

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

BRIEFING ON EEO PROGRAM

PUBLIC MEETING

Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Commission Hearing Room
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland

Thursday, February 20, 1997

The Commission met in open session, pursuant to notice, at 2:06 p.m., the Honorable SHIRLEY A. JACKSON, Chairman of the Commission, presiding.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

- SHIRLEY A. JACKSON, Chairman of the Commission
- KENNETH C. ROGERS, Member of the Commission
- GRETA J. DICUS, Member of the Commission
- EDWARD McGAFFIGAN, JR., Member of the Commission
- NILS J. DIAZ, Member of the Commission

STAFF AND PRESENTERS SEATED AT THE COMMISSION TABLE:

- JOHN C. HOYLE, Secretary of the Commission
- KAREN D. CYR, General Counsel
- ROXANNE SUMMERS, FWPAC & Managing Diversity Subcommittee
- LAWRENCE VICK, Performance Monitoring Subcommittee
- IRENE LITTLE, SBCR
- PATRICIA NORRY, DEDO
- PAUL BIRD, OP
- SUBINOY MAZUMDAR, Selection Subcommittee
- SUDHAMAY BASU, APAAC
- REGINALD MITCHELL, ACAA
- JOSE IBARRA, HEPAC
- JACOB PHILIP, AAAC
- MICHAEL WEBER, JLMBOC
- SHARON CONNELLY, CAD
- PETER BLOCH, Managing Diversity Subcommittee
- JAMES THOMAS, NTEU

P R O C E E D I N G S

[2:06 p.m.]

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Well, good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Today, the Commission is meeting to discuss the status of NRC's Equal Employment Opportunity Program for fiscal year 1996.

The Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, as amended, requires the executive director for Operations to report to the Commission at semiannual public meetings on the status of any problems and progress associated with EEO efforts.

The last EEO briefing was held on July 31, 1996. Today's briefing will include highlights of the NRC's EEO program, a report on the progress of the Performance

Monitoring, Selection, and Managing Diversity Subcommittees of the EEO advisory committees, and a discussion of various EEO issues.

I welcome the presenters and all employees in the audience. Your attendance demonstrates your interest in and commitment to the NRC EEO program. In fact, I must say, this is probably the best-attended Commission meeting from an employee point of view. So we are glad you are here.

Before the Staff begins its presentation, I would like to share the following thoughts. This is our first EEO briefing with our new deputy executive director for Management Services and our new director of the Office of

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Small Business and Civil Rights.

I understand that along with the Office of Personnel, they are continuing the spirit of cooperative dialogue with the advisory committees and subcommittees in developing strategies for addressing EEO concerns at the NRC.

As we face this period of government-wide streamlining, performance orientation, and budget constraints, we are then challenges to enhance opportunities, nonetheless, for the development and advancement of employees at all grade levels, regardless of race, gender, national origin, age or disability.

As we together step up to that challenge, I commend the Staff, the EEO advisory committees, and their subcommittees for their dedication, and I look forward to hearing about the improvements the NRC is making in the EEO area so that all employees can demonstrate their unique skills and talents in the fulfillment of the agency's mission, and where we continue to have challenges, how we are stepping up to meet those challenges.

If my fellow Commissioners have no comments at this point, Ms. Norry, please proceed.

MS. NORRY: Thank you, Chairman Jackson, Commissioner Rogers, Commissioner Diaz, Commissioner McGaffigan.

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Joining me for today's briefing on the status of the agency EEO program are Paul Bird, director of the Office of Personnel, and Irene Little, director of the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights.

Ms. Little will now introduce to you the representatives of the EEO advisory committees who are with us today.

MS. LITTLE: Thank you, Ms. Norry.

To my far left, we have Roxanne Summers, chair of the Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee and representing the Diversity Subcommittee.

To my immediate left is Mr. Lawrence Vick, representing the Performance Monitoring Subcommittee.

To Mr. Bird's right is Mr. Subinoy Mazumdar, representing the Selection Subcommittee.

These three representatives will be making statements later in the briefing.

I will also introduce the committee reps that are in the front row, and I would ask that each of you would please stand as your name is called.

From my left, Mr. Sudhamay Basu, chairperson of the Asian-Pacific-American Advisory Subcommittee; Mr. Reginald Mitchell, chairperson of the Advisory Committee for African-Americans; Mr. Jose Ibarra, chair of the Hispanic Employment Program Advisory Committee; Mr. Jacob Philip,

chair, Affirmative Action Advisory Committee; Mr. Michael Weber, chair, Joint Labor-Management EEO Committee; Ms. Sharon Connelly, chair, Committee on Age Discrimination; and Mr. Peter Block, representing the Subcommittee on Diversity. These committee representatives are available to answer any questions you have regarding their initiatives.

We also have in attendance today Mr. James Thomas, president of the National Treasury Employees Union.

This concludes my introduction. Thank you, Ms. Norry.

MS. NORRY: Thank you, Irene.

We are here to present the semiannual report on the status of equal employment opportunity in the agency. Over the next several months, we plan to conduct a review of the agency's EEO program and, where appropriate, form new strategies for developing opportunities for our employees.

Following the last Commission briefing on the EEO program, the Staff was asked to keep the Commission informed about seven specific items. I would like now to take a minute to address the status of each of those specific items.

The first two were closely related: to establish a more structured procedure to provide feedback to nonselected candidates in personnel selections, and provide personnel specialists and supervisors with training that

will assist them in counseling nonselected candidates on broadening their skills and knowledge so that they may have their potential for future positions enhanced.

In response to this request, the Office of Personnel has designed a two-day training course for supervisors and personnel specialists entitled Effective Management Participation in Merit Staffing. This course provides a more proactive structured procedure for providing feedback to nonselectees. When this course has been completed, participants should have clear understanding of their role and responsibilities in providing constructive feedback to job applicants regarding the ratings they received and how one might improve in those ratings.

We have given the first pilot session of this course in January and got some good feedback which caused the course to be modified. It has been offered again in February, and March, it will be given again. Then, thereafter, it will be on a monthly schedule.

After the March session, we will be ready to formalize this feedback process, and the day this is basically going to work is that Personnel will continue the staged notifications to nonselected applicants that they do now, and at the same time, they are going to notify applicants of the availability of information regarding their scores, the selectees' scores, and most importantly in

respect to this initiative, the opportunity for discussion with the personnel specialist, with the rating panel chair and/or with the selecting official. This discussion will cover specific rating factors, rating criteria, the applicant's application package, and constructive feedback on how to develop one's self into being more competitive for the kinds of the positions that a person may be interested in.

We are very hopeful that this will address the concern about additional feedback being needed for people

who are not successful candidates.

The third item asks that the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights should formally participate on the Executive Resources Board Review Group. That has been done. The director of SBCR is now a member of that group.

The next item requested that the Staff adopt additional measures to enhance the effectiveness of the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, and as we reported in our memorandum of October 2, 1996, we committed that this would be a first item of discussion with the new director of SBCR. That has been done, and Ms. Little will have a statement on her thoughts on that point.

The next item was to provide an opportunity for advisory committees to work with the Office of Personnel and with Small Business and Civil Rights to ensure that any new

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database systems would have pertinent statistical information for their future tracking needs, and what we intend to do is, as part of our development of our human resources information system, we are pursuing the acquisition of some commercial off-the-shelf software that will complement our payroll personnel system.

Since the EEO advisory committees are major stakeholders in this information system, we will ask them to select a representative for the project team that will be identifying and procuring the software.

Item 6 asks that we provide information on the number of women, minority, and total employees currently certified as SES candidates or in the feeder groups for SES or SLS positions.

There are 17 NRC employees currently certified as SES candidates. This includes 12 graduates of the most recent candidate development program, four graduates of earlier candidate programs, and one from the Department of Energy's candidate program. Among these 17 are two Asian males, two white females, one African-American female, and one African-American male.

For the feeder groups, we now have a total of 2,007 employees in the Grade 13 to 15 feeder groups. Ninety-seven of these are minority women, 24 Asian-Pacific-Americans, 18 Hispanics, 65 African-Americans.

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We failed to mention in the text of this reply that there are 76 African-American men, 137 Asian men, 22 Hispanic men, and 3 Native American men.

The final item requests that we provide information on methods that could be used to enhance advancement opportunities for minority women who wish to move into SES/SLS programs. Of course, the avenues that are available to all employees include obtaining the relevant education and training and being given the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of rotational and other opportunities that will put them in a position to be recognized and to be noticed.

We are pursuing some specific methods to help in this initiative, including Office of Small Business and Civil Rights interviewing all Grade 14/15 minority women, to discuss their career goals, to review the current status of the IDP, and to develop an action plan, to help them to develop an action plan, and that office also, along with Personnel, will be canvassing offices in regions for rotational opportunities that might be available.

We will be actively recruiting minority women for FEI and other development programs, and we will be promoting

the consideration of minority women for so-called high-exposure assignments, so that they will have an opportunity to exercise their abilities in ways that might . 11

be observed.

Of course, managers and supervisors should, as appropriate, encourage employees to be proactive in seeking out training opportunities and rotational assignments, and we will continue to publicize these opportunities.

This concludes our response to the seven SRM actions.

Finally, I would like to say that we are encouraged by the spirit of cooperation among the EEO advisory committees, the Office of Personnel, and the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights. We will continue our efforts to foster teamwork and to analyze and cooperatively resolve all the EEO areas of concern.

Our accomplishments so far may be modest, but they reflect, I believe, a continuing improvement and this new spirit of cooperation that we referred to.

Now, at this time, I would like to ask Irene Little to provide some additional comments regarding the program. Irene?

MS. LITTLE: Thank you, Ms. Norry.

Chairman Jackson, Commissioner Rogers, Commissioner Diaz, Commissioner McGaffigan, I am halfway through my second month as director of the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, and I am very pleased to participate in my first briefing on the status of the EEO . 12

program. Of course, I didn't plan it this way, but it is nice to be here to participate.

I have spent a good part of my time so far meeting with several parties, representatives of all of the advisory committees, with the chairperson of the Joint Labor-Management EEO Committee. My goal was to meet with each office director before this briefing. I fell short of that by two office directors, but my plan is to continue that, and to further build on the cooperative spirit and efforts that the advisory committees, the Office of Personnel, and the Small Business and Civil Rights Office have started so far.

Following the EEO Commission briefing in July 1996, the Staff was asked to keep the Commission informed about several aspects of the EEO program, including ways to enhance the effectiveness of the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights.

My assessment of the program, though not complete, is well underway, and I have identified some initial focus areas for my early activities. I plan to continue this cooperative effort that has already been started by the advisory committees, in conjunction with my office and the Office of Personnel.

I will also continue to work with the Office of Personnel and the advisory committees to improve and . 13

simplify the presentation of data at the EEO briefings and data that is used for analysis of issues by the advisory committees and the subcommittees.

I plan to work with the committees and NTEU, as appropriate, to support an informal forum to share information with employees about programs designed to facilitate equal opportunity within the NRC.

The paper for this briefing references six areas of emphasis that the Staff has focused on for the past several years. By our own assessment, we have made varying degrees of process in these areas. One area of special interest to me is improving communication, heightening awareness, and evaluating program progress.

I believe that the critical challenge in this area is always before us. Ongoing effective communication at all levels of the organization is critical to the success of any program. The EEO program in the NRC is no exception. We must continuously work together to improve communications.

The various committees are making contributions to this effort in several ways. The Joint Labor-Management EEO Committee is teaming up with the Office of Personnel to heighten awareness of sexual harassment prevention, a specific effort to highlight the importance of maintaining our workplace free of sexual harassment.

The Joint Labor-Management EEO Committee is also

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seeking out ways to encourage employees to take advantage of the extensive suite of courses offered by the agency to enhance communication skills. I would like to extend this effort to all supervisors as well.

The initiative by the six advisory committees to team up and focus their efforts on three broad issues of general concern to many employees is another effort to communicate effectively.

A third example is the initiative by the Office of Personnel to assist supervisors and panel members in providing responsive feedback to employees who compete under the merit selection process, but are not selected for a specific position.

My plan is to work with these ongoing initiatives, to provide leadership in modifying our current focus areas, and formulate new areas, as appropriate, to work with supervisors and managers to make sure that our recruitment and promotion policies and practices are not creating barriers to equal employment opportunity, and to ensure that management approaches to provide a supportive working environment to facilitate a level playing field for all NRC employees and applicants, and finally, to monitor and evaluate program results.

I look forward to a positive and productive experience in the coming years. This is the end of my

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presentation.

The three subcommittee reps will now each make a presentation. We will start with Ms. Summers, followed by Mr. Vick, and finally, Mr. Mazumbar.

Roxanne?

MS. SUMMERS: Thank you, Irene.

Chairman Jackson, Commissioners, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you today.

The Managing Diversity Subcommittee was created out of the perception and belief that the agency is changing. I think, as Chairman Jackson mentioned, there are a number of ways in which this is changing. For example, our resources are shrinking, but our work has not diminished. I think the tasks that we are called for, are called to face, are still continuing to change. Some of them are different from those tasks that we had a few years ago, and the regulatory challenges also may continue to change. Therefore, I think the skills that the work force have will need to change as well. The skills we have today

will be different in the coming years.

I think this presents us with both an opportunity and a challenge. It is a challenge to be able to predict the need for those skills in the future accurately and, I guess, in time so that we could provide the courses that are necessary in a timely fashion. At the same time, I think it

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will provide an opportunity for us to motivate employees to put forth the effort and the enthusiasm to actually acquire those skills that we will be needing.

So, as a Management Diversity Committee, we feel that our managers will be required to display exceptional managerial talent in the coming years. I think, also, the Commission has recognized this, for example, in the response to the strategic planning options for the decision issue, 19 or 23, I guess, enhancing regulatory effectiveness. The Commission called for measures to engage the work force at the grass roots level and to stimulate management and employee communications and problem-solving.

I am going to make a sort of leap here, but we think that to engage the work force requires managing diversity, which we have defined to mean that each employee must be motivated and encouraged to contribute to his or her maximum potential without regard to the list of things that Chairman Jackson mentioned, including ethnicity, age, gender, background, et cetera.

I think the words "encouraging each employee to reach his or her maximum potential" are very important words, and we wanted to emphasize that by saying we think this means that employees would come to work challenged and prepared to be challenged rather than, perhaps, expecting to be held back or under-utilized in their jobs.

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I think if are going to engage our work force, our managers must be chosen and promoted based on their managerial skills. I think that is very important. They must be able to motivate their staff and communicate a genuine interest in the career potential of their employees.

We think they must be required not only to provide the opportunities, some of these that Ms. Norry and Ms. Little have mentioned already, opportunities to develop by varying work assignments and by encouraging rotations, but we must also motivate the Staff to seize those opportunities. It can't just a pro forma effort.

We know that new skills can be learned. We have an intern program, and for example, training courses and probabalistic risk assessment that show that we can teach new skills when they are needed.

In its research to date, the subcommittee has learned one very important lesson, and that is it is no easy matter to manage diversity, to adapt well to a work force where the managers and the employees do not all come from a similar background. There is no question that that is a difficult task, and it will be particularly difficult for an agency like the NRC to place more importance on the managerial skills than on the technical skills of its executives.

I think it will require just the decision to do

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this, but a real determination to carry this out. Yet, it is a decision that is a business decision, really, that must be made. We cannot excel as an agency if our employees are not encouraged to reach their maximum potential. There are

no extra people on our payroll.

We think every person is a valuable resource in achieving the agency's goals of regulatory excellence, and in addition, we feel that people who feel valued do better work and feel better about working. Members of the subcommittee have, as one of their activities, read this book, which I highly recommend to those who are interested in the challenge presented by Managing Diversity. I am sure that Barbara Williams can obtain a copy, or I will even give you mine, but it really shows you that this is not an easy task, and to do what we have to do, it will require a lot of effort.

When we have completed our research, in addition to this book we are looking at what other agencies are doing and trying to come up with a list of recommendations which we will present at a subsequent briefing, but those will only be recommendations. This decision, this determination to change, can only be made at the highest levels of the agency, and it must be communicated forcefully to all managers and all employees. We can only hope to achieve the goal of regulatory excellence if we pursue managing

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diversity together.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Okay.

MS. SUMMERS: Larry?

MR. VICK: Thank you, Chairman Jackson, Commissioners, for the opportunity to speak to you on the issues being addressed by the Performance Monitoring Subcommittee.

As you review and consider the agency's EEO program, we believe that the important thing is not where we were or where we are, but where we want to go.

Our subcommittee is tasked to address five specific issues raised by the EEO advisory committees. Our primary goal is to assist management in monitoring and evaluating affirmative action initiatives, support strategic planning, encourage stronger management accountability systems into the EEO area, examine ways to enhance representation of women and minorities in supervisory and managerial positions, and lastly, examine root causes of discrimination complaints.

We are happy to report that meaningful progress has occurred to date. The subcommittee has held six month meetings since being informed in July of 1996. The subcommittee began its work by obtaining a focused

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understanding of the terms, "affirmative action," "equal employment opportunity," and "initiatives."

We then identified agency programs associated with these terms, with the ultimate goal to determine the effectiveness of each.

Thirty-four programs or initiatives that support EEO and affirmative action initiatives have been identified by this subcommittee for monitoring and evaluation. The initiatives cover a wide range of developmental areas in the administrative, technical, professional, clerical fields for both supervisor and nonsupervisory staff members.

SPCR and OP are currently collecting specific data associated with each. The data will include the number of participants, demographics, how the program is evaluated, and an overall recommendation regarding the effectiveness of each.

Data analysis is expected to be completed during FY '97. The resolution of these issues will aid all employees to be knowledgeable of the ways and means to achieve the objectives of inclusion and equal opportunity. The data analysis of these initiatives will also provide the basis for work on the issues of increased representation of women and minorities.

The subcommittee is working with SBCR to close the issue on examination and report on specific concerns of EEO committees and their root causes, and this will be done when the SBCR summary report is presented at the next briefing.

Because of the need for confidentiality, the actions taken by the agency to prevent reoccurrence of similar EEO complaints remain to be addressed. The subcommittee plans to work toward resolution on the issues of strategic planning and management accountability in the second quarter of this year.

To summarize, the subcommittee recommends that a better understanding of the terms and concepts associated with EEO affirmative action initiatives be routinely communicated and that a periodic review of the objectives in management directives, 10.61 NRC Equal Employment Opportunity Program, be undertaken by all employees, especially those with management responsibilities.

The ultimate goal is to ensure that all employees can share in the benefits derived from equal employment opportunity.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Repeat what you just said.

MR. VICK: The ultimate goal --

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: No, the one before.

MR. VICK: Okay. To summarize, the subcommittee recommends that a better understanding of the terms and concepts associated with EEO affirmative action initiatives be routinely communicated and that a periodic review of the objectives in management directives, 10.61, titled NRC Equal Employment Opportunity Program, be undertaken by all employees, especially those with management responsibilities.

In conclusion, the EEO advisory committees appreciate the attention the Commission has given to our concerns as we strive to bring about beneficial changes at the workplace.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Thank you.

MR. MAZUMDAR: Chairman Jackson?

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Could you pull the microphone more closer?

MR. MAZUMDAR: Chairman Jackson, Commissioners Rogers, Diaz, and McGaffigan, it is my pleasure today to present the progress made by the Selection Subcommittee in the last six months.

We have experienced that many at the NRC, especially those with the experience in other Federal organizations, believe that compared to other Federal agencies, NRC is a much better managed organization, especially in the selection and promotion policies.

However, we have also experienced that many NRC employees believe that in the past, some managers have unfairly preselected employees in the merit selection process. This is not only unfair. It adversely affects the

Staff morale.

The perception of preselection is so strong that when the EEO advisory committees were asked to prioritize their EEO concerns, preselection was identified as one of the three more important issues, and in September 1996, the Selection Subcommittee was formed to study the employees' concerns.

The word "preselection" is not in the Webster's Dictionary. However, most people at NRC have a pretty good idea what preselection is. To carry out its mission, the subcommittee has defined "preselection" as a selection that is predetermined and not based on a fair and equitable assessment of each candidate's qualification, experience, and capability.

The perception of preselection applies to positions that are advertised through the merit selection process, as well as participation in special programs and performance awards.

This subcommittee has 20 participants from different EEO advisory committees, Office of Personnel, and Office of Small Business and Civil Rights. The subcommittee has formed several working groups, each consisting of four to five members who study specific issues in depth and report their finding at the monthly subcommittee meetings.

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Thus far, this subcommittee has four monthly meetings and has decided to pursue the following five action items: action item one, develop criteria for examining and identifying possible evidence of presentation; action item two, review NRC policies, procedures, and practices related to the vacancy announcements, selection process, training, awards and other benefits; action item three, determine if there is a reasonable basis for the perception of preselection practices; action item four, learn from other agencies on measures taken to minimize preselection; and finally, present a report on the subcommittee's findings.

The subcommittee is aware that it has a difficult task ahead, but we believe that with support from NRC management, Office of Personnel, and Office of Small Business Development and Civil Rights, we will be able to present significant information on the perception of preselection that has demoralized many NRC employees.

I also take this opportunity to tell all those who have helped us to carry out our missions.

That is the end of my statement.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Thank you.

Let me ask you a couple of questions. First of all, do you anticipate and have you gotten a commitment from the Office of Personnel and SBCR that they will work with you so, that in the next briefing, we won't be talking about

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preselection as a perception, but we can actually have some sense of what the situation really is?

I say that because I know that that has been a concern for some time, and each time -- and I've been here now -- this must be at least my fifth such briefing, and there is always discussion of perception, and I think it is important that the Commission finally have some data so that we can have a real perception of what the situation is.

So I am, therefore, asking Mr. Bird and Ms. Little and, by implication, Ms. Norry, have you given Mr. Mazumdar your commitment that you are going to be working with this committee so that we can really have some concrete data to look at the next time the Commission is briefed or before?

MR. BIRD: I believe, and I know some of my staff here have been working hand and hand with that committee, and Irene's staff, also. I don't know that we have reached a point where we have hard specific data examples of where this has occurred. Certainly, the perception of preselection is an age-old perception. I think that is the goal, to eliminate the wrong as parts of preselection altogether, if we can do that.

The process we have in merit selection certainly intended to do that, and there are means of trying to address that through looking at how things have worked in that process.

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I think in terms of getting specific examples, that is something that we would have to work with the Office of Civil Rights to develop in specific cases or instances where we believe this is true.

Certainly, I think things are moving in that direction. I know there has been a lot of effort, but with the committee's support to try to get at this issue.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Have you decided what questions need to be ask to try to get at the issue?

MR. MAZUMDAR: So far, we have gotten good response from the Office of Personnel and SBCR, but we haven't progressed enough to ask some of the critical questions, where we can establish whether there is preselection or not.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Have you decided what those questions are?

MR. MAZUMDAR: We are looking into it. We haven't developed the final questions yet, no.

MS. LITTLE: Yes. Dr. Jackson, I was in attendance at the last subcommittee meeting, and yes, the Subcommittee on Preselection certainly has our commitment to work with them.

I think that we talked a little bit about the focus being on what we can do to eliminate that perception in the future. It is very difficult to get at that data in

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the past because some of it is perception and some of it may very well be real, but since we don't maintain any data specifically addressing that, our focus, as we talked in the last subcommittee meeting, was to look at ways that we can present this kind of thing from happening in the future.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: But you don't know what you are presenting if you don't know what exists.

MS. NORRY: You are saying the first thing we have to do is define the problem and address the questions.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Correct, right.

MS. NORRY: So we will work with the subcommittee to do that.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Okay. Commissioner McGaffigan?

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I know a little bit about preselection because I once was on that side of the table. I know how it is done in the Pentagon.

[Laughter.]

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I would suggest you look for things like unusual announcements that have unusual conditions in them that maybe -- I never was in the Pentagon, but I know people who went from the Hill to the Pentagon, and I think they were effectively preselected for what were open positions by gearing it toward the particular skills that that person had.

So I think if I were in your committee, I would be

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looking for that sort of thing, announcements that happen to have unusual --

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Qualifications.

COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: -- qualifications in them.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Right, right. It is called pick the person and then write the job description.

COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: Right, right.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Let me ask you a few questions. If we look at Table 1.1 on page 1.5 of your report, the table indicates that there has been marginal progress in hiring professional minorities, but the professional minority women, as well as Native Americans, still lag behind all other groups.

What kinds of efforts, particularly in the recruitment area, are being planned or taken to improve in these areas? We realize there is an issue of who is in the market and how geography plays into that, and that may have some impact on certain groups, but if you look across the spectrum of various minority groups and you look at professional minority women, it would seem that in this particular area that there is some mitigation of the geographic effect. So I am interested in what it is that you have either planned or have already undertaken to do something about that.

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MR. BIRD: Well, certainly, from a recruitment standpoint, the majority of our recruitment budget is now focused on this issue and is particularly focused on professional staff recruitment.

We have a rather ambitious schedule for going to specific schools that are representative of the groups that we believe could be improved, and I have a recruitment schedule. I won't go through that item for item, but certainly, there are some areas of the country and some particular schools that have populations that are well suited to enhance our populations in these areas.

We get, for example, from the Oak Ridge Institute of Science and Technology a breakdown that they update for us from year to year of where minorities and women are specifically enrolled. We do try to focus on these schools and keep current on where to go to find the right people, the right candidates to fill these jobs. So I think from the recruitment standpoint, that focus is there.

Certainly, more recently, as we have been downsizing, the opportunities for intake here have been less. That may change, of course, if some of the DOE regulatory work comes our way and we are back in more of an expansive recruitment mode. I think some of the payoff from these sources will show up in these data tables.

In our inventory, our applicant's supply file, I

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think, again, there is some good candidates. However, the candidates that are in that supply file may not find their way to specific jobs that we have currently. Again, the lack of opportunities here is fairly significant over the past three or four years.

We are certainly focussing on this internally as well in developmental opportunities. I think to some extent, there are already people in the agency who have the potential to move in the professional categories. Some are undertaking advanced education, and we should continue to

support that as well, but from a recruitment standpoint, I think we know where to go to look.

One thing that came up in the past couple of weeks was a Native American recruitment. I know we have gone back to refocus our efforts there to make sure that we are getting to the right schools that have these populations and that we put ourselves in the position to be able to compete favorably.

In many cases, minority candidates get multiple job offers. We feel we have, to some extent, been competitive. Our accepted service status allows us to be somewhat competitive, but there is always room for improvement, and I hope that we can continue that focus and continue to have a recruitment budget that permits us to do that.

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CHAIRMAN JACKSON: If we look at Table 1.5 on page 110, it seems to suggest -- in fact, that is what the statistics strongly suggest -- that minorities have not fared well in joining the ranks of the SLS.

The two questions that actually come to my mind are have minorities been applying and what steps are being done -- there are actually three questions -- to prepare individuals for it, and if you take away the Commission offices, what would the numbers look like.

MR. BIRD: Well, you know, again, the Commission has done very well in this regard. This particular Commission, I think, has been exceptional in that effort of trying to focus on minority women candidates and bring them into --

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Well, just minorities in general, if you look at it. I think I count up five.

MR. BIRD: Right.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: So, if you took away the Commission offices, what would the numbers be?

MR. BIRD: Well, it has gone up since this chart because this was last fiscal year --

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Okay.

MR. BIRD: -- but the number is now eight, but six, if you -- I think if I did my math right. There is one additional that is not a Commission office staffperson that

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is in the SLS, an additional woman who is in the SL ranks now.

So, again, there has been some progress there. There has been one additional woman. The numbers, currently, would be, in column 1, under women, 8, and the other numbers, the end number total would be 41, and that is, again, the difference between the last fiscal year and where we are today.

Again, the majority of those have been, as we know, Commissioner selections.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: So, in our regular professional ranks, we have essentially zero. Is that what you are saying?

MR. BIRD: Yes.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: So what is the story?

MR. BIRD: Well, you know, I don't know what to exactly say.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Should I not ask you, but have the office directors here --

MR. BIRD: Well, certainly, the office directors are the ones that make the selection, and I think there have

been candidates that have been in competition for those jobs, minority candidates.

There is a review group that Pat has chaired that looks at those selections, particularly with regard to this

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issue, and I think that committee has made some suggestions to specific managers, and perhaps, Pat, you would like to comment on that.

MS. NORRY: Yes. We have had, perhaps, not as many as in the SES, but there have been cases that my group looked at where there were candidates who we judged to be highly qualified, and ultimately, then, someone else was selected. That does happen, but I think the candidate pool, though, has not been as large as perhaps we would have liked. So I think it is a two-pronged thing. We have to get more people in the candidate pool for these jobs and also do a better job of looking at them once they are in there.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: I think that perhaps in the next Commission briefing in this area, we will have two panels, one, the group of you who are here, and the other, a group of office managers, of office directors, to have them talk with the Commission relative to the same issues that we talked with you about because it's a hand-in-glove situation. The real hiring is going on in those offices, and that is where we need to understand where the logjam seems to be, and I think the only reasonable way to get at it is to chat with some of those office directors, but let me ask you a couple of questions.

The SECY paper indicates that the supervisory

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development program and the SES candidate development program will be offered again when there is a demonstrated need to prepare additional employees for supervisory and SES positions.

In light of the mandated downsizing and the supervisor reductions, do you have any projection of when there might be such a demonstrated need? And how often have these programs been offered in the past?

MR. BIRD: Yes. The SES candidate development program has been offered three times, one time recently. In the recent instance, there were 23 graduates of that program. Of the 23 in fiscal '96, seven were selected out of the program and are now in SES jobs.

I might go on to say that four have been selected, some by the Commissioners to go to senior-level positions. Now, that is not SES. So don't let me confuse you because I am adding and subtracting here simultaneously.

Since the end of the fiscal year, there has been one additional candidate selected for an SL position, another selected for an SES position. That would mean if you could both SES and SL here, there would be 10 left in the candidate pool. However, since five of those are in senior level positions and not SES position, I think they would have to be considered still candidates for SES jobs.

So right now, of the 23, I would consider that

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there are 15 that would need to be placed. Our rule of thumb when we started that program was that when we hit a level of about 50 percent that we would reexamine, one, how long it has taken since we ran the program, which was '94, how long did it take to get to the halfway point, and then, if you could extrapolate from that or decide that it might take about the same amount of time to deplete it, we would

start another program when we were down to about a third of those candidates left.

We are moving in that direction and certainly need to begin to be thinking about starting that program again. As you will recall, it is a one-year-long program. So, if you want to have people trained and ready, you have to start in advance of that year, or you would have a shortfall.

But at this time, we are at a stage where it is time to begin looking at that and consider whether or not we want to start another round of that.

With the supervisory development program, there were 27 selected, and actually, this past program, which is a two-year training program, there were 27 selected. Out of the 27, seven have become new supervisors. Now, of course, that is in an environment where we have been reducing the number of supervisors, trying to reduce that number as the agency is drawing down in an equivalent percentage fashion.

That would mean that 20 of those candidates left.

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However, in fiscal '97, one of those candidates has been selected for a senior-level position, but again, I would continue to have that person in the count.

So I think we are a little farther away, there, considering starting another program that we are with the candidate development program, but the whole idea is that when we reach a point where we think it is time to redraw and restart those programs, we would certainly recommend doing that.

I think these are excellent. Both of these programs have been an excellent preparation for people that have gone into these jobs, even including the SES training for those that have gone into SL positions.

Is that responsive?

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Well, I think we need to on a more systematic basis understand how and when these development programs are offered and expect to be offered relative to our work force needs. Since we are coming out of a strategic assessment, we are looking forward to doing a multiyear plan, so that we can understand where the need is, to give some particular emphasis.

Let me ask you a few more questions. If we look at Chart 2.1, the numbers are small, but there does seem to have been a slight decrease in the number of Hispanic males as well as African-American females in the professional

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career fields, with the streamlining.

Are Hispanic males and African-American females particularly in positions where we expect that they may be more vulnerable to the streamlining, if that is the direction things continue to go?

MR. BIRD: I don't think -- again, I guess I'm --

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: These are fluctuations of the numbers?

MR. BIRD: Right. Yes. I am optimistic that in the case of this particular agency -- and I know this is an optimistic statement given the backdrop to where the Government is continuing to go, but I am hoping that, to some extent, these reductions have sort of bottomed out for us, and again, particularly with regard to some of the DOE work; that the opportunities to flatten out or even maybe have an increase in staff would certainly give us more opportunity to increase the numbers.

Again, when we have been in an upward hiring mode,

we have done much better with regard -- particularly since we have a good focus in recruitment -- of getting people through the door and making these numbers go up as a general rule, and I believe if the data we get from outside is correct, there are certainly more women and minority candidates in the fields that we recruit heavily for than there have been in the past.

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So, almost in my mind, by definition, if we are in a growth mode or even if we are in a replacement mode, we are going to see these numbers improve, and I certainly would hope that is true.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: You are tracking these feeder groups in terms of what happens in those groups, in terms of the entry-level professional positions?

MR. BIRD: Yes, particularly with regard to entry levels.

Certainly, I would hope that we would be entertaining more entry-level hiring. I am certainly an advocate for that, and I would encourage the Commission to

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CHAIRMAN JACKSON: To encourage you to do that.

MR. BIRD: To encourage me to do that.

[Laughter.]

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Well, we take advice.

I note that the Asian-Pacific-American Advisory Committee's briefing statement indicates that they are concerned about a perception of a longer time in grade for Asian-Pacific-American employees at the 15 to 13 grade levels in comparison with other groups.

Do we have statistics relative to time in grade at these levels, categorized by groups, and what can we say about that?

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MR. BIRD: We did a short analysis of that issue, and if I can find my data sheet, what we found was, particularly with regard to Asian-Pacific-Americans, was that that did not seem to hold up at the 13 and 15 levels, but it certainly did hold up at the Grade 14 level.

Now, again, this was a very short analysis, but I believe it is true. It was an average time in the current grade, which did reflect that at the Grade 14 level, there was a longer time for that particular group than others.

The same was not true at the Grade 13 level, nor was it true at the Grade 15 level, and I would be happy to provide that. We certainly will continue to look at this issue because it is one where I can certainly understand the concern that is raised in that regard.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Commissioner Rogers?

COMMISSIONER ROGERS: No, I don't have any special questions.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Commissioner Diaz?

COMMISSIONER DIAZ: I really feel like I am at a disadvantage. All of these numbers seem to be always in a relative senses, but I would like to say something that I think is from my previous experience in this area. As we work in using terms to describe what we want to do, I found that there was a term that was very, very appropriate, and that was the term "to enable," rather than just encourage or

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motivate. The system must be able to enable the person to function and progress to their level of potential achievement.

I think it is a very descriptive term. To enable

a person means the person is trying. I always feel like I need to try a little harder. I was maybe a little slower than most people. So I always tried a little harder or tried to run a little faster.

I think as the programs are set, the word "enable" is an integrating word in which it actually looks at the person. It allows the person to realize that they need to go a step farther, and it also puts the program in the position of saying I must provide these steps to enable that.

I think that is all I want to say. The next time, I will have a few more questions.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Commissioner McGaffigan?

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I would first like to ask Ms. Summers a question.

You made the distinction between technical skills versus managerial skills and said it would be hard in a technical agency to value one over the other. Why does that have to be versus? Why can't we be looking for senior managers with the appropriate technical skills who can also manage well? Why do you see it as a versus as opposed to we . 41
need to find the people with the technical skills who can also manage well?

MS. SUMMERS: It doesn't have to be a versus, but I think, particularly with the kind of technical work we do here, it doesn't give the technical people much of a background in dealing with people when they have chosen to spend most of their life dealing with figures and dealing with metallurgy or various other technical issues. Their backgrounds are not necessarily -- have not necessarily thrown them together in a situation where they have had to deal with people in the past, even in the agency at the lower grades in the work that they have done.

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: One thing I might just ask the people around the personnel system, what sort of opportunities are there for the technical folks at fairly senior levels? I mean, there are all these courses. You could take a year at a public administration school and get a master's in public administration or you could take a summer -- you know, the Kennedy School has a summer program for senior managers and Government. How often do we have people take advantage of those sorts of programs to try to broaden them out of the metallurgist to the manager?

MS. NORRY: We make good use of those programs, perhaps some of them, like the one at the Kennedy School, which I agree is a tremendous program.

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COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: Did you go to it?

MS. NORRY: Oh, yes. It was terrific.

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I see.

MS. NORRY: But it is very expensive, and it does get to be almost pricing itself out of the market, but things like the Federal Executive Institute and other programs -- I think, 10 years ago, I would have said, and many would have said that we did not do a good job of emphasizing management skills; that in fact, it was true that technical skills totally predominated in terms of how people got ahead.

I really don't think that is true --

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Is anybody able to be promoted today without having gone through some kind of managerial training or program?

MS. NORRY: We get them at the earlier stage where we have required courses. When you are going into a managerial, you have to have passed certain levels of required courses.

MR. BIRD: But I don't think that is all-inclusive.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: It is not a systematic program, and it is not a built-in requirement at this point?

MR. BIRD: Not yet.

MS. NORRY: But we make you play catch-up if you
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get in a job and you haven't been through the managerial courses.

MR. BIRD: It is mandatory training, but maybe a little too late.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Excuse me, Commissioner McGaffigan.

Over what time window are people required to catch up, so to speak?

MR. BIRD: I don't remember exactly. Perhaps someone on my staff might remember.

MS. HAMILL: Eighteen months.

MR. BIRD: Is it 18 months? It is an 18-month time frame for the required training elements to be complete.

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: We are basically resource-constrained to some degree.

I had a friend who is a Pentagon manager who had a really critical stage in his career. He was a white male. So he wouldn't meet an EEO target, but he got a whole year at the Kennedy School, plus his salary, and got himself a master's degree, which clearly enhanced his career thereafter. That was in the mid-'70s Pentagon when they were on one of their down slopes.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Yes, but their down slopes are our up slopes.
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[Laughter.]

MS. NORRY: One of the things, though, that we have here, which perhaps some other agencies don't, we have a very strong internal training program, and Paul and his staff have developed many, many courses which are offered in-house.

The ones outside are perhaps available not to everyone, but we still do take advantage of those, particularly FEI, which I believe still runs a good program.

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: Let Ms. Summers get a word in.

MS. SUMMERS: I don't think it is so much a question of the training courses that are offered as the importance that is placed on the choosing and promotion of people, depending on their people skills more than their technical skills.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Or as much.

MS. SUMMERS: Or as much. Well, I guess I would hope that as they got higher, it would become more people skills than technical skills, on the assumption that their technical skills were what got them the job in the first place and that they spent many years at the lower levels honing those skills, but I would just like to read two lines here from the book because this speaks of another technical agency where it says, "There is a tremendous preoccupation
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in getting the job done." This is true for managers. They

get so caught up that they fail to see the importance of people. I don't think anybody believes they will get by on people development alone.

I think that is the kind of thinking that is very prevalent here because we do have such an important technical mission that even the highest-level managers are more concerned with the technical job to be done than necessarily the people skills of themselves or their managers.

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I would like to ask just a couple more questions. The Tables 1.2 and 1.3, it looks like the intern program, and both of these are tiny programs, but it looks like the intern program is a relatively effective mechanism for meeting EEO goals, compared to the graduate fellowship program where it is more a matter of -- that it is really Table 1.4 that shows who is in it, but given the applicant pool, the result of who is in it is determined.

I don't know much about a graduate fellowship program. I didn't know actually until I saw this paper last night that we had one. Why do we have one as opposed to just relying on the NSF and other -- you know, there is a myriad of fellowship programs -- some run -- the Hertz Foundation, whatever -- especially if it isn't helping us in
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this area.

MR. BIRD: That program, if I remember correctly, started about three or four years ago in the interest of trying to develop a specific skill that we had a lack of abundance of in the agency.

I guess I can think of an example, a digital instrumentation. The whole notion was that we would -- again, working with Oak Ridge Institute of Science and Engineering -- go out with a large network of people, get a candidate base developed, find someone who was motivated to go to graduate school in an area that we defined.

We then would bring them in. They would serve nine months in-house, and then they would go off to graduate school, hopefully to come back with that skill and then be a long-term asset to the agency.

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: What is the requirement for years of service per year of graduate school?

MR. BIRD: I believe it is two to one.

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: Two to one.

MR. BIRD: So, if you are away for a year, then we have got you.

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: Do we have any evaluation as to whether the graduate fellowship program -- I guess if it is that young, we probably don't have the people back yet.
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MR. BIRD: Well, there are some that have gone through the program now. I believe there are a couple that have returned to the staff, and at least my initial feedback -- and I didn't look at it specifically for this meeting, but it was that, certainly, they accomplished what they set out to accomplish in those programs, and they are going to be looked at valuable assets in the agency.

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: And the rationale is trying to find that equivalent person just graduating from one of the graduate schools and recruiting them, we are not competitive doing that? People in digital instrumentation -- I mean, you know --

MR. BIRD: Yes. That was the notion, again, that this would be an enhanced recruitment tool. We would be offering them not just an internship within NRC, but an option to go and have graduate school paid for at our expense, and then --

COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: Do they get their salary while they are in graduate school?

MR. BIRD: They get a stipend.

COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: Get a stipend.

MR. BIRD: So there is a very attractive feature to that program in that regard for those students who do wish to get an advanced education, and again, that was the design. The program is a little different than the intern . 48
program.

Certainly, someone in the intern program could go on to graduate school at our expense. So it doesn't accept those people, but the design was a little different to attract, again, a little bit of a different person, not planning to come to work, but planning to go to graduate school and to allow us to at least have an opportunity to recruit them.

COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: I just suggest to Ms. Little that this is one of the programs you need to keep an eye on.

MR. BIRD: It has been very small so far. The program offices do this out of their hides, if you will, in FTE. So it is the goodwill of the office directors that we have been able to do this at all, and again, some of the office directors might be able to --

COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: Maybe that is another reason.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Another reason to have them there.

Yes.

COMMISSIONER DIAZ: I want to put my university hat on for a minute.

In some of the things from the graduate fellowship program, it really has been a very dry and hard time out . 49
there in the universities for fellowships, for people that are going to be involved in the nuclear engineering, sciences, or anything. So practically any of these programs are seen as life savers.

As far as I am concerned, and I have several of these programs going, any time you have somebody in a fellowship or even an assistant-ship -- I have some Department of Defense assistant-ships that went through programs -- you actually plug the individual to the organization in a certain way, and it does give you a recruiting advantage.

From the standpoint of the NRC, I always found that we graduate an enormous amount of engineers in this country, and many of them went to work in the nuclear industry, one way or another, that know very little about regulation, and that went out there and actually don't realize there is a tremendous interface that they have to work with.

No matter how good their technical skills are, they are actually handicapped by the lack of knowledge of the regulation. So I would encourage us to really try to put this program there and force the fellows to come here and learn what nuclear regulations are.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Okay. Commissioners Rogers?

COMMISSIONER ROGERS: Well, my observation of the

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graduate fellowship program here is that it has really been very targeted, and while there aren't many participants, it has been very useful.

The one or two cases that I have had an opportunity to look at, I don't think you have gotten those people out of the NSF and other graduate fellowship programs. The fact that they have to come here first and become part of our work force before they get into it, I think, is a very big difference, and when they go to graduate school, it is very targeted towards things that we are most interested in.

So, while the numbers are small and I think that there is probably all kinds of reasons for that, I do think that the program itself has been very effective, at least in the opportunities that I have had to look at it.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: From time to time, the Commission receives comments that there is a bias in our hiring and promotion relative to those who come from the Nuclear Navy. Have we looked at that?

I know we have made the argument that it is a good source of highly qualified people, but presumably, it is not the only source. So are you looking at that when you speak about recruitment, not just for minorities and women,, but more broadly?

MR. BIRD: Yes. Again, we have never had a rating

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criteria that says you have to have been in the Navy or gone to the Naval Academy in order to come to work, and certainly, that is something that many feel that there are certain advantages from having been through the Nuclear Navy Training Program, certainly in hiring inspectors, particularly. I think there is a value that does show up to some extent in the criteria in operating experience.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: But in the end, if you are looking at pumps and valves and gages and so on, there are any number of programs that presumably prepare people for that.

MR. BIRD: I believe so, and I certainly think that many of those get into our candidates base and should be looked at there, despite the fact that they have not been through the Nuclear Navy power school, nor have they had commercial experience, but they are very viable candidates, and certainly, some of the training, the Chattanooga Training Center, are options of ways to get that experience.

I know Ed Jordan and I have talked from time to time, and the Commission has been involved in the question of perhaps even having some people having experience at a utility. The Congress got into that at one point and admonished us and said that that wasn't a good idea, but we were looking for ways to get at the problem that you are describing of how to get people, valued and experienced,

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without having to go to particular sources.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: I mean, presumably, if we are dealing with issues, particularly as the nuclear plants mature, with things such as digital instrumentation and control systems and power systems, looking at aging issues which involve not just mechanical engineering, but metallurgy and other issues, that even at the bachelor's and master's levels, there are ranges of institutions, including ones represented by any number in the area and within a

certain radius, that prepare individuals who can add great value to our regulatory program. Is that correct?

MR. BIRD: Yes. I totally agree with that, and I think it takes me back to something that I said earlier about entry level, hiring an intern, hiring.

In a tight FTE environment, it is tough to make a commitment to a long training process. If it is a year or two, training involved with getting people up to have that operating experience, for example -

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: But I repeat, the operating experience is one part of it.

MR. BIRD: That is right.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: But there are a lot of other systems in a plant that have to be understood, evaluated. I mean, in the end, I always draw the analogy of driving a car. I can be a good driver and I can look at the road and

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obey the speed limit, and I don't talk this way when I am driving on the road, et cetera, but in the end, I am driving a piece of machinery, right? Somebody has to be able to look at and make some statement about it.

Commissioner Diaz?

COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Yes, just two comments. First, you keep saying the word "operating," and I have many people from the Nuclear Navy who work for me.

The majority of them have no operating experience. We have the misconception that people that come from the Nuclear Navy were operators or had operating experience, and a significant majority does not have operating experience. Only electronic mates, you know, had really operating experience or their supervising officers. The rest of them do not.

But something crossing my mind is that we were talking a while ago about preselection, and now we are talking about the Navy and things. Maybe there will be a good cross-correlation, a good point to start.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: That is what I am getting at. That is what I am getting at.

[Laughter.]

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I might just ask, though, from a personnel system perspective, what is the value of veterans preference for an entry-level position?

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Because the veterans preference and our skill needs are going to lead to the Nuclear Navy, and that is a matter of law, right?

MR. BIRD: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: If you have two equally qualified candidates and one is a veteran, you are supposed to hire the veteran?

MR. BIRD: Yes, if they actually have the --

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: But it doesn't say there is a Nuclear Navy --

COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: No, but my brother drove tanks, and I don't think he would be particularly good as a candidate for most of our jobs.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Thank you.

Would the National Treasury Employees Union representative like to make any comment?

MR. THOMAS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: You can go to the podium. That may be the easiest thing to do. Why don't you just talk into the microphone.

MR. THOMAS: I didn't have any prepared statement

here, but I jotted down a few points I would like to make.

We have initiated a program through the National Performance Review to eventually downsize or reduce the level of management, particularly middle management.

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We are in a situation in this agency where for every two employees that are in the bargaining unit, there is one employee who is excluded. There is a rational reason for excluding managers and supervisors. The big area of exclusion is for confidential employees. A large number of those confidential employees are women and minorities, deny the representation by the union. That is something I believe that particularly in the partnership arena. When a large number of managers and supervisors are no longer involved in any way, shape or form in day-to-day labor policy, a lot of these folks are being discriminated against, and I think the Commission should take a look at that as far as the representational rights.

With regard to some of the data that is here, I have been to quite a few of these present, and the data always seem the same to me and always seem to be missing some very, very key factors.

We typically take a look at the profile of the agency, the EEO profiles. We ignore information about the profile of our applicants and the profile of the best qualified list. What the supervisor is looking at is particular best qualified list, and if you have a situation of highly qualified individuals where, let's say, 50 percent of that group are women and minorities and 10 percent are the selectees, women and minorities, we have got a problem,

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but if the data is just presented as far as what we looked like last year and what we look like this year without knowing the profile of the folks that were being considered for those positions, we don't know what we are doing. We are just looking from day to day and hoping that the situation will improve itself.

I would hope that somewhere in the process, since we have the system computerized, that we can actually generate that sort of data, so that you can see at subsequent briefings the profile of the candidates, the profile of the best qualified list, and the profile of the final selection list to see if there is something that is unusual going on here.

The other thing that to me is a very serious flaw in the data that is being presented on EEO is the issue of equal pay for equal work.

I have sent one or two e-mails to some of the Commission regarding our classification system. Our classification system is so old, it is beyond belief. We are using classification standards for computer experts that were developed before the IBM PC was marketed.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: You have about --

MR. THOMAS: Two minutes. Okay.

If we are going to work the system properly, we need to be able to classify the jobs to where, instead of

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rating the job relative to the grade level of the person performing it, that a particular job function carries a grade level. That way, the people are being compensated for what they are doing, not just because they are a particular grade.

Preselection was an issue that was raised earlier.

That has been a long issue. It has been here since they hung up the sign, and I guess there were arguments about the sign hanger being preselected.

One of the things that you need to do is to standardize the vacancy system. You are hiring a Grade 14 nuclear engineer. If that is standardized where it is very easy for the person to use that standardized announcement and very difficult to deviate from the standard, it makes it difficult to rig the system, and the other factor in preselection is to bar communications between the rating panel and the selecting official, to try to rate one candidate getting on or off the best qualified list.

Nuclear Navy issue. I would dispute one point made by Mr. Bird. We have had rating factors that reference the Nuclear Navy. It is rare, but they have occurred. One way of getting an A on this is being in a Nuclear Navy program or something of that type.

I think it is an issue. I am not aware of management trying to dictate that as a policy, but I think

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we have had prior commissioners and EDO that is from the Nuclear Navy, and there is a perception that goes all the way down through management that those are the people we want to hire. I think something does need to be done with that as far as doing a profile.

The last thing I would like to mention is a job crediting plan. We have agreed to that, and I think that will help preselection.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Are there any further comments from any of the presenters?

[No response.]

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: Any further comments from the Commissioners?

[No response.]

CHAIRMAN JACKSON: In closing, let me thank all of the employees in attendance for your interest and to thank all of the participants for your views, comments, and suggestions.

This was a briefing on a complex subject that is designed to ensure that all of our employees are provided an equal opportunity to display their talents and to contribute to the agency's mission, and as we approach the year 2000 and face the various challenges and opportunities, I encourage the managers and supervisors to the best of their

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abilities to evaluate all employees fairly and objectively and to recognize those employees who demonstrate superior performance and to provide opportunities for training and development for all employees.

I think that in order to hear more about what you are doing in that regard, as I indicated, I think that in addition to hearing from the panel that is here, we will hear from a number of our office directors at the next briefing. We particularly, then, would like to hear relative to the issues related to preselection to recruitment and to this issue of the development of true managerial skills and the evaluation of them as part of job performance.

I would also like to urge all employees to, again -- and you have heard this from me before -- to avail yourselves of various training opportunities, rotational assignments, and developmental opportunities in order to maximize your potential for excellence and for advancement

at the NRC.

I think the final comment is the whole point of this briefing is that we do not discriminate. We are looking to maximize the potential of all of our employees and to manage diversity in its complete sense.

So I look forward to hearing about the progress we have made in this area, in the EEO area, at the next

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briefing.

Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 3:30 p.m., the briefing was concluded.]