

UNITED STATES

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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BRIEFING ON EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY, AFFIRMATIVE

EMPLOYMENT, AND SMALL BUSINESS

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THURSDAY,

FEBRUARY 18, 2021

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The Commission met via Videoconference, at
10:00 a.m. EST, Christopher T. Hanson, Chairman, presiding.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

CHRISTOPHER T. HANSON, Chairman

JEFF BARAN, Commissioner

ANNIE CAPUTO, Commissioner

DAVID A. WRIGHT, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT:

ANNETTE VIETTI-COOK, Secretary of the Commission

MARIAN ZOBLER, General Counsel

NRC STAFF:

ANTHONY BRIGGS, Small Business Program Manager,

Officer of Small Business & Civil Rights

CHERIE CRISDEN, Chair, Diversity Management Advisory

Committee, Region I and Allegations and

Enforcement Specialist

MARGARET DOANE, Executive Director for Operations

MINH-THUY NGUYEN, Chair, Asian Pacific American

Advisory Committee

VONNA ORDAZ, Director, Office of Small Business &

Civil Rights

BARBARA SANFORD, Deputy Director, Governance &

Enterprise Management Services Division,

Office of the Chief Information Officer

National Treasury Employees Union Representative:

SHERYL SANCHEZ, National Treasury Employees Union

1 PROCEEDINGS

2 10:00 a.m.

3 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Okay. I am showing 10:00 a.m.

4 Good morning, everyone, I convene the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's
5 Public Meeting on Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Employment,
6 and Small Business.

7 We are all virtual this morning, once again. We had our first
8 meeting that way last week. We're doing that again this morning. This
9 meeting is being transcribed and recorded and will be available on our public
10 website in the next day or so.

11 Twice a year we convene to get an update on the progress
12 and opportunities related to equal employment opportunity, diversity and
13 inclusion, and small business.

14 As an Agency, we are rightly focused on our mission to
15 provide reasonable assurance of adequate protection of public health and the
16 nation's civilian use of radioactive materials.

1 In order to fulfill this public service mission, we need a strong
2 workforce that is fully engaged. Today, we are discussing a number of topics
3 that are very important to ensuring the civil servants working at the NRC are
4 provided the environment they need to flourish and achieve their goals.

5 I'd like to take this opportunity to commend the Staff on the
6 great strides we've made as an Agency in working towards diversity and
7 inclusion in our workforce, while acknowledging that there is still much work
8 yet to be done.

9 Today we will hear about a number of programs, initiatives,
10 and opportunities to grow and strengthen our community.

11 My sincerest hope is that every NRC employee seeks to be
12 involved in some way and ultimately understands the value of these initiatives
13 to the Agency as a whole.

14 As we work together towards a culture of inclusion at the
15 NRC, I believe we can seek out opportunities for improvement in important
16 area like public engagement and environmental justice, furthering our service
17 to the public we are tasked with protecting.

18 I look forward to hearing valuable insights during the
19 discussion today, but before we start, I will ask first if my colleagues have any
20 remarks to make?

1 Okay, hearing none, we will begin with our Executive
2 Director for Operations, Margie Doane. Margie?

3 MS. DOANE: Good morning, Chairman and
4 Commissioners.

5 Thank you for the opportunity to highlight the progress and
6 accomplishments of the Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative
7 Employment and Small Business Programs, which demonstrate our continued
8 commitment to ensuring the NRC as an organization that welcomes and
9 appreciates diversity and inclusion, and continuing to enhance the role of
10 small businesses to accomplish our important, safety and security mission.

11 The Office of Small Business and Civil Rights provides
12 leadership for Agency efforts in carrying out our obligations under the various
13 civil rights and small business statutes.

14 SBCR has done a wonderful job of successfully meeting
15 these statutory obligations while maintaining a steady focus on promoting and
16 supporting new and ongoing efforts to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse
17 workforce.

1 Next slide, please. To achieve our transformation vision of
2 becoming a more modern, risk-informed regulator, we need to intentionally
3 manage our culture to ensure we are consistently valuing and encouraging
4 behaviors and norms that help us best accomplish our mission.

5 This includes fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce,
6 inclusivity is a hallmark of our ideal culture.

7 And inclusive culture sets the tone and expectation for how
8 we interact with one another, how we make decisions, how we get work done,
9 and how we are expected to innovate and collaborate.

10 While we've made progress and have taken concrete steps
11 to realize our ideal culture, there is still more work to do.

12 That's why we are focusing on fostering an environment that
13 is welcoming and appreciative of diversity and inclusion.

14 Specifically, SBCR has engaged management and the
15 workforce through various training sessions, periodic discussions, and
16 working towards achieving the priorities and goals in the Agency's Inclusive
17 Diversity Strategic Plan, IDSP.

1 The plan includes the principles of demonstrating leadership
2 commitment, employment engagement, and effective communication,
3 continuous diversity and inclusion, cultural competency learning, and shared
4 accountability and responsibility for diversity and inclusion.

5 We're in the process of finalizing a revised IDSP, which I
6 plan to endorse in the very near future once it is completed. This plan will
7 play a central role in guiding our efforts to realize our ideal culture.

8 We've also made tremendous strides in the area of small
9 business. You're going to hear a lot about this and, for example, through the
10 SBCR's leadership, the NRC has been recognized for its efforts to engage
11 and employ small and diverse businesses to support Offices' efforts to fulfil
12 mission-related work.

13 Notably, the NRC was awarded an A+ from the Small
14 Business Administration, the highest grade achievable. To say that I am
15 proud of what we have accomplished as an agency over the last year is an
16 understatement.

17 I believe the success is due in part to the diligence,
18 foresight, and hard work of all SBCR Staff who work tirelessly to provide
19 opportunities, services, and support for all NRC employees.

20 These efforts not only directly support the NRC's mission
21 but also result in enhancing the NRC's work environment.

1 This success is also due to the diligent efforts of all the equal
2 employment opportunity Advisory Committees and Affinity Groups who work
3 with us in achieving the Agency's desired culture by promoting a diverse and
4 inclusive workforce and the great partnerships established between SBCR
5 and the Offices and Regions.

6 Next slide, please. Now I'd like to introduce my fellow
7 presenters. First is Ms. Vonna Ordaz, Director of the Office of Small
8 Business and Civil Rights, who will provide an overview of the Equal
9 Employment Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion, and Small Business
10 Program.

11 She will be followed by Mr. Anthony Briggs, Small Business
12 Program Manager, who will be discussing the Small Business Program and
13 its recent successes.

14 Next will be Ms. Barbara Sanford, from the Office of the
15 Chief Information Officer, who will discuss OCIO's initiatives related to equal
16 employment opportunity, equal opportunity, and diversity and inclusion.

1 And she will be followed by Region I's Ms. Cherie Crisden,
2 who is Chair of the Diversity Management Advisory Committee and will
3 discuss Region I's initiatives related to equal employment opportunity, equal
4 opportunity, and diversity and inclusion.

5 And finally, Minh-Thuy Nguyen, Chair of the Asia Pacific
6 American Committee, who will provide a joint statement of the EEO Advisory
7 Committees.

8 This concludes my introductory remarks. I'll now turn the
9 presentation over to Vonna.

10 MS. ORDAZ: Thank you, Margie, and good morning
11 Chairman Hanson and Commissioners Baran, Caputo, and Wright. And
12 good morning NRC Staff.

13 I'm honored to brief you this morning on the status,
14 progress, and challenges of the Agency's equal employment opportunity,
15 diversity and inclusion, and small business efforts as administered by the
16 Office of Small Business and Civil Rights and its NRC partners.

17 Next slide, please. This year, SBCR has chosen the theme
18 Re-Imagining Perspectives, Enhancing the Vision. This theme helps us live
19 in our ideal culture.

1 As 2020 brought forward, there is challenges for everyone
2 and facing these challenges, SBCR recognized the importance of perspective.
3 While some things remain the same, they look different when faced virtually.

4 As a team, SBCR realized the need to reimagine past
5 perspectives and look forward to doing things differently under a new normal.

6 We're providing education, awareness, and resources
7 virtually to promote constructive shifts in our attitudes and behaviors to enable
8 success in moving the workforce forward.

9 We focus on what makes us stronger as we evolve and by
10 doing this we assist in building the ideal culture. And before I move on, I'd
11 like to recognize the main driver that keeps us strong, the Staff and volunteers
12 are the lifeblood of our work. I'd like to say a huge thank you to the
13 collaborative, inclusive, and brave folks that make up the Staff, the Advisory
14 Committees, the Affinity Groups, the Diversity Ambassadors, the employee
15 resources groups, and the executive sponsors of our programs.

16 We appreciate you and we are in this together.

17 Next slide, please. As we journey towards exemplifying the
18 ideal NRC culture, we must also inform our perspective through situational
19 awareness, outreach, and communication.

1 Policy statements are an important communication and
2 outreach tool used to let Staff know what we're doing, how we're doing it, and
3 they provide our legal guideposts.

4 Policy statements communicate that we're working with the
5 Commission and the Commission supports us and recognizes the importance
6 of the subject matter.

7 Last year, we issued four standalone policy statements for
8 the first time.

9 They are the Equal Employment Opportunity Statement, the
10 Statement on Diversity and Inclusion, Our Alternative Dispute Resolution
11 Policy, and the Notification of Federal Employee Anti-discrimination and
12 Retaliation Act of 2002, known as the No FEAR Act Statement.

13 Within each statement is information regarding best
14 practices and ways to enhance our culture that help us inform Staff of our
15 perspective across the spectrum of civil rights.

1 Next slide, please. As we engage and build relationships
2 with Staff in this virtual environment, SBCR has relied on several methods of
3 outreach. And where we found gaps, we created forums which include our
4 biannual individual office director and regional administrator periodic
5 meetings.

6 We continue data gathering through the comprehensive
7 Diversity Management Plan Report, and we hold virtual DIALOGUE sessions.
8 These DIALOGUE sessions have been an important ongoing effort in
9 addressing unconscious bias and difficult conversations.

10 Additionally, SBCR conducted training and gave
11 presentations at several office all-hands meetings. We held the first virtual
12 series of mandatory EEO and diversity training for managers and supervisors,
13 and supported the Advisory Committees in hosting a very successful virtual
14 EEO summit.

15 We created the initiative on civility awareness, respect, and
16 engagement, known as iCARE, to assist offices in communicating difficult
17 topics amongst themselves. And we explored bringing civility training to the
18 Agency.

19 Further, we've supported lunch-and-learns for Advisory
20 Committees and other various groups to promote cultural awareness and
21 professional development. With the virtual environment, attendance is at the
22 highest levels we've ever seen.

1 Next slide, please. So, what drives us? First, we're driven
2 by the strategic imperative of having a diverse and inclusive workforce, which
3 is important as we meet our mission.

4 Additionally, we're driven by the goals set for us and those
5 we set for ourselves, such as maintaining the NRC as a model EEO program
6 and by achieving the goals and priorities set forth in the Inclusive Diversity
7 Strategic Plan.

8 The plan's goals and vision in the reports listed here provide
9 a map of where we want to see this Agency. Periodically, this map is
10 reimaged by our oversight agencies as well as by all of the Staff, or Re-
11 Imagineers, in SBCR and beyond.

12 For example, the Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan, or IDSP,
13 was drafted through a coordinated effort between SBCR, other NRC offices,
14 the diversity management and inclusion Council, and the OEDO.

15 The IDSP is part of the map that links the diversity and
16 inclusion initiatives to the Agency's mission, transformation, and efforts to
17 enhance culture.

18 So, SBCR with input from the NRC Offices has drafted and
19 timely submitted to EEOC the Agency's annual MD-715 Report plan on
20 workforce analysis and self-assessment.

1 We also worked with our partners in OCHCO to submit the
2 annual disability affirmative action plan, which allows the Agency to establish
3 and maintain effective programs of equal employment opportunity.

4 We also participated with other federal agency partners in
5 the White House Domestic Policy Council to draw up the first federal
6 Historically Black Colleges and Universities competitiveness strategy.

7 The strategy forms the internal federal infrastructure to
8 support HBCU competitiveness and improve conditions for participation in
9 training, development, career placement programs, and funding opportunities.

10 This document supports the mission of the White House
11 initiative to promote excellence and innovation at HBCUs.

12 So, as you can see, these are just some examples of our
13 reporting requirements and there are many. This reporting structure allows
14 us to be an organization of continuous learning and data analysis as we strive
15 to reach and maintain our goals.

1 Next slide, please. Moving into the area of EEO complaint
2 data. Over the past few years, our EEO complaint activity has increased
3 slightly. We're now averaging about 30 pre-complaints and 20 formal
4 complaints per year.

5 This may be due to the effects of some of the changes that
6 the Agency has endured over time. This chart illustrates that our EEO
7 complaint activity is trending slightly upward for the past several years, even
8 as our Agency staffing levels continue to decline.

9 However, it should be duly noted that our Agency is still only
10 averaging about 1 percent of its workforce with pre-complaints and less than
11 1 percent of its workforce with formal complaints. I would also note that
12 despite the increase, NRC's complaint activity remains low in comparison to
13 other federal agencies of our size.

14 Next slide, please. So, in analyzing the basis of our formal
15 complaints, reprisal, race, age, and sex are the most commonly cited,
16 constituting approximately 84 percent of the formal complaint filings in
17 FY2020.

1 The chart reflects all bases cited in a formal complaint,
2 which may include multiple bases, which provides for a total that is greater
3 than the actual number of formal complaints filed.

4 So, as at the start of FY21 first quarter, there are only three
5 new complaints which relate to sex and race.

6 Next slide, please. Workplace harassment is persistently
7 cited as an issue in the Federal Government as reported by the Equal
8 Employment Opportunity Commission and continues to be one of our top three
9 issues alleged in FY2020.

10 The graphic reflects all issues cited in formal complaints.
11 Again, each complaint may include multiple issues, providing the rationale as
12 to why the total is greater than the actual number of formal complaints filed.

13 So, as of FY21 first quarter, there were only two complaints
14 and only one related to harassment.

15 We continue to work with our collaborative partners in
16 OCHCO and the Office of the General Counsel to cultivate a civil workplace
17 that is free from discrimination by addressing and eliminating all forms of
18 harassing behavior and misconduct, discrimination, and retaliation.

1 Next slide, please. Alternative Dispute Resolution is
2 designed to assist employees in resolving their workplace disputes and
3 conflicts collaboratively, fairly, and in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

4 Techniques include facilitated discussions, coaching,
5 conciliation, negotiation, and mediation, which is the method most used at the
6 NRC. All ADR techniques incorporate neutrality, fairness, flexibility, and
7 confidentiality.

8 This chart shows the resolution of issues using ADR in FY19
9 to FY21. As the chart indicates, there has been a similar number of issues
10 resolved in the last two years.

11 And this concludes my portion of the briefing. I'll now turn
12 it over to Anthony Briggs, who will discuss the Small Business Program and
13 its recent successes.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. BRIGGS: Thank you, Vonna. Good morning,
16 Chairman Hanson and Commissioners. I want to start with addressing the
17 state of small business at the NRC. So, let's move to Slide 15, please.

18 A question on the minds of many is what has been the
19 impact of the pandemic on small businesses supporting the Agency and what
20 are we doing to help or mitigate it?

1 But before I begin, I want to discuss why this question is so
2 important. The reason is because small businesses are vital to the economic
3 wellbeing of the country.

4 Small businesses create the majority of net new jobs added
5 to the economy, provide 67 percent of workers their first jobs, are the risk-
6 takers, and innovate and develop new technologies, and are essential to
7 maintaining a competitive supplier base where competition can thrive.

8 They dedicate senior management to Agency contracts and
9 are flexible to NRC's evolving needs, thereby ensuring Agency success in
10 carrying out its mission.

11 A few examples of where small businesses are supporting
12 Agency operations are shown in the pictures below.

13 For example, they are maintaining the Emergency
14 Response Center, they are responsible for the recent modernization of the
15 look to enhance usability and mobility of the public website.

16 They support the badge office and card readers, they
17 provide facility support services for Headquarters.

1 So, think of HVAC, plumbing, electrical, construction,
2 renovation, and custodial, the RIC, installing Wi-Fi, providing technician
3 assistance to the reactor and environmental programs. And they're helping
4 us transition to the Cloud, which has proven of vital importance as we
5 transition to working remotely.

6 Now, I want to discuss the impact of the pandemic and what
7 we are doing to help. While there are some contracts that have been
8 impacted, two examples being cancellation of the RIC last year and closure of
9 the on-site health center, we have pivoted to contractors working in a remote
10 environment.

11 The RIC will be virtual and the health center now provides
12 telehealth services. There have also been new contract opportunities
13 created such as the COVID-19 health screening contract for the Agency,
14 which is still supporting the regional offices. However, we need to continue
15 monitoring the impact as the environment is ever changing.

16 Now, it's worth noting the response and speed at which the
17 Agency Contracting Staff was able to modify existing contracts and the ability
18 of contractors to adapt to working remotely was extremely impressive and
19 deserves commendation.

1 There also has been an increase in businesses wanting to
2 shift from private sector to public sector contracts because the Federal
3 Government has remained open.

4 So, what are we doing to help these businesses? The
5 Small Business Program provides virtual one-on-one small business
6 counseling sessions to help companies navigate the federal marketplace,
7 market their services.

8 And we match company capabilities with Agency prime and
9 subcontract opportunities.

10 These services and the resources available to businesses
11 was communicated to the public via the Agency's public website and through
12 social media postings.

13 We're also assisting Contracting Staff in evaluating the
14 small business marketplace when the Agency has a product and/or service
15 need.

16 This has been successful in that the Small Business
17 Program received an increased number of requests to provide acquisition
18 planning and market research support for Agency contracts, which led to more
19 contracts being awarded to small businesses, such as the examples listed in
20 the slide, all of which are being supported by small businesses.

1 The next topic I want to discuss is on Slide 16 and it's how
2 we're enhancing innovation and partnerships to carry out our work.

3 As we transition to supporting our internal and external
4 stakeholders in a virtual environment, we had to transform the way we did
5 business. And we did it through innovation and partnerships.

6 We found success in leveraging the 365 tools to modernize
7 how we're providing support in a remote environment.

8 For example, we moved from a paper-based file cabinet to
9 the Cloud, having access anywhere at any time, created a SharePoint site to
10 catalog our work and how we collaborate, and produce our own channels with
11 recorded demonstrations of innovative products and services offered by the
12 small business community that support Agency operations.

13 Now, that's not to say there has not been a few technical
14 issues along the way, but OCIO was able to provide the support and
15 assistance needed to resolve any issues we faced.

1 We've also secured a leadership position on the Federal
2 Small Business Council consisting of federal small business executives and
3 is dedicated to maximizing contract opportunities in the Federal Government.

4 We were a presenter at the White House HBCU conference
5 where we were able to showcase the services we offer to identify and respond
6 to Agency contract opportunities.

7 We joined our federal counterparts from GSA and DHS for
8 a session hosted by SBCR's own Affirmative Employment Program Manager.

9 We also have continued to leverage partnerships. Our
10 partnership with the Acquisition Management Division has strengthened over
11 the past year as we navigate this new environment that we all work in.

12 Our involvement in the acquisition planning and vetting of
13 companies and contract vehicles has grown.

14 We help Agency customers find capable companies,
15 explore innovative solutions, and we facilitate streamlined contracting options
16 that save both time and money.

17 This is possible because of our partnership with the
18 acquisition management division. We provide them the support where they
19 need it, thereby adding value, and this partnership is critical to our success.

1 Now, let's turn to Slide 17, please, to see what we were able
2 to achieve. So, what has been the return on investment for our work and the
3 partnerships we've established?

4 First, we increased our SBA Scorecard grade from an A to
5 an A+ for Fiscal Year 2019. The SBA Scorecard measures an Agency's
6 small business contract performance, compliance activities, technical
7 assistance, and outreach to small businesses.

8 The Fiscal Year 2020 Scorecard has yet to be released but
9 is scheduled for spring of this year. The Small Business Program was
10 recognized by SBA senior management at our virtual award ceremony for
11 having the largest performance increase in the Federal Government for
12 contracting with small businesses located in Historically Underutilized
13 Business Zones, also known as HUBZones.

14 HUBZones are the areas that are in need of economic
15 revitalization and federal contract dollars are directed there in an effort to draw
16 businesses to those areas. One example of success is downtown Silver
17 Spring.

18 Now, this achievement is significant as the HUBZone goal
19 is one of the most difficult goals to achieve and one where many agencies fail
20 to reach.

1 In Fiscal Year 2020, the Agency exceeded all five of its small
2 business prime contract goals where they quadrupled the goal for small
3 disadvantaged businesses and more than doubled the goal for HUBZones
4 and small businesses owned by women and service-disabled veterans.

5 I will conclude with Slide 18 that summarizes how we are
6 envisioning the future through planned actions. So, how do we continue to
7 build upon our work to ensure success?

8 Well, we've transitioned from in-person small business
9 events we were hosting each year to now hosting a series of virtual events,
10 the first of which is scheduled for March of this year.

11 The events offer an opportunity about how to learn about
12 how to conduct business with the Agency and the services we offer
13 companies to grow their business.

14 And we are partnering with SBA, the National HUBZone
15 Council, and the Minority Business Development Agency and the Women's
16 Business Enterprise National Council.

1 We are working on developing an interactive list of contract
2 opportunities for companies to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness in the
3 way companies identify prime and subcontract opportunities.

4 We also are participating in an important initiative that is
5 exploring ways HBCUs can participate in federal contracting opportunities.

6 We are participating in an educational outreach campaign
7 beginning in March that will help HBCUs navigate the federal contracting
8 landscape to identify viable contract opportunities.

9 We also are planning on establishing a small business
10 taskforce committed to maximizing opportunities through challenge
11 campaigns, crowdsourcing, exploring best practices among our federal
12 counterparts, and adopting innovative ideas used in both the private and
13 public sector.

14 Now, we've covered quite a bit in a short period of time but
15 I want you to know we are passionate about what we do.

16 We will continue to monitor the impact of the pandemic on
17 Agency small businesses, we will continue to help. We have a plan for the
18 future and we want to thank everyone at the Agency for their support for what
19 we do.

1 That is every one of you. That is the Chairman, the
2 Commission, the EEO, AMD, the CORs from all the purchasing offices that
3 we work with, OCIO for its technology support and OGC.

4 Because that support is more important now than it has ever
5 been. It is those contracts that are keeping people employed, bills paid, and
6 local businesses to remain open.

7 Thank you for the opportunity to brief you and I now turn it
8 over to Barbara Sanford.

9 MS. SANFORD: Good morning, I am Barbara Sanford,
10 the Deputy Division Director for the Governance and Enterprise Management
11 Services Division, also known as GEMS in OCIO.

12 I begin by thanking for this opportunity to discuss with you
13 how we have worked and continue to work in OCIO towards building our
14 desired culture. This year has been quite a journey.

15 In OCIO we began the year knowing that we had work to do.
16 Our FEVS results had declined and the safety culture climate survey
17 confirmed that we needed to work together towards building an ideal culture
18 and enhancing the overall organizational health of our office.

1 We also experienced turnover in some critical management
2 and Staff positions and a substantial change in how we do our work with the
3 onset of expanded telework and the public health emergency.

4 Next slide, please. OCIO was one of the lowest-performing
5 organizations at the NRC in both the 2019 FEVS and the 2020 safety culture
6 climate survey. We determined that it was important to understand and
7 listen to the messages that Staff were providing us using a variety of tools.
8 We also did not want to change for the sake of change.

9 It was important to educate ourselves as an office and a
10 leadership team regarding the concerns that our Staff were raising and to learn
11 about best practices from other organizations.

12 We also considered the environment in which we were
13 working. With the onset of expanded telework and social distancing
14 protocols, there were no longer impromptu hallway conversations, casual
15 drive-by or drop-in office visits.

16 There was an immediate culture shift in how we interacted
17 with each other.

18 Next slide, please. To work towards building our desired
19 culture, we focused first on planning strategy.

1 We learned from the data provided by the surveys that we
2 had a disconnect between the work that was accomplished and how it fits with
3 the Agency and Office priorities. We stood up a Staff Working Group to help
4 us digest the data and focus on areas for improvement.

5 The group also helped us focus on common themes from
6 the data, such as building respect and empowerment amongst Staff and
7 management, recognizing and resolving workload challenges, and creating
8 environments where Staff feel welcome to share differing views and resolve
9 issues.

10 As an office, we also enhanced our look at the work. We
11 worked and continue to work to better define and communicate our priorities
12 in how the work is connected to the NRC's strategic initiatives, like the
13 transformation action plan and OCIO's own strategic plan, ESP, Empower,
14 Serve, Protect.

15 With the start of 2021, we have renewed our focus on
16 workload planning.

17 As we have devoted the time to these difficult conversations
18 about the workload challenges we experienced, we enhanced understanding
19 of each other's perspectives and we share ideas to resolve challenges more
20 effectively and efficiently.

1 To enhance visibility of work across the office, we have
2 showcased the work that Staff do and provided more clear discussion about
3 how our work impacts and enables the safety and security mission of the NRC,

4 We have focused on sharing feedback more
5 contemporaneously with Staff through quarterly feedback discussions both
6 from management to Staff and Staff to management, more informal vehicles
7 for communications and feedback, speed of trust discussions like Straight
8 Talk, encouraging Staff to take a seat at the table, increasing Staff
9 participation initiatives, which I'll discuss in more detail in a few slides, and
10 encouraging employee-of-the-month awards.

11 Next slide, please. As we learned the importance of
12 listening and understanding and learning in each aspect of interaction and
13 work in the organization, we became more focused towards action.

14 We strive for continuous improvement with a feedback cycle as
15 shown on this slide.

16 Within a few weeks of the transition to remote work, we
17 realized the importance of informal opportunities for Staff interaction and
18 discussion with a variety of media for Staff to provide thoughts and feedback.

1 We also enhanced the conversation with topics to build
2 camaraderie, with the occasional silly poll to lighten the mood and create
3 opportunities for Staff bonding.

4 We also held more formal focus groups and stood up the
5 Safety Culture Climate Working Group to help drive change and action
6 planning, and to provide an additional outlet for Staff to provide feedback.

7 We then used the feedback that we received from the
8 discussions to drive change and build organizational health, and then we seek
9 continuous feedback as we continue the conversations.

10 Next slide, please. We also have used the feedback
11 received to enhance transparency and communication. At the outset of
12 remote work, we held weekly and now bi-weekly OCIO check-in and division
13 check-in meetings.

14 Typically, these meetings are more informal, sometimes
15 with short topic presentations but always with opportunities for conversation
16 and discussion.

17 We also retooled the rhythm of meetings, creating a special
18 topics meeting where Staff can sign up to discuss a topic of importance with
19 the executive team and leadership team as a group.

1 We revitalized service review meetings with the creation of
2 a new service delivery model, and we have monthly newsletters where we can
3 share kudos received for OCIO Staff work from both inside and outside the
4 office.

5 Next slide, please. As a direct result of the feedback we've
6 received from Staff, we implemented a variety of strategies and practices.

7 We heard Staff concerns about workload and too many
8 meetings, so we created a no-meeting block on Wednesdays for Staff time to
9 focus and a training block once a month to complete mandatory training and
10 other initiatives.

11 To enhance Staff interactions and build camaraderie, we
12 began coffee chats and other opportunities for informal conversations with
13 topics like favorite TV shows, books, recipes, and more serious topics like
14 current events and individual perspectives.

15 We encouraged dialogues to learn more about each other
16 and bring our whole selves to the table in the Office, celebrating and learning
17 about our differences.

1 We also held virtual office celebrations such as a holiday
2 party and Halloween parade, providing opportunities for games and
3 merriment, and we instituted other recognition initiatives.

4 Kudos in the newsletter, weekly videos, one of which you'll
5 get a chance to see in a few moments, providing more thank you emails and
6 public shout-outs, employee-of-the-month awards, special act and group
7 awards, and when we were in the office, ice-cream parties, donuts, and coffee.

8 Now that we are remote, we even provided Staff with an
9 appreciation gift to the office, reinforcing our one OCIO concept.

10 Next slide, please. As we have just discussed, in OCIO we
11 have learned a lot and it is all due to the Staff and their willingness to share
12 and be open and honest.

13 We greatly appreciate Staff thoughts, ideas, and
14 suggestions, and we build on those as we look forward towards building our
15 ideal culture.

16 We are working to strengthen the connection between the
17 work the we do and how it impacts Staff across the Agency and enables
18 mission achievement. We're focused on action planning and crowdsourcing
19 feedback and suggestions.

1 We seek and will continue to seek out opportunities to
2 execute the actions planned and to measure our success. We will continue
3 to use the feedback cycle to plan for future actions.

4 In addition, we continue to engage and connect initiatives
5 with workforce planning to enhance our approach to these and other workload
6 challenges. And we've also received the 2020 FEVS survey results.

7 Even compared to the government and NRC averages, which
8 increased between 3 and 4 percent in engagement and satisfaction indices,
9 the OCIO improvements in these indices jumped almost 6 percent.

10 Other individual question items showed a marked increase, some as
11 much as 15 to 20 percent, such as in areas of communication, satisfaction
12 with the information received, respect, supervisor treats me with respect, and
13 recognition.

14 Employees are recognized for providing high-quality
15 products and services. Staff also indicated that they felt encouraged to come
16 up with new and better ways of doing things.

17 We have a long way to go and are still working to build our
18 intentional culture. But these results truly demonstrate that we are on the
19 right path.

1 In summation, we have an amazing Staff and I truly feel
2 privileged to work with them each and every day. In OCIO we have a saying,
3 one OCIO, and our symbol is a snowflake.

4 We chose the snowflake as each snowflake is unique but
5 when there are a lot of them, they blend together with their individual strengths
6 to form snow and together, they can make an impact like a snowstorm.

7 Next slide, please. With the start of remote work, we
8 recognized the importance of recognizing the contributions of our Staff and
9 giving Staff something to start Monday off with a smile.

10 So, please enjoy one of our Monday morning videos.
11 Here's an example.

12 (Video played.)

13 Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. And
14 now I turn the floor to Cherie Crisden.

15 MS. CRISDEN: Thank you, Barbara. Good morning,
16 Chairman Hanson and Commissioners, I'm honored to be here today,
17 representing Region I in the Region I Diversity Management Advisory
18 Committee, which we call DMAC.

1 Today I would like to share with you some of the activities
2 and events that our Committee hosts to promote diversity and inclusion in the
3 region. I will also talk about a couple of DMAC-led initiatives and our plans
4 for the future.

5 Next slide, please. We have 11 Staff Members on the
6 DMAC team and each is passionate about promoting diversity and inclusion
7 in the region. The team is diverse in that it includes Staff from every division
8 in the Region I Office.

9 Members represent both administrative and technical Staff.
10 We have different educational experiences and a couple of us are located in
11 different geographical areas.

12 Our goal is to help create an environment in Region I where
13 Staff feel comfortable learning about and valuing differences. We also aim to
14 cultivate a workplace that is inclusive to all Staff. We achieve these goals
15 by successfully sponsoring a wide variety of activities, which are supported by
16 regional staff and managers.

17 These events and activities are intended to strengthen the
18 regional culture and encourage the Staff to embrace this diversity. DMAC
19 works hard to find new, creative, and interesting ways to bring the Staff
20 together while also showcasing cultural differences and awareness.

1 Next slide, please. We aim to sponsor events and activities
2 continually in the Region. In the next few slides, I will share with you some
3 ways DMAC has cultivated a diverse and inclusive culture in Region I.

4 For more than five years, DMAC has sponsored the Region
5 I Book Club. The Book Club meets quarterly and the book selections
6 alternate between cultural and social awareness and leadership topics.

7 The Book Club provides an additional opportunity for Staff
8 to participate and also allows the Staff and management to have healthy
9 discussions about the books we've read together.

10 Books we've read have included The Hate You Give and
11 Measure What Matters. The Region I annual diversity celebrations continue
12 to focus on topics related to diversity and inclusion with the goal of educating
13 Staff and providing awareness.

14 In 2018, our Diversity Day celebration focused on Region I
15 Has Talent. We wanted to highlight the diverse interests of the regional Staff.

16 The Staff shared presentations on beekeeping, being a
17 referee, building community through fitness, Japanese culture differences,
18 and we also had a vegan cooking demonstration.

1 The 2019 celebration focused on overcoming bias in pursuit
2 of an inclusive workplace. The event featured a presentation by a veteran
3 educator shown in the center of the bottom picture of the slide, who, at the
4 time of the presentation, was a dean in diversity curriculum in a private school
5 in Philadelphia.

6 She highlighted the need for greater awareness of biases
7 when interacting with people of different backgrounds. Her presentations
8 inspired a significant level of interactive dialogue with active engagement by
9 many of the attendees.

10 In December, DMAC held an event called Who Are We,
11 celebrating the Region I family and welcoming our newest members.

12 The event highlighted the educational experiences, work
13 experiences, interests, and talents of the new and seasoned Region I Staff.
14 We sponsored this each to introduce the new staff but we also wanted to show
15 that diversity is so much more than what we see.

16 This session was particularly important because it brought
17 the Staff together during a year when we have been isolated due to the public
18 health emergency.

1 Next slide, please. In addition to Diversity Days, DMAC
2 has held numerous cultural events including our annual Hispanic Heritage
3 Month celebration.

4 At our most recent event, we had a discussion on how
5 people from Latin America identify, Hispanic or Latino. Our celebrations
6 usually conclude with a salsa and guacamole competition.

7 As you can see on this slide, our regional administrator,
8 Dave Lew, was actively engaged as a judge.

9 During our last celebration, instead of the competition we
10 ended with a variety of traditional Hispanic food, including rice and beans,
11 sweet fried plantains, and chips and salsa.

12 In 2018, we had our very first Juneteenth celebration, with
13 videos explaining the importance of the annual holiday, which commemorates
14 the end of slavery of the United States.

15 The event that concluded with an energetic and engaging
16 discussion about Juneteenth proved to be very educational as many Staff did
17 not know much about the holiday.

18 We've also celebrated Women's History Month by viewing
19 documentaries about the contributions of women. One such video was
20 Women in Space, which discussed the history of women pioneers in the U.S.
21 space program.

1 DMAC also sponsors training opportunities on relevant
2 topics. The training is usually held during a regional seminar. We have
3 presentations on the NRC anti-harassment policy and gender communication
4 in the workplace.

5 Because we believe diversity and inclusion isn't something
6 to think about only during women's history or black history month, we send out
7 periodic newsletters to highlight DMAC's activities.

8 We also have sent out what we call DMAC popups, which
9 summarizes articles related to diversity and inclusion that may be of interest
10 to the Staff.

11 Next slide, please. Over the years, DMAC has held a
12 variety of activities to bring Staff together.

13 During black history month in 2018, we hosted a Taste of
14 Soul, which featured a number of culture-inspired food items for Staff to
15 sample. I must admit, food is a staple at many DMAC events as it tends to
16 draw big crowds.

17 During October, the Region has promoted breast cancer
18 awareness and remembered those lost to the disease by wearing pink.

1 Over the past few summers, we've sponsored summer of
2 fitness, which has included meditation sessions, cross-fit classes, weekly
3 biking excursions, and nutrition presentations.

4 This past summer, because we couldn't be together due to
5 the public health emergency, we held a virtual fitness bingo where we
6 challenged the regional Staff to become fit by taking part in a wellness activity
7 each day in August.

8 On the slide you'll see participants of the cross-fit class we
9 held.

10 Next slide, please. DMAC sponsors many events and
11 services to our community and takes pride in our service to others. We are
12 generous in our giving to numerous local organizations.

13 We have collected toys, household supplies, food,
14 eyeglasses, and school supplies to fill backpacks of children just in time for
15 the start of a new school year.

16 Next slide, please. DMAC maintains a strong partnership
17 with the management team. Our management considers and provides ample
18 opportunities for DMAC to propose initiatives and activities that will foster a
19 diverse and inclusive environment.

1 This partnership and support is evidenced by a recent
2 revised to the Region I vision statement. DMAC proposed that addition of the
3 words diverse and inclusive to the statement.

4 Regional management agreed and the vision statement
5 now reads Region I continues to achieve our mission with a high level of
6 credibility and competency.

7 We will focus on enhancing individual and organizational
8 versatility while fostering a diverse and inclusive environment in which each
9 employee feels connected to the organization and to each other through
10 meaningful and rewarding work.

11 Additionally, the Region I management team with support
12 of DMAC's proposal to sponsor an open dialogue in response to civil unrest
13 over the summer.

14 The purpose of the open dialogue was to share personal
15 experiences and provide insights on how our beliefs were formed by those
16 experiences. The goal of the dialogue was to listen and to embrace each
17 other, even if we did not hold the same beliefs.

18 It was about accepting each other in a diverse and inclusive
19 workplace so that we can truly call Region I a family.

20 Following an open dialogue with management support,
21 DMAC sponsored two focused discussions, one on unconscious bias, and the
22 other on privilege.

1 Next slide, please. Although it seems we've been very
2 busy and have several noteworthy accomplishments, there's still work to be
3 done. Looking forward, DMAC is excited about working with the entire
4 Region I team and will continue to work in new initiatives that will foster diverse
5 and inclusive workplace in Region I.

6 Due to the public health emergency and increased telework
7 flexibilities across the Agency, DMAC, like other organizations, has had to be
8 innovative in bringing meaningful programming to the region.

9 We have successfully created a recruitment video and have
10 held events via Teams but we'll continue to explore how to use technology to
11 enhance in the future.

12 Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak today and I
13 will turn it over to Minh-Thuy Nguyen.

14 MS. NGUYEN: Thanks, Cherie. Good morning,
15 Chairman and Commissioners.

16 I would like to recognize and thank you for your continued
17 participation and support in the various diversity and inclusion efforts
18 throughout the Agency.

1 It's my honor to speak to you today on behalf of the Diversity
2 Management Advisory Committee, DMAC, which represents the collective
3 voice of the NRC's volunteer Advisory Committees.

4 The DMAC works with SBCR to support recruitment,
5 professional development, retention, and diversity, as stated in the Agency's
6 Comprehensive Diversity Management plan and the Inclusive Diversity
7 Strategic Plan.

8 Before I go into our joint statement, here's a short video
9 about our Agency's Advisory Committee.

10 Next slide, please.

11 (Video played.)

12 Needless to say, life as the way we knew it was turned
13 upside down in early 2020 with the onset of telework with maximum flexibilities
14 and state shutdowns.

15 Parents took on the additional role as educators and
16 technical support for their school-aged children, while others may have taken
17 on additional caregiver duties in addition to reconfiguring their home settings
18 to accommodate their new work-at-home equipment.

1 Despite this new way of working, we effectively use multiple
2 virtual platforms to continue to present educational, heritage, and awareness
3 month events.

4 The use of virtual platforms provided us with a unique
5 opportunity to transform our traditional approach to events to include non-local
6 speakers, while being more inclusive for regional and remote workers as
7 everyone was in a virtual working environment.

8 Additionally, Staff had the added benefit of engaging with
9 each other during the speaker's presentations, instead of limited interactions
10 throughout or at the end of the session.

11 Even as the public health emergency looked as if were
12 ending, we were forward-thinking and continued to plan our events in a virtual
13 environment. Next slide, please. This year, the DMAC coordinated a
14 virtual equal employment opportunity summit titled Embracing Diversity and
15 Inclusion in the Workplace.

16 A two-day event that embraced NRC's organizational values
17 to create a safe, welcoming, inclusive, and diverse Agency and a place where
18 everyone can bring their whole selves to work.

1 During the summit, 14 sessions were presented. Forums
2 addressed everything from experiences, themes of recent societal events, and
3 the importance of diversity to our mission and the impact on productivity to
4 explorations of human behavior based on social culture and its impact on the
5 workplace.

6 We were fortunate to have prominent external speakers in
7 the fields of diversity, mental health, employment, and health.

8 NRC Staff also presented sessions on unconscious bias,
9 how to be an ally, promoting fairness and inclusion within the Agency and
10 generational differences.

11 Many sessions were attended by as many as 250 managers
12 and Staff. The event received extremely positive feedback.

13 Next slide, please. The Advisory Committees and
14 resources groups are aware of the factors presently limiting promotions.

15 In this environment, we remain focused on contributing to
16 the Agency's broader efforts to recruit the next generation of leaders and
17 promote relevant training and skills development within the workforce to
18 ensure we remain an effective and agile organization.

1 Throughout Fiscal Year 2020, we engaged in recruitment
2 efforts and organized professional development seminars and workshops on
3 a broad variety of topics for the Staff.

4 A highlight from last year was partnering with OCHCO on a
5 event panel entitled Take Charge of Your Career with Individual Development
6 Plans, IDPs.

7 This panel discussed the overall process of creating an IDP
8 with successful use and benefit of IDPs from Staff and management
9 perspectives and how to engage with your supervisor in developing and
10 maintaining an IDP.

11 As the Advisory Committees and resource groups at the
12 NRC, we seek to ensure minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and
13 veterans are receiving the developmental opportunities to become future
14 leaders of the Agency.

15 Finally, we encourage NRC to build and maintain
16 relationships with minority-serving institutions and those other organizations
17 representing minorities and persons with disabilities to ensure there is a
18 diverse pathway and profession to make up future generations of Agency
19 Staff.

1 In 2021, we look forward to continuing our support of the
2 Agency in maintaining a diverse and inclusive workforce and providing a forum
3 for dialog on issues that are important to the principles of diversity and
4 inclusion.

5 Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about
6 how resourceful the Advisory Committees and resources groups are to the
7 NRC.

8 Now, back to you, Margie.

9 MS. DOANE: So, in conclusion, in closing I just want to
10 thank the Staff and management in the Office of Small Business and Civil
11 Rights who played a central role in realizing the achievements highlighted in
12 our discussion.

13 Also, I'd like to recognize the efforts of my fellow presenters
14 and the numerous staff who helped prepare for today's briefing including Staff
15 not only in the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, but also in OGC.

16 And I know Marian's at the table and they worked really hard
17 with us and also, in our office, in the OEDO's Office. This took a lot of work.

18 You can see from how many Committees across the regions
19 and at Headquarters that we really tried to get a very inclusive picture.

1 And we've achieved so much over the past year that directly
2 contributed to NRC's ability to meet its mission now and well into the future
3 and we're committed to building all this success to further enhance our support
4 of the small business, equal employment opportunity, and affirmative
5 employment programs.

6 This concludes our presentation and we look forward to your
7 questions.

8 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you, Margie. I'm going to
9 start with the questions and each Commissioner will have an opportunity to
10 speak.

11 And then I neglected to mention at the opening of the
12 meeting, we're going to hear from Ms. Sheryl Sanchez from the National
13 Treasury Employees Union for the last five or ten minutes of the meeting. So,
14 we'll look for that as well.

15 So, with that, once again, I'm super impressed about the
16 breadth of the activities that go on at the NRC and the level of enthusiasm and
17 the level of participation that we have in all of these diversity and inclusion
18 events.

19 And people outside the Agency look at us and pay attention
20 to us. Just this week, I had the opportunity to participate for the first time in
21 the International Gender Champions Impact Group, along with some of my
22 international counterparts.

1 And this is an effort co-chaired by President Rumina Velshi
2 of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, as well as Director General
3 Rafael Grossi of the IAEA in an effort to achieve greater gender parity in the
4 nuclear and nuclear regulation fields. And at that meeting I was pleased to
5 report on NRC's progress and increasing the participation of women in our
6 senior executive career development program among other successes.

7 And so there are international opportunities where people
8 are looking at us and looking at the programs we have in place and looking at
9 the ways in which we're trying to create an inclusive culture.

10 And there are certainly opportunities for us to learn from
11 them but they're also looking for opportunities to learn from us.

12 So, a lot of the things that got discussed this morning are so
13 important, both internally to the Agency but I would argue external to the
14 Agency as well.

1 Recently, and I know my colleagues have done a lot of this
2 as well, I've had the opportunity to participate in a small way in the Native
3 American History Luncheon as well as most recently on the lunch presentation
4 on African American families for African American History Month.

5 It was a presentation by Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum from the
6 University of Maryland, as I said, on African American families.

7 And these events are super important, in part because I
8 want to recognize that we're back to holding these events and I want to
9 encourage them and I want to encourage employees to participate as much
10 as possible in all of these things.

11 I find them enormously enriching and educational, partly
12 because I just get to learn more about the Staff and connect with people, but
13 also just people outside the Agency who come to talk about their experiences.

14 And we're not in a place now where we're having to get
15 permission from anybody to go do these events, we're not in a place where
16 we're policing speech or watching out for certain buzz words.

17 So, I think we've got a renewed opportunity here to really
18 press ahead with some of these things.

1 And as I think I'd expressed previously, the iCARE and
2 dialogue efforts were things that people could have in their email signatures
3 but we weren't really holding events. But I think we're back to that and I think
4 we heard some really good -- or touched on just briefly -- examples.

5 But I wanted to ask Cherie and Barbara and Minh-Thuy if
6 you had any success stories that you could share with the Commission from
7 the iCARE or dialogue or other things you've been doing.

8 Whoever wants to go first.

9 MS. SANFORD: Sure, I'm happy to go first. So, in OCIO
10 we began having dialogues with our Staff over the course of the year and
11 some of them even virtually.

12 And they really allowed us to have more of a broader
13 conversation with our groups and talk about our whole selves as we've been
14 in the office and completely voluntary.

15 But we had a great participation rate so we're actually really
16 hoping to carry those into the future. We've gotten a lot of good feedback
17 from our Staff about feeling more included and being able to be more open
18 through those dialogues.

19 So, I'm looking forward to having more of them.

20 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Great. Cherie or Minh-Thuy, is
21 there anything you wanted add?

1 MS. CRISDEN: I'll go after you Minh-Thuy.

2 MS. NGUYEN: Okay.

3 From DMAC's perspective, over the last summer we had
4 several open discussions, open forums that we identified that Staff would like
5 to have a safe space to just talk about how they've been affected by some of
6 the protests that have been going on.

7 Because some of us do live within the very busy area that
8 has been affected and while it provided a space for people to just be open and
9 ask questions without feeling that they were stepping on toes, we had a lot of
10 positive feedback.

11 I want to do a shout-out to ACAA because they also had
12 events in parallel with us. It just helped with that effort.

13 CHAIRMAN HANSON: That's great. That kind of thing is
14 so important. Cherie?

15 MS. CRISDEN: Yes, so similar to what Minh-Thuy just
16 said, in June, Region I had our open discussion following the death of George
17 Floyd.

1 And I would call this a success because we had over 100
2 people participate in this open dialogue, open discussion. And I was so proud
3 of the people that I work with because they felt comfortable enough to share
4 some of their personal experiences.

5 And even following the discussion, there was a desire to
6 have more discussion, which helped us with coordinating some of the small,
7 focused discussions that we have planned.

8 So, I'd call it a success because I think we fostered an
9 opportunity for people to feel comfortable to share their thoughts and also to
10 get involved and talk about how they were feeling. So, that was a success in
11 my mind.

12 CHAIRMAN HANSON: I would agree. 100 people in
13 Region I, that's more than half the Staff, right?

14 And any opportunity where people are having honest
15 conversations and exploring our shared humanity around really difficult topics,
16 I would agree, is a huge success so thank you for that. I really appreciate
17 that.

18 Thank you and thank you to Barbara and Minh-Thuy too for
19 those examples. As many of you know, one of the things I'm interested in is
20 our academic programs and our relationships with universities.

1 So, I was really intrigued in the back-up materials and I think
2 Vonna touched on this as well, some of the language about HBCUs.

3 And in particular I was really excited to find in the back of
4 the binder here our HBCU competitiveness strategy, which addresses Staff
5 recruitment, career development, and contract awards. So, I was
6 wondering if Vonna or someone else or Anthony or whomever can highlight
7 some early achievements from this program?

8 MS. ORDAZ: Hello. So, we do have the plan in place and
9 we have had some achievements.

10 Just internally, I can offer that the NRC's NRAN program,
11 the entry-level Nuclear Regulator Apprenticeship Network cohort has a
12 diverse mix including four individuals from HBCUs, which is very helpful.

13 In particular, we have two grads from Alabama A&M and
14 also two grads from South Carolina State University. So, that's progress.

15 We also have been engaging heavily with the White House
16 on those initiatives and I would also ask Tony Briggs if he could offer on some
17 of the partnerships that we've had in light of small business.

1 MR. BRIGGS: Absolutely. And thank you very much for
2 that question. So, SBCR is a member of the HBCU contracting
3 competitiveness academy pilot program.

4 It's the first type of program of its kind. Now, it was
5 established to assist HBCUs compete for federal contracts by providing
6 resources and guidance on how to navigate the procurement process, which
7 tends to be extremely difficult.

8 We took a look at it strategically and what I mean by that is
9 we looked at the data and we saw low to no participation in federal contracting.
10 And the root cause of this was like many new entrants to federal contracting.

11 The big question is where do I start and what resources are
12 available to identify opportunities? And what we're doing in this educational
13 outreach campaign and this pilot program that I mentioned is we're answering
14 all those questions.

15 And specifically, we're participating in the first event of its
16 kind in March.

1 What we're going to do there is we're going to introduce the
2 Agency, explain what we buy, how we buy it, the role and services offered by
3 the Small Business Program, how to market product and services to the
4 Agency, and explain how to identify and respond to Agency prime and
5 subcontract opportunities.

6 That's the initial kick-off or infomercial that we'll give to the
7 universities. And then we followed up with one-on-one counseling sessions,
8 where we meet with each university.

9 And according to their capabilities, we match those to
10 Agency contracting opportunities.

11 CHAIRMAN HANSON: I think that's great. It sounds like
12 a real effort in seed-planting and capacity-building among HBCUs, which just
13 then kind of cements those relationships with the Agency from which we can
14 benefit down the road.

15 So, I think that all sounds really encouraging. I know this
16 was something that was just kind of getting off the ground.

17 But I wanted to highlight it because I think it's important and
18 it's a way to institutionalize some of those relationships that will really benefit
19 us in the future.

20 So, thank you very, very much for that, Anthony and Vonna,
21 I really appreciate it.

1 I want to just squeeze in one last question and thank my
2 colleagues for this. I was interested to see in the back-up materials the
3 disability affirmative action plan.

4 And I wanted to ask what we're doing to ensure that
5 individuals with disabilities have what they need to work remotely and continue
6 to contribute to the mission during the public health emergency.

7 MS. ORDAZ: Thank you for the question. So, in many
8 cases there's been different needs, whether it be reasonable accommodations
9 for sit-stand desks or other types of things.

10 Some people have even had back challenges throughout,
11 sitting in the same chair all day long at home. So, the reasonable
12 accommodation program has been very, very helpful with that, that's
13 OCHCO's program.

14 And monitors, many folks we found that were looking at their
15 laptop screen and working on large documents so they needed to project onto
16 a larger monitor.

17 So, OCIO really did a fabulous job in sending out monitors
18 to folks to help with eyesight and those types of things to accommodate.

19 But from what I've heard and from what I understand, any
20 accommodations that have been requested have been fulfilled, and OCHCO
21 has been working wonderfully to make sure that that happens.

1 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Okay, great, that's great news.
2 Thank you, Vonna, it's good to hear that we've been able to kind of make sure
3 that everybody stays as kind of part of the family and is able to participate.

4 MS. ORDAZ: Absolutely.

5 CHAIRMAN HANSON: So yes, really glad to hear that.
6 All right with that, I'll turn it over to my colleague, Commissioner Baran.

7 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Well, thanks. Thank you all
8 for your presentations and the work you're doing. It's really very impressive.
9 And the amazing thing is I feel like it's -- gets more impressive every six
10 months, which isn't easy to accomplish.

11 As the Chairman alluded to, on January 20, shortly after he
12 was sworn in, President Biden issued an executive order on advancing racial
13 equity. This rescinded the previous administration's executive order that
14 severely restricted diversity and inclusion training and events at federal
15 agencies. In my view, this is great news for the Agency and our workforce.

1 The NRC diversity and inclusion events are extremely
2 valuable. And I think it's important that we're able to talk about institutional
3 racism, work to understand that some of us have had privileges in life that
4 others may not have had, and try to see the world from someone else's
5 vantage point. That's a healthy dialogue that should bring us together, not
6 divide us.

7 Diversity and inclusion programs and conversations have
8 never been more vital. They go to the heart of our agency's effectiveness
9 and the health of our workplace. We can only achieve our public health
10 mission if we're able to work together as a team, value in our diversity and
11 different life experiences.

12 Margie and Vonna, are we moving at full speed to relaunch
13 our diversity and inclusion programs and making it clear that those programs
14 have the full support of Agency leadership?

15 MS. DOANE: Okay, thank you for that question,
16 Commissioner Baran. So let me start and then maybe Vonna wants to add
17 anything if I don't hit all the work that we're doing.

18 So the short answer is yes, we are working at full speed.
19 So we lifted the suspension that we had on these programs, the diversity and
20 inclusion training programs and other things that had been put on hold, as you
21 remember, in the fall. So we've lifted that suspension.

1 We did a quick communication out through -- I did a quick
2 communication out to the staff through my EDO Note, my update that we do
3 every Thursday. But we need to do more in communications. So we're
4 working on the additional communication.

5 So when we lifted the suspension, we've also made sure
6 that we were not keeping the Agency from going forward on training, you
7 know, really being proactive to make sure we were doing the training, including
8 lunchtime seminars and making sure that we had full and open discussions.
9 Like you said, you know, just not having any kind of constraints on the
10 meetings anymore.

11 So, and then but more is necessary because we, like I said,
12 I think we need to just be really intentional about all that the program includes
13 and all of the diversity that we want to have and the open discussions. You
14 know, the dialogue, not -- in addition to just the training. So I think, you know,
15 more needs to be done so that we continue to give that message.

16 So Vonna, I didn't know if you wanted to add to that.

1 MS. ORDAZ: Sure. Agree with everything Margie
2 mentioned. We've very excited. You know, there was a temporary
3 suspension on all diversity training and activities, and now that that has lifted,
4 we are, as Margie mentioned, turning everything on. We're excited to be
5 issuing this new IDSP here later this month with a new policy statement signed
6 by Chairman Hanson.

7 Turning iCARE back on is going to be huge. We had a lot
8 of momentum, a lot of energy on that after the issues of social unrest earlier
9 this year.

10 And we had so much energy and positivity of dialogue and
11 discussions that when it had to, you know, temporarily suspend in light of that
12 other order. We -- we're trying not to lose momentum on the topic and still
13 try to promote the diversity and inclusive environment that we all know so well
14 here.

15 So we also are reestablishing contracts with the dialogue
16 cohorts. One of our contracts had ended, and so we're looking to -- we have
17 that underway as we speak. So a lot of great things, and wonderful work by
18 the committees for the lunchtime session. So that energy is still moving
19 forward. Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Great. Well, that's wonderful
2 to hear. It's -- there's always been so much energy there, and I don't want to
3 see us lose momentum. So that's terrific.

4 The January 20 executive order and a subsequent
5 executive order on tackling climate change also have a strong equity and
6 environmental justice focus. The January 20 executive order lays out a
7 process for agencies to assess their programs and policies to determine
8 whether they advance equity and are accessible to underserved communities.

9 Similarly, the climate crisis executive order instructs federal
10 agencies to make achieving environmental justice part of their missions by
11 developing programs, policies, and activities to address disproportionate
12 adverse impacts on disadvantaged communities.

13 I see these executive orders as an opportunity for NRC to
14 take a hard look at our programs and procedures to see if they are serving
15 disadvantages communities, or instead creating barriers for them to
16 overcome. My sense is that in licensing and siting decisions, environmental
17 justice factors have basically only been addressed in one section of an
18 environmental impact statement.

1 I don't believe they have any meaningful impact on the
2 Agency's ultimate decision. I think we need to ask ourselves whether that
3 should change, and if so, how.

4 Our adjudicatory procedures have been called strict by
5 design. Is that another way of saying that the Agency has intentionally made
6 it very hard for interested stakeholders, including disadvantaged communities,
7 to overcome all the barriers that have been placed in front of them before they
8 can have their concerns addressed in the hearing?

9 Has the Agency created a set of rules that effectively
10 excludes the voices of communities that lack the resources or the legal or
11 technical expertise to surmount a series of complex procedural hurdles?

12 Or the 2.206 petition seeking Agency enforcement action.
13 Is that system really set up to advance equity and make it easy for
14 disadvantaged communities to raise concerns and seek Agency action?

15 There are probably a lot of other questions we could be
16 asking about the way the Agency has traditionally operated if we're viewing
17 our historic practices through the lens of environmental justice.

18 Margie and Vonna, are we starting to ask tough questions
19 like these? Do you have thoughts about how the Agency should respond to
20 the President's call to action on equity and environmental justice?

1 MS. DOANE: So the questions that you've raised are kind
2 of broad, so let me start out by saying that environmental justice at the -- and
3 I know you know this, so I just want to make sure that it's well understood to
4 put my comments into context.

5 So the environmental justice program at the NRC is focused
6 on our implementation of the -- of NEPA, of the National Environmental Policy
7 Act. And so that's why you see a focus on -- you see a lot of discussion in
8 those licensing actions and things like that.

9 The -- I would tell you that the one thing that I would make
10 clear is that the staff that's implementing those provisions are very dedicated
11 to working with communities that are identified and ensuring that we do
12 understand the impacts and that our documents reflect the impacts as they
13 specifically affect the communities that are covered by environmental justice.

14 And so I would tell you that it does make a difference
15 because it does further the Agency's decisionmaking. And while it might not
16 look like there's a lot of discussion, there's a lot of scoping, a lot of making
17 sure that those communities have a voice, and all kinds of different things that
18 go on.

1 I think you're -- if you're raising the question of but does this
2 really affect our decisions, I think that it has in the past, the very distant past
3 when this was first being developed in, I know, I'm sure you know that it was
4 in Louisiana Energy Services. These issues came up about environmental
5 justice. And the Commission did address these issues and things -- and
6 decisions were made with respect to impacts.

7 But I think that from the policy statement, we then got better.
8 And so I think that we do make sure that we look at the impacts on these
9 communities and we look at them specifically. As opposed to like looking at
10 the whole and trying to judge, like, you know, from the community seat, what's
11 the impact. That doesn't really get to what are the impacts of an individual
12 community. So we do have a focus on that, and it's an important aspect to
13 our decisionmaking.

1 But the equative provisions that you're talking about, you're
2 -- those are really different. Those are far beyond, or go beyond what we do
3 in implementing the National Environmental Policy Act. They can affect any
4 process that we have. And we do have attention on our processes. And
5 importantly, one of the things that we've been doing is we have a -- we have
6 a program on limited English proficiency.

7 And we have a plan. And this process is to make sure that
8 any communities that have difficulty getting access to our programs or
9 meetings or licensing actions -- but it really goes below licensing actions.
10 Doesn't have to be that significant, it's really access to anything that the NRC
11 does in individual programs. So it includes small, the small business work
12 that we do.

13 And this program really reaches out to these communities,
14 and we've -- in a way that makes sure that any barriers to access are
15 eliminated. And this is really important so that we can hear from these
16 communities and we can take those views into consideration, and then we can
17 act on them.

18 So for example, you might know that in the consolidated
19 interim storage facility proceeding -- now, this is a NEPA -- this is a NEPA
20 review. But I this is -- I just wanted to give you a recent example. We
21 translated the documents into both Spanish and Navajo so that there would
22 be effective access to the meetings. We've also reached out to communities
23 on how to best allow them to participate.

1 And this is not unusual. We will go to communities and say,
2 you know, do people have access to technology. If they don't, like for
3 example one thing that we're trying to do with an upcoming meeting is maybe
4 to put it over a radio, do a radio broadcast, since maybe they don't have
5 access to technology. So that's an example.

6 And then you heard with Small Business and maybe
7 Anthony or Vonna would like to -- and I don't know, Commissioner, I don't want
8 to take up all your time.

9 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Well, thanks, no, Margie, I
10 really appreciate that. And with all the passion everyone has for diversity and
11 inclusion, it doesn't surprise me at all that you all are already starting to think
12 about this, that you already have some programs in place. I think that's
13 terrific.

14 I just think I kind of want to challenge us to think a little bit
15 broadly and ask ourselves are there changes that should be made or we want
16 to think about making or evaluate, you know, in a thorough way.

1 Ultimately, I think there are some tough questions here that
2 the Commission itself will need to confront and grapple with. We'll need to
3 figure out what kind of systematic review makes sense and how we're going
4 to achieve tangible results in the areas of equity and environmental justice.

5 And I'm a little over on time, but before I turn it over to
6 Commissioner Caputo, I just -- I want to mention I appreciate that Chairman
7 Hanson mentioned the progress the Agency is making on increasing the
8 diversity of the SES CDP cohorts. I share his commitment to making further
9 progress there.

10 I want to take a moment to highlight something I think we
11 know, but it is worth highlighting. Which is we still have a lot of work to do
12 there. We have a great group of talented SESers. But women of color
13 remain significantly under-represented in this key group of senior managers.
14 Out of 109 individuals in SES positions at NRC, only seven are women of
15 color. That includes just one African American woman and one Latina.

16 I know we can do better, and I want to see us do better in
17 the future with future SES CDP classes and SES hires. Thanks.

18 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you, Commissioner Baran.
19 Commissioner Caputo.

1 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Good morning. As always,
2 I'd like to thank the staff for all of their work in putting together this meeting.
3 It's very exciting to hear about what we're -- what the Agency's doing on these
4 topics and really shape the times.

5 I want to congratulate the Small Business folks for achieving
6 their A+ on their small business scorecard and for the outstanding HUBZone
7 performance. Outstanding and well done.

8 I also want to add my comments to Chairman Hanson and
9 Commissioner Baran. I too am impressed with the activity and the level of
10 enthusiasm with regard to diversity and inclusion. But I have to admit, in
11 preparing for today's meeting, I brought up the NRC's internal website to sort
12 of find the spot where all of these programs are sort of brought together and
13 included sort of one location where all of our activities are highlighted, and I
14 didn't find it.

15 I looked on the external website to see how much we are
16 raising awareness for external stakeholders about the level of activity that we
17 have on these issues and didn't really see it there either. If you really search
18 and you find the Office of SB -- SBCR, you can find some of our activities.

1 But I guess I would like to just challenge the staff to think
2 about some way in which we can raise awareness by highlighting everything
3 we're doing in one location. Because I think particularly on our external-
4 facing website, you know, it really -- you really wouldn't look at the NRC
5 homepage and say that the Agency is really focused on diversity and
6 inclusion.

7 And I think we need to do something to raise that awareness
8 and really make sure that people understand how dedicated our employees
9 are and active on these issues and all the actions that the Agency's taking.
10 So now granted, some of these maybe are not necessarily as important for an
11 external-facing website. But I do think we need to do some work there in
12 terms of raising awareness.

13 Vonna, I'll turn my first question to you. In our last meeting
14 on EEO, December 17, 2019, a Commission briefing on EEO affirmative
15 employment and Small Business, I asked about the inclusive diversity
16 strategic plan. And in particular I was hoping to hear about we're moving
17 beyond planning and onto achieving results.

18 MS. ORDAZ: Absolutely.

1 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Focusing on data-driven
2 approaches. You asked me to pose this question again next year. So it's
3 been a long year given the pandemic, but here we are. I know Margie noted
4 that the plan isn't quite finalized. You mentioned that it would be done later
5 this month. So considering it's about -- the plan is about to be finished, when
6 do you think we'll start to see beneficial outcomes from the plan?

7 MS. ORDAZ: Absolutely. Thank you again, another great
8 question this year. And first, I just wanted to mention, I really appreciate your
9 feedback on the website. We're just bringing in a rotation to help us with that.
10 Somebody from NSIR is coming in to join us, as well as we have a posting for
11 a vacant position that we changed to a program assistant in our office.

12 So we're hoping with those two additions to our
13 organization, that will help us. One of the things we need to do is more of the
14 communication, I agree, and highlight all the great work that's being done.

15 So with regards to the IDSP, I did want to make sure you're
16 aware that we have been operating under the 2016 government-wide and our
17 Agency-specific IDSP. And we've been reporting on these activities annually
18 through the FEORP Report to OPM.

1 So we did recognize that we needed to create better
2 efficiencies, better employee engagement, and organizational transformation.
3 Therefore, we drafted this 2021-2016 IDSP that's expected to be issued, as
4 we said earlier, later this month.

5 So this is a document that we've worked very closely with
6 offices, regions, OEDO, OGC, OCHCO, the DMIC, the DMAC, and we are
7 very proud of this document. It will also have a commitment from Chairman
8 Hanson in it that he has -- that we'll be signing shortly.

9 So with that, when are we going to see results? So we
10 have been seeing some results. We've seen results on diversity and
11 inclusion over the year somewhat in some of our workforce representation.
12 Not significantly, of course, but we have some things that we have been
13 seeing there.

14 We are examining quantitative measurable data through --
15 such as the federal statistical workforce tables with data regarding NRC's
16 workforce. Employees assigned to major occupations, positions, grade level
17 distribution, external hires, etc. So we do have some quantitative
18 measurable data that we have.

1 We also compare the NRC's workforce tables to the
2 National Civilian Labor Force percentages and also the government-wide
3 findings to determine representative of women, minorities, and individuals with
4 disabilities. So this is all part of -- that will be in that inclusive diversity
5 strategic plan to help broaden our scope at the Agency.

6 And further, we do review and examine qualitative data,
7 such as employee separation interviews and negative reasons, any negative
8 reasons that come out of that related to EEO and try to identify possible trends
9 from that information.

10 We examine recruitment data, including applicant flow data,
11 recruitment under special hiring authorities to determine whether or not
12 recruitment's drawn from all segments of society and exercise fairness in that
13 area.

14 And also we review FEVS results associated with diversity
15 and inclusion and our employee engagement scores. You may hear of the
16 term FOCSE. That ties back to the letters fairness, openness,
17 cooperativeness, etc. And this ties back to questions that come out of FEVS
18 that relate to our engagement as an agency. So we look at that and we can
19 trend that over time.

1 So we have been doing all of these activities. What's
2 different about this new IDSP will really bring it to the next level in how it
3 matches against the Agency's mission and what we need to accomplish. So
4 we're very excited about it and look to communicate even more about that in
5 here shortly later this month. Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Okay, thanks. When you
7 were, during your presentation when you were mentioning the IDSP, you then
8 shifted to discussing the disability affirmative action plan. So I have a bit of a
9 question there. Obviously, persons with disabilities are going to have innate
10 needs. We have particular compliance requirements for them.

11 But we don't exclude them from the diversity strategic plan,
12 right? Because to me, inclusiveness means to be inclusive, and they are
13 people like anyone else. And to me, that belongs in including them in our
14 diversity programs instead of just relegating them to a separate group. Are
15 they included? Oh, Vonna, you're on mute.

16 MS. ORDAZ: Absolutely. We also put a focus on it, and
17 one of the reports we send downtown is on the affirmative action plan. So
18 that's why you see it in a separate report. But it's fully encompassed and fully
19 part of our inclusive diversity strategic plan, yes.

1 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Okay, all right. And then
2 one more last question on as part of transformation, I know we had a recent
3 rollout of the employee journey tool. When it comes to improving diversity,
4 you know, there are several aspects to it, attracting, recruiting, and retaining.

5 Do you see this employee journey tool as being helpful in
6 retaining and developing our diverse staff members by helping them chart a
7 career path and achieve their goals?

8 MS. ORDAZ: Absolutely, yes. This employee journey
9 platform, it provides employees an opportunity to explore career paths at the
10 Agency. As you may know, the goals are to improve workforce engagement
11 and talent retention, improve employee career planning capabilities, and align
12 employee expectations with Agency needs, and improve employee
13 understanding of requirements for various positions.

14 So this will so -- be so very helpful to all of us, especially
15 those like myself and others that do the mentoring. It's a great place to help
16 people go to to look at their paths for the future. And I think it will go a far
17 way in helping us with retention in this area with minorities, women and
18 minorities.

1 MS. DOANE: And Commissioner, would it be okay if I add?
2 I don't know how your time. Oh, okay. I would just add that I think -- that's,
3 Vonna. I would add to that the -- this came out of the Jam, where employees
4 were saying that, you know, for mid-level and employees that had a longer
5 future at the NRC, that they felt like they were stuck.

6 And especially after Project AIM and other -- because they
7 had felt like there weren't promotional opportunities and all kinds of different
8 things.

9 And what we know is that the effects on the larger
10 community have even an additional impact on communities that are
11 disadvantaged for other reasons. And so you really have to make sure that
12 you're concentrating on minority and other communities that feel like they're
13 already disadvantaged or that where you have these programs. You really
14 have to focus on that intentionally when you're looking at retention and
15 recruitment.

16 And so this program is for everyone, but we also made sure
17 that we were listening to our community groups. And I met with every
18 advisory committee and affinity group to hear all about these different issues
19 and how we could -- why this site was important.

1 And one of the things that it does is it levels the playing field.
2 It lets anyone come in and see how to improve their skills so that, you know,
3 it's not just -- there's no feeling of favoritism or something like that. Like who
4 has access to this information. We want it to be really transparent and open
5 to everyone.

6 We've also tried to identify jobs that we've heard are things
7 that people are interested, but we also use strategic workforce planning to
8 identify the skills that we need in the future. And then we're trying to highlight
9 those jobs.

10 So this is a -- this is, you know, the start, and we'll add other
11 jobs, other competency models as we go along. But so it was very intentional
12 to focus on all these, but specifically groups that felt like maybe the playing
13 field wasn't level.

14 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: All right, I'll just -- with the
15 indulgence of my colleagues, I'll just wrap up by saying Vonna, I really want
16 to thank you for all of your effort. I guess you've been in this position -- my
17 recollection is more than a year, less than two.

1 There's a lot that's gone on in that time, so thank you for
2 your leadership and the hard work of your staff. It's clearly -- the results of all
3 these activities and the progress that's been made is a testament to all of their
4 hard work. And I just want to take a moment to give you a special thank you.

5 MS. ORDAZ: Thank you, Commissioner. I appreciate all
6 the staff that supports to make this happen, so thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you, Commissioner Caputo.
8 Commissioner Wright.

9 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
10 thank you so much. And good morning to everyone. I want to echo the
11 comments of my colleagues, too, in thanking you for your presentations today
12 this morning. Everything that each of you highlighted, it really shows how
13 much is going on. I mean, there's a lot happening.

14 So, thank you for your efforts in this area and every effort as
15 we're trying to reach these important goals as well.

1 Vonna, I -- being last, there's not a lot of questions still to
2 ask, but I do have a couple. Again, to echo Commissioner Caputo, thank you
3 for what you do and what your office does, because you all do a lot. In the
4 background materials today, I noticed that there was an event that was held
5 last February where SBCR had supported a symposium hosted by the League
6 of United Latin American Citizens.

7 And it was for students and others who were interested in a
8 career in federal government. So I've got two questions about it. One, how
9 did it go, and are there plans to hold or join that event again this year. Then,
10 as a followup -- I forgot to say that was held in Bethesda right before everything
11 fell apart and we went virtual.

12 So with more events like that being held virtual, have you
13 looked into other areas of the country or events that are hosted by others that
14 maybe we could join or participate in, rather than just doing them in the
15 Bethesda area or Rockville area?

16 MS. ORDAZ: Thank you, Commissioner, for that question.
17 And my understanding of that event is that it went very well. We're looking at
18 other ways now that we've been in this virtual environment for some time to
19 outreach not just with what we do with diversity and inclusion, but also in our
20 small business program.

1 So, you'll hear -- well, Tony already shared with you some
2 of the information with you on some of the things we're doing. We have a
3 virtual small business event coming up here in the next week, and looking
4 forward to that. But doing things that we used to do in person now virtually is
5 a lot of extra work, because we have to go find them and figure out how to do
6 it.

7 So, we're really growing in that area and we'll continue to
8 look for great events, such as the one you highlighted, to participate in.

9 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you for that. I'll follow
10 up with another question, too, and if the others want to jump in, they can. So
11 I like the idea of Lunch and Learns and all the training and stuff you're doing
12 and the outreach on things like that.

13 How are you measuring the success of these trainings and
14 measuring the effectiveness of it? Do we benchmark against other agencies
15 or, in terms of how they measure success, or how successful their efforts have
16 been? Or how do you -- how do you go about that, what do you do?

17 MS. ORDAZ: Well, it's interesting, and Minh-Thuy
18 highlighted it also, that we have had, now that we're in this virtual environment,
19 we have had an extraordinary amount of participation, attendance, from
20 regions, from the offices, ones that may not have attended in the past. We
21 have really, really expanded in that area.

1 But in terms of measuring success, further attendance, we
2 can look at FEVS scores. We know the recent FEVS scores will be in here.
3 We should receive them shortly. So that would also give us a measure of
4 success in some of the things that we're doing in outreaching to the staff and
5 ensuring that employees are satisfied.

6 We also are advertising, many of the regions are doing an
7 incredible job of having a lot of their own activities and self-sponsoring many
8 things through their DMACs. And advertising that to the rest of the Agency
9 to help ensure everybody has the opportunity to participate and to learn.
10 There's an event going on in Region II, they have a three-part series going on
11 in light of African American History Month.

12 So it's been rewarding to see the more of the inclusion
13 across all these groups. The summit that was held last year was also a huge
14 event that was a two-day summit that was really fully involved with all of the
15 committees.

1 Many of the managers, the executive sponsors for these
2 committees are very into participating with the committees to help give them
3 ideas or thoughts, bounce things off of them. So they're also bringing in some
4 of their own ideas to help further inclusion in some of these events.

5 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you.

6 MS. DOANE: Commissioner, I think you might be on mute.

7 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I put it on mute so nobody
8 would get feedback. And it was mine. So I want to go onto Cherie and
9 maybe to Minh-Thuy too the -- maybe they can comment on this. And Cherie,
10 thank you so much for highlighting the events and everything that are going
11 on, which bring inclusivity to our offices.

12 I am curious about your thoughts on how the other work
13 done by the Agency plays into these programs. For example, I know in the
14 past, a lot of the Agency participated in Speed of Trust exercises and has
15 encouraged leadership training at all levels. Do you think that that's improved
16 participation and engagement from employees in events like this and made
17 people feel more welcome?

1 MS. CRISDEN: Thank you for your question. I would say
2 -- I would say yes. Kind of touch on a little bit of what Vonna said was being
3 in a virtual environment, I think people have more of an opportunity to
4 participate in Region II events and other, in Region IV events, and also in
5 Headquarters events.

6 And I think having the Speed of Trust session that we had
7 in Region I, I think people do feel more comfortable, and I do hear that people
8 using the terms, the acronyms from Speed of Trust. And I think they feel
9 more comfortable jumping on different events and that's not just in Region I.

10 So I think that it has played a part, and I think that people
11 are open and more comfortable into participating.

12 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Okay. So and Minh-Thuy,
13 do you have anything to say to add to that or anything? I'm on back on mute
14 -- no, I'm not. I wanted to follow up I guess with this, because you all have
15 been very successful. And you said there's been a lot of participation in this,
16 right. And it's at the highest levels maybe that we've had because virtual
17 allows that to happen.

18 But that doesn't mean everybody's participating, right?
19 That's still one -- even though we've got high levels, there's others that aren't
20 participating.

1 Are there -- is there anything else that you might think that
2 could help improve even a higher participation in these events and these
3 opportunities that you have and might encourage those people who've never
4 taken part in this stuff to maybe do so? Is there anything that we can do, or
5 how do we get there?

6 MS. ORDAZ: Absolutely. The best way I leverage that is
7 giving them a role. If they have a role in it, then they're going to do something
8 and present. And you know, it's a little bit of competition out there sometimes.
9 People like to make sure they're all contributing, so sometimes you'll see some
10 regions or offices doing one activity and others want to jump in and do it as
11 well. So that's another thought.

12 We've also reached out to the EEO Commission. They've
13 deemed this, the programs that we have, as a model EEO employer and
14 things that we do in diversity and inclusion as well. So we often periodically
15 reach out to see if there's other ideas.

16 I'm engaged in various committees downtown, whether it be
17 the EEO directors' meetings or the -- there's an EEO Diversity and Inclusion
18 Committee. And different ideas get fleshed out there. So we're constantly
19 looking to see if there's something else that we can do to broaden our
20 participation and interest in these activities.

1 MS. DOANE: Yeah, and Commissioner, if I could add. I
2 just wanted to say that, again, when I met with the committees, they did talk
3 to me about how participation had somewhat decreased because the Agency
4 was so busy. You know, we had less staff and also through different things
5 going on with transformation, we had built a lot of teams for the seven
6 initiatives. We had seven teams.

7 And so they were talking about that there wasn't as much
8 participation, exactly what you're talking about. And so we thought of some
9 things.

10 Now, first of all, those teams have -- I'll say they have
11 sunset, but that's a funny way of saying it. We completed those initiatives to
12 build the infrastructure, and so they're still change agents. But we don't have
13 the initiative teams going on.

14 So one thing that they've asked me to do is just to make
15 sure that I was, in my conversations with staff, just encouraging people to join
16 the committees. They also, I think if you saw the video, I think you saw where
17 they highlighted how to participate, so that's a second thing.

1 And then also for us to make sure that senior leaders are
2 attending these activities as well and encourage our staff. And Vonna is so
3 great about getting out the messages to us, to the senior leaders, and then we
4 go out to our staff. And so that was a really good issue that the committees
5 brought to us.

6 And there's another issue just really quickly they brought is
7 that, you know, we don't want the affinity groups to only do things that are
8 large initiatives for the Agency that are also important, like the leadership
9 model and things like that that are very important to diversity and inclusion.
10 But they aren't necessarily about that community.

11 And so they wanted to make sure that this year be the
12 groups really highlighted their communities really specifically. So those are
13 some things. So we were discussing this very thing. I just thought I'd
14 comment on that.

15 MS. ORDAZ: The other quick item, Margie, I did want to
16 mention, which was the commitment that each of you have when you come to
17 these events, that is so important. The Commission commitment, Margie's
18 commitment, having your time and investment, that means a lot. And they
19 see that, they enjoy that, and they know that you care. So thank you for the
20 various presentations you all do at our events.

1 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Well, thank you for that,
2 Vonna. To follow up on Commissioner Hanson's comment earlier, he's just
3 now starting to participate in some of these things. And I've had the
4 opportunity to do it now for multiple events over the last almost three years.
5 And they're very rewarding, okay in a number of ways. And you get to share,
6 which I think's great.

7 Even, you know, October, I think you all had the wear pink
8 for breast cancer and breast cancer awareness. So as a shameless plug, I'll
9 tell you next month is colon cancer awareness month. So I'm going to
10 encourage everybody to wear blue and to get screened. So thank you so
11 much, I'm going to turn it back to you, Mr. Chair.

12 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you, Commissioner Wright.
13 That wasn't shameless at all, I think that was entirely appropriate. I
14 appreciated it, so. And thank you all to my colleagues certainly for I think a
15 really great discussion and really good lines of questioning.

16 So with that, I will turn it over to Ms. Sheryl Sanchez from
17 the National Treasury Employees Union. Sheryl?

18 MS. SANCHEZ: Good morning. Can you all hear me
19 well?

1 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Yes, ma'am.

2 MS. SANCHEZ: So, okay, so I'm going to start, and this is
3 not on script, I'm going to start by telling Chairman Hanson and anybody else
4 that cares about it, if you really all want to know what's going on, talk to the
5 union. We see the good, the bad, and the ugly.

6 And now I will go on script since I was up past midnight
7 writing this. So good morning, Chairman Hanson; Commissioners Baran,
8 Caputo, Wright; EDO Doane; managers and staff; and most importantly, NRC
9 bargaining unit employees. I'm Sheryl Sanchez, President of NTEU Chapter
10 208, and I'm pleased to be able to provide the union's comments this morning.

11 NTEU Chapter 208 is the exclusive representative of
12 bargaining unit employees here at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. I am
13 joined virtually by a large number of NTEU team members, who work hard
14 every day on behalf of our bargaining unit employees, such as our stewards,
15 labor partners, and executive board members.

16 Without such a dedicated team, NTEU would not be able to
17 strive to achieve our mission to work together to ensure that every NRC
18 employee is treated with dignity and respect.

1 In looking at slide number 6, the one which addresses
2 equality, equity, and fairness, I am reminded of an old cartoon where three
3 people of varying heights are standing behind a fence, trying to get a view of
4 a baseball game. The tallest can see over the fence, while the other two
5 cannot.

6 Equality, which is treating everyone the same, would give
7 each one the same size box to stand on. But in this case, the tallest, who
8 could already see the game, is just taller. The next tallest can now see the
9 game, but the shortest still cannot see over the fence.

10 This may be equal, but it is not equitable. Equity is taking
11 away the box from the tallest and stacking it on top of the box of the shortest.
12 So now all three can get a good view of the game. Equity then is giving
13 people what they need to reach an equal outcome. But what would be
14 fairness or justice in this case? We'll come back to this.

1 Fairness is defined as impartial and just treatment or
2 behavior without favoritism or discrimination. Achieving justice is not easy.
3 We are inclined to try to fix a broken or unjust system or practice, but this is
4 not likely to work. Broken or unjust systems are rarely salvageable. In order
5 to achieve true justice, you have to build a system that has never existed
6 before.

7 This requires the willingness to be open to radical change
8 because it may require completely dismantling an oppressive system that is
9 in fact working exactly as designed. I know this is hard to hear. But moving
10 from equity to fairness requires awareness, open-mindedness, and the
11 courage to change.

12 Inequity is designed, it is not accidental. The coronavirus
13 has killed over three Black Americans for every one White American, a
14 disparity that goes back to redlining, which is an illegal discriminatory practice
15 in which a mortgage lender denies loans or an insurance provider restricts
16 services to certain areas of a community, often because of the racial
17 characteristics of the applicant's neighborhood. Or the exclusion of Black
18 Americans from the GI Bill.

19 There's nothing accidental about today's inequity. It is a
20 reflection of intentional systems of repression established in the past that
21 continue today. How do you think we are doing at the NRC, and where do
22 you think we are on this spectrum? I would suggest that we pretty much have
23 equality down.

1 Typically, all employees have access to the same
2 information and opportunities. However, some make better use of the
3 information and opportunities than others. This may or may not be due to a
4 lack of equity.

5 We are spotty with equity, but not necessarily devoid of it.
6 We have special programs to recruit and hire disabled employees. We reach
7 out to historically Black colleges and colleges with other diverse
8 demographics. We have a fairly robust reasonable accommodation program,
9 mentoring programs to match younger employees with already established
10 leaders to help them navigate their career and benefit from the experience of
11 the mentor.

12 I honestly believe the NRC wants to be an equitable agency.
13 But where the rubber meets the road, the system favors inertia. And this may
14 be an example of where we have to dismantle the existing system as opposed
15 to fixing a broken one. I'm certain the Agency wants to do this, but it's
16 struggling with how. We have made much progress, but we're not there yet.

1 I think we have the potential to get there, but unless we are
2 willing to ask the difficult questions and accept the honest answers, we will not
3 get there. One of the most important roles of the union is to level the playing
4 field, and we welcome the opportunity to work with the Agency to make the
5 NRC a more equitable agency.

6 We cannot avoid tough but important issues simply because
7 they are unpleasant to address. We must find wise and equitable ways of
8 addressing controversial issues and the balance between discrimination and
9 reverse discrimination. But we can get there. It is possible, and I sincerely
10 hope to see this in my remaining years at the NRC.

11 Fairness or justice is much more difficult. Justice would
12 take equity one step further and fix the system in a way that leads to longterm,
13 sustainable, equitable access for all generations to come. This sounds very
14 hard because it is. Most people eventually just accept that life isn't fair, and
15 nobody ever told them it is. But this doesn't mean that we shouldn't strive for
16 fairness and justice.

17 NTEU does sometimes have the privilege to help
18 employees get justice when it has been denied to them. But this is only after
19 the unfair treatment has occurred, and it is always more difficult than it should
20 be. But it is always worth the fight.

1 So what would justice in the example of the three people we
2 discussed before trying to get a view of the baseball game, what would that
3 look like? Well, that depends on who you ask. Some think letting them all
4 inside the fence. Some think there should be restitution for all the years
5 behind the fence and they should be given the most favored seats in the
6 stadium. But all agree that equity is not enough.

7 We at the NRC have to consider what fairness and justice
8 would look like and how we can become an agency that is more fair and just.
9 We acknowledge that we may never get there, but that shouldn't stop us from
10 trying like hell.

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you very much, Ms.
13 Sanchez, for your remarks.

14 And with that, I want to thank my colleagues, and I
15 particularly want to thank the staff for their presentations today and for this
16 great discussion. We, I think all of us learned a lot. And I look forward to
17 doing this again, I believe in June when we're going to have another EEO
18 Commission meeting. So thank you all very much, and we are adjourned.

19 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record
20 at 11:55 a.m.)