

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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BRIEFING ON HUMAN CAPITAL AND EQUAL
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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TUESDAY,
JUNE 8, 2021

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

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

CHRISTOPHER T. HANSON, Chairman

JEFF BARAN, Commissioner

ANNIE CAPUTO, Commissioner

DAVID A. WRIGHT, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT:

ANNETTE VIETTI-COOK, Secretary of the Commission

MARIAN ZOBLER, General Counsel

NRC STAFF:

DARRELL ROBERTS, Deputy Executive Director for

Materials, Waste, Research, State, Tribal,

Compliance, Administration, and Human Capital

Programs

MARY LAMARY, Chief Human Capital Officer

LATONYA MAHLAHLA, Chief, Specialized Technical

Training and Support Branch, Office of the Chief Human Capital

Officer (OCHCO)

LARNIECE MCKOY MOORE, ESQ., Technical Assistant,

Office of Small Business and Civil Rights

DAFNA SILBERFELD, Chief, Learning and Talent Development

Branch, OCHCO

BI SMITH, Chief, Policy, Labor and Employee

Relations Branch, OCHCO

ALEXUS WILLIS, General Engineer, Nuclear Regulator

Apprenticeship Network (NRAN), OCHCO

ALSO PRESENT:

SHERYL SANCHEZ, National Treasury Employees Union

PROCEEDINGS

10:41 a.m.

CHAIRMAN HANSON: Good morning, everyone. I convene the Commission's public meeting on human capital and equal opportunity employment. Twice a year, we convene to get an update on significant human capital initiatives and equal employment opportunities. Our last meeting was in February of this year. Today we're going to be discussing a number of topics that are very important to ensuring the NRC staff has a healthy work environment, even if it's at home.

Also, as we celebrate Pride Month, we want to recognize that diversity, inclusion, and belonging are very important here at the NRC. The NRC is a great place to work because of its people. This makes it all the more important to recognize and acknowledge the experiences of others. Given all that is going on in our world today, it's especially important that we support the LGBTQIA+ community and foster an environment of inclusion for all.

We will now hear about a number of programs, initiatives, and opportunities to grow and strengthen our Agency. I look forward to hearing valuable insights during the discussion today. But before we start, I will ask first if my colleagues have any remarks to make.

(Pause.)

CHAIRMAN HANSON: Okay. We'll hear first from Darrell Roberts, our Deputy Executive Director for Materials, Waste, Research, State, Tribal, Compliance, Administration, and Human Capital programs. And he'll begin with opening remarks.

Darrell, the floor is yours.

DR. ROBERTS: Thank you, and good morning, Chairman

1 and Commissioners. And happy Pride Month to everyone.

2 I feel honored to open this very important meeting on the
3 topic of our workforce. As Chairman Hanson spoke about during his
4 plenary at the Regulatory Information Conference earlier this year, three
5 interrelated and ongoing efforts at the Agency involve further risk-informing
6 our regulatory programs, transformation, and diversity and inclusion.

7 Undergirding these are the pillars of regulatory
8 independence, data, and our people. And though I said it last, our people
9 certainly come first. Our workforce is changing, and recruitment and
10 retention programs are important focus areas for us. Today you're going to
11 be hearing about this very important topic, including how we are building a
12 21st century workforce and enabling our staff to be prepared to take on our
13 future challenges in an agile manner.

14 You're also going to hear about efforts being taken to
15 ensure that now and into the future, we 1) effectively consider diverse and
16 competing staff perspectives, 2) we respect each other, and 3) we create a
17 continual learning culture that will ultimately lead to improved performance
18 and productivity and which will help us continue to successfully meet our
19 mission.

20 Next slide, please.

21 I'd like to spend a moment highlighting a couple of aspects
22 of the topics you'll be hearing about today that are near and dear to my
23 heart. And as the Agency's Executive Sponsor for Knowledge
24 Management, or KM, I'm excited about the high-level focus on this area and
25 am pleased to see recent growth in our knowledge management programs,
26 such as transforming of dozens of courses into blended or virtual delivery
27 and a multitude of pages -- hundreds, in fact -- that have been developed in

1 the Nuclepedia platform.

2 We use numerical data to measure our progress, but KM is
3 not all about metrics. An overall focus on embedding KM activities into our
4 culture is critical. Part of what we need to do to transform into a modern
5 risk-informed regulator is to embrace a culture that emphasizes continual
6 learning and empowers individuals and teams to make good decisions at the
7 lowest reasonable level.

8 Critical information needs to be identified and captured,
9 and decisions should be data driven and evidence-based and a healthy KM
10 program helps us reach these goals. I'm looking forward to hearing Dafna
11 Silberfeld and Latonya Mahlahla tell you more about how we have put the
12 tools in place to nurture a knowledge-sharing culture.

13 Secondly, I'd like to also briefly talk about diversity and
14 inclusion initiatives here at the NRC. As stated in our recently-issued
15 Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan, we will continue our commitment to
16 diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in all aspects of the Agency's
17 operations. When we draw on the wisdom of a workforce that reflects the
18 population we serve, we are better able to understand and meet the needs
19 of our customers, the American people.

20 One of the ways we are continuing our commitment is by
21 moving forward with actions associated with the resumption of training,
22 forums, and discussions as we continue to analyze new guidance issues by
23 the Administration related to Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial
24 Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal
25 Government.

26 Larniece McKoy Moore is going to tell you more about how
27 the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights cultivates a diverse and

1 inclusive workplace to advance equal employment opportunity for employees
2 and applicants, and she'll share the latest on our iCARE program.

3 Next slide, please.

4 I've already mentioned a few of our presenters today, and
5 I'd like to fully introduce all of them. The first speaker will be Larniece
6 McKoy Moore, Esq., Technical Assistant, Office of Small Business and Civil
7 Rights. And she will be providing an update on civil rights and diversity and
8 inclusion at the NRC.

9 Next, several staff from the Office of the Chief Human
10 Capital Officer, or OCHCO, will be presenting, starting with Mary Lamary, the
11 Chief Human Capital Officer, who will provide an overview on human capital
12 and strategic workforce planning. Following Mary, Bi Smith, Chief of the
13 Policy, Labor, and Employee Relations Branch, will present the human side
14 of human capital during COVID-19 and how her office supported the NRC
15 workforce.

16 Next, Latonya Mahlahla, Chief, Specialized Technical
17 Training and Support Branch, will describe the Employee Journey Program
18 and how our workforce is being supported today and in the future. And then
19 Dafna Silberfeld, Chief of the Learning and Talent Development Branch, will
20 talk about transformation and modernization, as well as knowledge
21 management and Nuclepedia.

22 And, finally, we'll hear from Alexis Willis, a General
23 Engineer in the Nuclear Regulator Apprenticeship Network, or NRAN, who
24 will be presenting about the new employee experience.

25 That concludes my introductory remarks, and now I'll turn it
26 over to Larniece. Thank you.

27 MS. MOORE: Thank you, Darrell.

1 Good morning, Chairman Hanson, Commissioners, and
2 NRC family. Before getting started, I'd like to thank my SBCR management,
3 Director Vonna Ordaz, and Deputy Director Jeanne Dempsey, as well as the
4 EDO, Margie Doane, for providing me the opportunity to speak with you
5 today.

6 As Darrell said, I am Larniece McKoy Moore, Technical
7 Assistant for the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights. However, for the
8 last nine months, I have been on rotation within the office as Program
9 Manager for Diversity and Inclusion Outreach, which we have branded, if
10 you will, as the Initiative for Civility, Awareness, Respect, and Engagement,
11 or iCARE.

12 Next slide.

13 It is the mission of SBCR to support the Agency's mission
14 in protecting public health and safety and the environment by cultivating the
15 Agency's diverse and inclusive workplace to advance equal employment
16 opportunity for employees and applicants, to provide fair and impartial
17 processing of discrimination complaints, to afford maximum practicable
18 prime and subcontracting opportunities for small businesses, and to allow for
19 meaningful and equal access to the Agency's conducted and financially
20 assisted programs and activities.

21 Today I will be discussing the Agency's equal employment
22 opportunity, or civil rights trends and statistics for the first half of fiscal year
23 2021, as well as how we in SBCR assist in resolving complaints.
24 Additionally, I will share how on the continuum of civil rights initiatives we
25 support employees and assist in contributing to the Agency's desired culture.

26 Next slide.

27 In the area of EEO, at our last briefing to you in February,

1 we noted a small increase in cases as compared to the same time in
2 previous years. The chart before you now shows informal and formal
3 complaints at more than double what they were reported in February.

4 While this may seem like cause for concern, we at SBCR
5 are not quite there yet, in part because our Agency is still only averaging
6 about one percent of its workforce with pre-complaints and less than one
7 percent of its workforce with formal complaints, making the NRC's EEO
8 complaint activity low in comparison to other federal agencies of similar size.

9 However, we continue to analyze all available data in seeking to understand
10 the case of this increase.

11 Next slide, please.

12 Part of our analysis is looking at the bases and issues for
13 complaints. In reviewing the bases of complaints, race, reprisal, age, and
14 sex/gender continue to be the most commonly cited, constituting nearly 85
15 percent of formal complaint filing. We'd like to note here that reprisal
16 continues to remain one of the top bases cited here at the NRC and
17 throughout the federal government, referring to those who have had prior
18 EEO activity or opposition to an employment policy or practice.

19 This chart reflects all bases cited in a formal complaint,
20 which may include multiple bases, providing the total is greater than the
21 actual number of formal complaints filed.

22 Next slide, please.

23 This slide illustrates the state of complaints by issue. The
24 issues you see thus far in 2021 have been among the top two to five over
25 the last several years, with harassment continuing to be the top issue raised.

26 We continue to work with our partners in OGC and OCHCO to provide the
27 staff with knowledge of the anti-harassment policy and to provide

1 anti-harassment training.

2 Next slide.

3 While ADR is offered 100 percent of the time in the
4 informal process, it is not always chosen as the method of resolution. And
5 even with mediation, some cases move to the formal process. However,
6 there are also times when cases are resolved in more creative ways, such
7 as in-house facilitated conversations, one-on-one consultations, or conflict
8 coaching. This is consistent with our office goal of resolving disputes at the
9 lowest level possible. In addition to resolving complaints at the lowest level
10 possible, creative dispute resolution requires us to remove ourselves from
11 the transactional nature of disagreement and appeal to our human side.

12 As of late, our office has seen an increase in requests for
13 DNI or cultural intervention as a means to resolving disagreements. When
14 both parties feel that they've been heard and can contribute to a solution,
15 everyone is more engaged in the community.

16 Next slide.

17 And, speaking of engagement, a major goal of SBCR over
18 the last year has been keeping our community engaged throughout these
19 unique and difficult times. iCARE came to be as a result of many
20 discussions among SBCR staff, led by Vonna, about what our country was
21 experiencing. We were looking for a way beyond the norm to reach out to
22 our NRC family to say that we indeed care.

23 With Margie's approval, the Initiative on Civility,
24 Awareness, Respect, and Engagement was born, and I was afforded the
25 opportunity of taking on the very daunting task of pulling together a team and
26 asking people to just talk about what they were feeling. What we have
27 found with iCARE, much like what we have found with alternative dispute

1 resolution, is that people want to be heard. They want to be seen as more
2 than an engineer or an analyst. They want to be seen as fully human,
3 understand the humans around them, and bring or learn how to bring their
4 whole selves to work.

5 Next slide.

6 iCARE has not been without challenges. Just as we were
7 gearing up, researching, vetting speakers, trainings, and parameters, things
8 changed, and we pivoted to put those things on hold and properly report to
9 external agencies. Of course, after a few months, direction changed again.

10 As mentioned by Darrell, with regard to new executive
11 orders, in moving forward we are continuing to analyze new guidance as it's
12 being issued by the Administration, and we're looking at all of the ways to
13 make any possible program enhancements.

14 Meanwhile, we are pleased to report that we have
15 resumed diversity and inclusion training, forums, and vibrant discussions.
16 And I would like to personally thank the Commission for your support for
17 these efforts, as well as everyone who's been a part or partner in these
18 conversations, whether at your office, division, branch, or agency level.
19 Studies have shown that leadership involvement, specifically senior
20 leadership involvement, is critical to how an organization deals with issues of
21 diversity, equity, and inclusion.

22 SBCR have been welcomed into staff meetings, planning
23 meetings, and periodics in order to assess what's going on in the offices,
24 what support the offices need, what folks want to talk about, and how best to
25 let them express themselves. One thing we've all learned is that it's okay to
26 be vulnerable, to share, to learn, and grow.

27 I would be remiss if I didn't mention my teammates on

1 iCARE here, Haile Lindsay from NMSS, Elva Bowden Berry from OGC, and
2 Dorothea Washington, also from SBCR, who've all taken time out of already
3 packed schedules to help facilitate conversations, review documents, and
4 assist in creating presentations for the advancement of our NRC community.

5 Next slide, please.

6 So what's next? There are a lot of folks working together,
7 and there are a lot of projects going on. Not only has SBCR been working
8 with other offices, but we have been working internally to ensure that all of
9 our own initiatives, guidance, and documents play well with others. For
10 example, we've been meeting with our partners in OCHCO and on the
11 Culture Team to discuss the use of data, to understand the thoughts/feelings
12 of staff when it comes to an inclusive culture. This also helps us
13 understand where to concentrate our outreach efforts.

14 Additionally, SBCR has had the opportunity to discuss the
15 Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan in a comprehensive Diversity Management
16 Plan Report, iCARE, and the Culture Initiative at the Region II DRMA
17 Counterpart Meeting in March, as well as with other offices. We also
18 recently finished a civility course pilot with Region II, which we're still
19 evaluating. And we are working to bring back the dialogue cohorts.

20 Another exciting initiative, which I'm mentioning here for
21 the first time beyond our offices, is that SBCR is partnering with the culture
22 team to help our community define and understand what bringing your whole
23 self to work means. While the last year and a half has been heavy, in many
24 ways, it's been eye-opening and exciting, and it's provided a wealth of
25 opportunity. The pandemic and current events have required us to look at
26 ourselves individually and as a community, as well as as a nation.

27 We at SBCR continue to look forward to serving our

1 community, working with our community, and fostering a community that is
2 better every day.

3 Again, thank you for the opportunity to present. And with
4 that, I will turn it over to our Chief Human Capital Officer, Mary Lamary.

5 (Pause.)

6 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Mary, we can't hear you.

7 MS. LAMARY: Thank you, Larniece.

8 Good morning, Chairman Hanson, Commissioners, NRC
9 workforce, and members of the public joining us today. Thank you so much
10 for the opportunity to highlight some of the activities that we are undertaking
11 to ensure the NRC has the workforce it needs to meet our mission of today
12 and into the future.

13 The Agency is rapidly changing. And when you look at all
14 the initiatives and innovative things happening around the NRC, you cannot
15 help but be excited about our future. Through our Strategic Workforce
16 Planning, or SWP efforts, OCHCO partners with the offices and regions to
17 ensure that data-supported hiring and training decisions are made based on
18 current and future work and critical skill needs. We are listening to and
19 delivering on what employees need to create an engaged workforce, and we
20 are innovating the way we deliver services to our employees.

21 We understand the importance of sound planning and a
22 solid comprehension of the work of the future, the skills necessary to
23 perform that work, and the work environment that will help us attract new
24 workers as well as retain the world-class staff that we have attracted over
25 the years.

26 The offices and regions are engaged and excited about the
27 outcomes of the SWP process, and we are nearing completion of our

1 activities for FY21. These results will inform hiring and training decisions by
2 focusing not only on what they need today but also what they will need in the
3 future.

4 At our last meeting, we provided you some workforce
5 statistics, and you requested that we reassess and execute a study of the
6 percent of retirement eligibles who actually did retire in a given year, as well
7 as attrition by age group. We provided the findings of that study to you
8 earlier this year, and a copy is included in your briefing books. I would like
9 to take this opportunity to draw your attention to several significant findings
10 from that report.

11 Next slide, please.

12 As you can see in this slide, while 2016 may be an outlier
13 due to the Agency offering early retirement and separation incentives, the
14 Agency has experienced significant reductions in overall attrition. This is
15 especially the case with our mid to late career, 40 to 60 and over, age
16 groups.

17 Attrition in our under 30 to 39 age groups has remained
18 somewhat more stable through 2020, with 2021 trending in a positive
19 direction. While this is not necessarily surprising with the millennial and
20 post-millennial generations, it is an area we are addressing through our
21 SWP process, which you will hear more about later this morning.

22 Next slide, please.

23 As you can see in this slide, again with the exception of
24 2016, when the Agency offered early retirement and separation incentives,
25 our retirement rates for eligible employees has consistently ranged between
26 approximately 13 and 16 percent. However, the number of Agency staff
27 eligible for retirement has decreased from 847 to 824, a reduction of total

1 workforce retirement eligibility of 2.7 percent since 2016.

2 More importantly, the number of technical staff eligible for
3 retirement has decreased from 519 to 468, a reduction of 9.8 percent since
4 2016. We consider this to be attributable in large part to our SWP activities
5 generally and the launch of the NRAN program in 2020.

6 We believe the Agency's renewed focus on our entry-level
7 recruitment has reduced the risk to the number of technical staff who are
8 retirement eligible, and we fully expect this trend to continue. As an
9 example, in FY20, 53 percent of our hires into permanent professional
10 positions joined the Agency at the entry level.

11 As we continue to prepare our senior technical staff to
12 retire through the implementation of a robust knowledge management
13 program, insights from the SWP process will be used to highlight
14 developmental activities in support of proficiency progression for mid-career
15 staff, inform the placement of our current NRAN cohort, and influence
16 outreach and recruitment for future NRAN cohorts and entry-level hires.

17 Throughout the presentations today, you'll hear more
18 about SWP, our competency modeling, knowledge management, and
19 employee journey initiatives. These initiatives, while distinct and
20 interrelated, provide a great example of synergistic support for the Agency's
21 transformation activities.

22 Again, thank you for the opportunity to meet with you
23 today, as you saw, from my office, the phone rang.

24 Our next speaker will be Ms. Bi Smith, who will address
25 how we supported the NRC workforce throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
26 Thank you.

27 MS. SMITH: Thank you, Mary. And thank you,

1 Chairman Hanson, Commissioners, DEDO Roberts, and Executives, for the
2 opportunity to be here today and share the human side of human capital
3 management during the COVID-19 pandemic and to tell the story of how we
4 support the NRC workforce.

5 Next slide, please.

6 Back in March of 2020, former President Trump declared
7 the COVID-19 outbreak a national emergency. While keeping in mind our
8 important health and safety mission, the NRC has and continues to be
9 concerned with workplace health and safety. Therefore, in response, we
10 encouraged employees to maximize telework to the fullest extent possible.

11 As more employees teleworked, the Office of the Chief
12 Information Officer provided additional computer equipment, such as
13 headsets and monitors that could be used with their laptops, and there was
14 also a slight increase in the number of reasonable accommodation requests
15 received by OCHCO due to COVID and teleworking. The most common
16 requests were for ergonomic chairs or cushions and sit-stand desks, which
17 were provided in coordination with the Office of Administration.

18 Throughout COVID-19, our Agency has moved through
19 various stages of telework, including mandatory and maximum telework.
20 During that time, OCHCO has provided guidance to NRC staff on what each
21 of the stages mean and what options employees have to telework.

22 In addition, our office worked to adjust various aspects of
23 our telework practices to allow employees to immediately begin working from
24 home. These included adjustments to required paperwork in a streamlined
25 form, more time to complete required training, and granting a special
26 exception to our Agency policy to no longer bar teleworking when young
27 children or other dependents requiring care are present.

1 As a result of these efforts, a majority of our staff have
2 remained teleworking during the pandemic. In addition to expanding our
3 use of telework, OCHCO also approved temporary work schedule
4 flexibilities. These changes allow employees on new flex or compressed
5 work schedules to include workdays between the hours of 12:00 a.m. to
6 11:59 p.m., Monday through Saturday, with supervisory approval.

7 Next slide, please.

8 Even with the increased work schedule flexibilities and
9 expanded use of telework, the NRC recognized that there may be limited
10 instances where employees are unable to complete their full tour of duty.
11 Therefore, the EDO authorized supervisors to grant up to ten hours of
12 excused absence per week for a full-time employee.

13 This authority is expected to be used judiciously and not
14 granted on a regular basis. In February of this year, the excused absence
15 authority was expanded to allow employees to receive the COVID-19
16 vaccine if it was scheduled during their regular tour of duty. And in May of
17 this year, it was expanded even further to allow up to two days for
18 post-COVID-19 vaccination recovery.

19 During this time, OCHCO also provided guidance to
20 employees on emergency leave for certain qualifying circumstances related
21 to COVID-19 that became available. Under the Families First Coronavirus
22 Response Act, emergency paid sick leave was available to employees from
23 April 1st of 2020 through December 31st of 2020. Under the American
24 Rescue Plan Act of 2021, emergency paid leave is available through special
25 funds, which are administered by the Office of Personnel Management,
26 during the period of March 11th of 2021, through September 30th of 2021.

27 Throughout the pandemic, the Agency has prioritized the

1 health and safety of our workforce. We have continuously encouraged
2 employees to use their annual leave and enjoy time off.

3 Next slide, please.

4 OCHCO also made changes to some of its services. We
5 stopped collecting membership fees for the Fitness Center at headquarters,
6 and we opened up remote fitness services to all employees, which includes
7 things such as virtual fitness coaching or group exercise classes. The
8 Health Center at headquarters also quickly transitioned from in-person to
9 telehealth services. A nurse is available every Monday through Friday from
10 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and a doctor is available from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
11 Monday and Wednesdays for all employees.

12 Last fall, we were able to continue our annual flu
13 vaccination drive at both headquarters and the regions and provided free flu
14 shots to all interested employees. The Employee Assistance Program also
15 transitioned to accommodate our telework environment. In-person
16 counseling was moved to virtual counseling. In addition, we increased our
17 marketing of EAP services and developed new on-demand resources, such
18 as videos and podcasts, to address topics such as pandemic anger or winter
19 blues and seasonal depression.

20 We also created new support groups during these times,
21 such as a parenting support group and managing social isolation during
22 COVID. Interest in the Caregiver Support Group also increased.

23 Next slide, please.

24 While we have thoughtfully considered the health and
25 safety of our employees, we have also continued to carry out our health and
26 safety mission needs. Through the NRC's Strategic Workforce Planning
27 process, or SWP, the Agency aligns current and future hiring needs with

1 projected workload forecasts to ensure that our hiring decisions are made
2 with the future in mind.

3 Throughout this pandemic, our staffing and hiring needs
4 continued. Within two pay periods, we transitioned to a completely online
5 orientation process. And between March 2020 through April 2021, over 200
6 new employees began employment with our Agency.

7 Next slide, please.

8 To assist with the SWP strategy for increasing entry-level
9 hiring, offices have focused on student hires. In the summer of 2020, the
10 Agency brought on board 55 summer student interns who worked virtually.
11 At the end of the summer, 25 of these students were converted to the co-op
12 program.

13 For the summer of 2021, the NRC will bring on board 60
14 summer student interns, again virtually. Several of these students are
15 returning for a second internship. Most of these employees have started in
16 recent weeks. For 2021, our co-op program had 27 students. More than
17 half graduated in May, and five were converted to permanent positions
18 noncompetitively.

19 Next slide, please.

20 The SWP process also identified that the Agency would
21 need new personnel to fill anticipated critical skill gaps and/or hard-to-fill
22 positions, such as health physicists and reliability and risk analysts. In
23 response, the NRAN program was conceptualized. The NRAN program
24 supports future Agency skill needs by bringing in an entry-level cohort
25 without a specific end position designated at the time of hiring.

26 The first NRAN cohort began virtually in June of 2020 with
27 23 graduates. Thirty-five percent of them graduated from minority-serving

1 institutions, and 17 percent graduated from historically black colleges and
2 universities. The Agency is now leveraging projected critical skill gaps
3 identified in the SWP process to place cohort members when they complete
4 the program at the beginning of next year.

5 The Agency has also begun planning for the recruitment of
6 the second NRAN cohort. Recruitment for the 2022 NRAN cohort will begin
7 this summer as we interact with our co-ops and student interns and will
8 continue during the fall career fairs and outreach activities.

9 Next slide, please.

10 During calendar year 2020, the NRC continued with its
11 outreach activities by participating in 26 recruitment events, 85 percent of
12 which were held in a virtual environment. The NRC continues to proactively
13 adjust the future recruitment schedule based on FTE and funding levels,
14 while keeping in mind mission-critical skill needs.

15 The schedule provides the Agency with a mix of events
16 focused on both entry-level student vacancies and mid-career positions. It
17 includes a variety of schools with solid engineering and science programs
18 and also includes schools and events that aid us in developing a diverse
19 applicant pool, to include minorities, women, veterans, and people with
20 disabilities.

21 Next slide, please.

22 The Agency has also focused on developing our
23 employees and ensuring that they have the necessary training to perform
24 their jobs and address their developmental needs. In the past, the Agency
25 offered a wide variety of instructor-led courses at both the Technical Training
26 Center and at the Professional Development Center.

27 However, due to COVID-19 and Agency-wide travel

1 restrictions, OCHCO reviewed the training sessions to determine if they
2 should be canceled, rescheduled, or moved to virtual training. Fifty courses
3 were able to be converted to a virtual environment, of which 35 were
4 technical training courses, and the rest were professional development and
5 leadership courses.

6 As a result, the NRC was positioned to continue to offer a
7 robust schedule of leadership, professional, and technical training that met
8 stakeholder demands and workforce training and development needs.
9 Between March of 2020 through March of 2021, we offered over 350 training
10 sessions with over 10,000 attendees. This was an increase over the
11 previous year's numbers.

12 With that, I would like to turn this over to Latonya
13 Mahlahla, who will speak more about training and the employee journey and
14 engaging our workforce today and in the future.

15 MS. MAHLAHLA: Thank you, Bi.

16 Good morning, Chairman Hanson, Commissioners, and
17 Agency staff. Thank you for the opportunity to present today. I'm very
18 excited to share with you some of the human capital resources available to
19 staff throughout their employee journey at the NRC.

20 The NRC is committed to supporting and engaging the
21 workforce today and in the future. The employee journey is continuous and
22 can even start before being hired as a full-time NRC employee by
23 participation in the summer intern program or as a co-op student. Later,
24 you will hear from a new employee in the NRAN program who started as a
25 summer intern and how some of the employee development processes,
26 tools, and resources are supporting her employee journey.

27 Next slide.

1 Today I will discuss five resources that support employee
2 development, technical and professional training, the NRC Guide to Career
3 Enhancement, the Employee Journey website, competency models, and
4 individual development plans.

5 Next slide.

6 The employee journey starts with training and
7 development. After onboarding and completing new employee training,
8 professional and technical training opportunities are available to support staff
9 development and qualifications. The NRC provides technical training in
10 multiple disciplines such as reactor technology, health physics, fuel cycle,
11 probabilistic risk assessment, security, and fundamental regulatory skills to
12 prepare and qualify staff for their roles.

13 Over 100 technical training courses are available to
14 support the qualifications of inspectors, examiners, licensed reviewers, and
15 other technical staff in the regions and headquarters. The use of reactor
16 simulators, laboratories, training aids, and specialized equipment and
17 facilities are an integral part of technical training.

18 Students participate in interactive exercises with scenarios
19 and gain hands-on experience to provide them with simulated real-world
20 experiences they may encounter while performing their regulatory duties.
21 Newer professional training opportunities are also available to build and
22 develop key foundational skills in areas like communication, project
23 management, data analysis, business writing, and leadership development
24 both at the NRC and through external leadership programs.

25 Next slide.

26 This slide shows the variety of technical and professional
27 development courses available. Employees can register and select options

1 from the catalogue to support their qualification or individual development
2 needs. Most of the technical training courses are requirements for formal
3 qualifications, but they are also available to other staff who may be
4 interested in broadening their technical expertise in a specific area.

5 There is a menu full of options of professional
6 development courses, allowing employees to select the best options for
7 them based on where they are in their journey. New employees may be
8 interested in business writing and communication courses. More
9 experienced employees may choose some of the leadership development
10 courses and programs to make them more competitive for new potential
11 roles. No matter where they are in their journey, there are resources
12 available to support them along the way.

13 Next slide, please.

14 To ensure employees have access to these resources,
15 OCHCO uses multiple delivery methods for training. These include
16 in-person courses, online self-paced courses, and virtual instructor-led
17 courses. Modernizing learning and development by transforming some
18 traditional classroom training to blended learning has been a focus since
19 2015.

20 Through this effort, dozens of courses have been
21 transformed to online or blended learning, creating more opportunities for
22 employees to access technical and professional training resources. Use of
23 tools like the Collaborative Learning Environment provide online and blended
24 technical training to employees on demand to support their current role or
25 future roles they may be interested in.

26 The CLE and the rapid conversion of technical and
27 professional courses using virtual platforms were essential during COVID-19

1 to continue to support employee qualification and development due to the
2 unavailability of in-person training. Additionally, informal learning resources
3 like Skillsoft books and videos and knowledge management tools like
4 Nuclepedia are also available, which you will hear more about in the next
5 presentation.

6 Technical and professional training courses are not only
7 available at the beginning of an employee's journey, but they are available
8 anytime to refresh or broaden technical knowledge and expertise and refine
9 professional development skills as needed. Providing access to learning
10 and development opportunities is essential to supporting employees today
11 and in the future.

12 Next slide.

13 Employees, whether they are early, mid, or late career,
14 may be trying to figure out what's next or how they can advance their career
15 in future roles. With this specifically in mind and as a response to a need
16 expressed by employees during the "Jam," OCHCO developed the NRC
17 Guide to Career Enhancement as a single-stop access point to career
18 development resources. The guide is beneficial for staff at all stages of
19 career development. New staff may be unaware of the many tools that are
20 available or where to start. Mid-career staff may be interested in changing
21 positions or exploring new opportunities based on NRC workforce needs.

22 By using this interactive guide, employees can navigate to
23 various tools and processes and learn how to apply them to personalize and
24 take charge of their own career development.

25 Next slide, please.

26 The guide connects employees to the Strategic Workforce
27 Planning results, where employees can view NRC workforce needs and

1 where the future work is expected. Employees can gain insight on
2 projected workflow for their offices and other regions and offices. By
3 staying engaged and understanding Agency needs, employees can
4 determine if their skills are a good fit for current or potential new roles.

5 They can assess their skills through tools like competency
6 models and build supporting individual development plans. The NRC Guide
7 to Career Enhancement is a road map to various employee development
8 resources. Since its launch, over 895 staff have visited the site, with over
9 2,970 visits to the page.

10 Next slide, please.

11 From the NRC Guide to Career Enhancement site,
12 employees can also connect to the Employee Journey, a new platform to
13 explore career paths at the Agency. OCHCO debuted the Employee
14 Journey website to highlight positions that are expected to be in high
15 demand in the future based on SWP data.

16 This interactive platform provides detailed information
17 about the skills, career levels, major duties and responsibilities, locations,
18 and potential career paths for these positions.

19 Next slide.

20 Currently, there are ten positions available for employees
21 to explore. Employees can select a position they're interested in to learn
22 more. For example, if an employee is interested in becoming a budget
23 analyst, they can review the major duties and the skill sets consistently
24 found in that position.

25 They can find out the career levels and where the positions
26 are located in the Agency. Direct links to current NRC vacancies, rotational
27 opportunities, solicitations of interest, and open opportunities are also

1 available. There have been over 1,824 site visits since the site launched in
2 December of 2020.

3 Next slide, please.

4 The competency model assessment process can also
5 support employees in their current jobs and potential future roles.
6 Employees can compare their current skills to the performance requirements
7 of a job at different proficiency levels. Last year, OCHCO integrated a
8 competency assessment process in the talent management system to
9 provide better access to the models to support employee development.

10 The competency model tool uses input from the employee
11 and their supervisor to provide assessment results for competencies within a
12 model. With input from both, employees can have meaningful
13 conversations with their supervisors to identify areas of growth and new
14 development opportunities to support their long-term career needs.

15 Over 150 competency models have been developed for
16 core positions, both technical and corporate, that cover approximately 1,500
17 staff. Additionally, by integrating the models in TMS, NRC employees now
18 have access to all models using the optional career planning feature.
19 Employees can use this feature to explore competency models for careers
20 they may be interested in and compare their capabilities to requirements for
21 successful performance in a potential new role. They can create a
22 development plan to develop new skills and close any skill gaps necessary
23 to move into that role.

24 This new feature and TMS can be a powerful tool in the
25 employee journey for career planning. Since its launch, over 700
26 assessments were completed using the optional career planning feature.

27 Next slide, please.

1 After exploring some of the resources and tools available,
2 employees can revisit the NRC Guide to Career Enhancement to help them
3 figure out what's next for them on their journey. Before developing a
4 formalized plan, they should reflect on their personal priorities to determine if
5 positions they're interested in fit their personal needs.

6 Life factors such as location, travel requirements, and work
7 flexibility options should be considered to determine if a change or a new
8 career will meet the employee's needs. Personal priorities may change
9 over time, so reflection should be considered throughout the employee
10 journey.

11 The individual development plan, now integrated in TMS,
12 is an essential tool to support the employee journey. Working with their
13 supervisors, employees can document a formalized plan to meet their career
14 goals. It gives employees and their supervisors an opportunity to set
15 objectives and identify corresponding activities to move employees along
16 their career journeys.

17 The IDP can include training, rotation, mentoring, and
18 other opportunities to support their career growth. Employees are more
19 likely to achieve their career goals with a written plan.

20 I've only highlighted a few of the human capital resources
21 available; there are many others. As employees move along their career
22 journeys, they are acquiring knowledge, skills, and expertise that may be
23 useful and helpful to other employees. Knowledge management is another
24 important resource available to support employee development.

25 Now I will turn it over to Dafna Silberfeld, who will provide
26 information on how KM can be used and shared throughout the employee
27 journey.

1 MS. SILBERFELD: Thank you, Latonya.

2 And thank you, Chairman Hanson, Commissioners, Deputy
3 Executive Director for Operations Roberts, and Executives.

4 It is an exciting time to have the opportunity to be here
5 today and brief you on the NRC's Knowledge Management Program and
6 cycle that we follow at the NRC, showcase an example of how the Office of
7 Nuclear Security and Incident Response is implementing knowledge
8 management strategy to support knowledge transfer through the strategic
9 workforce planning process and talk about our newest tool, Nuclepedia.

10 Next slide, please.

11 The NRC has practiced the capturing, preservation,
12 sharing, and use of organizational knowledge long before the term
13 knowledge management, which I'll refer to from now on as KM, came into
14 common use. However, it was not until 2006, with the establishment of a
15 formal KM program with a clear system of governance, that the NRC initiated
16 a more structured and systematic approach to KM.

17 Since the KM program's inception in 2006, the Agency has
18 done a great deal of foundational work around establishing a KM community
19 network, creating a shared understanding around the concept of KM,
20 developing various approaches and methodologies for applying KM
21 practices, and implementing tools to increase knowledge capture, sharing,
22 and collaboration.

23 Next slide, please.

24 Today, I'd like to take you on a journey of KM, stepping
25 through the NRC's KM cycle and highlighting how we have put the tools in
26 place to nurture a knowledge-sharing culture by embedding KM into our daily
27 activities so it becomes a regular part of what we do.

1 People, process, and technology are the three main
2 components that make up the NRC's KM cycle and support our
3 organizational knowledge. At the top of the cycle, we've got knowledge
4 creation and our knowledge base, our people. We then move to
5 transferring and capturing knowledge, known as our process. And finally,
6 the third piece is how we access knowledge to apply, reuse, and learn, our
7 technology.

8 Although distinct, they all work together to meet our
9 Agency KM goal to maintain NRC's regulatory and technical excellence by
10 ensuring critical knowledge is captured, available, and used by all NRC staff,
11 present and future. Let's take a deeper look at each part of the cycle that
12 makes up KM.

13 Let's start with our people. We know that our people are
14 the NRC's greatest asset. Our employees are what make up NRC's
15 organizational knowledge. In order for knowledge transfer to occur, it is
16 important we not only identify where the knowledge resides but also facilitate
17 people connection and collaboration throughout an employee's career, better
18 known as the employee journey.

19 An employee journey identifies the moments that matter,
20 such as the first day on board, knowing from day 1 what's expected, knowing
21 where to go to complete an assignment, knowing how to navigate our
22 applications and systems to find information, and most importantly, how to
23 find the right people, the subject-matter experts.

24 Tying KM to employee journey is key to anticipating the
25 knowledge and tools employees need to be motivated and more productive.
26 It also helps employees to do their jobs effectively. If we are successful in
27 integrating KM throughout the employee journey, we can provide knowledge,

1 information at their fingertips, as they start their career, as they advance, and
2 as they reach the end of their career.

3 By doing this, we avoid the mad rush to capture their
4 knowledge as they are walking out the door, because we have been
5 capturing it all along. Today, the NRC is faced with the challenge of the
6 latter part of the employee journey, which is that of an aging workforce,
7 which remains a driver for KM and keeps a continued and heightened focus
8 on KM. We are continuously reminded of the importance of planning and
9 preparing for the future through our people.

10 Knowing what information to capture and how to capture it
11 is another key component of the KM cycle, which we will call the process.
12 This is informed in several entrance points via Agency programs or
13 initiatives, such as Strategic Workforce Planning.

14 Human capital practices, such as the Strategic Workforce
15 Planning process, are an integral piece to strategically plan and inform
16 opportunities for KM. KM is integrated into the Strategic Workforce
17 Planning process and is a commonly noted strategy in office and regional
18 plans when a gap is identified.

19 Once information is identified and captured through our
20 processes, where the information is stored and accessed is the third piece,
21 the technology piece, of the KM cycle. How we manage our organizational
22 knowledge is influenced by the continual advancements in technology with
23 the ultimate goal of getting our employees the information they need when
24 they need it to get their job done successfully.

25 Next slide, please.

26 Now that we have walked through the KM cycle, I would
27 like to share an example from the Office of Nuclear Security and Incident

1 Response, Division of Preparedness and Response, to highlight how they
2 use all three components of the KM cycle (people, process, and technology)
3 and how the different puzzle pieces fit together.

4 I will start with describing how they use the Strategic
5 Workforce Planning process to identify knowledge gaps and needs and use
6 KM tools to minimize the gaps, capture knowledge from experts leading the
7 Agency, and prepare for future employees.

8 In working through the Strategic Workforce Planning
9 process, the Division of Preparedness and Response identified a near-term
10 need for emergency preparedness expertise. They moved quickly to
11 develop an action plan to capture knowledge from subject-matter experts
12 and bridge the knowledge gap.

13 For the knowledge gap, for the people aspect, their
14 strategies included the following: a double-encumbered Branch Chief
15 position for six months for knowledge transfer, hiring of two new hires, one of
16 which was converted to a co-op to bring in new talent, and placement of the
17 Nuclear Regulatory Apprenticeship Network employee in an emergency
18 preparedness apprenticeship.

19 For the process piece, not only was the strategic planning
20 a vital component, but information gleaned from other Agency efforts, such
21 as competency modeling, to support emergency preparedness development,
22 was used to inform their KM needs.

23 Their strategies included cross-training with current staff to
24 include knowledge transfer sessions and DPR spotlights where staff is given
25 the opportunity to present and share knowledge on a topic of their choice, a
26 focus on having 100 percent of staff who are preparing for departure conduct
27 KM activities such as creating desk guides, fact sheets, or Nuclepedia

1 pages, and a job shadowing program, which results from feedback collected
2 in prior Federal Employee Viewpoint Surveys.

3 Lastly, the technology portion of their strategies included
4 virtual Nuclepedia training to train staff on how to create pages; creation of
5 over 30 Nuclepedia pages on topics such as current processes for
6 emergency preparedness, licensing, and oversight activities; KM interviews
7 with pending retirement senior emergency preparedness experts in multiple
8 formats, such as audio, video, and written information; using various tools
9 such as MS Teams and MS Stream; demonstrating sensitivity to different
10 learning styles; and building and enhancing office, division and branch
11 SharePoint sites and organizing materials found there. Thanks to the NSIR
12 team for sharing this example with us.

13 While the Office of Nuclear Security and Incident
14 Response example is truly exemplary, it is important to keep in mind that
15 every KM approach is different. Some strategies will work better in one
16 organization than another, and some may not be appropriate for specific
17 types of content. The challenge is to identify and develop complementary
18 ways to further KM and knowledge transfer in an organization.

19 Next slide, please.

20 I want to take a moment now to talk to you a little bit more
21 about Nuclepedia, our newest knowledge resource repository, the NRC's
22 internal wiki platform. Nuclepedia was launched in January 2020 and has
23 proven to be an invaluable tool in supporting knowledge sharing.
24 Nuclepedia is accessible to all employees, allowing for collaborative
25 contribution and providing information and learning on demand. It is a tool
26 that serves as a bridge to the past, present, and future.

27 Growing the Nuclepedia footprint to make a go-to

1 information source that is easily accessible has been a KM goal. Although
2 it was launched two months prior to the pandemic, Nuclepedia has seen
3 significant growth over the last year. Eight hundred employees have
4 accessed the platform, and over 4,000 pages have been developed.

5 Next slide, please.

6 Nuclepedia allows for creativity in how individuals want to
7 capture knowledge, using multi-sources of information, essentially locating
8 them on Nuclepedia. For example, in the Office of Research, as you can
9 see on the slide, Dr. Richard Lee was preparing for retirement and had been
10 the Branch Chief for the Fuel and Source Term Code Development Branch
11 from 2007 to 2020.

12 Beyond his role as Branch Chief, his career at the NRC
13 spanned over 40 years, and he had subject-matter expertise in areas such
14 as neutronics, nuclear reactor systems, accident analysis, thermal
15 hydraulics, and neutronics, to name a few. The office created a seminar
16 series to record and capture Richard's knowledge, experiences, and
17 perspective on these various topics before he walked out the door. Thanks
18 to Agency's efforts, the information is housed in Nuclepedia and is available
19 to the entire Agency.

20 I hope that as you take the time to peruse the Nuclepedia,
21 you will enjoy the articles you read. And I encourage you all as
22 Commissioners to create a page.

23 As discussed throughout my presentation, making sure
24 employees have the knowledge and information they need when they need
25 is a key factor to NRC becoming a more modern, risk-informed regulator.
26 The KM cycle starts and ends with our people. From the time they onboard
27 to the time they leave, KM must be embedded in our culture and become

1 part of what we do.

2 The NRC continues to evolve, put processes and tools in
3 place to support a knowledge-sharing culture, and as an Agency, we will
4 continue to strive to integrate KM into our daily work activities and work
5 processes, such as Strategic Workforce Planning, to help address
6 knowledge gaps and capture knowledge at all levels of the organization and
7 throughout the employee journey.

8 Thank you for the opportunity to present on Agency KM. I
9 will now turn it over to Alexis Willis to share her employee journey, which
10 also has KM woven into it.

11 MS. WILLIS: Thank you, Dafna. Good morning,
12 Chairman Hanson, Commissioners Caputo, Wright, and Baran, Darrell
13 Roberts, and to the entire NRC family. My name is Alexis Willis, and I'm a
14 member of the Nuclear Regulator Apprenticeship Network in OCHCO. It is
15 my honor to speak to you today and share my new employee experience
16 with you all.

17 Next slide, please. My employee journey at the NRC
18 began during the summer of 2018 as a summer hire within the Radiation
19 Protection Branch in the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research. By joining
20 the NRC, I was a part of one of the first summer hire classes in many years.
21 I was one of the 6 hires within my office and 21 within the agency.

22 During my summer experience, I was able to complete
23 mission-related work pertaining to the medical uses of byproduct material, as
24 well as work alongside the Radiation Protection Computer Code Analysis
25 and Maintenance Program, better known as RAMP. Through my efforts
26 with this team, I created a web page that was developed to reach university
27 students and highlight the different codes RAMP has to offer.

1 The importance of knowledge management activities was
2 introduced and recognized at the beginning of my journey. Based on the
3 mission-related work that I completed, lessons learned, and experiences and
4 connections made, I decided to return to the Office of Regulatory Research
5 as a co-op student during the summer of 2019. As a co-op student, I
6 continued to expand my knowledge of the mission-related work that the NRC
7 produces, including RAMP projects, NUREGs, and the abnormal occurrence
8 report.

9 Following my co-op experience, I took that knowledge and
10 information back to my university, Texas A&M, to conduct research for my
11 senior design project. By the way, I received an A in that course.

12 Because of the mission-related work at the NRC and the
13 family-friendly work environment that the NRC has to offer, I knew that I
14 wanted to start my career at the NRC after graduating. Therefore, I decided
15 to return to the agency as a cohort member within the Nuclear Regulator
16 Apprenticeship Network, better known as NRAN, program.

17 Next slide, please.

18 The NRAN program is an entry-level program designed to
19 develop well-rounded regulators in areas of projected agency skill needs
20 through a targeted initial training as a cohort, followed by three to four
21 apprenticeships that focus on mission-direct contributions and experiences.

22 Next slide, please.

23 As a member of the cohort, I contributed to building
24 NRAN's vision and mission statement. We defined our vision to be
25 excellence and service to the American people and leadership for the next
26 generation of diverse, innovative, knowledgeable, environmentally-conscious
27 nuclear regulators. And our mission is NRAN anchors the next generation

1 of skillful regulators by fostering diverse and innovative thinking in individuals
2 who strive to uphold and support the NRC mission to protect public health
3 and safety, and the environment.

4 We are a very diverse and unique cohort. Many of us are
5 recent college graduates, while some of us have prior career experience,
6 such as Navy experience. And two members of the cohort recently
7 graduated with their Master's degrees. We are nuclear engineers,
8 mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, health physicists, environmental
9 engineers, chemical engineers, structural engineers, and mathematicians.

10 Also, each member of the cohort has a specific connection
11 to the NRC. Some of us were co-op students, summer hires, and some
12 were grant recipients. Almost a year ago, in June of 2020, the NRAN cohort
13 was onboarded to a virtual environment from different locations across the
14 United States. Even though it was a fully virtual environment, we were able
15 to make a smooth and easy transition into the agency due to the help of
16 many offices.

17 During our first week, the cohort immediately began to
18 bond and create the foundation for meaningful friendships and relationships
19 by introducing ourselves and getting to know one another. Even though
20 some of us are at different stages of our careers and lives, we are still able
21 to connect with one another and establish a close relationship as a cohort.
22 We can go to each other for help, guidance, and support during our time at
23 the agency and beyond.

24 During our transition to the agency, we were assigned
25 disrupters, who are peer-mentors through NextGen. These staff mentors
26 volunteered their time to help the NRAN cohort during their transition to the
27 agency and while in our apprenticeships. They've been a resource to us

1 since day one. Also, different offices and regions took the time to welcome
2 us to the agency and made sure that we felt at home.

3 Next slide, please.

4 Our initial weeks at the agency were jam-packed with
5 activities. We had the opportunity and pleasure to meet with multiple senior
6 executives as a group and one-on-one to ask them questions about their
7 journey at the NRC and beyond. Following these sessions, we selected
8 senior executive career mentors who are there to help guide, support, and
9 advise us during our journey at the NRC. Also, during this time, we
10 completed trainings that covered topics, including power plant engineering,
11 health physics, and risk-informed decision-making, to name a few. We
12 gained firsthand and background knowledge that prepared us for our
13 apprenticeship and future placement within the agency.

14 As a cohort, we planned and executed multiple
15 presentations that focus on qualification programs and significant events
16 within the nuclear industry. By working on these projects, we were able to
17 learn and transfer our knowledge to others in the agency. For example, my
18 group and I shared the knowledge that we gained on the Ciudad Juarez
19 contaminated Mexican steel incident through a knowledge management
20 session for Region III. Also, the knowledge that we received, we shared on
21 Nuclepedia and made available for all staff.

22 Once the cohort relocated to the Rockville area, the cohort
23 met one another while following COVID guidelines. We planned and
24 participated in team-building activities and took the NRC Desired Culture
25 workshop in person, which allowed us to further our relationship as a cohort.

26 I've highlighted some of these events through photos. As you can see, in
27 one photo we are in front of the White House. On this day, we bonded as a

1 cohort and visited different agencies that work with the NRC to help fulfill our
2 mission. By being able to work together and interact with one another, our
3 relationship as a cohort was able to strengthen.

4 Each of us have a qualification program that we are
5 working towards in conjunction with our apprenticeship. Currently, I'm
6 working on my materials health physics inspector qualification. This
7 position is considered a need for the agency based on the Strategic
8 Workforce Planning process. Others are working on their qualifications for
9 the reactor technical reviewer or a resident inspector, to name a few. This
10 allows us to gain first-hand experience and knowledge about the role that
11 inspectors or technical reviewers have while working alongside staff in those
12 specific roles.

13 Next slide, please.

14 The NRAN program focuses on developing well-rounded
15 regulators through training, qualification programs, and apprenticeship
16 opportunities. Apprenticeship opportunities are offered from each program
17 office: NMSS, NRR, NSIR, and RES, and from each region. While in the
18 NRAN program, I had the opportunity to spend my first apprenticeship in the
19 Nuclear Analysis and Risk Assessment Branch in the Office of Nuclear
20 Materials Safety and Safeguards. While in NMSS, I had the opportunity to
21 develop a Federal Register notice and put it through the concurrence
22 process, develop a screening tool pertaining to forward fit, and take multiple
23 training courses.

24 During this apprenticeship round, members of the NRAN
25 cohort that were in NMSS made sure that we maintained our relationship
26 with one another by having bi-weekly discussions to check in on one
27 another. Currently, I'm on my second apprenticeship in the Materials

1 Security Branch within the Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response.

2 While in NSIR, I'll be helping with transportation route reviews of spent
3 nuclear fuel and working on the transportation readiness campaign to
4 support large-scale commercial transportation of spent nuclear fuel.

5 During each apprenticeship, every NRANer is completing
6 knowledge management activities while expanding their knowledge on the
7 work the NRC does to support our mission. I've included two photos of
8 NRANers: Muzi and Hayden. During Muzi's first apprenticeship, he was at
9 Braidwood Nuclear Plant in Region III, and Hayden is at Sequoyah Nuclear
10 Plant in Region II during his second apprenticeship.

11 Next slide, please.

12 Based on my positive experience, I've decided to become
13 an Embrace NRC ambassador for summer hires so that I can help them
14 establish those relationships and connections that I made as a summer hire.

15 As an Embrace NRC ambassador, I helped plan and lead the Embrace
16 NRC technical sessions group which planned virtual sessions to give
17 summer hires an overview of the many facets of work at the NRC. Also, I
18 helped coordinate social activities to foster workplace engagement and
19 networking. I want to ensure that the next group of summer hires feel as if
20 the NRC is a family, which is how I felt.

21 After almost a year in NRAN, we are continuing to create
22 relationships, as well as contribute to mission-related work. The NRAN
23 program is one of the key programs to ensure technical expertise in the
24 future in support of the Strategic Workforce Planning process. Even though
25 everyone in the agency does not have the same journey, we are all working
26 to fulfill the same mission.

27 Thank you for the opportunity and thank you for your time.

1 MR. ROBERTS: All right. Thank you, Alexis. And
2 thanks to all the presenters today. Staff provided you, Commissioners, with
3 an overview of our Strategic Workforce Planning and some important that
4 OCHCO and SBCR have supported our staff and will continue to do so in
5 this period of transformation and change.

6 Throughout our transformation, we will continue a strong
7 focus on equal employment opportunity and diversity and inclusion to ensure
8 that our workforce is valued and fully engaged. Not only does this help the
9 NRC be a great place to work, but it is of strategic importance and it enables
10 us to best carry out our mission in an evolving work environment.

11 So that concludes our presentation and my closing
12 remarks, and we welcome your questions.

13 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you, Darrell, very much for
14 that and thanks to the staff for the very interesting presentations on a wide
15 range of subjects this morning. I'm going to start off with the questions,
16 followed by Commissioner Baran, Commissioner Caputo, and Commissioner
17 Wright.

18 So with that, I wanted to start with kind of highlighting and
19 thanking the staff, I think, for some of the hard work they've done,
20 particularly during the public health emergency. It's been really quite a
21 period of 15 months here that we've had, and the public health emergency
22 has left millions of Americans mourning their loved ones, and life in the midst
23 of COVID-19 has sparked fear, frustration, and anxiety all around, and our
24 lives have really been altered in a whole variety of ways. However, I've
25 been really very impressed by the resilience and creativity demonstrated by
26 the NRC staff during this very difficult time.

27 Today, I wanted to highlight OCHCO's efforts during this

1 time. They've been working hard to ensure the staff's health and well-being
2 is preserved so we can continue to support our mission. OCHCO made
3 telework possible during the public health emergency in collaboration with
4 the Office of the Chief Information Officer. The made sure the staff had
5 important services available, such as the Employee Assistance Program,
6 remote fitness services, and telehealth. We were able to bring on 200 new
7 employees thanks to their efforts, and I can attest personally to the success
8 of the virtual orientation process because, as you know, I started my term
9 during the public health emergency. The list of accomplishments really
10 does go on.

11 Your support for the NRC workforce doesn't go unnoticed,
12 and, therefore, I want to express my gratitude to OCHCO for their steadfast
13 and creative efforts over the last 15 months. This is on top of everything
14 else we need to do during normal times.

15 I also appreciate the strides you've made in Strategic
16 Workforce Planning, staff development and training, and all of your unsung
17 efforts that maybe most of us don't see during most of this time.

18 I also want to note on a related but kind of different topic,
19 we marked a sober anniversary recently. Two weeks ago marked the
20 one-year anniversary since George Floyd was murdered. This event was a
21 stark reminder of the racism endemic in too much of our nation's culture.
22 This past year, attention has rightfully been focused on the disparate
23 treatment endured by people of color in America. We've seen ongoing
24 examples of biased policing, increased violence, and unfair practices in the
25 news, knowing full well that only a fraction of these incidents are being
26 widely reported. The recent attacks on Asian Americans and Pacific
27 Islanders and the increase in anti-Semitic violence continue to serve as daily

1 reminders of the hard work we have before us. There has never been a
2 more important time to come together as a community to face these threats
3 to our nation's promise of liberty and justice for all.

4 And, therefore, I want to thank SBCR for their continuous
5 commitment to cultivate a diverse and inclusive workplace. I'm incredibly
6 grateful for the quick reinstatement of the much-needed diversity and
7 inclusion training celebratory lunches and roundtable discussions after the
8 revocation of the executive order limiting the federal workforce's ability to
9 speak freely and openly about race and diversity. Efforts such as iCARE,
10 the culture initiative, and others are critical to allowing our staff to bring their
11 whole selves to work. I've been fortunate enough to be able to attend some
12 of these events and trainings, and I'd like to encourage everyone to take the
13 opportunity to join in.

14 It's an understatement, to say the least, that in the past 15
15 months our colleagues, friends, family, and communities have had their lives
16 changed in critical ways. Each person has different experiences that shape
17 their daily lives. Recognizing and appreciating this is important, and it's my
18 sincerest hope that we can continue to foster a community of support and
19 deeper understanding here at the NRC. I, for one, commit to doing my part.

20 With that, I'm going to ask a couple of questions. For Bi
21 Smith, you mentioned in passing some veterans recruiting events. As my
22 colleagues know, I think it's 23 percent of NRC employees are currently
23 serving in the military or are veterans that contribute a great deal. We just
24 recently in May observed recognition of veterans' contributions to the
25 agency, and I was wondering if you could say a little bit more about our
26 veterans recruiting efforts.

27 MS. SMITH: I'm sorry. I don't know more about the

1 veterans recruiting efforts. I know that we have used it for our mid
2 entry-level hiring, and we've used it when we don't have the skill set that we
3 have in-house. So I don't know if anybody else on this have some more
4 additional information on veterans hiring.

5 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Okay.

6 MR. ROBERTS: Maybe Mary could speak to the service
7 events that we recruit at.

8 MS. LAMARY: Correct. So as part of our recruitment
9 efforts, we recruit for diversity inclusion at minority-serving institutions,
10 HBCUs, et cetera. But in addition, we also bear our recruitment efforts
11 through programs such as the VSOs, the veteran service organizations.
12 And, in fact, I believe that at least one of our NRANers is a veteran. So we
13 look to recruit from veterans for all levels of employment, whether they're
14 entry level or mid-career, and we are very proactive in it. We also have
15 veterans' preference application. Although we're an excepted service
16 agency, we still had the opportunity to apply veterans' preference to the
17 extent practicable in our recruitment efforts, as well, in our general
18 recruitment efforts.

19 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you for that. I'm going to
20 jump around here just a little bit, and I had a question about knowledge
21 management. And maybe my colleagues get these emails, but I know
22 occasionally departing employees or even sometimes current employees will
23 email me and say please, for the love of all that is holy, will you please fix
24 ADAMS? And I'm wondering, my question is really about the role that
25 ADAMS plays in knowledge management and kind of what the current
26 thinking is with regard to maybe improving document search capabilities and
27 other capabilities in ADAMS. I don't know, Latonya or someone else maybe

1 want to tackle that?

2 MS. SILBERFELD: Sure. This is Dafna.

3 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Dafna. Thank you.

4 MS. SILBERFELD: Yes. And so while I will say I can't
5 necessarily completely speak to ADAMS per se, what I can say is that really
6 Nuclepedia is what we are trying to build and grow to be kind of that focal,
7 that entry point, that almost directory, so that if you have a topic that might
8 have a link to something in ADAMS, you can really go to Nuclepedia, you
9 can look up that topic, and then, hopefully, there can be a link in Nuclepedia
10 that would take you straight to that ADAMS document.

11 So we're still sort of in that gardening phase. We're now
12 really growing, it's really a year in. We're trying to encourage people to
13 continue to add to Nuclepedia because there's so much we could do with our
14 internal Wiki tool and having information at your fingertips. So it's kind of
15 part of our overall strategy, and we are working on it.

16 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Okay. Thank you. I can see the
17 real benefit of having something that kind of curates ADAMS a little bit on
18 specific topics. So thank you very, very much for that.

19 And, lastly, Alexis, thanks for all your feedback on the
20 NRAN program. It was really great to hear your experiences. I've got a
21 bunch of questions for you, but I'll just keep it to one, and that is, do you
22 have some suggestions for us? We're constantly trying to learn about what
23 works in these programs and what doesn't. But do you have some
24 suggestions for improvements on the NRAN program that we could
25 consider?

26 MS. WILLIS: Yes. Thank you for the opportunity and
27 thank you for your time. Some suggestions I would have is lengthening the

1 initial training phase of our program so that we're able to do more trainings
2 and more team-building activities prior to starting our apprenticeships. I
3 know that this is a challenge with the pandemic this year, but I believe that
4 creating that relationship amongst the cohort is a very important factor to
5 establish the cohort's relationship.

6 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Great. Thank you very much. I
7 appreciate that. And with that, Commissioner Baran.

8 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Thank you, Chairman. And
9 thank you for your heartfelt remarks. I couldn't agree more. And thank you
10 to all of our panelists for your presentations.

11 I really appreciate the update on Strategic Workforce
12 Planning. This process helps the agency by ensuring that we have the right
13 staffing and skill sets to do our work now and in the future, but it can also be
14 very helpful to NRC employees because it gives them the ability to see
15 which skills and experiences they'll need to be competitive for different
16 positions throughout the agency.

17 And it sounds like we're getting closer to realizing this
18 vision. The agency is able to forecast what positions will need to be filled
19 down the road, the competency modeling lets employees know what's
20 needed for different positions, individual development plans help employees
21 develop a strategy to get those skills and qualifications, and the training and
22 rotation opportunities help make it happen.

23 Mary or Latonya, the pieces seem to be coming together.
24 How well is this all working in practice? Are we seeing people able to use
25 these tools to successfully transition to their desired positions within the
26 agency?

27 MS. LAMARY: Very much so, sir. Thank you for your

1 question. We are really, really pleased that the SWP process has become
2 very much institutionalized. It's a very repeatable process. Its phased
3 implementation now covers the entire agency. In terms of the competency
4 modeling, our competency models cover over 50 percent of the staff already.
5 There's still a ways to go, but the 153 CMs that we've completed cover
6 approximately 1,500 of our approximately 2,800 employees. We can see by
7 virtue of our internal promotions and selections how we are building our own
8 internally, and we can see from the visits and traffic to the employee journey
9 and to our portals, the career paths, that folks are actually going in and
10 exploring that and mapping their careers.

11 Latonya, do you have anything you want to add in terms of
12 specifics?

13 MS. MAHLAHLA: The only thing I'll add is that we also
14 are integrating a lot of these processes in our Talent Management System.
15 So having the competency models in TMS and linking those to supporting
16 development plans, all that works together. We modeled, developed our
17 modeling plan based on the SWP core positions, so they're all linked. And
18 as we consolidate the information and make it more available in our Talent
19 Management System, it's working really well, and we'll continue to grow in
20 that area as far as using that data. Employees will have access to that data
21 to support their own career development and move into some of those roles
22 that were identified through the Strategic Workforce Planning process.

23 COMMISSIONER BARAN: That's great. What gaps are
24 left to be filled in the Strategic Workforce Planning process? For example,
25 what's left to be done on competency modeling and what's the time frame to
26 complete that work?

27 MS. MAHLAHLA: I can take that. So for competency

1 modeling, right now we have over 153 positions that have been modeled,
2 and we are basing those off of the SWP core positions. But we are
3 planning to model other agency positions, as well. As we develop those
4 models, we're working on competency-based qualifications where we'll
5 actually transform some of our qualifications in our training programs to
6 make them more competency based. Right now, we're doing a pilot for the
7 resident inspector program, and, from that project, we will be making
8 changes to that formal qualification program to support employee
9 development.

10 Additionally, after we finish that program, we'll be focusing
11 on other qualification programs, and, again, we're going to be using the SWP
12 data to inform what we work on next.

13 We're also focusing on development opportunities, really
14 looking at all of the training opportunities that are available. In my
15 presentation, I mentioned that there was over 100 training courses available.

16 There are tons of professional development courses available. As we work
17 on refining and enhancing our models, we're working on linking those
18 training opportunities and other development opportunities to those specific
19 models so that we can have that direct link to the individual development
20 plan.

21 So there's a lot of work to continue, but we're making great
22 progress. And we're seeing increased use of the CMs by employees,
23 especially the optional career planning feature. A lot of people are using
24 that tool to explore other potential careers in the agency.

25 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Thanks. Let me turn to the
26 related topic of hiring. I'm glad to hear that we're getting back to a
27 significant amount of hiring with 149 permanent hires over the last year or

1 so. That's a great development. And it's going to be important to maintain
2 a substantial amount of hiring going forward in order to offset our annual
3 attrition and be ready for the work ahead of us.

4 Mary, a key piece of the puzzle is to fully utilize our
5 budgeted FTE. Are we improving in that area as an agency? Are
6 managers and supervisors filling the open budgeted positions?

7 MS. LAMARY: Thank you for that question. We are, sir.
8 As you mentioned, we did a great deal of hiring and onboarding in a virtual
9 environment. We hired, currently, to date, we've hired 66 more employees
10 than we did last year, and we're on track to continue that hiring.

11 Of the hiring that we've done, a hundred or so have come
12 from outside the agency, so we are bringing in and supplementing our staff,
13 as well as promoting from within. We would love to bring more on, but our
14 need is greater than our staff can handle right now. So we're at capacity in
15 terms of doing the recruitment, the crediting plans, the qualifying of
16 applicants, et cetera. We're doing as much as we can to reduce the hiring
17 time so that we can do more hiring with the same resources, but we're
18 working very, very diligently to get there.

19 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Okay, thanks. Bi and
20 Alexis, thanks for the update on NRAN. It's an important element of our
21 hiring. Bi, can you talk about how the staff determines the right size for an
22 NRAN cohort?

23 MS. SMITH: Sure. So the NRAN size, I think, is kind of
24 gathered from the SWP process. We can kind of forecast on where we
25 need to have positions, and it's based on mission need. So the current
26 cohort right now is a technical cohort, and then we're also planning for
27 another technical cohort in the summer of 2022.

1 And so we want to try to make sure that the technical
2 entry-hire leveling group has a good mix of diversity from, like,
3 minority-serving institutions. And then we also want to make sure that the
4 size that we have is optimal so that it can be for effective learning. So when
5 you factor in, like, the on-the-job training activities or the right number of
6 instructor-to-staff ratio, we want to make sure that we have the right size.
7 So that's why we think it's approximately 25.

8 We also keep in mind that we're constrained by, you know,
9 physical classroom sizes at the NRC or at contractor facilities. And then we
10 also have one branch chief and one program manager for the entire cohort.
11 So managing a larger cohort could be difficult.

12 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Okay. So that might actually
13 get at my next question, but I'm going to ask it anyway. Maybe it's just my
14 enthusiasm for the program. But, you know, right now, we have a cohort
15 every couple of years, and one cohort finishes before another begins. Is it
16 feasible to have overlapping cohorts? Could we have a new cohort starting
17 each year?

18 MS. LAMARY: I'll take that. I'm sorry. I can take that.
19 We do actually have some overlap, Commissioner Baran. But where the
20 overlap lies is on the staffing and recruitment side. So while we're in the
21 midst of finalizing the final year of the first NRAN cohort, we're also
22 beginning to look at the recruitment efforts to bring the second one onboard.

23 So we don't have the resources to run two concurrently,
24 but we do do the work concurrently with some overlap towards the end of
25 one cohort to bring the next one in.

26 COMMISSIONER BARAN: And in terms of that resource
27 constraint, is it the amount of kind of effort for the apprenticeship aspect of it,

1 from, you know, let's say, in this case, the technical staff; or is it more of a
2 limitation of the folks in terms of our resources in OCHCO? What's the
3 constraint on, you know, if we wanted to do 20 or 25 every year, what's
4 holding us back from doing that?

5 MS. LAMARY: Well, that indeed would be a huge
6 demand, so we would have to identify candidates. We would have to then
7 get them vetted and get them onboard. We would have to then work with all
8 of the offices to ensure that we have placements for them in terms of
9 rotations and then apprenticeships themselves. We just heard from Alexis
10 that, optimally, from her experience, she would have appreciated more time
11 before she went out becoming acclimated to NRC in terms of training,
12 development, spending time with the cohort.

13 So with only two people to actually manage the program
14 and do that work and keep the very, very cohesive sense that Alexis feels
15 with her NRAN cohort, I think that, in terms of identifying what is optimal,
16 both the size and the every other year, is the appropriate approach, sir.

17 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Okay. Thanks. I appreciate
18 the complexities there. I'm kind of running out of time, but, Alexis, I want to
19 just ask, well, it sounds like you've had a good experience with the program
20 so far. I imagine the past year was not the easiest one to start a new job
21 anywhere with everything being virtual. From your perspective, how have
22 the mentoring and apprenticeship aspects of the program gone during this
23 COVID virtual period?

24 MS. WILLIS: Thank you for your question. During the
25 COVID environment, our apprenticeships have been very welcoming.
26 We've been able to make smooth transitions into each apprenticeship.
27 Also, with mentoring, we've been able to keep those connections with our

1 mentors and set up monthly chats or bi-weekly discussions and able to
2 check in with our mentors and able to keep that relationship open.

3 Like I mentioned, our apprenticeship opportunities have
4 been very welcoming. Bridges have been prepared for us, and a lot of us
5 have received technical mentors within the apprenticeship that are able to
6 help us on our day-to-day basis and make us feel welcome within that
7 branch.

8 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Terrific. Thanks so much.
9 Thanks, Chairman.

10 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you, Commissioner Baran.
11 Commissioner Caputo, over to you.

12 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Thank you. Well, good
13 morning, everyone. And thank you for your presentations today. As the
14 Chairman said, it's certainly been a very challenging 15 years for all of us
15 and challenging to each individual in various ways. And so I just want to
16 add my appreciation of the staff for just performing admirably under an
17 amazing set of trying circumstances.

18 And with that in mind, I'd like to start with a question to Bi.
19 You mentioned how you've been shaping EAP programs to meet anticipated
20 need. Has there been an uptick in utilization of EAP, considering all the
21 challenges going on?

22 MS. SMITH: So I believe that when COVID first started
23 that we went down on the EAP, like, the number of people that were
24 interested in EAP, just because it was in a state of flux. But I believe, just
25 as more time went on and the pandemic continued, we noticed that it was
26 putting a stress on people. So we've made an effort to reach out and kind of
27 put out announcements very week about EAP services so that all employees

1 are aware of what's available.

2 And then we did develop a few support groups, and we
3 were actually getting ready to put out an announcement about another
4 support group that we're going to be developing, as well.

5 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Okay, wonderful. Thank
6 you. I also wanted to give a compliment to Ms. Mahlahla. I looked over the
7 email, the May 28th internet announcement for upcoming training for
8 summer interns. It was quite a list. I have to say I was interested in taking
9 a handful of those myself, and I really appreciate the fact, it seems novel to
10 me to take trainings that are designed for interns and open them up to
11 everyone in the agency, but I think that's going above and beyond. I think
12 it's a very creative opportunity for staff to tune in and perhaps learn about
13 things that maybe are going on at the agency that they haven't been
14 exposed to before. So thank you very much for that. Well done.

15 And I have another question for Bi on recruitment. You
16 talked about how we've been doing more recruitment virtually. Does that
17 extend our reach? Are we, by the nature of recruiting virtually, able to reach
18 more students or more populations than we otherwise would in trying to do it
19 in person?

20 MS. SMITH: I don't know for sure. I would say that we
21 have done it virtually, but not only just those jobs fairs, but we reach out
22 through things such as LinkedIn or Twitter or job boards and print
23 advertisements. So it's not just the recruitment fairs that I think that we can
24 reach out to those employees, as well. But I don't have the exact numbers
25 of if we've gotten more or not.

26 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Okay. Thank you. I have
27 a question for Mary also about recruiting. It sounded in response to

1 Commissioner Baran's questions that you feel your staff is sort of at their
2 limit for the amount of recruiting that they can accomplish. We've had 227
3 hires, and 147 of those are permanent. The summer interns are included in
4 the temporary hires I'm guessing?

5 MS. LAMARY: Yes, yes, they are. They are still folks
6 that we need to do backgrounds on and do onboarding and orientation with.
7 Yes, ma'am.

8 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Okay. And so how many
9 staff do you have handling recruiting?

10 MS. LAMARY: Here at the headquarters, we have about
11 30 that handle all aspects of staffing and recruitment, so that includes
12 classifying position descriptions to maintain modern competencies and skills
13 required. When we recruit for a position that's not been filled for a while,
14 we'll update that position description, so we have classification efforts going
15 on, as well as staffing and recruitment to place the job announcements, do
16 crediting plans.

17 So there's a lot of work involved. You don't just simply
18 post a job and make a selection.

19 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Okay. And I have a
20 question for Larniece. You talked about iCARE, and I'm just curious, can
21 you just describe iCARE in a little bit more detail and maybe give us a little
22 bit more on how it differs from our other programs, what makes it unique and
23 helpful?

24 MS. MOORE: Sure. Thank you for the question.
25 iCARE is built on the model of our Dialogue program, which is a cohort
26 program where people come together and discuss different facets of
27 diversity. When I say built on the model, it kind of means that we're having

1 facilitated discussions or presentations and allowing the staff to guide that.
2 So it's a little bit different from either just talking at them but allowing them to
3 guide the conversation on topics that they would like to discuss, want to
4 know more about.

5 So we feel like it's important that, as SBCR, because, you
6 know, we don't want any outside issues or issues to come up where we
7 need the other part of SBCR. So it's more of a guided, facilitated discussion
8 than just teaching or lecture. So I would say that it's guided by staff more
9 than anything else.

10 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Okay, thank you. I have
11 another question for you. You know, as we commonly see in these
12 meetings, you had data and charts on EEO complaints. I'm just wondering
13 if you're seeing any changes in the types of complaints based on the
14 pandemic? Are we seeing different dynamics, different challenges, just
15 given the past 15 months; or is it, more or less, similar to what we normally
16 experience?

17 MS. MOORE: I don't think we have complete data on that
18 yet. I think the Civil Rights Program is still adjusting. I know that the cases
19 are more complex, but I think we're still kind of evaluating what effect the
20 pandemic has had on the program. And, you know, as things continue to
21 change, coming back to the office and all of that, I think the effect is
22 continuing. So that may be something that we can't answer maybe for
23 another six months to a year.

24 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Okay, great. Thank you.
25 That's it for my questions. I just want to associate myself with the
26 Chairman's remarks about Pride Month. It's, I think, just incredibly
27 important to support all of our employees and really call attention to some of

1 the aspects of Pride Month to celebrate those employees.

2 I have to say the expression bring your whole self to work
3 was new to me when I joined the NRC. I think it's an incredibly human and
4 important phrase to recognize who we are and that we all need to be
5 comfortable in coming to the workplace and bringing our whole selves to
6 work. So while it may have been novel to me, I really do appreciate the full
7 meaning of that and hope that, as the agency endeavors to make all of our
8 employees feel more welcome, that we really do all embrace that expression
9 and what it means to all of our colleagues that we work with here.

10 Thank you very much.

11 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you, Commissioner
12 Caputo. Thank you for those remarks. Commissioner Wright.

13 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
14 and then thank you, Commissioner Caputo, for your remarks, as well. Very
15 heartfelt.

16 So good morning to everyone and thank you for your
17 presentations. The work that you've highlighted really shows how much
18 planning and work goes into ensuring that the NRC leverages our expert
19 staff's knowledge and experience and our diverse workforce and fosters an
20 open and inclusive workplace, both in person and virtually. So I do
21 appreciate everyone's efforts as we meet those goals.

22 I also agree that the last 15 months has felt like 15 years at
23 times, right? You know, one of the things that this last year, it's proven
24 there's a lot of minefields out there and a lot of things that are out there to try
25 to cause people to think differently or pit one person against another or one
26 group against another, and I really appreciate how the NRC goes about their
27 business, you know, because inside this agency there is respect, there's

1 trust, there's honesty, and there's truth, and I see it every day. I see it in
2 person, and I see it virtually, as well. So I'm very grateful.

3 And it's been difficult for a lot of people, as the Chairman
4 mentioned in his comments. You know, people lost loved ones and had a
5 lot of different things happen to them personally that you wouldn't see in any
6 other time, you know, outside of a pandemic and war maybe.

7 But as it was stated, I think, by Larniece talking about there
8 was opportunity. This whole 15 months has been, there's just been tons of
9 opportunity for us to grow and to do things in a very positive way.
10 Congratulations. You've adapted. You've survived. It hadn't been fun or
11 easy, but you made it, we made it, and we're coming out on the other side.

12 So we've learned, you've been innovative, you've shown a
13 lot of ingenuity as a staff, and I see a more confident and an even more
14 competent NRC. So congratulations to everyone, and thank you for, the
15 panelists today, for what you've done to foster that.

16 So with that, you know, I love the executives and I love all
17 the SESers and I love the senior staff. But, Alexis, I really admire you, and
18 I love it that we have the opportunity to pick your brain a little bit. So I'm
19 going to start with you. And I'm, quite honestly, just on a personal note, I'm
20 excited to follow your career, you know, based on what I know about you
21 and what I'm learning about you today.

22 So I appreciate you sharing your experience as a summer
23 hire and a co-op student and a member of the first NRAN cohort. And I'm
24 really impressed that you and the others transitioned in such a positive way
25 in this program in a virtual environment. I'm going to follow, kind of stay
26 with where the Chairman began with you. I'd like you to tell me if there's
27 something that came out of the virtual onboarding elements that worked well

1 that you believe would be beneficial. And if you want to, in the future, you
2 can expand a little more if you want on what you maybe were starting to
3 share with the Chairman. And then I guess, on the other hand of things, do
4 you have any other suggestions for improving the summer hire, the co-op
5 experience, and the NRAN experience?

6 MS. WILLIS: Thank you for your question. Some things
7 that worked well in our transition to our virtual environment is having
8 disrupters who are peer mentors of NextGen. These staff members were
9 there whenever we had questions during our transition for making sure that
10 the next cohort or the other members that are coming on virtually have that
11 point of contact that they're able to ask questions about.

12 For your second question about some things that could
13 possibly change or some things like that, as of now I believe that the NRAN
14 cohort is a great program. As I mentioned previously, I would change the
15 infiltrating phase just to incorporate more team-building activities, but that
16 was not able to be done due to the pandemic. So just making sure that
17 those things are done so that the next cohort can have the same relationship
18 as my cohort and that close relationship.

19 Thank you for your question.

20 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes. I'm going to stay with
21 you for a second. So back in '18 and I think in '19 when we had the
22 summer hires here, I had a group of them come up to my office and they
23 actually sat down, and maybe you were one of them because I know two of
24 them were from Texas A&M.

25 MS. WILLIS: Yes, I was one.

26 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: That's what I thought. And
27 so you remember that discussion and where we took that discussion to

1 OCHCO and kind of talked about what we were missing when we were
2 going out into the universities trying to bring people in.

3 Are they still continuing to, in your opinion, have we as an
4 NRC, are we adapting to get into there earlier and to do things better and to
5 make sure that the cream that is rising to the top isn't getting picked off by
6 some other agency?

7 MS. WILLIS: Yes, I believe that NRC is doing a great job
8 at that. Last year, before the pandemic, the NRC actually came to Texas
9 A&M in September and started the recruiting process there so that they can
10 hire new hires and start the NRAN program and actually talk to us and talk to
11 the NRC grant recipients to let them know about the NRC and NRC's
12 opportunities. So I believe they're doing a great job at that.

13 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you very much. And
14 it goes without saying to you and the others that, not just from myself but I'm
15 sure that my colleagues, as well, our doors are open to you any time that
16 you need us. And you can either walk up or call, however you want to do it,
17 when we're there. So thank you so much.

18 Mary Lamary, I want to come to you for a second. You've
19 heard the conversation I just had with Alexis. In the onboarding of this
20 cohort, did you use any lessons learned from previous entry-level hiring
21 programs, such as, I don't know, the nuclear safety intern program or the
22 professional development program or the Honor Law Graduate Program?

23 MS. LAMARY: We did, sir, and they became part of our
24 onboarding process in terms of inculcating the NRC culture with our
25 NRANers. We ensure that they had mentors. We ensured the disrupters.
26 The disrupters is a great name, by the way. We ensure that they had a
27 resource where, back in our day it might have been question authority, ask

1 questions, never ask in fear and never fear to ask, you know, just have to
2 necessarily salute and execute, you need to understand why something is
3 done the way it is.

4 So I think we made a lot of progress in terms of
5 onboarding our NRANers from past experience. And as Alexis said, we
6 learned quite a bit in terms of even recruiting them and getting out earlier
7 and not missing out on the top candidates who had already made
8 commitments to other programs.

9 So I think, even before they actually come in to do their
10 onboarding, we've learned a lot of lessons and have begun to implement
11 them.

12 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes, so I do want to
13 follow-up on that last part right there, although it could still be a little bit early.
14 But are there any other lessons learned, other than the couple that have
15 been pointed out very recently here, any lessons learned from this first
16 NRAN cohort that you're going to plan to use going forward?

17 MS. LAMARY: So, actually, Alexis is another perfect
18 example of lessons learned in terms of recruiting and how to identify
19 candidates. So for those who did not know or understand how the hiring
20 process, the various flexibilities work, summer interns are sort of
21 self-defining. They're here for the summer. But then you can use
22 something called the co-op program, which Alexis also transitioned into.
23 So the co-op program are folks that can work at any time, not just during the
24 summer. They can work full-time while they're in school and work part-time
25 for us. They can work during spring break, over winter break, not just the
26 summer.

27 And we can also recruit from grant recipients, scholarship

1 recipients. And so when, obviously if someone has received a grant or a
2 scholarship from NRC, it's somebody that we've identified as a hot potential
3 candidate. So those are the resources that we look at, in addition to our
4 outreach programs; our job fairs; our campus visits, whether they're in
5 person or virtual. We are already looking at pipelines for high potential
6 candidates who they have an interest in NRC-related fields, as well as the
7 opportunity to retain them through converting the summer interns to a co-op
8 or supporting them through a grant or a scholarship process.

9 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you very much. And,
10 Mr. Chairman, I wish I had more time to speak because I want to ask
11 questions of each one of them. They were great. It was a great
12 presentation today, but I yield back.

13 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Well, I think we could all, we all
14 probably have a lot of questions we could ask and could be here all day if we
15 wanted to. With that, though, I will ask Sheryl Sanchez if she'd like to make
16 some remarks from the National Treasury Employees Union.

17 MS. SANCHEZ: Thank you, sir. Good morning,
18 Chairman Hanson, Commissioners Baran, Caputo, and Wright, DEDO
19 Roberts, and NRC bargaining unit employees. Happy Pride Month to all,
20 and I hope you will participate in various activities to celebrate both at the
21 NRC and outside of the NRC, as I plan to.

22 I'm Sheryl Sanchez, President of NTEU Chapter 208, and
23 I'm pleased to be able to provide the Union's comments this morning.
24 NTEU Chapter 208 is the exclusive representative of bargaining unit
25 employees here at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. I'm joined virtually
26 by a large number of NTEU team members who work hard every day on
27 behalf of our bargaining unit employees, such as our stewards, labor

1 partners, and our executive board members. Without such a dedicated
2 team, NTEU would not be able to work together to strive to ensure that every
3 NRC employee is treated with dignity and respect.

4 When I was here in February, I discussed equality, equity,
5 and fairness, and concluded that equality and equity were not enough and
6 that the NRC has to consider what fairness and justice would look like and
7 how we can become an agency that is more fair and just. One of the most
8 important functions of NTEU is to level the playing field and make the
9 agency a fairer and more just place for our bargaining unit employees.

10 As I have said on many occasions, NTEU is here for you
11 should you feel you are not being treated fairly. So if you are a bargaining
12 unit employee, don't hesitate to seek our help.

13 While I was reviewing the slides for today's meeting,
14 before preparing my comments, I kept coming back to slides 10 and 11.
15 Slide 10 is the one which says inclusion, support, and engagement during
16 difficult times and on difficult topics. And slide 11 is the iCARE slide on the
17 initiative on civility, awareness, respect, and engagement.

18 NTEU jumped on the civility bandwagon early on when, in
19 the 2015 collective bargaining agreement, we negotiated a dignity clause
20 into Article 2 which states that relationships in the workplace should be
21 conducted in a civil business-like manner. Although I am pleased to see
22 that this is being addressed again in the iCARE initiative, I'm a little sad and
23 troubled that we have to state the obvious. But, sadly, I have witnessed
24 more than my share of a lack thereof lately, both personally and that
25 experienced by employees that came to NTEU for assistance.

26 Civility, awareness, respect, and engagement are at the
27 heart of any effort to achieve diversity and inclusion, especially during

1 difficult times and in dealing with difficult topics. So often the inability to
2 deal with difficult topics is due to the destructive ways in which they're
3 addressed. People need to realize that other thoughtful and caring people
4 may have very different views on how to address complex problems and act
5 accordingly or civilly.

6 But civility clearly has to be more than politeness. Any
7 effort to promote civility will not amount to much if all it does is get people to
8 say excuse me while they stab you in the back.

9 On the flip side, civility also cannot mean roll over and play
10 dead. Employees have to feel safe raising tough questions and present
11 their cases when they feel their interests, rights, or values are being
12 threatened. We should not avoid difficult but important issues because they
13 are unpleasant. We must find creative ways and equitable ways to address
14 them, which recognize the differences that divide our diverse employees.

15 In the book "Getting to Yes" by Roger Fisher, it is advised
16 to separate the people from the problem and be soft on the people but hard
17 on the problem. This will lead to discussions that are more likely to be
18 successful, as opposed to personal attacks which create a hostile
19 environment and shut down the solidarity which could lead to solutions.
20 This means both parties must acknowledge that it is possible that they're
21 wrong and some of the arguments made by the other party are right.

22 While civility is essential, it is only a start and not nearly as
23 important as awareness, respect, and engagement. As I've stated many
24 times when encouraging employees to reach out to NTEU for our
25 assistance, if we are not aware of a problem, we can do nothing to fix it.

26 Similarly, if an individual is not aware of their biases, they
27 will not be able to do anything about them. It is essential that we are

1 self-aware and that we hold our co-workers accountable for their biases,
2 which may not be intentional but are, nonetheless, hurtful. This is easier
3 said than done, but as long as we try everyday with good intentions, we will
4 see improvement in our culture.

5 I will close by asking you something I've asked before:
6 please be kind, kinder than you think is necessary, kinder than you think the
7 person you are dealing with deserves, especially if they may not be acting so
8 kind or have been especially hurtful or disrespectful to you. I know this is
9 not easy, and I will be honest: sometimes, I have been successful at this and
10 other times not so much, but I always try to be a nice human. We are all
11 only human, but, if we approach each interaction with genuine respect for
12 the other party's view and do our best to engage them, our agency will
13 become a better place.

14 Thank you for your attention, and do not hesitate to reach
15 out to NTEU if you have any questions or concerns or if you would like us to
16 assist you. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you, Ms. Sanchez. Thank
18 you to the staff today for your presentations and the thought and care that
19 went into that in presenting the progress that we've made in the areas of
20 Strategic Workforce Planning and knowledge management and diversity and
21 inclusion initiatives. It's very much appreciated.

22 Thank you to my colleagues. I've very much appreciated
23 your questions and comments this morning, as always. I think we had,
24 again, another very good discussion.

25 And with that, we're adjourned.

26 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record
27 at 11:54 a.m.)