

POLICY ISSUE INFORMATION

May 14, 2003

SECY-03-0075

FOR: The Commissioners

FROM: William D. Travers
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO) BRIEFING

PURPOSE:

To inform the Commission of the status of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program at the NRC.

BACKGROUND:

The Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, as amended, requires the NRC Executive Director for Operations (EDO) to report to the Commission, at semi-annual public meetings, on the problems, progress, and status of the Agency's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program. For the next briefing, scheduled for May 29, 2003, the staff will provide a continuing discussion on five key aspects of the Agency's EEO program: (1) enhanced management accountability, (2) EEO complaint activity, including activity in alternative dispute resolution (ADR), (3) recruitment initiatives, (4) staff development and retention, and (5) diversity management strategies. Our discussion will also include successes and challenges in achieving EEO goals.

Accomplishments of the program will include a discussion of activities/data through March 31 of FY 2003, based on the four guiding principles listed in the NRC's Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP): (a) create a discrimination-free work environment; (b) ensure that agency policies, processes, and procedures provide employees the opportunity to participate in the Agency's mission and enable fair and equitable competition for career enhancement and advancement; (c) employ a competent, highly skilled, and diverse workforce in a positive work environment;

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and (d) recognize and value diversity, thereby demonstrating trust, respect, and concern for the welfare of all employees within the Agency. This briefing will also include a summary of the Agency's small, minority, 8(a), and women-owned business activity related to Federal procurement preference requirements.

Following the last briefing on October 31, 2002, the Commission requested, through a Staff Requirements Memorandum (SRM), dated November 7, 2002, that the staff provide data on how the number of formal EEO complaints per year at NRC compares with the number at other Federal agencies. This issue was addressed in our response dated January 3, 2003. A copy of the SRM and our response are provided in Attachment 1.

This report includes a statement by Mr. James Dyer, Regional Administrator, Region III, on implementation of the EEO program within his region (Attachment 2). Also included are workforce profile data through March 31, 2003, by grade, ethnicity, gender, occupation, and age for FY 1999 - FY 2003 (Attachment 3); a joint statement from the five EEO Advisory Committees (Advisory Committee for African Americans, Hispanic Employment Program Advisory Committee, Federally Employed Women Advisory Committee, Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee, and Committee on Age Discrimination); and a statement from the Joint Labor Management Equal Employment Opportunity Committee (Attachment 4).

DISCUSSION:

(1) Management Accountability

Our efforts continue to focus on creating a discrimination-free work environment. Strategies to support this objective include: practicing sound management and leadership that support effective communication, embracing diverse approaches to problem solving leading to continuous improvement and innovation, inclusion and respect, fostering teamwork, and facilitating early resolution of issues.

Managers play a key role in formulating and implementing these strategies, and are provided tools to assist them in these efforts. As stated in the last briefing, an EEO job element has been incorporated in the performance standards for managers and supervisors. The Office of Small Business & Civil Rights (SBCR) will continue to review office-specific EEO accomplishments and will provide input to the EDO for his use in evaluating office and management performance. SBCR and the Office of Human Resources (HR) will provide input and assist managers in evaluating supervisory performance.

During the first half of FY 2003, six sessions of the *EEO and Diversity Management* course were conducted in headquarters and the regions. The objective of this course is to enhance management awareness regarding acceptance of differences, unique perspectives, and diverse approaches to problem solving, and provide an update on current EEO laws and management responsibilities. Two additional sessions have been scheduled for headquarters later this fiscal year. Additionally, three sessions of *Feedback Techniques for Non-Selected Internal Applicants*, one session of *Selection Interviewing Workshop*, and one session of *Human Resources Management Practices* were conducted for managers and supervisors.

The SBCR staff developed and conducted two pilot sessions of the training course, *EEO for Employees* in Region I and Region II. This course is designed to enhance employee understanding of EEO laws, employee EEO rights and responsibilities, and the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process. Enhanced employee awareness of what constitutes discriminatory practices and the principles of fairness should help foster mutual understanding of practices that give rise to allegations of discrimination and improve cooperation among Agency staff. Participant feedback from the course will be used to make modifications to the course, as needed.

The Director, SBCR, met with the executive leadership teams of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) and the Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards (NMSS) to provide an overview of the Agency's EEO objectives and discuss ways SBCR could assist the offices in achieving their EEO goals. SBCR highlighted strategies to enhance opportunities for minorities and women to obtain supervisory and managerial positions, recruitment of entry-level and experienced professionals, mentoring, and coaching. Also, the Affirmative Employment & Diversity Manager met with NRR managers to discuss the objectives of the Affirmative Employment Plan, provide an overview of the Agency's current EEO objectives, and discuss the new EEO performance element for supervisors. The executive team members of NRR and NMSS routinely meet with their subordinate managers and supervisors to provide information regarding current EEO objectives and discuss office-specific strategies and accomplishments in support of these objectives. SBCR plans to meet with the Offices of Nuclear Regulatory Research and Nuclear Security and Incident Response, and other offices to assist them in identifying additional actions that may be needed to achieve their EEO and diversity management goals.

The EEO Advisory Committees continue working with management to create and maintain a discrimination-free work environment at the NRC. Committees continue to work closely with SBCR to identify and address agency-wide issues that may impact EEO and diversity management, provide input regarding office-specific EEO strategies, and improve communications and the overall work environment. Committee members continue to participate as recruiters, follow-up with potential applicants to encourage their employment interest, and serve as mentors to new hires. A Joint Statement, included as Attachment 4 to this paper, identifies the Committees' most critical issues and recommendations.

Additionally, managers must maintain awareness and sensitivity to the special needs of persons with disabilities. NRC is dedicated to the hiring and placement of persons with disabilities and continually seeks ways to improve the work environment for persons with disabilities. As of March 31, 2003, none of the 100 total hires for FY 2003 were identified as having targeted disabilities. NRC will continue to identify viable sources to attract and hire persons with disabilities.

During the first half of FY 2003, 16 employees requested and received reasonable accommodation to include one alternative work station and 15 special ergonomic chairs. An electronic door device was installed leading to the Office of Human Resources in the Two White Flint building to provide easy access for physically disabled employees and applicants.

(2) EEO Complaint Activity Including Use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

The ADR process is consistently offered to employees as an option for resolving informal and formal allegations of discrimination. The data below depicts informal and formal complaint activity for all of FY 2002 and the first half of FY 2003.

FY 2002	FY 2003 (as of March 31st)
Informal Complaint Activity:	Informal Complaint Activity:
35 Initiated	11 Initiated
35 Closed (6 settled, 7 withdrew, 22 received notice of right to file/15 filed formal)	10 Closed (1 settled, 5 withdrew, 4 received notice of right to file/4 filed formal)
3 ADR (2 settled, 1 unsuccessful)	1 ADR (settled)
Formal Complaint Activity:	Formal Complaint Activity:
15 Filed	4 Filed
14 Closed (8 settled, 4 final agency decision, 2 dismissal)	11 Closed (5 settled, 5 final agency decision, 1 withdrew)
1 ADR (settled)	4 ADR (1 settled, 3 unsuccessful)

Our rate of success in bringing to closure EEO complaints in the first half of FY 2003 and FY 2002 is due in part to cooperative efforts of complainants, managers, EEO counselors, mediators, SBCR staff, and members of the Office of the General Counsel and the Office of Human Resources. Additional information regarding complaint data in comparison with other Federal agencies is found in the SRM response from the last EEO briefing dated January 3, 2003 (Attachment 1). As of May 13, 2003, 16 cases are pending.

(3) Results of Recruitment Initiatives on EEO

Several ongoing initiatives are in place to attract highly qualified and diverse applicants. The Agency continues to use a highly successful recruitment model to attract applicants at the entry-level and the mid-level. This model includes focused recruitment at universities and at professional career fairs and conferences, use of diverse recruitment teams, advertising in engineering and scientific publications, advertising via NRC's automated NRCareers network, and maintaining liaison with institutions that have significant representation of women and minority students. As of March 31 of FY 2003, NRC hired a total of 100 permanent employees: 25 (25%) minorities, 19 (19%) white women, and 56 (56%) white men. When compared to hires as of March 31, 2002, the number of women and minorities hired as of March 31, 2003, is approximately the same. Table A shows a demographic breakout on hiring.

**Table A - Agency FY 2003 & FY 2002
Hiring Activity (Permanent Employees)**

	FY 2002 Hires		FY 2003 Hires As of 3/31/03		Total On Board As of 3/31/03	
Total	243	100%	100	100%	2930	100%
African American	47	19%	8	8%	389	13%
Asian Pacific American	19	8%	8	8%	207	7%
Hispanic	30	12%	8	8%	122	4%
Native American	1	.4%	1	1%	9	.3%
White Female	55	23%	19	19%	740	25%
White Male	91	37%	56	56%	1463	50%

As Table B below shows, our recruitment efforts over the past 5 years have resulted in doubled representation of Hispanics in the workforce. While the Agency continues to address increased workload and FTE challenges, the percent representation of on-board staff, including women and minorities, has remained relatively constant (minorities 25%, white women 25%, and white men 50%).

**Table B - Agency FY 2003, FY 2001 & FY 1999
Permanent Staff Trends**

	FY 2003 Staff as of 3/31/03		FY 2001 Staff		FY 1999 Staff	
Total	2930	100%	2826	100%	2832	100%
African American	389	13%	367	13%	366	13%
Asian Pacific American	207	7%	195	7%	196	7%
Hispanic	122	4%	90	3%	63	2%
Native American	9	.31%	9	.32%	9	.32%
White Female	740	25%	726	26%	731	26%
White Male	1463	50%	1439	51%	1467	52%

Targeted Entry-Level Recruitment - during the first half of FY 2003, NRC participated in 59 events, including 39 college career fairs and 20 recruitment events focused on minorities. Interviews targeting minority applicants and NRC information sessions/classroom presentations were conducted on 11 college campuses including Florida A&M University, Alabama A&M University, University of Puerto Rico, South Carolina State University, Howard University, San Diego State University, Texas A&M University, North Carolina A&T University, University of California-Berkeley, and Penn State University.

The Agency holds membership in two national recruitment-related organizations: the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) and the Cooperative Education Association. Membership in these organizations helps to increase the effectiveness of our college relations program by identifying college employment markets and obtaining information regarding starting salaries nationally of recent graduates. The Agency also updated its recruitment displays and brochures to reflect its diverse workforce and to highlight NRC's mission-related activities. These efforts help the Agency maintain active liaison with academic institutions and professional organizations and expand our ability to attract highly qualified women and minority applicants.

College Liaison - to maintain active liaison with some college institutions, campus visitations were conducted at the University of California-Berkeley and Florida A&M University. A senior executive briefed university representatives on the NRC mission and function, employment programs and areas for potential partnerships. A senior executive also conducted classroom presentations on NRC's technical functions. Additionally, the agency hosted an open house for Howard University's junior and senior engineering and science students to provide information regarding NRC's mission and programs and to encourage employment interest at the NRC. Activities to support this outreach effort should enhance our ability to attract women and minorities for entry-level positions.

Targeted Feeder Pool (GG-13-15) Recruitment – During FY 2003, the Agency is placing additional focus on attracting women and minorities at the GG-13-15 mid-levels in an effort to improve diversity. As of March 31, 2003, there were 1,106 non-supervisory GG-13 through 15 scientists and engineers on board: 69 (6%) African American, 140 (13%) Asian, 33 (3%) Hispanic, 3 (.27%) Native American, 106 (10%) white women, and 755 (68%) white men. New hires as of March 31, 2003, include 39 engineers and scientists at the GG-13-15 grade level: 7(18%) Asians, 1 (3%), African American, 2 (5%) Hispanic, 5 (13%) white women, and 24 (61%) white men. Eighteen additional technical offers have been made (1 Asian man, 1 African American man, 1 white women, and 15 white men) and these employees are expected to enter-on-duty by June 30, 2003. These are experienced employees with the necessary skills to strengthen the pipeline from which first-line supervisory positions are filled.

Nuclear Safety Intern Program (NSIP) Hires – A total of 1,061 applicants applied for the FY 2003 NSIP and 317 were rated best qualified. As of March 31, 2003, 71 NSIP offers were made: 15 (21%) African Americans, 14 (20%) Hispanics, 6 (8%) Asians, 9 (13%) white women, 24 (34%) white men, and 3 (4%) unknown. A total of 49 offers have been accepted: 11(23%) Hispanics, 10 (20%) African Americans, 3 (6%) Asians, 6 (12%) white women, and 19 (39%) white men. In addition, 7 offers are pending and 15 have declined. This program remains a vital source for increasing representation of women and minorities in engineering, scientific, and administrative entry-level positions.

Cooperative Education Program - The Co-op Program has been revitalized and aggressive efforts have been made to attract students to this program. The Co-op Program provides study-related work experience for potential entry-level employees during their college years.

As of March 31, for FY 2003, a total of 14 co-op students are in the program: 3 (22%) Asians, 2 (14%) African Americans, 2 (14%) Hispanics, 2 (14%) white women, and 5 (36%) white men. Three co-op offers are pending: 1 African American and 2 white men. Eligible co-op students have the opportunity to participate in the Undergraduate Scholarship Program which provides financial assistance for their senior year in college. This program also serves as a vital source for increasing representation of women and minorities in engineering, scientific, and administrative positions. As of March 31, 2003, offers have been accepted by 4 graduating seniors (1 African American, 1 Asian, and 2 white men) who will be converted to permanent status later this fiscal year.

(4) Staff Development and Retention

NRC seeks to retain a highly qualified and diverse staff. Development and advancement opportunities, along with effective communication remain effective retention strategies. Initiatives to support these strategies include employee training, succession planning, and use of developmental activities such as the SES Candidate Development Program (SES CDP), Leadership Potential Program (LPP), Graduate Fellowship Program, Computer Science Program, rotations, mentoring, and career counseling.

Senior Level Staff Development:

SES Candidate Development Program (SES CDP) - According to a recent GAO report, diversity at the senior executive levels in the Federal government, will not change much over the next several years unless Federal agencies enhance efforts to recruit and promote minorities in the Senior Executive Service. The report (*Senior Executive Service - Enhanced Agency Efforts Needed To Improve Diversity As The Senior Corp Turns Over*/GAO-03-34) further indicates that the projected proportion of minorities will remain unchanged in SES but there will be an increase in the number of white women who will replace white men leaving the government. According to the GAO report which used SES on-board on October 1, 2000, and based on actual SES appointment rates for FYs 1995 - 2000, NRC minorities in SES will decline from 16 (11.5%) to 12 (8.6%), white women will increase from 16 (11.5%) to 20 (14.4%), and white men will remain at 107 (77%) by October 1, 2007. An abstract and portions of the report were provided to the Commission on March 10, 2003. For the 24 CFO agencies (covered by the Chief Financial Officers Act, 31 USC) evaluated for this report, NRC had the lowest percentage of women in SES (13.7%), and the 6th lowest percentage of minorities (11.5%) as of October 2000. The report also projected for October 1, 2007, NRC will continue to have the lowest percentage of women in SES and minorities will be the 5th lowest among the 24 CFO agencies.

From October 1, 2000 to March 31, 2003, actual data shows that the total number of NRC SES increased from 139 to 142, minorities decreased, white women increased, and white men increased. The following table shows the GAO report data and NRC SES data as of March 31, 2003:

	SES on-board 10/1/02	%	SES as of 3/31/03	%	Projected for 1/1/07*	%
Minorities	16	11.5%	14	10%	12	8.6%
White Women	16	11.5%	19	13%	20	14.4%
White Men	107	77.0%	109	77%	107	77.0%
Total	139	100.0%	142	100%	139	100%
*based on replacement at appointment rates for FYs 1995-2000						

Looking at longer trends over the past five years (September 30, 1999 - March 31, 2003), the number of SES has remained the same for Hispanics (2) and Native Americans (0), increased by 4 for white women, increased by 2 for Asians, decreased by 3 for African Americans, and decreased by 1 for white men. See Attachment 3, Chart 3 for additional details. To increase the potential for enhanced diversity in future competitions for the SES CDP and the SES, we are considering the following strategies: 1) enhance managerial accountability for implementation of diversity initiatives related to hiring, retention, staff development and mentoring via the SES performance management and evaluation process, 2) conduct mandatory EEO and Diversity training for managers, 3) focused recruitment efforts that could be expected to increase minority hires at the SES and mid-levels, 4) continue use of LPP and SES CDP processes and encourage minorities and women to participate, and 5) include diversity management principles in forming workforce and succession planning initiatives. We continue to encourage managers to support staff participation in developmental activities and serve as mentors to provide career guidance and constructive feedback.

To assist Federal agencies in addressing this issue, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recently established a new nationwide SES Candidate Development Program in an effort to increase the number of women, minorities and persons with disabilities certified for SES positions nationwide. The OPM program will begin later this fiscal year and individuals at the GG-14 -15 grade levels, or equivalent, from within and outside the Federal government are eligible. The program will run twice a year and include up to 50 participants in each session. Agencies will be encouraged to fill their SES vacancies from among these graduates. Information regarding the OPM program will be distributed to all NRC employees and appropriate timing for the next NRC program is under consideration.

Leadership Potential Program (LPP) - Of the 40 graduates of the FY 2002 program, 20 (50%) have been selected for supervisory positions: 9 (45%) white men, 5 (25%) white women, 2 (10%) Asian men, 2 (10%) Asian women, 1 Native American man (5%), and 1 (5%) African American man selected for a temporary supervisory position. To date, none of the African American or Hispanic graduates have been selected for permanent supervisory positions. Three graduates (1 African American woman, 1 African American man, and 1 white woman) have been promoted to non-supervisory mid-level positions. Graduates of the LPP should serve as a potential pipeline for future SES Candidate Development Program applicants and for future supervisory positions.

To enhance awareness of available graduates, the Deputy Executive Director for Management Services discussed strategies for potential placement of LPP graduates during recent senior management and Executive Resources Board meetings. SBCR and HR will place additional emphasis on monitoring advancement opportunities for the remaining graduates, and refer their applications to offices with vacant supervisory positions. A new LPP program was announced in April 2003 and selections will be made later this fiscal year.

Other Developmental Programs/Activities:

Computer Science Development Program - This program helps secretaries and administrative assistants GG-5 through 12 obtain training and education in information technology (IT). As of March 31, 2003, the majority of the para-professional and clerical staff are women and minorities: 131 (29%) African Americans, 19 (4%) Asians, 16 (4%) Hispanics, 1 (.2%) Native American, 269 (59%) white women, and 20 (4%) white men. Currently, there are five employees participating in the program: 3 African American women, 1 Hispanic woman, and 1 white woman. This program could serve to provide a source of qualified women and minority information technology professionals for future NRC IT positions. The Office of Human Resources will provide information regarding graduates of this program to the Chief Information Officer.

Rotational Assignments - Rotational opportunities continue to be an important factor in successful career progression and also aid in the retention of highly qualified employees. As of the first half of FY 2003, percent representation of minority participation in rotational assignments has almost doubled over the past five years from 22% to 38%. For FY 2003, as of March 31, 2003, 100 employees participated in rotational assignments, 38 (38%) were minorities, 31 (31%) white women, and 31 (31%) white men.

Mentoring and Career Counseling - SBCR continues a Facilitated Mentoring Program for all employees which provides employees an opportunity to discuss their career goals with experienced employees who serve as mentors. During FY 2003, a special mentoring orientation session was conducted for NMSS interns and mentors. A second session is planned for new NMSS interns later this fiscal year. The number of mentees and mentors participating in the program increased from 151 to 164 in FY 2003.

Additionally, the Career Counseling Program is another tool for employees to use to identify their career goals and strategies to achieve these goals. During FY 2003, the program supported 27 employees in the development of their career goals: 15 (56%) minorities, 7 (26%) white woman, and 5 (18%) white men. Employee use of these developmental tools is expected to help them advance their career objectives and enhance their potential for advancement.

The Office of Human Resources established a speech enhancement course designed to support employees for whom English is a second language. The objective of the course is to improve the enunciation and English grammar speech pattern of the participant. During FY 2003, 19 minority employees participated in the program. Completion of this course should enhance their ability to communicate more effectively and to help prepare them potentially for leadership positions.

(5) Diversity Management Strategies

Effective diversity management strategies must be institutionalized if long-term success is to be achieved. In pursuit of this long term success, SBCR continues to assist offices in evaluating their ongoing management practices, and formulating goals to address office-specific diversity management and organizational improvement issues. To date in FY 2003, SBCR has conducted a total of eight managing diversity sessions for employees from the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation and the Office of the Chief Information Officer. Three sessions are scheduled later this fiscal year for employees in Regions II and IV. Region I has requested an additional session scheduled for May 2003.

In late 2001, the Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards launched an extensive office-wide diversity management initiative, seeking ways to increase workforce diversity and maximize the potential of all its employees. Early assessment of this initiative has been positive, indicating progress in clarification of work assignments and performance expectations, improvement in communication and teamwork, and broader sharing of ideas. Studies and employee surveys, including a GALLUP survey, have been conducted, and areas for future emphasis have been identified. These areas are: (1) improved communication, (2) increased clarity of roles and responsibilities, and (3) increased use of diverse views in resolving technical and policy issues. SBCR will monitor NMSS's progress and results in this initiative.

(6) Small, Minority and Women-Owned Business Outreach Activity

The Small Business Program provides advocacy to all categories of small business in NRC's procurement process. Over the years, the Agency has consistently met or exceeded the majority of its procurement goals. However, in FY 2001, in order to take advantage of marketplace efficiencies and reduce costs, a decision was made to change the information technology (IT) business model used to procure IT services. This resulted in awarding new contracts to large businesses to perform IT work formerly completed by small, 8(a), and women-owned businesses. In FY 2002, this change resulted in a significant decline in contracting with small businesses and the Agency achieved only two of its six goals.

SBCR, with support from the Office of Administration's Division of Contracts, is leading the development of a strategy to improve the status of our small business accomplishments. The strategy includes enhanced communications with program offices, closer monitoring of accomplishments, training key staff with procurement responsibilities, and implementing outreach activities to identify qualified small businesses in the scientific and engineering areas.

The EDO issued a statement of commitment on March 21, 2003, to reflect senior management support of this initiative and requires office directors and regional administrators to be more proactive in achieving the Agency's small business goals. An assessment of these strategies will be completed at the end of FY 2003. Our collective efforts to implement this strategy should result in an increase of small and minority business participation in NRC's procurement program.

(7) EEO Successes and Challenges

Continued focus on affirmative employment strategies such as targeted recruitment of entry level and experienced employees has resulted in a more diverse NRC workforce overall. The total number of women and minorities in the workplace has increased. Although their percent representation has remained approximately the same over the past 5 years, representation for Hispanics has doubled from 2% to 4%. Continued use of our recruitment model, along with implementation of our Strategic Workforce Planning tool to assist us in targeting experienced and entry-level applicants with the required skills needed for the future, will serve the agency well in recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse workforce. The efforts of managers and employees to utilize the ADR process and other informal means of resolving issues have helped to enhance awareness and cooperation between managers and staff.

Several challenges remain. Increasing diversity in the SES and supervisory ranks continues to be a challenge. Data as of March 31, 2003, show that over the past 5 years, the percent representation of minority managers and supervisors, inclusive of SES, decreased from 15% to 14% (including a decrease in African Americans from 8% to 6%, and an increase for Asian Pacific Americans from 4% to 5%), and increased for white women from 13% to 15%. The challenge is to more effectively utilize and prepare non-supervisory GG-13-15 scientists and engineers in the feeder pool for advancement opportunities. As noted previously, as of March 31, 2003, of the 1106 non-supervisory GG 13-15 scientists and engineers, minorities represent 22%, white women 10%, and white men 68%. Utilizing the Leadership Potential Program (LPP) will continue to provide a source to increase the current level of diversity in the applicant pool for supervisory positions. It is important for the agency to maintain and improve the level of diversity in the applicant pool for the LPP program. We have increased our efforts to target highly qualified applicants for non-supervisory mid-level positions. It is expected that increasing representation of women and minorities among experienced hires for technical positions will enhance diversity within the pool of eligible candidates for this program, and for supervisory positions.

While the overall number of minority non-SES managers and supervisors has improved, the greater challenge is the diversification of the SES core. The recent GAO report referenced earlier projects that the only significant changes in SES diversity government-wide will be an increase in the number of white women and relatively equal decrease in white men. For NRC, the report projects that there will be a decrease in the number of minorities with an equal increase in the number of white women, and the number of white men will remain unchanged.

To improve and maintain diversity at the SES level, strategies are being developed to improve the pool of applicants for future competitions for the SES CDP, to increase minority hires at the SES and mid-levels, and to incorporate diversity into workforce and succession planning models. Senior executives will be expected to support these strategies which are critical to enhance representation of women and minorities in SES. These strategies, coupled with continued use of the SES CDP and the LPP to train and prepare outstanding performers for SES and supervisory positions will assist in enhancing diversity at the SES and supervisory levels.

NRC is committed to developing and sustaining a highly qualified diverse workforce, and thereby enhancing our collective ability to ensure public health and safety. Our continued success in achieving this goal lies in our individual efforts to make NRC the employer of choice for our employees and for highly qualified applicants.

/RA/

William D. Travers
Executive Director
for Operations

Attachments:

1. SRM & Staff Response
2. Statement by James E. Dyer, Regional Administrator, RIII
3. Equal Employment Opportunity Workforce Profile Data
4. EEO Advisory Committees Joint Statement

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*SEE PREVIOUS CONCURRENCE

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Staff Requirements Memorandum (M021031B)

November 7, 2002

and

Staff Requirements Response

January 3, 2003

Attachment 1

Statement by
James E. Dyer, Regional Administrator
Region III

Attachment 2

**Region III
May 2003**

By J. E. Dyer, Regional Administrator

I am pleased to address the Commission regarding Region III activities related to equal employment opportunity (EEO) and diversity management and to assure you of our commitment to the letter and spirit of the NRC Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP) and its guiding principles. With assistance from Small Business and Civil Rights (SBCR) and Office of Human Resources (OHR) staff, and agency-level and Regional EEO Advisory Committees, we have worked hard to recruit and retain a highly skilled and more culturally diverse workforce, and to improve the quality of work life for all Region III employees. I appreciate this opportunity to brief you on the progress made since my predecessor briefed you in 1997.

Demographics

The workforce demographics within Region III are changing. As of February 28, 2003, there were a total of 221 permanent employees in the Region III office and its 18 remote sites. While the total number of employees has been reduced, both minority and female representation have increased slightly.

Region III Work Force Profile Changes June 1997 to February 2003

Ethnicity	As of June 30, 1997			As of February 28, 2003		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
African American	1% (3)	5% (13)	7% (16)	3% (6)	5% (10)	8% (16)
Asian/Pacific	2% (5)	1% (3)	3% (8)	2% (5)	2% (4)	4% (9)
Hispanic	2% (5)	0.4% (1)	2.5% (6)	2% (4)	2% (4)	4% (8)
Native American	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
White	61% (146)	27% (64)	87.5% (210)	58% (128)	27% (60)	85% (188)
TOTALS	66% (159)	34% (81)	100% (240)	65% (143)	35%(78)	100% (221)

More importantly, we have made progress not only in the overall diversity of our total workforce but also in the movement of women and minorities into management and other key positions. In 1997, we had a white female SES Division Director, an African American female acting GG-15 Division Director, and 1 Hispanic male GG-15 Branch Chief. We have retained those female and minority managers; promoted 2 white females and 1 African American male to Branch Chief positions, 1 African American female and 1 white female to Senior Resident Inspector (SRI), GG-14; 1 white female to Senior Risk Analyst, GG-15; and placed 2 additional white females as Resident Inspectors, GG-13. Additional promotions pending in May and June 2003 include 1 Hispanic male to Branch Chief and 1 African American male to SRI, and placement of 1 Nuclear Safety Intern (a Hispanic female) to Resident Inspector. These promotions/placements will help to diversify the candidate pools for future leadership development, SES candidate development and senior management career opportunities throughout NRC.

Facing the Need for Continuous Improvement

While the above statistics demonstrate that we are making progress in achieving a more culturally diverse workforce, we realize that our efforts must be continuous, aggressive, and comprehensive if we are to achieve and maintain a workforce that is highly motivated in a positive work environment. The 1998 OIG Safety Culture Survey confirmed the findings of a 1997 Regional self-assessment that our working environment needed improvement. We have pursued change management initiatives to address identified weaknesses on a Region-wide basis, and believe those efforts are responsible for improvements noted in the 2002 OIG Safety Culture Survey results. However, while we are pleased by the improved survey results, we believe we can and must do better. Accordingly, our management team is focusing on areas of weakness identified in the 2002 survey to address diverse issues within the respective divisions. Specially, we have enhanced strategies related to recruitment, staff retention and development, management development, and established partnerships with academic institutions and professional organizations to accelerate our progress and to ensure our ability to achieve and sustain our desired results.

Outreach Recruitment

We have expended significant efforts to identify and attract highly qualified and culturally diverse candidates to meet our hiring needs. In response to the goal set by the Executive Director for Operations (EDO), in his memorandum dated March 21, 2000, that 25% of all new professional hiring be done at the entry level, special emphasis has been placed on entry-level (GG-5/7/9/11) professional recruitment. In FY 2001, 5 Nuclear Safety Interns were hired 5 in FY 2002, and we have made 7 offers to date in FY 2003. NSIP hiring has clearly been a primary influence on the changes in our overall workforce demographics since 1997 (see prior chart). The chart below depicts demographics of our NSIP hiring and all our external hiring (including NSIP hires) from FY-2001 through FY-2003.

Region III External Hiring FY-2001 through FY-2003

Ethnicity	Entry-Level Hiring			All External Hiring		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
African American	6% (1)	6% (1)	12% (2)	7% (3)	2% (1)	9% (4)
Asian/Pacific	0% (0)	6% (1)	6% (1)	2% (1)	2% (1)	4% (2)
Hispanic	18% (3)	29% (5)	47% (8)	7% (3)	12% (5)	19% (8)
Native American	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
White	12% (2)	24% (4)	36% (6)	49% (21)	19% (8)	68% (29)
TOTALS	35% (6)	65% (11)	100% (17)	65% (28)	35% (15)	100% (43)

To date, all our NSIP hires have had superior academic achievement at the bachelor and advanced degree levels, and 3 have been previous NRC summer hires. From FY-2001 to present, we have also far exceeded the EDO's goal for entry-level professional hiring. During the past 3 years, professional hires at the entry-level in Region III have exceeded the 25% goal: 42% in FY-2001, 45% in FY-2002, and 58% in FY-2003. From all of these perspectives, it is easy to see how crucial entry-level professional recruitment is to our achieving an increasingly diverse workforce and continuously improving the already considerable expertise of our

workforce to perform, and support, the NRC mission.

Line managers have been integrally involved in recruitment efforts. Managers, along with Human Resources staff, have participated in 15-20 recruitment events annually, including university career fairs and numerous professional conferences to attract women and minority applicants. Managers have also assisted in establishing on-going relationships and participated in recruitment activities with a number of key universities (e.g., University of Puerto Rico, University of Illinois, Purdue, North Carolina A&T, Florida A&M, Tuskegee). Intern candidates have been hosted for pre-hire interviews in the Region III office and, when possible, visited nearby power plants to observe NRC Resident Inspectors on-site. We have established an Adopt-a-School relationship with the University of Illinois-Urbana, and with personal support of one of our Division Director's, we have established close liaison with the Society of Women Engineers at the University of Illinois-Chicago. These efforts, while time-consuming and labor-intensive, are critical investments in making NRC Region III an "employer of choice" for highly qualified and diverse applicants.

Staff Retention and Development

Outreach recruitment to bring new employees to the team is a first step in creating a highly qualified and diverse staff. We must also support strategies to improve the quality of work life and foster job satisfaction, enhance productivity and retain employees. To this end, we have significantly increased our investment in staff development through increased funding of training and college courses; temporary promotions, rotations, and career counseling. Additional strategies include project-based and fixed-schedule flexiplace, student loan repayments, and employee recognition. During FY 2002, 17 common or general mission related courses were conducted on-site to maximize opportunities for staff participation; and 184 employees participated individual external training experiences, in addition to required inspector qualifications training courses. In FY-2003, 23 on-site courses have been scheduled, and we expect to fund an equal or greater number of external training opportunities for our employees.

Employees are encouraged to seek NRC-wide development opportunities. During this fiscal year, 1 Hispanic male has been approved to pursue a masters degree starting in FY-2004 under the NRC Graduate Fellowship Program. Awards presentations are incorporated as a standing item on our weekly Principal Staff Meeting agenda. A weekly awards board process ensures that employee achievements are promptly considered for recognition and that the recognition given is consistent with the significance of the achievement. In FY-2002, 5 employees received quality step increases and 131 employees received cash awards for performance, employee of the month, supervisor of the quarter, value-added findings and other individual or group achievements. We expect to recognize similar numbers of employees with awards in FY-2003. Several of our employees and work groups have been nominated for and received NRC's Meritorious or Distinguished Service Awards and the Chicago Area Federal Executive Board recognition for "Federal Employee (or Work Team) of the Year." We also regularly submit articles for NRC-wide newsletters highlighting Region III staff achievements. Additionally, employee recognition is posted monthly on RIII's intranet webpage.

Management Development

Managers are routinely encouraged to complete training to enhance their leadership skills. Region III has two supervisors who are current participants in the SES Candidate Development Program. All Regional SES staff, Branch Chiefs and Team Leaders have completely or are scheduled for Franklin-Covey's "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" course, and many have completed the Aubrey Daniels' course "Bringing Out the Best in People." SBCR staff has facilitated the EEO and Diversity for Managers and Supervisors' course. A piloted EEO course has also been conducted for employees.

Partnerships for Progress

SBCR and OHR staff, and the NRC EEO Advisory Committees provide information and support to assist us in addressing EEO and affirmative employment concerns and objectives. However, we also recognize the need for our own employees' involvement in making Region III a better organization in which to work, and therefore, an organization that works better. They are uniquely positioned to help us maintain an awareness of how our policies, programs and day-to-day management decisions affect the work lives of our employees and, in turn, our ability to fulfill our mission.

The joint Region III EEO Advisory Committee was formed in 1997 to identify and recommend solutions to general EEO concerns, and assist Region III management in the accomplishment of EEO objectives. The committee is comprised of representatives corresponding to each of the NRC's EEO Advisory Committees/employee groups, and includes a representative for persons with disabilities. I meet with the committee quarterly to discuss the status of accomplishments related to the AEP's guiding principles (for incorporation in our Operating Plan Updates), and to obtain information regarding activities of the various NRC EEO Advisory Committees. In addition, the committee oversees the Region's Diversity Day activities and our annual Take Your Kids to Work Day. The committee has sponsored awareness seminars and participated in professional development workshops, conducted surveys on the accessibility of our facilities for persons with disabilities and obtained feedback from our Nuclear Safety Interns regarding their work experiences at the NRC. The committee also sponsors and provides information about special emphasis month celebrations for me to highlight in monthly all-staff meetings.

Additionally, the Regional management team partners with elected union officials and designated employees who, together with management representatives, comprise the Region III Partnership Committee. That group addresses issues and concerns that have impact on the work place and employees' work lives, and jointly conceives, evaluates and implements solutions to issues raised.

Summary

We have made significant progress in support the objectives of the AEP guiding principles, but still have much to do. I want to assure you of the entire Region III management team's collective and individual commitment to pursuing continuous improvement in all areas of EEO and affirmative employment. We look forward to reporting on our further progress in future Commission briefings.

Equal Employment Opportunity Workforce Profile Data

Attachment 3

Joint Statement by
The Equal Employment Opportunity
Advisory Committees

Attachment 4

Equal Employment Opportunity Joint Statement May 2003

The purpose of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Joint Statement is for the EEO Advisory Committee (hereafter, Committees) to 1) inform the Commission of the Committee's current perspectives regarding the Agency's progress related to the EEO and diversity management process, and 2) summarize the common issues identified by the Committees, 3) and provide recommendations for addressing them.

The Committees value the Agency's efforts to address EEO and diversity management issues. Efforts in these areas have been illustrated by the 1) recruitment and retention initiatives that resulted in increase representation of women and minorities at the entry- and experienced levels, especially for Hispanics whose representation doubled over the past few years, and 2) the overall increase in the total number of permanent minority employees. Additionally, the NRC continues to 1) provide EEO, diversity management and feedback training for managers and supervisors to assist managers in communicating effectively to employees regarding their performance and expectations, and (2) enhance management and leadership skills needed to successfully manage a diverse workforce. Furthermore, the NRC has placed greater emphasis on management accountability and the development of staff. These efforts have the potential to increase diversity overall in the Agency and to enhance representation of women and minorities in supervisory, managerial, and executive positions. Other potential benefits for the Agency may include improved delivery of services through a more informed and skilled staff, and reduced recruitment costs due to retention of highly qualified and trained staff.

However, a challenge remains for the Agency: Diversity is not reflected in the ranks of our senior leaders. The representation of minorities in the Senior Executive Service (SES) and the Senior Level Service (SLS) positions has remained relatively unchanged over the past few years. The Agency's commitment to the four EEO guiding principles that underpin the NRC's 5-Year Affirmative Employment Plan is clear yet the Agency's EEO program success is not reflected in achieving its EEO goals in this area for minorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING SIGNIFICANT EEO ADVISORY COMMITTEE ISSUES

- Continue to encourage women and minorities to participate in supervisory and management development activities such as the Leadership Potential Program, SES Candidate Development Program, rotations, and mentoring.
- Continue to recruit and hire entry-level and hire experienced employees.
- Enhance efforts to develop staff, including mentoring, and qualify them for potential advancement.
- Continue to provide constructive and timely feedback to employees regarding their career strategies and to unsuccessful candidates for competitive vacancies.
- Encourage enhanced sensitivity to age related issues to ensure fair performance appraisals, rotational assignments, and promotions for staff age 50 and older

- Ensure managers and supervisors are held accountable for success in EEO. Set measurable EEO goals for senior managers and continue to evaluate their progress annually.
- Reaffirm and communicate EEO policies and outcomes to all employees as an essential element in NRC's strategic business planning.
- Ensure that selection processes are transparent and the methods used are consistent.
- Continue to implement initiatives that foster a "family friendly workplace" environment.

The attached individual Committee statements provide more detail on the above issues and recommendations. The EEO Advisory Committees appreciate the Commission's support for EEO and diversity management, and recommends that the Commission continually reaffirm the Agency's EEO standards and shape a organizational climate within the NRC that supports a more diverse workforce built on acceptance and trust.

The Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee

May 2003

The Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee (APAAC) welcomes the opportunity to address the Commission on equal employment opportunity (EEO) related issues that impact Asian Pacific Americans and the NRC. During the past year, the Agency has continued efforts to enhance representation of Asians, especially at the entry-level. Additionally, focus on enhanced management training and accountability has helped to create an environment toward acceptance and trust. However, the number of Asian/Pacific Americans (APAs) in management positions, including SES ranks, remains historically low compared with the available pool of highly qualified APAs in the Agency. The APA group was the most adversely impacted group during a series of office reorganizations during the past few years. The under-representation of APAs in management and SES positions is evident from the Workforce Profile Data included in this briefing package. We would like to reemphasize our concern and recommend greater management focus on the issue of advancement of APA employees to management positions.

Our recommendations are as follows:

1. Enhance promotion opportunities of APAs into supervisory, SES and SLS positions.
2. Increase hiring of APAs for entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level professional positions.
3. Continue target recruitment at universities identified by the Agency and APA employees, especially members of APAAC.
4. Increase opportunities for rotations to EDO and Commission offices.

We urge that management effectively address these recommendations.

Advisory Committee for African Americans

May 2003

The Advisory Committee for African Americans (ACAA) welcomes the opportunity to address the Commission on equal employment opportunity (EEO) related issues that impact African American employees and the NRC. During the past few years, the NRC has taken a number of positive steps to enhance diversity.

ACAA recommends continued management focus as follows:

Enhance representation of African Americans in supervisory, management, SES, and senior level positions.

Enhance representation of African Americans in feeder groups (Grades GG 13-15) positions that may serve as a source for future supervisory, management, SES, and senior level positions.

Enhance participation of African Americans in career development initiatives such as SES Candidate Development Program, Leadership Potential Program, Computer Science Program, Administrative Skills Enhancement Program, rotations and mentoring.

Enhance recruitment efforts to attract and hire African Americans at the entry-and experienced levels.

ACAA will continue working with the Deputy Executive Director for Management Services, Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, Office of Human Resources and program offices to strengthen the NRC's EEO program and diversity management process.

Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee
May 2003

The Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee (FWPAC) appreciates the opportunity to address the Commission on women's issues. FWPAC's current focus is on leadership development for its constituency. FWPAC goals are to (1) work with management and women to assist in defining career strategies that enhance the potential for advancement of women into supervisory and managerial positions, and (2) evaluate the impacts of flexiplace on employees with respect to managing career objectives and family responsibilities.

FWPAC believes the Agency should increase representation of minority women in senior staff, supervisory, and management positions. Recommendations on how to accomplish this are (1) encourage women to participate in developmental activities such as the Leadership Potential Program, SES Candidate Development Program, rotations, and mentoring, and (2) enhance efforts to qualify women for advancement into senior positions.

Many individuals at the senior level are at or near retirement and it is projected that there will be a potentially negative impact on diversity in the SES. For example, of the 7 African Americans currently in the SES, only two maybe remaining over the next 2-4 years.

FWPAC supports the idea that development of an individual development plan (IDP) and a time line that meets a person's individual and professional goals. We encourage continued management support of the IDP process and feedback to employees regarding their performance and career strategies.

Employers are increasingly recognizing that they can improve the performance and well-being of their employees by helping them achieve a balance between work and their personal lives. Flexible work arrangements are examples of family friendly practices that help people to balance their lives. We recommend continued support of this initiative and will seek to review the impact of flexi-place on employees' work and family responsibilities.

Advisory Committee on Age Discrimination

May 2003

The Committee on Age Discrimination (CAD) again appreciates the opportunity to address the Commission on aging issues. CAD continues to enjoy the active participation of its members and in particular those from the Regions, and the successful communications with the other EEO committees and the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights (SBCR).

The full and productive use of the NRC's older employees is in the best interest of NRC staff, managers, and goals of the agency. The CAD hopes to continue to work with SBCR, NRC management, and the Commission, to make the NRC an example of progressive thinking and innovative actions regarding aging workforce issues in government, and society as a whole.

The CAD would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention some opportunities for increased management involvement:

In the briefing to the Commission in October 2002 we recommended:

1) a seminar for employees and managers which would reinforce, expand, and refine knowledge and skills related to effectively participating in NRC's performance appraisal and promotion systems as related to age issues; 2) mentoring programs to reinforce the transfer of knowledge to the new and generally younger employees; and 3) statistical analyses of promotion data, and rotational data for scientists and engineers ages 40 and above.

With respect to recommendation 1, we note that the Office of Human Resources offers a management course titled *Effective Communication and Feedback* and some offices are providing coaching skills development for its managers. However, we still recommend that a similar course be provided for employees. With respect to recommendation 2, we note that a mentoring program is in place. CAD recommends that Senior staff in addition to managers be appointed to mentor and utilize their experience in coaching new staff. To the best of our knowledge, no final action has been taken on recommendation 3. We again urge that they be implemented.

The CAD is concerned about equity in performance appraisals for staff of age 50 and above. The CAD has been analyzing performance appraisal data for non-supervisory engineers (Job Series 800-899) and scientists (Job Series 1300-1399) for many years. We have consistently found that younger staff receive a higher proportion of outstanding ratings than do older staff. Although we realize that age discrimination may not be the only possible explanation for these findings, the available data did not allow us to investigate the possible reasons. Because each year's performance appraisal ratings are in separate data files, it was not possible to track an individual's performance ratings over time.

Upon CAD request, SBCR supplied us with the performance appraisal ratings from FY1988-2000 for all Grade 13-15 non-supervisory engineers and scientists, tabulated by grade level and age. This data base allowed us to carry out a longitudinal study to examine the extent to which changes in performance appraisal ratings of individuals over time are correlated with age. Of the 763 engineers and scientists who were rated at least 5 times in the period FY1988-2000, 63

percent had essentially the same rating over the years, 24 percent had a downward shift (lower appraisal) and 13 percent had an upward shift (higher appraisal). While there was no correlation with age for the upward shifts, the odds of a downward shift for senior staff 50 or over were about twice the odds of a downward shift for junior staff under 50. In other words, the performance of older scientists and engineers, as measured by performance appraisal ratings, was more likely to deteriorate and be lower than that of younger scientists and engineers.

We recommend that the reasons for these findings be investigated. Whatever these reasons may be, the deteriorating performance of senior staff means that the resources of the agency are not being utilized as effectively as they might be. If the reasons are understood, then corrective actions might be taken to improve agency effectiveness.

For the coming year, CAD plans to examine data on rotational assignments and promotions for engineers and scientists.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to address the Commission on aging issues and look forward to our continued interaction with other EEO committees and the SBCR.

HISPANIC EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 2003

The Hispanic Employment Program Advisory Committee (HEPAC) appreciates the opportunity to address the Commission on equal employment opportunity (EEO) related issues that impact Hispanics and the NRC. Our perspective is that enhancing the diversity of our workforce will provide the NRC with the varied perspectives needed to address future challenges successfully.

During the past year, the NRC has taken a number of positive steps to enhance diversity, improve retention, and manage diversity. HEPAC recognizes NRC management has realized tangible results since the last EEO briefing and over the past couple years to increase representation of Hispanics through entry level hiring largely using the intern program. Specifically, Hispanic representation has doubled over the past five years. However, since overall representation of Hispanics is still low, HEPAC encourages continuation of similar efforts to continue the progress. HEPAC recommends that NRC management continue focused targeting of Universities with significant Hispanic populations to attract highly qualified Hispanic applicants. We also recommend that Hispanic employees continue to be utilized as recruiters, and to provide followup with applicants and new employees. HEPAC members have participated in greeting applicants brought in for interviews and have provided assistance to new employees in their transition to the local area and the NRC. HEPAC members also serve as mentors to new employees to provide career advice.

With respect to upward mobility and retention, there have been a few promotions of Hispanic employees and a couple to the supervisory ranks. However, the outcome of the most recent Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program did not result in any Hispanic selections. Given that it has been a very long time since an Hispanic entered the SES at the NRC we believe that more effort can be devoted to ensure senior staff are being developed, and constructive feedback is provided. This is even more important given the overall number of Hispanics in the GG-13-15 pipeline and in supervisory positions remains very low. One practice that has been used effectively to aid in development is rotational opportunities and other career enhancing assignments, especially at the higher graded levels; therefore, we encourage managers to continue this practice. Another recommendation would be that more emphasis should be placed on recruiting Hispanics to fill vacancies at the mid and senior levels. Our understanding is that one office has made inquiries into methods by which this could be done more effectively. HEPAC intends to provide our assistance and recommendations to help NRC management in this area. Ensuring diversity in NRC management can bring different approaches for solving problems and can aid with retention by providing encouragement to those seeking a management career path.