

INFORMATION PAPER

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SECY-00-0064

FOR: The Commissioners

FROM: William D. Travers /RA/
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY BRIEFING

PURPOSE:

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

BACKGROUND:

The Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, as amended, requires the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) Executive Director for Operations (EDO) to report to the Commission, at semi-annual public meetings, on the problems, progress, and status of the Agency's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program. For the next briefing, scheduled for March 30, 2000, the staff is providing a summary of major EEO accomplishments and activities consistent with the four Guiding Principles stated in the NRC's 5-Year Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP). These principles are: 1) create a discrimination-free work environment; 2) ensure that policies, practices, and procedures enhance equal employment opportunity and enable fair and equitable competition for employee career enhancement and advancement; 3) employ a competent, highly skilled and diverse workforce in a positive work environment, and 4) recognize and value diversity, thereby establishing trust, respect, and concern for the welfare of all employees within the Agency. Additionally, to provide a more comprehensive status on the Agency's overall equal opportunity activities, this report includes a summary of the Agency's small, minority, 8 (a), and women owned business activity related to NRC's procurement preference program; and a summary of the Agency's compliance activities for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Program (HBCU).

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Following the last briefing on July 22, 1999, the Commission requested, through a Staff Requirements Memorandum (SRM) dated August 25, 1999, that the staff respond to five issues: 1) the impact of the FY 1999 reorganization and downsizing on disabled veterans and other employees with disabilities; 2) provide diversity information about professional and entry-level offers, declinations, and hires for FY 1999 and FY 2000; 3) identify strategies to train managers to do better, more effective performance appraisals; 4) provide data on the likelihood that employees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) will leave the Agency earlier than employees covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), and assess if the finding could significantly impact Agency retention of employees in the near future; and 5) discuss actions taken to encourage qualified employees, including women and minorities, to apply for Senior Level Service (SLS), Senior Executive Service (SES), supervisory and other competitive positions and for the SES Candidate Development Program. The Commission also requested that consideration be given to promoting more aggressive outreach efforts with fellow agencies to attract qualified and diverse applicants, and to promote intra-governmental rotational assignments to showcase the NRC to qualified and diverse applicants. These issues were addressed in the staff response dated December 27, 1999. A copy of the SRM and the response are provided in Attachment 1.

This report discusses accomplishments and challenges in the four major EEO goal areas, and includes a statement by Mr. Michael Springer, Director, Office of Administration, on implementation of the EEO program within his office (Attachment 2). Also included are discrimination complaint data and workforce profile data by grade, ethnicity, gender, occupation, and age for FY 1999 (Attachment 3); and a joint statement from the five EEO Advisory Committees and a statement from the Joint Labor Management Equal Employment Opportunity Committee (Attachment 4).

DISCUSSION:

1. Create a discrimination-free work environment.

The foundation for a discrimination-free workplace is an informed workforce, where managers and employees are aware of their roles and responsibilities, and where managers and supervisors are motivated to consistently apply sound principles of fairness and equity. Two primary goals have been established to facilitate a discrimination-free workplace: 1) educating managers and employees about EEO and preventing harassment in the workplace, and 2) ensuring reasonable accommodations are provided to employees with disabilities. The Office of Small Business and Civil Rights (SBCR) and the Office of Human Resources (HR) continue to work together to provide relevant EEO advice and training for managers. The basic EEO course, *EEO for Managers and Supervisors*, is generally provided annually in headquarters and the regions. This course was revised during FY 1999 to include sexual harassment prevention (which was previously taught separately) as well as the recent changes in the Federal sector EEO complaint process. As of January 2000, agencies are required to offer an alternative dispute resolution process to resolve EEO complaints. Discussion of the Agency's plans to implement this requirement are included in the revised course. A pilot session of the revised course was presented in November 1999, and sessions will be presented at Regional offices and Headquarters throughout FY 2000. This course is a requirement for all new supervisors.

Other course offerings include *Effective Management Participation in Merit Staffing*, a course designed to help prepare supervisors, managers, and rating panel members to rate, rank, select, and provide feedback to job applicants, and to improve their knowledge of the Agency's merit staffing policy and procedures. Sessions were conducted at headquarters and Region II in October 1999. In FY 1999, the Agency conducted 6 sessions of *Sexual Harassment Prevention at NRC* for employees who came on board since 1995 and had not attended this required training which was offered agency-wide in the 1992 - 1994 time frame.

To create and maintain a working environment that is free of discrimination, additional focus is being placed on identifying office-specific EEO goals and improving management's responsiveness in addressing EEO related concerns. To facilitate implementation of this initiative, the Director, SBCR, has met with office directors, regional administrators, and several division directors to discuss EEO goals for their specific organizations and to provide advice and recommendations regarding strategies to achieve these goals. Targeted recruiting strategies, especially for Hispanics, were of common concern during these discussions and still remain the Agency's most significant recruitment challenge. Other areas of focus discussed during these meetings included management's responsibility to provide honest and timely feedback to employees about performance expectations and career development, affirmative employment, upward mobility, and diversity management. Discussions also focused on the value of creating and maintaining a positive work environment that supports diverse perspectives, open communication, and staff recognition for good performance.

The Agency's EEO counselors play a critical role in working with employees and management to address issues early, and seek mutually agreed upon resolutions at the lowest level in the organization. A review of informal complaint data indicates that counselors continue to be highly effective in facilitating informal resolution of EEO related issues.

Four informal counseling cases were pending at the end of FY 1998. During FY 1999, 35 informal counseling cases were filed, for a total of 39 cases. Five were withdrawn based on satisfactory resolution during counseling. Four were closed with settlement agreements, and 21 Notices of Right to File a formal complaint were issued. Nine active counseling cases were pending at the end of FY 1999, 7 cases were initiated during the first quarter of FY 2000, for a total of 16 informal cases: 4 were withdrawn based on satisfactory resolution during counseling, 1 was closed for employee's failure to pursue, and 4 Notices of Right to File a formal complaint were issued. Seven informal cases were pending at the end of the first quarter of FY 2000.

The number of formal complaints increased significantly during FY 1999, as reflected in the following data:

Fiscal Year	Number of Complaints
1996	11
1997	7
1998	12
1999	16
FY 2000 as of 12/31/99	<u>1</u>
Total filed	47

Thirteen formal complaints were pending at the end of FY 1998, and 16 formal complaints were filed in FY 1999 for a total of 29 complaints. Three cases were withdrawn, 9 cases were closed with settlement agreements, and 4 final Agency decisions of no discrimination were issued. Thirteen formal complaints were pending at the end of FY 1999. There were 37 issues cited in formal complaints processed during FY 1999. The most frequently cited issues were non-selection for promotion (17) and performance appraisal (6). The most frequently cited bases were race/color (11), gender (8), age (7), and disability (6). A complaint can include more than one basis and issue.

To ensure that EEO matters are resolved in an expeditious manner, it is critical that management and staff continue to work cooperatively to eliminate valid bases for complaints, and to resolve issues that are raised. Alternative dispute resolution, a confidential, non-adjudicative, and non-adversarial process, should assist the Agency as an additional mechanism for resolving issues at the lowest level possible. Details on EEO complaints are included in Attachment 3, Chart 1.

A discrimination-free work environment must provide reasonable accommodations to enable physically and mentally disabled employees to carry out their assigned tasks. A reasonable accommodation is an adjustment or alteration that enables a qualified person with a disability to apply for a job, perform job duties, or enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment. Accommodation requests must include appropriate supportive medical documentation for action by management. In FY 1999, 22 requests for accommodations were approved. Also sign language interpreters were provided for hearing-impaired employees during meetings and during the Agency's Special Emphasis Programs.

2. Implement Policies, Practices, and Procedures to Enhance EEO, and Enable Fair and Equitable Competition for Employee Career Enhancement and Advancement.

It is the policy of the NRC to implement a human resources management program consistent with the goals and objectives of EEO. To effectively implement this policy, two overarching goals have been established: 1) implement management policies, procedures, and practices that support EEO, and 2) improve management responsiveness to identifying and overcoming barriers to EEO. SBCR and HR are responsible for ensuring that appropriate human resource management policies and procedures related to recruitment, merit selection, promotion, performance evaluation, awards, and training and development are in place and implemented. During FY 1999, the following significant human resource management actions were implemented to support the goal of fair and equitable competition and career enhancement for employees:

- a. *A Merit Staffing Checklist*, developed and implemented based on the joint recommendation of the EEO Advisory Committees, was used by the HR Specialists in discussions with managers and supervisors regarding developing rating factors and vacancy announcements. Use of this standardized checklist is intended to improve the quality and uniformity of the merit process.
- b. Office directors and regional administrators were routinely encouraged to use broad rating factors for posted vacancies. Expanding rating factors helps to attract the widest possible pool of diverse candidates. Additionally, the majority of NRC's rating panels are composed

of members from diverse groups to provide for multiple perspectives in the evaluation process.

- c. To enhance uniform and fair application of the merit staffing process, office directors and regional administrators frequently meet with their subordinate managers to discuss justifications for applicant evaluations prior to selection. Selection officials are expected to interview all internal "A" or "best qualified" candidates.
- d. As now required by law, external postings that were previously open only to current federal employees have been expanded to include veterans not currently in the federal workforce.
- e. A process has been established on the internal web to advertise available rotations and allow NRC employees to indicate that they wish to be considered for a rotational opportunity within the Agency.

Individual office operating plans indicate that 18 offices held regular office-wide meetings to improve communication between management and staff. These meetings are used to provide employees information regarding current office developments, exchange ideas, recognize award recipients, and conduct information workshops regarding the merit staffing process, application procedures, and the facilitated mentoring process.

The performance appraisal guidance for FY 1999 encouraged managers to provide honest feedback to employees regarding their performance and to conduct performance evaluations consistent with appropriate application of the Agency's performance criteria. As noted in the last EEO briefing, during FY 1998, application of established performance evaluation criteria resulted in an overall decrease in the number of outstanding ratings for all groups, but more significantly for African Americans and women. The staff has conducted a review of performance ratings for FY 1999 performance appraisals. Findings indicate that in FY 1999, the number of employees receiving "outstanding" ratings agency-wide increased by 4 percentage points over FY 1998 and the number receiving "fully successful" ratings decreased by 3 percentage points. "Outstanding" ratings for white males and Asian Pacific Americans tracked with the Agency's overall 4% increase. White females rated "outstanding" increased by 5 percentage points. African Americans rated "outstanding" increased by 2%, Hispanics decreased by 2% and "outstanding" ratings for Native Americans decreased from a raw number of 3 to 2.

The number of white males rated "fully successful" decreased by 4 percentage points (from 12% to 8%). The number of white females decreased from 9% to 7%, African Americans and Asian Pacific Americans decreased from 15% to 11%, and Hispanics increased from 13% to 20%. The number of Native Americans rated "fully successful" increased from 1 to 2.

The percentage of outstanding ratings for all minority groups is below (by a minimum of 10%) the overall Agency rate of 38%. White males are slightly above the Agency percentage at 39%, and white females significantly higher at 46%. All age groups are higher than the 38% except employees at age 56 and above. Twenty-seven percent of these employees were rated "outstanding", reflecting no change from FY 1998. See Attachment 3, Chart 26 for more detailed information regarding performance appraisals.

Managers and supervisors are encouraged to base employee performance ratings on objective performance standards. Prior to the end of each performance rating period, a memorandum regarding completion of performance appraisals is issued to all managers and supervisors encouraging them to be particularly sensitive not to allow age, ethnicity, handicapping condition, or gender intrude into performance evaluations. Such a memorandum will be issued again in September 2000 by the EDO.

NRC's internal web page and the automated vacancy announcement system were used to facilitate a more timely and efficient process of notifying employees of vacancies in headquarters and regional offices. Additionally, vacancies are announced on the Office of Personnel Management's USA Job web page. Upon request, employees may also obtain information regarding vacancies from the HR Service Centers.

When making selection and promotion decisions, managers, supervisors, and selection panel members were reminded to ensure that fair and equitable consideration is given to all employees. For all supervisory and non-bargaining unit positions at the GG-15 level and above, selection packages are reviewed by the Executive Resources Board EEO Review Group prior to selection as another check-and-balance in the system to ensure that senior management is aware of the availability of highly qualified women, minorities, and candidates with disabilities.

SBCR is responsible for evaluating EEO accomplishments and assessing efforts that support the Agency's EEO goals. Office directors and regional administrators provide quarterly status reports to enable SBCR to identify areas which require additional focus. At the request of regional management, the Director, SBCR, conducted individual and employee focus group sessions at Regions I, III, and IV to identify and address issues of concern to employees. An annual report of office accomplishments was provided to the Executive Director for Operations for his use in evaluating the performance of senior executives.

EEO Advisory Committees, including representatives from regional offices, also play a role in identifying and assisting in the resolution of EEO related concerns. Committees provide advice and recommendations to SBCR regarding recruitment, hiring, promotion, placement, and training and career development for employees. In the Joint Statement included as an attachment to this paper, the Advisory Committees raised the issue of enhancing opportunities for women, minorities, and persons with disabilities in two areas: SES, SLS, and managerial positions; and upward mobility positions. To address the first area, the Joint Statement recommends that management identify ways to increase minority representation, especially Hispanics, in the next SES Candidate Development Program. In regard to the second, the Joint Statement urges management to give greater attention to utilizing upward mobility positions wherever feasible. The EEO Advisory Committee Joint Statement contains other ongoing committee concerns and recommendations.

3. Employ a competent and highly skilled workforce, representative of America's diversity, which enables the Agency to accomplish its mission.

Four major initiatives have been established to enhance and support affirmative employment: 1) hire at the entry-level, 2) expand the pool for supervisory, management and executive positions; 3) attract and retain persons with disabilities; and 4) maintain effective student outreach activities.

NRC's targeted recruitment is based on groups deemed under represented in NRC's workforce. The recruitment schedule is a dynamic tool, based on an evaluation of the outcome of specific recruiting events (e.g., number of applications received, number of applicants placed in the pool, number of selections made). Events that are judged as not successful in a given year may be eliminated from the following year's recruitment schedule, and others may be added. The FY 2000 recruitment schedule includes 35 events (professional conferences and college career fairs) of which 26 are targeted for minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. A breakdown of the events by diversity category follows: 8 Hispanic events, 1 Native American event, 8 African American events, 1 Asian Pacific American event, 4 multi-ethnic events, 1 women event, and 3 events for persons with disabilities. The multi-ethnic events include a Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Fair sponsored by the school's chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE); a Massachusetts Institute of Technology Fair sponsored by the school chapters of NSBE, SHPE, and the American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES); the University of Maryland Multi-Ethnic Career Fair; and the Society of American Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) Conference. It is expected that these sources will provide a highly diverse applicant pool for technical and scientific positions.

Managers and staff from diverse backgrounds served as recruiters in recruitment events that targeted women and minority applicants. During FY 1999, a total of 37 HR representatives and 45 technical employees including 10 managers served as recruiters: 13 white women, 18 white men, 31 African Americans, 11 Hispanics, 8 Asian Pacific Americans, and 1 Native American. During the first quarter of FY 2000, a total of 8 HR representatives and 8 technical employees including 1 manager served as recruiters: 7 white women, 5 white men, 1 African American, 2 Hispanics, and 1 Native American. The staff has been able to maintain a cadre of diverse employees who are available to participate in recruitment events. Research has shown that diverse representation among recruiters, especially managers, is a key marketing strategy for maintaining a diverse applicant pool.

Recently a new recruitment strategy was used to attract applicants for secretarial positions. These positions will fill the NRC's secretarial pool which is centrally established in HR to provide training and development prior to permanent placement in secretarial positions. A network announcement was used to advertise these positions. This network announcement provided the opportunity for all employees to participate in the recruitment process.

NRC's recruitment program has been revitalized so that the Agency can compete successfully for minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. Initiatives include:

- Developing relationships with targeted minority institutions and colleges and universities with significant disabled populations including contacting student organizations and relevant professors and department chairpersons, conducting classroom presentations, and meeting with college and university Directors of Office of Disability Services.
- Targeting pertinent military components (military separation centers as well as minority-specific military organizations).
- Working with the new full-time recruiter recently hired by HR, placing additional focus on entry-level hiring and on developing additional strategies to attract highly qualified women, minorities, and disabled.

NRC has experienced a steady decline in FTE resources over the past five fiscal years. However, this trend has not significantly reduced decreased the number of hires since FY 1996. As shown in Table A, the number of hires has remained relatively constant, averaging approximately 100 annually. During FY 1999, a total of 102 employees were hired: 44 (43%) white men, 36 (35%) white women, 11 (11%) African Americans, 5 (5%) Hispanics, 5 (5%) Asian Pacific Americans, and 1 (1%) Native American. This includes 14 entry-level and intern hires. During the first quarter of FY 2000, 20 employees were hired including one entry-level employee. This number includes 7 white males, 9 white females, 2 Asian Pacific Americans, 1 African American and 1 Hispanic. The overall percentage of hires for women and minorities held constant or increased.

Table A - Hires

	FY 00		FY 99		FY 98		FY 97		FY 96	
Totals	20	100%	102	100%	116	100%	109	100%	100	100%
Female	12	60%	47	46%	40	34%	31	28%	43	43%
Male	8	40%	55	54%	76	66%	78	72%	57	57%
African American	1	5%	11	11%	9	8%	9	8%	12	12%
Asian Pacific American	2	10%	5	5%	15	13%	5	5%	5	5%
Hispanic	1	5%	5	5%	4	3%	1	1%	8	8%
Native American	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%
White Female	9	45%	36	35%	30	26%	23	21%	31	31%
White Male	7	35%	44	43%	57	49%	71	65%	44	44%

Attracting, hiring, and developing talented, diverse entry-level employees who have the skills and potential to become future Agency leaders and experts is one of the Agency's most important and most challenging priorities. As the average length of service of Agency employees increases, we need to attract new staff earlier in - and especially at the beginning of - their professional careers. Entry-level/intern hiring has been the most successful method of improving the diversity of professional employees at NRC. Our emphasis must continue to be placed on entry-level hiring, whenever possible. The Agency is establishing a goal of hiring at least 25% of new employees at the entry-level. Offices and regions are being encouraged to fully utilize the Agency's full-time equivalent (FTE) resources to support this goal. This includes

efforts to attract and utilize cooperative education students, who may later, as some have in the past, become entry-level employees.

As shown in Table B, the reduction of the Agency's full-time equivalent (FTE) resources has led to a significant decrease in the number of entry-level/intern hires after FY 1996. However, entry-level/intern hires has remained steady since FY 1997. Details on all hires are included in Attachment 3, Chart 13.¹

Table B - Entry-Level/Intern Hires

	FY 00		FY 99		FY 98		FY 97		FY 96	
Totals	0	100%	8	100%	8	100%	9	100%	22	100%
Female	0	0%	7	88%	4	50%	3	33%	11	50%
Male	0	0%	1	13%	4	50%	6	67%	11	50%
African American	0	0%	3	38%	0	0%	0	0%	2	9%
Asian Pacific American	0	0%	0	0%	2	25%	1	11%	3	14%
Hispanic	0	0%	0	0%	1	13%	0	0%	0	0%
Native American	0	0%	1	13%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
White Female	0	0%	3	38%	3	38%	2	22%	8	36%
White Male	0	0%	1	13%	2	25%	6	67%	9	41%

Utilization of NRC's unique pay setting authority and benefits package has provided attractive incentives for applicants. Generally, the Agency's hiring authority enables us to set pay levels above the step-1 of the general grade for entry-level and experienced employees. Utilizing the Agency's unique hiring authority is critical in enhancing our ability to compete with other Federal Agencies for highly qualified applicants. During FY 1999, pay levels above the step 1 of the general grade, were established for 11 prospective entry-level/intern employees and 34 prospective experienced employees. Equally attractive to applicants is our benefits package which includes opportunities for salary increases based on fully successful performance, special salaries for entry-level engineers and physical scientists, paid annual and sick leave, paid holidays, group health and life insurance, retirement program, personal banking at the credit union, use of the health center and child care facility, use of the Fitness Center, and special employee discounts on recreational activities sponsored through the Employee Recreation and Welfare Association. Existing family-friendly policies and practices such as work-at-home, part-time employment, and alternative work schedules also help to attract new employees.

Other hiring incentives for applicants include access to training and development, mentoring, and career counseling. HR assesses the need for developmental programs to attract applicants and retain and develop on-board staff. Developmental programs include: Women's Executive Leadership, Facilitated Mentoring, Computer Science, Technical Intern,

¹In order to maintain consistent data and reporting, the Agency will count as professional entry-level hires recent college graduates with bachelors, masters, or PhD degrees and little or no work experience in their field. This definition yields lower numbers of entry-level hires than shown in Table B of the SRM response issued on December 27, 1999. (Attachment 1)

Administrative Skills Enhancement, and Certified Professional Secretary. These programs serve as an effective tool for enhancing developmental opportunities for women and minorities, older workers, and persons with disabilities.

Rotational assignments provide another developmental tool for enhancing employee knowledge and skills and for attracting applicants. HR advertised rotational opportunities on its internal web page which allowed employees to obtain information regarding rotational opportunities. In addition, employees can now indicate their availability for rotational assignments on HR's internal web page. HR specialists and the SBCR staff advise employees to seek rotational assignments, and work with employees and offices to facilitate such assignments. During FY 1999, employees participated in a total of 141 rotational assignments. As shown in Table C, women and minorities received 57% of these rotational assignments. This is an increase of 13% from FY 1998 with the largest increase for white women. Additional information regarding rotational assignments is provided in Attachment 3, Chart 14.

Table C - Rotational Assignments by Gender and Ethnicity

	FY 00		FY 99		FY 98		FY 97		FY 96	
Totals	44	100%	141	100%	215	100%	238	100%	260	100%
Female	22	50%	66	47%	77	36%	90	38%	92	35%
Male	22	50%	75	53%	138	64%	148	62%	168	65%
African American	8	18%	15	11%	24	11%	16	7%	22	8%
Asian Pacific American	0	0%	12	9%	12	6%	16	7%	15	6%
Hispanic	1	2%	2	1%	3	1%	6	3%	10	4%
Native American	0	0%	2	1%	3	1%	0	0%	0	0%
White Female	16	36%	50	35%	53	25%	68	29%	63	24%
White Male	19	43%	60	43%	120	56%	132	55%	150	58%

Career counselors also encourage employees to take advantage of developmental programs. During FY 1999 and through the first quarter of FY 2000, 27 employees received career counseling: 5 professional, 5 administrative, 7 clerical, and 10 paraprofessional employees. The counselor assists employees in identifying their short- and long-term goals and in developing an Individual Development Plan (IDP) which outlines developmental assignments and training needs.

The Facilitated Mentoring Program serves as a training and development tool that provides employees an opportunity to discuss their career goals with experienced NRC employees who volunteer to serve as mentors. The program's principal objectives are to enable the transfer of skills from one employee to another, to improve staff productivity and potential for advancement, improve staff morale, and support upward mobility by providing employees with sound career guidance. During FY 1999 and through the first quarter of FY 2000, SBCR conducted 2 mentoring orientation sessions for new participants. A total of 98 employees are currently participating in the program. A breakdown of the data is shown in Table D below.

Table D - Facilitated Mentoring Program

	Mentors	Mentees
Totals	42	56
African American	6	19
Asian Pacific American	2	5
Hispanic	1	3
Native American	0	0
White Female	10	10
White Male	23	19

The SES Candidate Development Program was opened in FY 1999 with its principal objective of selecting and developing potential leaders to fill future SES vacancies. Another objective of the Program is to enhance diversity of the SES corps within the Agency. Twenty-four selections were made: 14 white men, 6 white women, and 4 minorities (1 Asian Pacific American woman, 1 Asian Pacific American man, 1 African American woman, 1 African American man). Table E below provides demographics of the CDP.

Table E - SES Candidate Development Program

	Total Applicants	Applicants Referred	Selections
Totals	187	40	24
African American	14	3	2
Asian Pacific American	13	2	2
Hispanic	2	0	0
Native American	0	0	0
White Female	30	13	6
White Male	110	22	14
Unknown	18	0	0

Successful management strategies to enhance diversity at all levels is critical to the success of an organization. NRC's career planning at the executive level must incorporate strategies to train and develop more minorities.

The Agency strives to reach as wide and diverse a mix of applicants as possible when seeking applicants for SES and Senior Level positions. For example, we post SES and Senior Level positions on OPM's USAJOBS web site and advertise in a variety of media. A sampling of the media we use are *Minority Engineer*, *Workforce Diversity*, *Society of Hispanic Professional Engineer*, *Winds of Change*, *Diversity/Careers in Engineering*, *National Society of Black Engineers*, *Society of Women Engineers*, *Legal Times*, *Nuclear News*, *Power Engineering*, *Hispanic Professional Society Newsletter*, the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Saludos Website*.

The Agency is committed to the hiring, development, and retention of employees with disabilities. To attract persons with disabilities to the NRC, we advertise positions in

publications such as *Careers and the Disabled* and *Diversity/Careers in Engineering*. Additionally, in FY 2000, the staff will attend career fairs that target persons with disabilities such as those sponsored by the President's Committee on Employment of Persons with Disabilities, the National Training Conference on Employment of Federal Employees Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and the Association of Higher Education and Disability, which is attended by Directors of Offices of Disability Services at colleges and universities nationwide.

We will also recruit for summer college students with disabilities by using a database of disabled students interested in summer employment through the Workforce Recruitment Program for Persons with Disabilities. This program, coordinated by the President's Committee on Employment of Persons with Disabilities and the Department of Defense, offers Federal agencies and private sector employers a database of students representing all major disciplines with many levels of experience from more than 150 colleges and universities. HR has asked each office to indicate its summer hiring needs by the second quarter of this fiscal year.

To enhance our recruitment of persons with disabilities, we recently began to include on all vacancy announcements a statement that reasonable accommodations will be made for qualified applicants or employees with disabilities except when doing so would pose an undue hardship on agency programs or resources. We expect that this language will encourage more persons with disabilities to apply for NRC positions. In an effort to ensure qualified persons with disabilities are afforded proper consideration, HR specialists review and track applications, and contact selecting officials to advise them when qualified applicants identified as having disabilities are available for consideration.

The NRC Information Guide for People with Disabilities provides useful information for employees and potential applicants about services and accommodations available at the NRC for employees with special needs. This publication describes work site accommodations, special equipment available, transportation accommodations to attend local meetings, and programs such as the agency's Occupational Health and Safety Program, health services, and the Employee Assistance Program.

Executive agencies are required to engage in a variety of economic empowerment activities for women, minorities, and other protected groups. Two major EEO programs implemented by SBCR are the Small Business Procurement Preference Program and the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Program (HBCU).

Executive Order 12876, signed by President Clinton in 1993, requires each executive department and agency to establish an annual goal for funds to be awarded to HBCUs. Our Agency's program is funded and managed by SBCR through a cooperative agreement with Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education. The program provides an opportunity for HBCU students and faculty members to participate in research and development activities related to the NRC mission (e.g., nuclear engineering, health physics). This program can lead to partnerships and collaborations that promote research at HBCU campuses; enhance teaching skills of faculty participants; and encourage students to seek advanced degrees in science, engineering, and technology. Those selected for the program engage in ongoing research at Department of Energy laboratories, other state-of-the-art facilities, and on campuses.

In Fiscal Year 1999, \$189,000 was awarded under this agreement compared to \$5 million awarded to non-minority Institutions of Higher Education. The allocation for FY 2000 is \$200,000. In Fiscal Year 2001, annual funding for the program is expected to increase to \$250,000. The percentage of funds for the HBCU Program remains at less than 5 percent of total funds awarded by NRC to non-minority institutions.

The Small Business Program for Federal Agencies was established pursuant to the Small Business Act of 1958, as amended by Public Law 95-507. This law requires Federal agencies to assist and support the interest of small businesses. NRC's Small Business Program plays a vital role in locating and evaluating small businesses to provide goods and services to the Agency in a variety of areas. SBCR, in conjunction with the Office of Administration, provides assistance and support to NRC program offices in meeting their procurement needs, and at the same time ensuring that small businesses receive a fair share of NRC contracts. In FY 1999, SBCR initiated the practice of conducting quarterly small business forums to assist small businesses in understanding the Federal procurement process. These forums have proven to be effective in marketing small businesses to NRC's program offices. In fiscal year 1999, NRC made procurement awards in the total amount of \$72 million (commercial contracts). Thirty-one million (44%) was awarded to small businesses. The FY 2000 estimated procurement awards for the Agency is \$55 million (commercial contracts). NRC's small business goal is \$14 million (26%) of this amount.

4. Recognize, appreciate, and value diversity, thereby establishing trust, respect, and concern for the welfare for all employees within the Agency.

Employees are our greatest resource. We must do all we can to reflect our high regard for their contributions and their value to the organization. To assist managers in creating a positive work environment, the Agency implemented the managing diversity process in FY 1998. Managing Diversity awareness sessions for managers and supervisors were completed during FY 1998 and FY 1999. The objectives of these sessions were to define diversity management, discuss the value of managing a diverse workforce, highlight the nature and impacts of subtle biases, and discuss factors that impact organizational climate and the success of organizational performance. Creating a positive work environment is a cooperative venture and requires the support of managers and employees. During FY 2000, awareness sessions for employees were initiated to enhance employee understanding of their role and responsibility in creating an efficient and successful organization. Sessions were completed in Regions III and IV, and are scheduled for headquarters and the remaining regions during FY 2000.

Members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) are expected to provide proactive leadership in working towards EEO objectives. Performance plans for SES members include a mandatory subelement, *Human Resources Management*, in Critical Element II, *Management Effectiveness*. This subelement includes a requirement that each executive be rated on how he or she "selects, develops, appraises, and recognizes staff consistent with Agency merit and cultural diversity principles, affirmative action objectives, and equal employment opportunity requirements." Each Senior Executive is rated on this subelement during each performance cycle. To further enhance management effectiveness in EEO, we will propose a new separate EEO subelement to be included in SES performance plans, and a new performance element for non-SES managers and supervisors. The new element and subelement, address a

discrimination-free work environment, diversity, and fair opportunity for all applicants and employees.

Concern for employee welfare and morale is reflected in Agency support of existing family-friendly policies and practices. In FY 1999 the agency continued to encourage and support the use of established Work-at-Home, career part-time employment, alternative work schedules, and flexiplace work policies. Other family-friendly practices included the approval of sick leave to care for ill family members and approving employee requests to use up to 12 weeks of leave without pay per year to care for a family member with a serious medical condition.

The NRC is working to improve open communications, mutual trust, and respect. One-on-one dialogues between supervisors and employees, as well as staff meetings between supervisors and groups of employees, is strongly encouraged to promote open communication, cohesion, and mutual trust. Office and Regional partnership committees provide a formal, ongoing mechanism for management-staff discussions on broad-based, generic issues affecting all employees within a specific organization.

The Office of the Executive Director for Operations has launched a concerted effort to improve communications and has assigned an SES member to his staff to work full time on this initiative. As part of the SES Candidate Development Program, the SES candidates have elected to work on improving internal communications and will provide recommendations to the EDO to effect change in this area.

Another avenue for improving communication, and for recognizing the accomplishments of employees, is through the performance appraisal process. NRC maintains a reputation of employing highly qualified employees capable of producing high quality work. Managers and supervisors are reminded, at least annually, to create and maintain a positive employee-supervisor dialogue when establishing performance plans and evaluating work performance. Managers are asked to provide honest feedback in the form of realistic and fair assessments of individual strengths and weaknesses. The Agency-sponsored course *Effective Management Participation in Merit Staffing*, was designed with this objective in mind. To recognize the accomplishments of employees, high quality increases and performance and cash awards were given. As shown in Table F, during FY 1999, a total of 2007 non-SES incentive awards were given to employees.

Table F - All Non-SES Awards

	FY 00		FY 99		FY 98		FY 97		FY 96	
Totals	1096	100%	2007	100%	1725	100%	1665	100%	1451	100%
Female	489	45%	861	43%	679	39%	694	42%	633	44%
Male	607	55%	1146	57%	1045	61%	971	58%	818	56%
African American	150	14%	296	15%	222	13%	210	14%	217	15%
Asian Pacific American	66	6%	105	5%	98	6%	79	5%	66	5%
Hispanic	22	2%	37	2%	38	2%	34	2%	20	1%
Native American	5	4%	8	0%	4	2%	4	2%	4	3%
White Female	338	31%	599	30%	490	28%	502	30%	453	31%
White Male	515	47%	962	48%	879	51%	824	49%	698	48%

Table G shows a comparison of awards to each group and the group's representation in the NRC permanent workforce. The percentage of awards given to all minority groups and White females equals or exceeds their representation in the NRC workforce, except for Asian Pacific Americans who received slightly less than their representation. Fifty-two percent of NRC's workforce is White male and they received 47% of the awards given to date in FY 2000.

Table G - Comparison of Awards To Workforce Representation

	Representation in NRC Permanent Workforce		FY 00	
Totals	2832	100%	1096	100%
Female	1055	37%	489	45%
Male	1777	63%	607	55%
African American	366	13%	150	14%
Asian Pacific American	196	7%	66	6%
Hispanic	63	2%	22	2%
Native American	9	.32%	5	4%
White Female	731	26%	338	31%
White Male	1467	52%	515	47%

Since FY 1996, the percentage of awards has remained consistent for all employee groups. Forty-three percent of the award recipients were women and 22% were minorities. Details of awards are included in Attachment 3, Chart 17.

Summary and Conclusion

Strategies to improve EEO at the NRC are continually evolving. The current resource and cultural climate in the agency supports initiatives such as EEO and diversity training for managers and employees, reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, targeted recruitment, improved merit staffing procedures, and an Alternative Dispute Resolution process. The Agency continues to do well in institutionalizing these strategies.

Other initiatives that have intrinsic value to the success of EEO and the overall success of the organization require organizational cultural and individual behavioral changes. The concept of diversity management, which seeks to maximize the potential of all employees, requires accountability and responsibility of both managers and employees in creating a positive work environment. The concept of diversity management also fosters improved communication among all parties in the organization. It enables open dialogue in the safety of an environment that promotes acceptable levels of risk-taking and encourages diverse perspectives. Expectations and common objectives must be clearly communicated, well understood, and supported. However, institutionalizing these initiatives is more challenging. Organizational and behavioral change does not occur with training alone. Training and revised policies and procedures must be coupled with a strong commitment to positive action and change.

Implementation of these initiatives will improve performance in EEO and institutionalize the objectives of the Guiding Principles of the Agency's Affirmative Employment Plan discussed in this Commission paper. SBCR will continue to monitor and evaluate EEO performance, and will assist offices in developing strategies to accomplish the Agency's EEO goals.

/RA/

William D. Travers
Executive Director
for Operations

Attachments:

1. December 1999 Response to August 25, 1999 Staff Requirements Memorandum
2. Statement by Michael Springer, Director, Office of Administration
3. EEO Complaint and EEO Workforce Profile Data
4. Joint Statement by the Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committees and Statement by the Joint Labor Management Equal Employment Opportunity Committee

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December 1999 Response to August 25, 1999, Staff Requirements Memorandum

Attachment 1

Statement by Michael Springer, Director, Office of Administration

Attachment 2

**EEO PROGRAM POLICIES AND PERFORMANCE IN THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION**

Michael L. Springer, Director

I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide the Commission today with an overview of the Office of Administration's (ADM) Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program. ADM fully supports the Agency's Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Policy and we are very proud of our accomplishments in this important area. After a brief summary of ADM's demographic profile, I will discuss the initiatives, accomplishments, and challenges associated with our EEO program.

Current Demographics

ADM currently has 118 full and part-time employees. The table below depicts ADM's workforce by ethnic background and gender. As a result of ADM's EEO efforts in hiring, development and promotion activities, 44% of the staff are minorities, and 62% are women. Minority women represent 29% of the staff, minority men 15%, White women 33% and White men 23%. Of our supervisors and managers, 36% are African American and 50% are women.

Staff Diversity			
Ethnic Background	Female	Male	Totals
African American	31	17	48
Asian Pacific Amer.	1	0	1
Hispanic	2	1	3
Caucasian	39	27	66
Total	73	45	118

From the beginning of FY 1999 to the present, ADM has filled 16 positions. Four of these positions were filled with minority women, four were filled with minority men and five were filled with White women. Most significantly, two of these selections were key managerial positions at the branch chief level. An African-American man was hired for one of these positions, a White woman for the other.

Initiatives and Accomplishments

Along with the recruitment and selection of staff discussed above, we recognize that an effective EEO program is the product of a well thought out plan for developing staff and providing meaningful opportunities for career growth. To this end, ADM has structured a continuing program which provides opportunities for clerical and para-professional staff to embark on a career path leading to a professional contract specialist position. For example, one-half of the professional contracting staff is currently comprised of former secretarial or para-professional personnel.

The Office of Administration has historically maintained a strong philosophy for training and developing its employees. Support is provided for employees to complete in-house and college-level courses. Several employees are participating in developmental programs such as Computer Science, and

Administrative Skills Enhancement. The office has also maintained an on-going upward mobility initiative to attract employees for entry-level procurement assistant vacancies.

In FY 1998, ADM developed an office-wide upward mobility program that has recently come to fruition. ADM posted three Administrative Management Trainee positions that were specifically designed to provide on-the-job training to the selected applicants to provide a transition from clerical/para-professional positions to professional administrative positions. Two African American women and one White woman were selected for this program. After successfully completing 18 months of training in various administrative fields, all three women were recently selected for professional career ladder administrative positions, two of them in ADM and one in the Office of the Inspector General. At a time when ADM was faced with a large number of employees who were eligible for retirement, this program satisfied the office's need to fill positions with staff that were prepared to move into various positions as vacancies occurred.

To ensure that our EEO program continues at least at its current level of productivity, I have discussed with senior managers and supervisors new initiatives in this area. Given the success of ADM's most recent upward-mobility program discussed above, we are exploring a more ambitious effort involving outside recruitment, especially for recent college graduates, with a focus on diversity.

I review all selections in the office with the respective Division Directors. We routinely seek diversity among our rating panel members and I strongly encourage key managers of the Office of Administration to seek minority and women candidates for vacant positions. This process helps to ensure that ADM rating and selecting officials focus on fairness and reflect the office commitment to the merit selection process and the EEO objectives of the Agency.

I participate personally with my three division directors in monthly meetings of the ADM labor-management partnership. This provides a non-adversarial forum for discussion of personnel issues and employee concerns which sometimes focus on issues of equity for women and minorities regarding awards and promotion opportunities. I would characterize our relationship with our labor partners as excellent. We have been able to resolve issues quickly and amicably within this group.

To improve communication among the staff, I conduct bi-weekly meetings with Division Directors to discuss achievement of program goals. Information discussed during these meetings is shared with the staff and employees are asked to provide their perspectives and opinions regarding issues.

Awards

A top priority within ADM is to recognize individuals whose performance set an example for others in achieving excellence in the workplace. To accomplish this, we have implemented an ongoing awards program which recognizes employees for exceptional performance throughout the year, culminating in an annual award ceremony at the end of the appraisal period. During the FY 1999 and 2000 Awards Ceremonies, ADM presented 106 Performance Awards, 37% of which were given to minorities, 31% to white women and 33% to white men. ADM also recognized exemplary employee performance throughout the year with instant cash awards for employees who complete assignments by demonstrating unusual initiative, ingenuity, or customer satisfaction. During FY 1999 and the first quarter of FY 2000, ADM presented 40 instant cash awards, 45% of which were given to minorities, 40% to white women and 15% to white men.

Developmental Assignments

ADM continues to provide a wide variety of opportunities for Agency employees to participate in developmental assignments. Minorities and women are selected for many of these assignments. For example, one White woman is participating in the Administrative Skills Program, one White woman and one African American woman are participating in the Computer Science Development Program. Also, one White woman was rotated to a management assignment in NMSS, one African American woman was detailed to a Branch Chief position within ADM and a White woman was detailed to a Branch Chief position in ADM. Additionally, in conjunction with the SES Development Program, ADM is providing rotational management assignments for an African American woman and a White woman.

Challenges Ahead

While staff downsizing has resulted in diminished recruitment and advancement opportunities for all employees, we remain fully committed to our EEO Program. ADM will continue to explore innovative ways to promote equity for women and minorities in career advancement. To continue the success achieved from our upward mobility program, I plan to pursue new recruitment sources at colleges, universities and career fairs for hiring interns, as FTE for this program becomes available. I envision this as an area where we will be able to recruit and retain highly qualified diverse staff.

ADM has 29 Contracting Officers and Specialists whose positions are in the 1102 classification series. Fifteen of these employees are minorities and 23 are White women. Recent Office of Personnel Management changes in the qualification standards for the 1102 series require employees who occupy these positions to obtain a college degree in order to advance to the GG-13 level or higher. ADM has appointed a Career Development Program Manager to implement and oversee programs that provide any participating professional the opportunity to obtain his or her Bachelors Degree. We have also added funds to our training budget to achieve this objective.

I will continue to meet regularly with ADM's managers and supervisors to ensure our continued success in the EEO arena. I look forward to the year ahead and appreciate the opportunity to present this information to the Commission.

EEO Complaint and EEO Workforce Profile Data

**Joint Statement by:
The Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committees**

**Statement by:
The Joint Labor Management Equal Employment Opportunity Committee**