

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, DC 20555  
Phone 301-415-8200 Fax 301-415-2234  
Internet: opa@nrc.gov

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"STRIVING FOR EQUALITY  
IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE SOCIETY"

BY

DR. SHIRLEY ANN JACKSON, CHAIRMAN  
U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

BEFORE THE

RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE  
SEVENTH GARNET D. BALTIMORE LECTURE

IN

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Good afternoon, President Pipes, faculty, staff, and students. I am honored to be invited to participate in the Garnet D. Baltimore Lecture Series. You should be commended for establishing such a lecture series. I am pleased to address the topic of "Striving for Equality in A Culturally Diverse Society." Like Mr. Baltimore, who overcame enormous obstacles to become the first African-American graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, I, and you, have been on a journey toward equality in a culturally diverse society. To see you and to interact with you is particularly gratifying given the recent College Fund report (Washington Post, 2/27/97, p. A22) on the status of African-Americans in American higher education. That report, in addition to revealing a huge gender gap in college attendance and college graduation among African-Americans, shows how much African-Americans lag the majority in receipt of bachelor's degrees (21% white for ages 25-60 vs 14% Black). In addition, the choice of studies for African-Americans is not in the sciences. At the graduate level, Black men tend to study

education and Black women tend to concentrate in public administration. Only three percent of the recipients of doctorates are Black, and only five percent of university faculties are Black. It goes without saying then that I am very pleased -- as a physicist, an African-American, an alumna of a technical university, and an MIT Life Trustee -- to be here with you today.

### CAREER EXPERIENCES:

My journey started in Washington, D.C., the nation's capital, and my birthplace. I entered public school there just three years before the Supreme Court's epochal decision in Brown v. Board of Education. It is hard to overstate the impact of that decision on the generation of African-Americans who were of school age in 1954. We had all grown up with segregation as a fact of life. In fact, I was barred from attending a school three blocks from my home in a predominantly white area. A neighbor drove my sister and me several miles across town to a predominantly black school.

We needed no court to tell us that segregation was morally wrong; we already knew that. But the Brown decision was the official declaration that segregation was also legally wrong: indeed, that it was repugnant to the Constitution.

The practical effects of Brown, in terms of changing the composition of the various public schools I myself attended, were interesting. Initially, the schools were integrated by law, but later became de facto re-segregated, as the racial composition of school-age children in Washington, D.C., became increasingly African-American. The moral and psychological effects, however, were enormous. If discrimination was wrong in the schools, then logically it could not be right in any other aspect of American life. Even children, then, could sense that great changes were in the making; that the door of opportunity would be open a little wider for us than it had been for earlier generations; and that, accordingly, we had all the more reason to "aim for the stars," which had always been my father's advice to me.

There was a second event on my journey that helped to shape my school career. In 1957, the country was shaken by the news that the Soviet Union had beaten us into space by putting the first artificial satellite (Sputnik) into orbit about the earth. At the time, Sputnik seemed to suggest that the Soviets had surged ahead of us in science and technology, and that the American educational system was to blame. The result was that money poured into the schools to improve the quality of education in mathematics and the sciences. There was considerable encouragement to students to pursue careers in these areas.

Let me also say something about the instruction we received in the public schools of that era. Our teachers were demanding --

extremely demanding. They felt they had to be. They had experienced both discrimination and the Great Depression, and they were determined that we would acquire the knowledge and skills to enable us to compete successfully in the job market, even in economic hard times. Our teachers' collective attitude was that if we were going to succeed in life, we would have to be not only as good as the next person, but probably much better. Therefore, they asked for excellence -- nothing less -- and they had no tolerance for excuses for second-rate performance.

That, then, was my schooling: rigorous, achievement-oriented teaching, in the era of opportunity opened by the Brown decision, with the special impetus given to scientific education by Sputnik. For some of us, it was a very fortunate combination. In my case, I graduated from Roosevelt High School in Washington, D.C. as valedictorian.

I entered MIT as a freshman in the fall of 1964. I can still recall the day in the mid-1960s at MIT, when I was deciding what to major in, being told by a professor that "Colored girls should learn a trade." Needless to say, this caused me a great deal of angst, but I responded by choosing a trade -- physics!! Whatever motivation the individual who said this to me may have had, I think all of you will recognize its potential to be a career-breaking statement. There were 43 women and 5 African Americans in my entering freshman class of 900 at MIT -- not very diverse. The number of African-American women was two. That compares with 451 women and 76 African Americans, including twenty-seven women, in this year's more diverse entering class of around 1100.

A friend of mine (Dr. Jennifer Rudd) and I were the first African-American women to graduate from MIT, in 1968. She went to medical school and is now a physician. I remained at MIT as a graduate student and received my Ph.D. in theoretical elementary particle physics in 1973. I am happy to say that since that day, a number of African-American women have been awarded doctorates by MIT, but at that time, it was a first.

In my scientific career I have had the opportunity to travel extensively, both in the U.S. and abroad, to participate in conferences, and to lecture, including at the NATO Advanced Study Institute in Antwerp, Belgium, on "Polarons and Excitons in Polar Semiconductors and Ionic Crystals," in 1983, and the Bouchet Conference on Physics and Mathematics in Accra, Ghana in 1990. I do not want to list them all, because I think you understand my point, which is to say how far, and in what varied directions, one's journey can take one.

#### THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION:

As some of you may know, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is the independent regulatory agency that is responsible, among other things, for ensuring the safety of the nation's 110 nuclear power plants. The NRC charter encompasses many other kinds of nuclear uses as well, including, for example, industrial radiography, nuclear medicine, and licensing the nation's first-of-a-kind high-level waste repository.

Originally, all aspects of the use of nuclear energy, military and civilian, were the responsibilities of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), which was created in 1946. The NRC was created in 1975, after Congress decided that the nuclear power industry had reached a point where the same agency should not be promoting the use of nuclear energy, and regulating that use. The AEC was abolished. The promotional and developmental, and nuclear weapons duties were given to what is now the Department of Energy, and the NRC was given an exclusively regulatory mandate.

Having served at the NRC for almost two years, I can say that its mission is extraordinarily interesting, and multifaceted. One might imagine that nothing could be more exclusively technical than the task of ensuring the safety of nuclear power plants: setting and enforcing standards, inspecting to ensure compliance, and taking corrective action when needed. In reality, the NRC's mandate encompasses much more than nuclear power plants. Moreover, many disciplines are involved in the NRC's activities. Ours is an agency where technology, law, economics, public policy, national security, and sometimes even foreign policy considerations intersect.

### Economic Deregulation of the Electric Utility Industry

Let me give you a few real-world examples of the intersection of various policy, financial, and technical issues, beginning with the regulation of nuclear power plants. For many decades, America's electric utilities have enjoyed monopoly status in their service areas. They have been regulated by state public utility commissions, which has guaranteed them a fixed rate of return each year, on a given asset base and has allowed them to pass on their prudent business expenses to the consumers of electricity. As a result, the economic performance of these utilities has been so predictable and dependable, that their stocks and bonds were known as "widows and orphans" securities -- the epitome of safe, conservative investments.

The guarantee of funding meant that if a utility decided to build a nuclear power plant, the NRC did not have to be concerned, once the plant received its license, about the utility's financial condition.

In 1992, Congress passed the Energy Policy Act of 1992, which gave to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) certain authority to initiate competition in the various parts of the energy business. Recent initiatives at the state and Federal levels have set into motion a process by which we will soon see true competition in the generation of electric power. Just as consumers can now choose their long-distance telephone service provider, they soon will be able to choose their supplier of electric power.

What are the implications of this? The changes associated with economic deregulation and restructuring of the electric utility industry include internal restructuring; ownership changes, including mergers; and a continual effort by utilities to control and reduce costs. These structural changes and economic uncertainties are driven by regulatory and market forces that will determine how, and in what form, nuclear electric generators will survive in an unregulated, or less regulated, world. The focus of the NRC is on ensuring that, as the business environment changes, economic pressures do not erode nuclear safety. That means that whenever nuclear power is used, it is used safely, and that, when a nuclear plant is shutdown, there is adequate funding to ensure that it can be decommissioned safely. The question now facing the NRC is what deregulation will mean for how we go about meeting these safety objectives. For example, what level of assurance does the NRC have that a particular utility will spend the money required for adequate maintenance and for necessary safety upgrades? What changes do we have to make in our inspection program and other evaluation processes to ensure that we stay ahead of any potential degradation in safety at a plant, so that we can detect adverse trends and correct them. If a nuclear utility is involved in a merger or acquisition, what will the change in ownership mean for the way the plant is operated?

The NRC traditionally has relied on its inspection and plant assessment programs to identify any adverse trends in safety performance. In the current economic environment, if new business arrangements, competition, or economic constraints result in any impairment of safety, it is imperative that our assessment mechanisms detect such problems early.

The Commission has asked the staff to examine measures to identify plants where economic stress may be impacting safety. Moreover, since deregulation may change the economic umbrella for some licensees, the NRC may need to monitor their financial qualifications more closely.

In the Fall of 1995, I initiated a reevaluation of NRC policy regarding decommissioning funding. The NRC issued an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) in April 1996, on electric utility restructuring. The ANPR explained that some additional

decommissioning funding assurance might be needed for those power reactor licensees no longer subject to rate regulation by FERC or the State regulatory commissions.

In short, the NRC is being presented with a host of new challenges, just as a result of utility deregulation, which involve far more than technological issues. A single change in the law -- one that on its face has nothing to do with nuclear regulation -- can have major ramifications for the way we go about ensuring the safety of the public.

#### EXTERNAL REGULATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

In 1995, the DOE created an Advisory Committee on External Regulation. In its December 1995 report, the Committee recommended that DOE nuclear facilities be regulated externally, and named the NRC and the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board as the two potential safety regulators. Last month, then Secretary of Energy O'Leary announced that the administration would introduce legislation to give the NRC the responsibility for the regulation of nearly all DOE nuclear facilities, phased in over a ten-year period. This would place such DOE facilities as the Brookhaven, Argonne, and Lawrence Livermore Laboratories under NRC regulatory authority.

Many questions remain to be answered and many issues, both legal and technical, must be resolved about potential NRC oversight of DOE nuclear facilities. Public comments we have received overwhelmingly favor NRC oversight of DOE nuclear facilities. This might seem to take us back to the beginning of time, i.e., to the old Atomic Energy Commission. This is not quite so -- this time. We would be the external regulator of DOE, not co-joined in a single agency.

#### NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

I mentioned that the NRC's duties include questions of national security and foreign policy. Let me explain. As I am sure you know, a major concern for more than two decades has been the possibility that if a nation is eager enough to have nuclear weapons, it will extract the plutonium from spent nuclear fuel and use it to construct a nuclear device. For that reason, there is a system of international safeguards, administered by the International Atomic Energy Agency, designed to ensure that exports of nuclear fuel and facilities go only to nations willing to accept, among other things, inspection of their facilities.

To ensure that U.S. exports of nuclear reactors and nuclear fuel do not contribute, directly or indirectly, to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, Congress gave the NRC the duty of reviewing all such export proposals, and deciding whether they are

compatible with U.S. security interests. The law includes a number of specific criteria relating to non-proliferation. If a proposed export has the support of the Executive Branch, it comes to the NRC for review, and if the NRC approves, the export goes forward. If the NRC votes to disapprove, however, the issue is sent to the Congress, which has sixty days in which to vote to block the export. Unless it acts within that period, the Executive Branch view prevails, and the export proceeds.

What that means is that even if the President has decided that a particular export is in the best interests of the United States, we the NRC Commissioners -- all Presidential appointees -- still have the duty of making our own judgment about whether it will serve the national interest, and of bringing that judgment before the Congress, as set forth in the law. That is no small responsibility.

Let me describe another issue with both domestic and international implications. The Department of Energy has a large quantity of surplus nuclear materials from its weapons program. Those materials include plutonium. What should be done with it? Should it be treated as high level waste and disposed of in a repository, or should it be mixed with uranium and used as fuel in nuclear reactors? From the standpoint of maximizing usable resources, the latter course sounds attractive, but for almost two decades, it has been U.S. policy that the dangers of a plutonium fuel cycle are too great -- because of the risk of nuclear proliferation and terrorism -- to justify recycling. Some have called for a re-examination of that policy. But what about U.S. and Russian surplus weapons-grade plutonium? In December 1996, DOE released its plan for excess weapons plutonium disposition, which involves a two-track strategy of vitrification (mixing plutonium with glass, then disposing of it as high-level radioactive waste), and mixing plutonium with uranium to create mixed-oxide fuel (MOX) for use in commercial nuclear reactors. I do not propose to address all these questions this afternoon, but only to give you an idea of the kinds of issues we face. Any recycling of plutonium in this country, or any use of recycled or excess weapons plutonium in fuel for commercial reactors, would require NRC approval.

Since the downfall of Communism, there are a number of newly independent countries with inherited Soviet-built nuclear power plants. Those nations are mindful not only of the design and operational problems that led to the Chernobyl disaster, but also of the inadequate regulation of nuclear energy in the former Soviet Union. Accordingly, these newly independent states are looking to the United States for advice in setting up regulatory bodies of their own, modeled on the NRC. We have been providing such assistance to these countries, using funds from the U.S. Agency for International Development (U.S. AID) and other sources

to strengthen both the authority and capabilities of their regulatory bodies.

It is important that regulators have the authority, independence, and resources to do their jobs. Toward that goal, I have proposed the formation of an international body of nuclear regulators to focus specifically on the regulatory agenda. This past January, I was host to the initial meeting of a working group of seven nations -- France, Germany, Spain, Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. -- to plan for the establishment of a permanent organization.

In the last several years, there have been twice-yearly meetings between Vice President Albert Gore and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to discuss a range of issues of common interest. These include the safety of Russian reactors, the development of new generating stations to replace potentially dangerous old nuclear plants taken out of service, and, as I mentioned, the disposition of plutonium from dismantled weapons. The Secretary of Energy and I have been participants in those meetings.

#### **JOURNEY TO SUCCESS AND EQUALITY:**

Despite my individual success story and those of others, I say to you today that, after the loss of life, the fight for hope, the struggles of the 1960s, and the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the path to equality is still fraught with obstacles in our society. But, there are roads that can lead each of you to your dream, to your vision, to your equality. One has only to look at the life of Garnet D. Baltimore, Rensselaer's first African-American graduate. The challenges he faced, and the legacy he left, paved the road that you are traveling today.

On any individual's journey to success and equality in our diverse society, he will go through various stages of development. There are at least five identifiable phases. These are: (1) early dreams and infinite possibilities; (2) the challenges of the reality of one's environment; (3) the sacrifice and hard work to overcome challenges; (4) stability and forward progress, once success is achieved; and, (5) turning ordinary moments into extraordinary events.

In the first phase, with emotional and physical security, a solid educational foundation, and early success, a child begins to explore and to see possibilities of what he could be or do. Regardless of economic status, race, color, creed or gender, it is at these earliest moments that our dreams are taking shape. This all presupposes, of course, that a child's early environment does not rob him of opportunity and his right to dream. A child's vision is seen through a prism -- colored with

imagination, and joined by an abundance of faith in a dream. All things are possible. There are no limits.

I believe that Dr. Benjamin Carson's dream of being a doctor began early and pushed him forward to become a world class neurosurgeon. Dr. Carson faced many challenges, including racism, but he clearly was determined not to let that play a controlling role in his life. Today, Dr. Carson is recognized for his pioneering work in successfully separating Siamese twins, among other achievements.

I believe that Thurgood Marshall formed his dream early on -- when his parents reinforced in him the expectation of achievement and imbued him with self-confidence, along with a disdain for racism, wherever he encountered it. Thurgood Marshall fought for freedom and full equality for an oppressed people, and later became one of this nation's most noted Justices of the Supreme Court. These great African-American leaders probably spoke the words "I have a dream that I will be . . ." and began a journey that would take them, from the beginning -- forward. What are your aspirations? What are your dreams?

My early curiosity about science was manifested by my experiments with bees. I would capture live bumblebees, hornets and yellow jackets. I would vary diets and environment to study their effects on the behavior of these insects. I did not know it then, but this was a critical point in my life: a point where my curiosity was not caged or suppressed, but allowed to blossom, where I had access to an opportunity for my dreams to become a reality. As a result of this and other nurturing, I was inspired, and I grew strong enough to push consistently through discrimination, and other injustices, in my desire to become a physicist.

We all are products of our exposure to places, people, and things that have shaped our minds, our beliefs, and our dreams. The cultivation process is a joint effort shared by parents, religious leaders, educators, and friends. Growing up in the nation's capital, even under segregation, allowed me to see what I could be, and where I could go. My visions and dreams were shaped by the signals from my family, my teachers, my community, my church, and from African-American leaders fighting for my civil rights. They also were shaped by the diversity of American society, and the adversity that I faced. I knew that the opportunities presented in my dreams could be realized only by working hard, and by fighting for them.

At the second stage, one encounters the reality that dreams do not automatically come true. One moves away from what may have been a secure place in childhood, where one's dreams and aspirations have formed, and where many people have provided

safety and security, and the opportunity to dream. One moves to an arena where dreams may be influenced by others, dramatically - and bombarded by challenges. What happens when too much time passes without fulfillment; when the early achievements no longer fulfill one's desires; and when thinking through problems is muddled by the chaos of factors beyond one's control? Will dreams become buried? Will they be lost or abandoned out of frustration or sheer laziness? As Langston Hughes wrote in "A Raisin in the Sun" -- "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore -- and then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over -- like a syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?"

If you are going to proceed to third phase, to not have your dream explode, you must have the courage of your convictions.

In the third phase, a shift is required to push through barriers, and to overtake challenging hills-many of which feel like mountains. The challenges of "unequal opportunities," insufficient finances, family demands, and peer pressure may seem impossible and difficult to surmount, but that means you must potentiate your staying power. How can you do this?

You must use whatever talent you have, and make sacrifices to be world class in your fields, in order to compete in today's global marketplace. You must seek the knowledge and insight required to become a significant contributor to society, to challenge the status quo, to do more than the minimum required.

It is important that I say to you that there were times when it was difficult for me, when it was clear to me that my opportunity was indeed "not equal to others." In college, I was not always allowed, by professors, to come forward and to rise to the occasion. Nor was I always sought after by fellow students, even though I did very well in my courses. But I felt that I could not allow myself to be demoralized by that kind of isolation and attempt to hold my progress in check; or to be derailed from the pursuit of my goals. The emotional strength that I developed in overcoming obstacles allowed me to progress -- I firmly believe this.

Success in the third phase means that in the fourth phase, you are ready to smoothly move along the road of success. By today's standards many African-Americans have achieved both academic and economic success. Many have acquired material possessions that represent position and power. Some have moved into boardrooms and club houses. Kenneth Chenault, recently named COO of American Express, illustrates this. There are others. Curtis Crawford, President of Microelectronics, Lucent Technologies, also comes to mind. The question remains, however, whether this

movement will translate into real progress for the bulk of African-Americans. Having fought for the right to vote, African-Americans have yet to exercise their full political influence, the percentage who ever vote is pitifully low; and moving into the boardrooms does not always equate to making boardroom decisions.

So, you must be prepared to accept the pleasure of success, and the responsibility of progress. Success is what you enjoy. Progress provides a bridge for countless others to cross, who will follow your path. It provides the promise of dreams fulfilled. Your progress and success, properly balanced, will improve the quality of life for others by showing them a road to follow -- the road you travel, and by clearing away the underbrush of unnecessary obstacles as you go along.

Today, with the makeup of the U.S. workforce changing, and with ever more need for excellent and well-trained minds in business, government and academia, it will be imperative for organizations to seek the best people, no matter their race, gender, color, or creed. At the same time, the continuing globalization of commerce challenges our domestic economy. It also implies that talent can be tapped from anywhere. How will you measure up in our diverse society? In a global economy? Will you strive for equality, through excellence, and create your futures? Or will you wait for others to define it for you? "Preparation" and "learning" have to occur continuously. If you do not want to be prejudged, or if you want to overcome prejudice, you must be premier -- among the first and the best.

If you remain in the fourth phase, you can be challenged, make contributions, and be fulfilled. But there is the fifth phase -- a special one. It is the "overdrive" that takes you to the outer limits of all of which you are capable. It places you in the arena of those who chose to take that extra risk, such as the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who as a twenty-five-year-old preacher, led a protest against discrimination in an Alabama city, and within a few years, was not only a national leader, but a world leader. The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had a powerful dream -- a dream of peace, justice, and equality for all people, which he believed was attainable through non-violent protest. Even in Dr. King's circles, many thought his approach impossible. However, the passion of his purpose built a model that brought success. Dr. King's example helped to fire the movement to end colonial rule and racial discrimination in Africa -- especially South Africa. There, Nelson Mandela's perseverance, his ability to remain true to his own moral compass through twenty-seven long and bitter years of imprisonment, has made him not only his country's liberator and its president, but a moral beacon around the globe to people of all nations and races. Another example is provided by Dr. Ronald E. McNair, who pursued his dream, and pushed the edge of the "envelope," as one of the

first African-American astronauts. He gave his life in the pursuit of knowledge when the space shuttle Challenger exploded after liftoff in April 1986. He was doing what he wanted to do, and what he felt was important.

Harriet Ross Tubman once said, "I started with this idea in my head. There's two things I've got a right to: 'death or liberty.'" She chose liberty, made an unprecedented journey that led many to freedom on the underground railroad and never lost a passenger.

The fifth phase also places you in the arena of those who turn ordinary situations into extraordinary outcomes. Among those are Dr. George Washington Carver, one of America's most famous agricultural scientists who took what he had, and made much -- 300 products from the peanut and more than 100 products from the sweet potato -- and Dr. Ernest Everett Just, who, as a cell biologist at the turn of the 19th century, made seminal contributions to the understanding of the behavior of cell cytoplasm. He did this while teaching at Howard University, and only being able to conduct research during summers at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Dr. Just wrote over seventy scientific papers in the process. It also includes Dr. J. Ernest Wilkins, Jr., physicist and engineer, whose talents contributed to the research and development of nuclear power. Dr. Wilkins received his doctorate degree in physics at age 19. He was a professor and a corporate officer, and has served in a number of significant advisory positions including as Chairman of the NRC Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards. He also was President of the American Nuclear Society.

Some of the African-American women who were "firsts" and early trailblazers included Ruth E. Moore, the first African-American woman to earn her doctorate in bacteriology from Ohio State University in 1933, followed by Ruth Beckham in Psychology from the University of Minnesota in 1934, Flemmie Kittrell in nutrition at Cornell, who served as a consultant to the Department of State in conducting a nutritional survey of Liberia and five other African Nations in 1947-1948. There was Jessie J. Mark, who received her Ph.D. in Botany at Iowa State in 1935, R. A. Young in Zoology at the University of Pennsylvania in 1940, Mary Maynard Daly in Chemistry from Columbia in 1948, and Evelyn Boyd Granville (born in Washington, D.C. in 1924), a Mathematician, who obtained a Ph.D. in Mathematics from Yale in 1949. Will you be my next example? And you, and you?

### **CONCLUSION:**

So, students of Rensselaer, I challenge you, as you travel through life, to continue to dream, and to use and develop the

talents and creative energies that brought you here. Continue to strive for excellence. Your excellence is a role model for others. You also must be caring and moral individuals. In working for yourselves, reach back and create bridges for others to cross.

In last years's Garnet Baltimore lecture, New York State Comptroller H. Carl McCall said that "the future of our nation is the sincere embrace of diversity." I am proud that, as Chairman of the NRC, I am in a position to embrace diversity as a means to perform an extremely demanding job, with some of the best personal staff in the agency -- a staff comprised of white males and females, African-American males and females, Hispanics, Asians, and employees of Jewish, Catholic and Protestant backgrounds. At the same time, I have been able to open hitherto closed jobs for an equally diverse group of career managers. They all work hard (as do all NRC employees). I ask them all to aim high, to meet very demanding standards, to work together. They all are doing so. This has taught me the role of leadership -- in setting an example, in creating opportunities for all those who have the talent and the willingness to contribute. It allows me to assuage fears of exclusion at the same time.

Therefore, I challenge those of you who lead Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute to continue to seek successful educational models and methods, and to create an academic environment that enables, lifts up, and encourages all of your students to maximize their potential. After all, your students are the great thinkers and leaders of tomorrow, who live today in this culturally diverse society.

Thank you for your attention.