UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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HUMAN CAPITAL AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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PUBLIC BRIEFING

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TUESDAY

JULY 29, 2014

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The Briefing convened in the Commissioners' Conference Room, 1st Floor, One White Flint North, Rockville, Maryland, at 9:30 a.m., Allison M. Macfarlane, Chairman, presiding.

PRESENT

ALLISON M. MACFARLANE, Chairman

KRISTINE L. SVINICKI, Commissioner

WILLIAM D. MAGWOOD, IV, Commissioner

WILLIAM C. OSTENDORFF, Commissioner

PRESENTERS:

MARK SATORIUS, EDO

MIRIAM COHEN, OCHCO

JENNIFER GOLDER, OCHCO

BEN FICKS, OCHCO

JODY HUDSON, OCHCO

TONY BARNES, SBCR

CATHY HANEY, NMSS

MARIA SCHWARTZ, NTEU

P R O C E E D I N G S

9:39 a.m.

CHAIRMAN MACFARLANE: It's always packed for these briefings, so welcome, everybody. Good morning. So, the Commission is going to receive a briefing this morning about Human Capital activities and an update on our Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Management Program.

These programs, I think you're all aware, are very important to the Agency. As we all know, recruitment and retention of a diverse and highly competent, skilled workforce is essential to help us complete our mission.

The Commission is truly committed to maintaining a work environment that's inclusive and maximizes the potential for all employees. In my view, it's extremely important right now as the Agency looks to the future and seeks to insure that we have the right skill sets in place, and that we're ready to address a variety of possible futures.

So, we look forward this morning to hearing from the Staff on the NRC's comprehensive Human Capital Program in the area of Worklife Benefits, Employee Development and Training, and Efforts to Foster and Maintain a Positive Organizational Culture.

And we also look forward to hearing a presentation on Managing Change and remarks from the Union.

But first, let me see if my fellow Commissioners would like to make any opening comments? No? Okay, then I'm going to turn it over to our EDO, Mark Satorius.

MR. SATORIUS: Good morning and thank you, Chairman, Commissioners. And, Commissioner Ostendorff, good to see you on your feet again.

As I reflect on the last year, I take great pride in what the Agency has accomplished. Last year's sequestration coupled with a Continuing Resolution that extended beyond where we would have preferred, and the shutdown of the government was a hardship on many of us. I congratulate and thank every single NRC employee for their hard work, and dedication to our mission, and to our organizational values through such a tumultuous time.

NRC remains a place with an important mission, with a wealth of diverse, skilled, and conscientious employees, and with an abundance of opportunities for employees to make valuable contributions, and to feel good about where they work.

This is a critical time for our Agency, and one during which we need to consider a range of long term scenarios affecting the workload and activities of the Agency, adjusting Agency plans and supplementing the planning process for future budget cycles. With these tasks in mind, we have initiated Project Aim 2020 in which we'll improve NRC's planning ability in an effort to become more agile and adapting to changing circumstances. The goal of Project Aim is to develop the 2020 forecast along with strategic recommendations and a roadmap that will enhance NRC's ability to plan and execute our mission. Additional information on the Project Aim.2020 will be shared with the Commission at a Commission meeting this afternoon.

In additional to Project Aim 2020, the NRC has several programs which you will be hearing about this morning that help us improve our organizational culture and insure that we have the right people with the right skills and knowledge necessary to accomplish the NRC's mission and to insure the NRC remains one of the best places to work.

The Behavior Matters campaign launched last year to strengthen the NRC values is now in Phase 2 and has been a critical part of helping us to accomplish the NRC's mission. While Phase 1 of the campaign identified shared challenges and ideas of how the NRC values should translate into actions, Phase 2 will use those insights to help participants develop awareness and skills needed to more smoothly navigate and positively interact with each other.

As part of our strategy to build an SES talent pipeline, the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer will conduct another SES Candidate Development Program, or CDP, and dovetailing up to the current SES CDP Program which is expected to graduate next spring. The application phase for the new program is currently underway.

In closing, I'd like to thank again the Staff for their commitment and efforts on behalf of the Agency. In addition, I would like to commend the overall level of collaboration between the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer and the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, and to thank those groups that contribute to the overall success of our Human Capital and EEO Programs.

I'll now turn the presentation over to Miriam Cohen, our Chief Human Capital Officer, who will introduce our program participants and begin the briefing. Miriam.

MS. COHEN: Good morning, Chairman, Commissioners. I'd also like to acknowledge Commissioner Magwood who will be leaving I guess soon. He's been a supporter of our programs and we just want to acknowledge that. And I also want to welcome back Commissioner Ostendorff.

As Mark mentioned, we overcame a turbulent beginning of the fiscal year, and despite how the year started we were still able to pay out performance awards, institute the first pay raise in three years, fulfill external training requests, and continue to enhance the internal organizational culture. But as we move into the future, we need to continue to be flexible as we deal with a number of external challenges.

Project Aim recommendations may significantly impact where and how the Agency is going to go over the next five years. During this period, it's going to be critical that we make appropriate and measured investments in our workforce so that we can maintain mission requirements and continue to be a great place to work. Let me highlight three areas of focus for my remarks today. I think it's the first slide, sorry about that.

Proactive emphasis on workforce issues. As part of that, we need to continue to insure that we have the skills and competencies to carry out our mission. As a strategic partner with the offices, it's our goal to have a firm understanding of what skills and capabilities exist in-house, where gaps may exist, and the best way to fill those gaps either through internal reassignments, mobility, or external hires.

Secondly, we need to continue to strengthen our knowledge management and knowledge sharing programs. And similar to other agencies we, too, are looking at workforce that's going to have an increasing number of staff that are going to be eligible to retire over the next five years. Given that this rate of attrition is likely to increase, we have to make preparations now to insure that our workforce can handle the work that lies ahead.

And, finally, we need to continue to focus on employee development and succession planning. As I mentioned earlier, we have to invest appropriately in the development of our employees so that we have a ready pipeline of talent for both our technical and leadership positions.

The second area I'd like to focus on is preparing employees to embrace change. It seems that every year we come to these meetings and we talk about managing change and, quite frankly, this is no different. With continual pressure to reduce costs and seek efficiencies, we have to address our challenges head-on and accept that change is a normal part of our working life. Having just returned from a national HR conference, the theme that we heard throughout was managing constant change, and doing more with less.

For us to continue to be a preeminent regulator we must have well trained employees who can do their jobs well, that can adapt to changes in their environment, and seek innovative ways to conduct our business processes. We have already started down this road through our efforts to insure that we have the right people with the right skills to perform the Agency's work. And I would argue that we've already had to be agile by reassigning staff with appropriate skills to meet emergent work demands, whether it was Waste Confidence, Yucca Mountain, or movement of staff from NRO to NRR to assist with the backlog of licensing actions. But our ability to train and rapidly retrain to meet new business needs is going to be vital as we move ahead.

The final area that I think we need to focus on is developing the next generation of leaders. We need to make sure we have leadership talent at all levels, entry level, first line supervisor, and the SES. The Agency is always going to have to have a pipeline ready, and I will contend that we will recruit at a modest level talented and diverse professionals, and in doing so we will continue to partner with SBCR to maximize the benefits of our University Champions Program, and broadening recruitment of students who receive support under our Integrated University Program and Minority-Serving Institutions Program.

We're going to continue to invest in our Leadership Potential Program by hopefully having a new class this coming spring. And as Mark mentioned, we are already getting ready to launch another SES Candidate Development Program to meet our senior management needs.

I want to reiterate that our office is committed to partnering with employees and managers to insure that they're taking advantage of the vast human capital programs that we have available to them, whether it's career development, helping employees balance their work and professional lives, or just making sure employees and managers understand federal regulations and NRC policies.

On a personal note, I want to acknowledge the importance of maintaining a culture of care in the workplace. As a number of you know, the Agency lost a shining star earlier this year when Nicole Glenn passed away from breast cancer. Nicole was always so grateful to the NRC because she was able to work a flexible schedule throughout her battle. She never, ever, ever took that for granted because, like myself, she worked in other agencies where she did not have that flexibility.

When she was alive, she had hoped to start a breast cancer support group but was unable to, but in her memory and her honor our office, with the assistance of a number of NRC employees created a group called Canserve. This group conceived from the ground up has held a number of meetings and has received great support from NRC Staff who are survivors, family members, or people who just want to show their support. I think this is a proud moment for the Agency, and I just wanted to share that with you.

In closing, I would like to turn the presentation over to Jennifer Golder who's going to touch a little bit more about our Agency Worklife and Benefit Programs, and we support employees.

Ben Ficks will then go through a presentation about how we help employees develop throughout their careers here. Jody Hudson is then going to touch on Fostering Positive Organizational Culture. Tony Barnes is going to provide an update on some new Diversity and Inclusion initiatives. And, finally, Cathy Haney will talk about Managing Change and what she's done in the Office of Nuclear

Materials and Safeguards, and help me out.

MS. HANEY: Safety.

MS. COHEN: Thank you. I didn't want to use an acronym but I guess you knew NMSS. So, with that I'll turn the presentation over to Jennifer.

MS. GOLDER: Thank you, Miriam. Chairman Macfarlane, Commissioners, it's an honor to be here today to talk to you about how we support our employees through our Worklife Benefit Programs at the NRC.

Worklife is focused on creating a flexible, supportive environment to engage employees and maximize organizational performance. We provide a wide range of services, and we're focused on the holistic wellness of our employees.

There have been case studies and reports in both the private and public sector that show that strong Worklife Programs support employees' positive well being. It's important to an organization's effectiveness, it helps create healthier, happier, and more productive and engaged employees. And per OPM, Worklife Programs actually can do a couple of things, can lower health care costs, improve recruitment and retention efforts, reduce absences of employees, and increase employee satisfaction with their employer.

In the current work environment, there is a lot of diversity in the workforce. We have more women, more two-income families, juggling small children, more single parents. We have multiple generations with diverse backgrounds, more veterans. We have care givers in the sandwich generation caring for their elder parents and their children at the same time, and employees that live far away from NRC that have to commute long and far every day just to get here. And a strong Worklife Program can definitely support these employees and help them stay engaged, and have balance in their lives.

There are five elements according to OPM of a strong Worklife Program, and that includes health c-- the first element is health education through seminars, webinars, educational training, lunch and learns, retirement planning.

The second element is a strong social and environmental support, can be as simple as having a cafeteria, walking paths, jogging, showers, a fitness center, a nursing mother's room, strong telework and flexiplace schedule program, and also providing retirement, legal, and financial support.

The fourth element is very important, that's to have strong leadership and employee commitment, and engagement, and involvement. And then, also, the third is links with other important programs in the Agency, like the Safety Program, ergonomics, the Federal Employee Health Benefits. The last one is screenings, biometric health screenings.

In June, the President signed a memo to all the agencies asking agencies to enhance their Worklife Programs, and I'm happy to say that NRC is very far ahead in this area. We're seen as a leader among other federal agencies and other agencies have reached out to us over time to learn about what we do.

And, in fact, the 2013 Federal Employee Viewpoint

Survey had a number of questions on the Worklife Programs focused on participation and satisfaction. And, overall, NRC was higher in Worklife satisfaction than government-wide rates. I'll just point out a couple of the survey results to share with you.

One of the questions focused on do Agency senior leaders demonstrate support for Worklife Programs, and 80 percent of the employees who took the survey responded favorably, that they felt that Agency leaders do support it. And that's more than 25 percent above the government-wide average for the same question. And 91 percent of employees who took the survey were satisfied with the Health and Wellness Programs that we offer at the NRC, compared to 79 percent government-wide. And the last statistic or last survey result I'll just mention is the Employee Assistance Program; 88 percent of employees who took the survey responded favorably about their satisfaction with the EAP Program, as compared to 74 percent government-wide. So, my staff and I take great pride in knowing that we provide these programs to the NRC employees. And I'm just going to touch on a few more in detail.

First, I'll talk about the NRC Health Center, and this Health Center integrates health and wellness services for the employees. We offer a wide range of services, including health screenings, and wellness and education services Agency-wide, as well as sick care to headquarters employees which make up about 70 percent of the workforce at the Agency. And this Health Center helps give peace of mind to employees on the job, and also keeps them more engaged and productive.

At headquarters we offer sick visits, screenings, seminars, physicals. The support that we offer to the Regions and to TTC, they can get flu shots and biometric screenings. Each Region holds a day at their location where employees can come in and get their flu shots or screenings. And if they're not able to be there that day, they get vouchers for an extended time period to go get these flu shots or screenings. And they also can get physicals. And all they have to do is contact the headquarters Health Center and we'll arrange the physical for them with a local health care provider. And the physical that they get in the Regions is comparable to what is offered here. And we actually have the staff from the Health Center, they have traveled to the Regions, and they've met with the local health care providers to make sure it's on par with what we offer here at headquarters.

And we do have a lot of employee experiences that have been offered to us, and I just want to share one or two so you can hear the stories.

There was an employee who had a routine physical at headquarters and through the EKG that was offered, the medical staff detected an issue that had not been identified before by his primary care physician. And he ended up finding out he had a rare heart condition, and he had heart arrhythmias. And he had followed-up with the Health Center and they had sent him to the emergency room, and he had a heart procedure the next day which if he had not been treated could have possibly been fatal. So, that's a really good thing that we had that here for him.

The Regional feedback, I've got a couple of anecdotes from the Regions. There was an employee in one of the Regions who participated in the onsite biometric screening and he was diagnosed with borderline hypertension. And he probably would not have known about that if he had not participated. So, definitely, there's productivity and time savings for the employees with the Health Center here.

We have a large number of employees who live more than an hour away, and by being able to use the Health Center for physicals or sick visits, they don't have to take as much sick leave to get treated. They usually return to work in less than 45 minutes. In fact, 98 percent of the employees that have used the Health Center for sick visits have returned to work that day, or very shortly after, and 37 percent avoided seeing an outside doctor because of the treatment they got.

And just a quick statistic, in the last two years the Health Center administered approximately 5,300 flu shots and allergy shots to the employees Agency-wide, and also 2,600 blood pressure checks were done in 2013, so it is definitely widely used. I'm not sure what that says about our blood pressure at the NRC, but it's a good thing we're getting it checked.

The next thing I'll talk about is the Employee Assistance Program, which does provide professional assistance to help handle personnel concerns and issues of our employees. And we all know things happen in life, sometimes things that we can't B- that we don't necessarily expect or plan for. And that can lead to major stress and angst, and detract from what's truly important. And EAP can help employees deal with these issues. They can provide short-term counseling, referral services. One of the uses that many people don't know that EAP can provide is help with developing a will, which is really important. They can do simple wills at no cost. They can help with more complex wills. They can refer you to an attorney, and you can get 25 percent off the hourly rate, which is a great thing for everyone.

The referrals that they can do are also to counselors, or specialists. For instance, if you have a child that needs a counselor or to see some sort of specialist, they can help you out with that. They can help you with referrals to hospice care, assisted living, senior living.

We had an employee that shared with us that she used EAP for elder care issues. She had parents living out of state. She was juggling small children, her full-time job, and her father needed to have open heart surgery, and her mother was ill, so she was under a great deal of stress. She used EAP to get help with assisted living and nursing care, in addition to counseling. And it was very helpful to her. She was very appreciative, and there are a lot of people in this Agency that have similar circumstances, and EAP is available to help them.

Another benefit of EAP is to provide grief support and counseling. We've had a number of situations, unfortunately, where employees have passed away and we have EAP available to help provide counseling to the supervisors, the employees, the organization, and also the families of those who have passed. And, in fact, Region I used this service in 2013 when they lost an employee, and OCHCO did, as well, in 2014 when we lost Nicole. And that was a great support to our office, and all of the employees in OCHCO.

Miriam mentioned the Careserve support group. We have other support groups that EAP has started. We have a care giver support group, a grief and loss support group, and retirement readiness. And the Regions can all participate in these support groups by phone or VTC, and they do.

And speaking of retirement, I'm going to talk about retirement benefits quickly. We have several resources available to employees for planning retirement. We do training at the PDC for mid-career and pre-retirement planning. And in the last two years, we've given courses 26 times, we've had over 600 employees attend these courses. And we also provide advice to individual employees on specific retirement plans. There's three different retirement plans at last count, and it keeps changing.

In 2013, we serviced approximately 110 retirees, and in 2014, as of the end of June we supported approximately 100 employees with their retirement. And on a yearly basis, we counsel approximately 1,500 employees at headquarters and throughout the Agency on a variety of benefits, life and health insurance, long-term care, thrift savings, federal savings accounts. And we do need to stay on top of the benefits area closely because it does change. When laws get passed like the Defense of Marriage Act, and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, it does impact the administration of our benefits, and we have to make sure we're constantly aware of all of the changes so we can provide the right advice to our employees.

I'll quickly touch on the NRC Fitness Center Program, which all employees are eligible to receive a benefit of. Obviously, it's B- exercise is important to manage stress and for your own physical well being. It can improve your health and help people stay focused at work.

Many employees at the NRC juggle other responsibilities outside of work, families, school, volunteering, and it's hard to fit in exercise. I, myself, know that. I struggle with that, as well. We have fitness resources available to our employees, so it's easy to squeeze in exercise just to be fit, or just to train for races. We have a number of employees who compete in triathlons, marathons, and races and it helps them.

We have 700 members at the headquarters Fitness Center, and approximately 110 headquarters employees who use the Gold's Gym facilities from Three White Flint and Church Street. And the Regions also have a health fitness center benefit. They can get reimbursed for expenses up to $200 annually at a fitness center of their choosing which is B- that was enhanced from two years ago. There was only one facility in each Region that they could use, so that's changed, and we've seen enrollment increase. We receive between 5 and 15 reimbursement requests from the Regions a month, which is good.

We've gotten positive feedback from the Regions and headquarters on the fitness facility, and we are working with the Office of Administration on the Fitness Center facility expansion, which will B- right now, I believe it's expected to take place by January. And when that happens, there'll be more equipment and space for the employees. Employees at Three White Flint will be able to join the Fitness Center, which is a very good thing.

And, in summary, people, the employees, all of us lead busy, full lives. We juggle our families, home, work, outside responsibilities, and one of the last things people normally do is devote their own time, their own health and well being, and we can certainly help them do that, and help them be more engaged and productive at the NRC.

And with that, I'm going to turn it over to Ben Ficks to talk about Employee Development.

MR. FICKS: Thank you, Jennifer. Good morning, Chairman and Commissioners. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to discuss the Agency's activities related to Employee Development. Next slide, please.

Employee Development continues to be a top priority for the Agency. It's one of the several key drivers of employee engagement. I'll be focusing on three key components today for supporting the Agency's efforts in this area; communications and outreach, individual development planning, and knowledge management. Next slide, please.

Communications and outreach activities are critical to insure that employees not only hear the message that the Agency continues to support their development, but that the message is backed up by specific activities to inform them of the support that we have, and the variety of training they have access to both in-house and externally.

It's particularly important given the fact that training coordination for most of the Agency was centralized into OCHCO beginning in FY 2014. Recognizing that, OCHCO developed an integrated communications plan utilizing the Powered by You theme, and that was designed to increase awareness of Human Capital Programs and services to help employees reach their full potential. The campaign started in May, and it's going to go for the entire year. And topics are selected by month. And we began in May with training, and we centered outreach activities around information tables in the Exhibit Hall, and Two White Flint cafeteria, and also supervisory and employee information sessions, and also success stories in the NRC Reporter.

So, at these sessions we basically covered all the internal resources available to staff, both qualification-related training and non-qual related training, including 358 instructor-led classroom courses at the Professional Development Center, and also the Technical Training Center. Also, the Books 24/7 which has on-demand book access, thousands and thousands, I think it's 24,000 books are in that. Skillsoft and Leadership Advantage, which provides 2,000 online courses in a variety of formats, and uses a variety of instruction methods to make it very engaging and easy to digest. All these resources are available to employees without requiring any additional funding requests.

OCHCO has also held information sessions for both supervisors and employees on the process for requesting external training, and how those requests are prioritized. And that supports transparency and a consistent understanding among all staff how external training funds are requested and prioritized.

We also publish periodically upcoming in-house PDC and TTC courses in the NRC Reporter, as well as articles on the process for requesting external training and the availability of development programs, such as mentoring and career counseling.

As a result of those outreach activities, we've seen an increase in the number of course completions for the Agency, which is a great thing. Also, satisfaction with OCHCO training support is over 90 percent on all four dimensions that we track, which includes professionalism, knowledge, accuracy and completeness, and timeliness. Next slide.

Another area we've been focusing on to assist employee development is Individual Development Planning. OCHCO continues to strongly encourage the use of IDPs for all staff, and we recommend that staff consider the 70/20/10 Rule when developing their IDP. And, basically, that rule states that 70 percent of learning happens on the job, 20 percent of learning is coaching and mentoring, and 10 percent from formal training.

To support employees in this process, we've actually rolled out workshops for employees and supervisors which were very, very well attended, and evaluations indicate the workshops were very helpful to staff in developing their plans. And we timed that to coincide with the FY 2015 external training call.

We also continue to offer a Mentoring Program and the formal Career Counseling Program, and those programs are very well used. In fact, I looked up some statistics, and Region II had been a big user of our career counseling, and we think it might be related to some of the transition that they've been going through, which probably is connected to what Project Aim is all about.

We also held two flash mentoring opportunities. Well, plan B- through this year B- we held on in March, and we have another planned probably in October. These flash mentoring opportunities are really great, and very popular, and they basically B- it's like speed dating, and it allows you to meet with several mentors, potential mentors and create long-term relationships. So, we plan to continue doing that.

We also offer individual development planning for those in supervisory and executive positions. All SES members are required to prepare, implement, and regularly update Executive Development Plans, and those plans are informed by 360 assessments and coaching from executive coaches, and also input from their supervisors.

This year we're also offering 360 assessments for Branch Chiefs, and this is based on feedback from our Human Capital Council which is composed of Deputy Office Directors across the Agency. They recognized the need, and we supported that.

And as was mentioned previously, we are in the process of initiating a new SES Candidate Development Program. And to support the recruitment efforts for that program we've held sessions on preparing your SES package and application, as well as what it's like to be in the SES, having a panel on that. And those were very well attended, and people liked those a lot.

We created a SharePoint site which houses useful information for people, tips and tricks how to do your application on the SESCDP. And we've also been an active member of the Diversity Management Inclusion Council, and are working to advance their recommendations related to employee development. For example, we partnered with SBCR in the recent Executive Leadership Seminar on Diversity and Inclusion: Role of the Executive Leadership, which was one of our highest scoring Executive Leadership seminars ever.

Also, yesterday we had a supervisory webinar on Diversity and Inclusion, and that covered how to improve diversity at NRC, and also tips for building a more inclusive environment. And that was very well attended, and Tony actually led that for us. It had 125 participants on the webinar. Next slide.

Finally, knowledge management remains a top priority to insure that we capture and preserve knowledge to assist with employee development and performance. We continue to insure governance through the Agency KM Steering Committee and Workgroup, and those entities oversee our activities in the Agency to insure that we're meeting current and future KM needs. So, we use a broad variety of evolving KM tools and methods. For instance, the month of November is marketed Agency-wide as KNOWvember, K-N-O-W-vember, and that's to raise awareness and provide an opportunity to remind employees about the importance of KM.

We executed our second annual KNOWvember campaign which was dedicated to KM's successes and best practices around the Agency, and it highlighted office-sponsored events, and also NRC Reporter articles were highlighted, different activities.

The program also launched an internal series called Ask SME and Learn which captures critical knowledge and experiences of subject matter experts, and the sessions provide an opportunity for staff across the Agency to learn directly from Agency experts on topics of interest, including cyber security, which was NSIR-sponsored, Price-Anderson Act, which was NRR-sponsored, and low-level waste which was FSME-sponsored. All those sessions were recorded and are available to staff as a knowledge asset in ADAMS and iLearn.

In addition, we had a strong presence at the Regulatory Information Conference on our KM program where we highlighted tools like the NUREG KM series, and that series was launched in 2012 and has proven to be very, very popular particularly with external stakeholders. It's covered topics such as Browns Ferry, Three Mile Island, and Davis-Besse. In addition, Research is leading our efforts to insure knowledge is captured in the review and update of Regulatory Guides.

So, lastly, we also presented a paper describing NRC's KM governance at the recent International Atomic Energy Agency conference. IAEA was very impressed with our approach, and asked that we submit and present a similar paper in an upcoming symposium.

So, thank you for the opportunity to provide a high-level overview, and at this point I turn it over to Jody Hudson.

MR. HUDSON: Good morning, Chairman and Commissioners. It's a pleasure to be here with you this morning to talk about what we're doing to insure that NRC has a positive and effective culture to support the mission here. Next slide, please.

As you can see from this particular graph, NRC's culture remains very positive. The blue line is the NRC line for employee engagement; whereas, the green is the government-wide scores. We've been able to maintain a high level of scores with regard to employee engagement across the NRC despite the challenges that the federal workforce has faced over the last several years. 2010 was the first year that OPM measured employee engagement across the federal government, and has done so for each of the subsequent four years.

So, despite the challenges, our culture has remained strong. We have a very high employee engagement index score. We currently rate number two across the whole federal government, just slightly behind one other agency.

Now, you might ask why we're using employee engagement as a measure for culture, and there is a report that came out last year that B- from the Gallup organization. It's a 2013 "State of the American Workforce Report," provides the single-most comprehensive analysis of employee engagement. And one of the key findings from that report is that organizations with high employee engagement are more productive, have lower attrition, have fewer quality defects, and are more safe. And the median differences between top quartile and bottom quartile show 41 percent fewer quality defects, and 48 percent fewer safety incidents. It's no accident that the IG Safety Culture and Climate Survey that they conduct on a three-year basis here at NRC has a very heavy emphasis on employee engagement. There's a very strong correlation between employee engagement and safety. And this is especially relevant to NRC given safety is central to our mission, and that we need a culture that effectively supports that mission.

There are additional indices that OPM uses that's extracted from the FEVS data that we monitor on a regular basis, but the employee engagement index still remains the key index as the indicator of the overall culture of the organization. And you'll be hearing more about one such index that's extracted out of the FEVS from Tony Barnes when he discusses the Inclusion Quotient, or the New IQ. Next slide, please.

So, a major reason that we have a positive organizational culture here at NRC is because we consciously and systematically monitor our culture, and take actions to strengthen it. It also helps that we strong anchors here that helps anchor our culture, including the values, a very clear mission about why we are all here and what we're to do, our whole purpose, and the principles of good regulation. All those provide very solid anchors that help anchor our culture here at NRC. But, again, being consciously monitoring the state of the culture and being proactive is one of the reasons why we are able to maintain a strong culture here at NRC.

So, how do we do this? We assess our culture through the annual FEVS survey, and also through the triennial Safety Culture and Climate Survey conducted by the Inspector General. And each year we analyze these data, and we assess it through two primary lenses. One lens is enterprise-wide approach where we take a look at the entire data set and extract out of that what is relevant to NRC as a whole? What are those crosscutting issues that warrant attention to further improve the culture here at NRC?

The second lens that we look at the data through is through an organization-specific lens. There are many different organizations here at NRC, and although there are some general things that cut across the whole of NRC, there's going to be some office-specific issues that warrant attention. That's looked at through a separate lens, but through a combination of the primary lens enterprise-wide, the secondary lens, organization-specific, actions plans are developed that address all of those issues both at the Agency-wide level, as well as at the more office-specific level.

As far as major enterprise-wide culture improvement actions that we have underway, you heard briefly the Behavior Matters initiative. I'll talk a little bit more about that. The primary purpose of that initiative is to strengthen the awareness and the modeling of NRC values through the behaviors across all segments of the NRC workforce. And we've completed Phase 1, which consisted of a series of facilitated discussions using a café facilitation approach. There was discussions on the values and behaviors, and what do those look like in actual practice. We're now moving into the Phase 2 which consists of skill-building, with the skill-building intended to improve the ability to both individually model the values through behaviors, through improved self-awareness and provide constructive feedback to others to help them model values. We're currently in the pilot phase with NRO and with Region III, and we'll go fully operational with Phase 2 in early calendar year 2015.

We're also now beginning to prepare for the 2014 FEVS. The survey was conducted last spring. We expect the first data sets to be coming in in the September-October time frame. Hopefully, we'll see that we continue to have a strong culture through that data set, but we'll wait and see what the data shows.

To augment the enterprise-wide and the office and regional-specific action planning and implementation actions I described, we also conduct Organizational Development engagements across the NRC. And these Organizational Development engagements, or OD engagements for short, they take a variety of forms. Most often involve working with individuals, teams, branches, divisions, and in some cases entire offices to increase effectiveness, improve team work, improve working relationships, help plan and navigate change management, all of which contribute to strengthening the organizational culture here at NRC. These OD engagements typically start out with going in and doing some type of a diagnostic assessment followed by the design and implementation of an appropriate engagement solution.

A number of OD engagements have occurred over the past years. In 2014, we conducted 18 such engagements. This contrasts with having conducted only two in 2011. So, as pressures increase inside the Agency, tensions increase because of budget reductions and other decisions and issues that affect the federal workforce, it's in turn created a greater demand for these services. And the engagements have thus far spanned 16 of the 28 different NRC offices across the whole of NRC. Based on both the increase in requests for the OD services and feedback from our office partners where we deliver these services, the services are effective and add value in maintaining or improving NRC's organizational culture.

Later in the agenda we'll be hearing from one of our business partners, Cathy Haney, who will be describing the benefits of one such Organizational Development engagement we conducted at her request in NMSS involving managing change.

In conclusion, NRC's organizational culture remains positive. We monitor it through independent third-party surveys, FEVS, Safety Culture Climate Survey. We actively use the data at both the Agency and the office regional levels to focus our improvement actions, and we provide a range of organizational development services tailored to increase organizational effectiveness, and improve organizational culture.

And now I'm going to turn it over to Tony Barnes who will be discussing the topic of Inclusion and Its Importance and Interconnectedness to Employee Engagement, the Organizational Culture. And Tony will be followed by Cathy Haney who will describe the benefits of the OD engagement we conducted at her request involving management change. Tony.

MR. BARNES: Thank you, Jody. Good morning, Chairman Macfarlane and Commissioners. I appreciate the opportunity this morning to give you an introduction to a new Diversity and Inclusion topic. But first, Commissioner Magwood, let me give my thanks on behalf of SBCR and the Committees for your personal support to the Advisory Committees and the events that they put on which attempt to insure personal and professional growth of all NRC employees. Your support goes a long way to showing by example how leaders should care about those that they lead, and we thank you very much, sir.

Well, there's lots of important and exciting things that are happening here at the NRC in support of our people and our Agency's safety mission. You just heard Jody Hudson talk about how the NRC continuously ranks among the top agencies of the entire federal government for its commitment to employee engagement, and strong engagement equals strong inclusion.

Now, this is not a fact that is told to us by outsiders. Instead, this is what our employees tell us by their responses collectively to the annual Federal Employment Viewpoint Survey. Complementary and equal in importance is this new way that we will attempt to measure inclusiveness, and it's known as the New IQ. Next slide, please.

So what is inclusion and why is it important? Well, simply put, inclusion is our ability to include differences in a friendly, flexible, and fair way. Inclusion creates an environment where employees feel welcome and important. When employees feel valued, appreciated, and respected they work more productively. This is a fact that we know. Everyone wins in an inclusive, open, and collaborative workplace.

The New IQ measures our inclusive intelligence which are the intentional, deliberate, and proactive acts that increase work group intelligence by making people feel they belong and are uniquely valued. If you do not intentionally, deliberately, and proactively include then you unintentionally exclude.

OPM's adaptation identified 20 specific questions taken from the annual FEVS that describe the 20 behavioral statements that measure workplace inclusion. The average score of the positive responses to these 20 questions is how the inclusion quotient is measured. The slide on the screen here shows you a four-year trending of the difference in the employment IQ score of the federal government-wide versus the NRC. Next slide, please.

So, using the framework of the New IQ, members of the NRC's Diversity, Management and Inclusion Council developed a presentation that captures a four-year trend of FEVS scores from 2010 to 2013, which measures our inclusion quotient. And as an Agency, as we have it broken down on this slide, we also have it by office and by Region using the same 20 questions identified for the inclusion quotient. And as you can see, we are about 25 percent higher across the board than the government or other agencies as a whole. Despite a slightly declining trend overall, the NRC scores as an

Agency greatly exceed the federal government-wide scores for each of the four years. We have room to improve, we understand that, but this is an achievement gap that is something that we should definitely be proud of. I believe that we can improve, and I know that we're up to the task. Next slide, please.

So, recently when OPM rolled out this product across the entire government, it was in conjunction with other initiatives associated with the Presidential Executive Order 13583, which is Diversity and Inclusion of the Federal Workforce. And as I said, it focuses on those 20 important specific questions. Those questions, as well as the chart, are in your backup binders.

Now, let's talk more about the five inclusive habits that are so important, and those habits are fairness, openness, cooperativeness, supportiveness, and empowerment. Fairness in the workplace means that arbitrary actions, personal favoritism, coercion for patrician and political purposes, and prohibited personnel practices are not tolerated. While it seems a no-brainer, fairness indicates that appropriate steps are taken to deal with poor performers who cannot or will not improve, and that differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way. In addition, rewards are provided in a fair manner, awarded on how well employees perform their jobs, and not about longevity or non-job related activities.

Openness, in an open work environment creativity and innovation is rewarded. Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace, and supervisors and team leaders are committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society as they work well with employees of different backgrounds.

Cooperativeness. In a cooperative work environment, managers promote communication among different work units and support collaborativeness across work units to accomplish work objectives. Supportive defines supervisors that support that need for work balance and other life issues. Supervisors and team leaders have to provide employees with constructive suggestions on how to improve work performance and talk to employees more than just the every six months on a mid-period or end of year. Supervisors and team leaders take time to listen to what employees have to say, and treat employees with respect.

And, finally, a score of empowerment is the last of what we call FOCSE habits, it's empowerment. In an inclusive workplace, employees have enough information to do their jobs well, and feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things. In an empowered work setting, employees' talents are used well, and employees have the feeling of personal empowerment with respect to their work processes. Next slide.

So, using this new framework of the New IQ, we have developed these presentations, and it's my intent to make myself available to each of the leadership groups across the Agency to discuss what the tool is designed to do, and to participate and work with that leadership group in order to see if we can build on this beginning initiative.

As I said, we average about 25 percent higher as a whole, so let's get back to a positive trend. We're looking forward to the trends of 2014, and add it to this trend, and even make a wider margin with the rest of the federal government.

So, where do we go from here? They're a tool and they're used for engagement. I know that we're up to the task, and I'm looking forward for the opportunity to participate.

This concludes my portion of the brief. I'm prepared to address any of your questions in the Q&A, and at this time I'll be followed by Cathy Haney from NMSS.

MS. HANEY: Thank you, Tony. Good morning, Chairman and the Commissioners. I'm very happy to be here today to speak to the changes and the environment in the Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards.

As you're aware, our programs have significantly changed and evolved over the last five or so years. We've seen the suspension and restart of the Yucca Mountain Program. We stood up the Waste Confidence Directorate that was charged by the Commission with updating the Waste Confidence Rule which has evolved into the Draft Final Continued Storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel Rule. We've relocated from the Executive Boulevard building to Three White Flint, and now we're planning a move to Two White Flint in the very near future. We successfully transferred inspection efforts for Material Control and Accounting and Criticality Inspections from NMSS to Region II.

We've seen these changes while we've also seen a reduction of 52 full-time equivalents when you account for the standup of the Waste Confidence Directorate and the recent Yucca Mountain.

We've also had an 80 percent turnover in senior executives in the office over the last five years. And we've done all of this and adjusted to all of this at the same time that we've been performing our day to day activities in the program areas.

And I'd say that we have been successful in these areas for a few reasons that I'll speak to today, but one primarily is the maintaining the staff and management engagement, and we have crossed all business lines, there are two business lines in the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards. I acknowledge that there are changing work priorities and as those priorities change, we also need to adapt. But I'd also like to add two more, one of those being that we have a very highly dedicated and competent staff that works within the office, as well as we have a tremendous amount of support across the Agency. And those items combined help us meet the changing environment.

Now I'd like to move to the next slide, and to talk about some of the areas where we have really focused in adjusting to this. And I ask that you think of this as a clock for the sake of my presentation today. And, first, I'd like to start with 1:00, that being the two-way communication. And by communication I'm referring to formal and informal communications that take place across the office. And to give you a few examples of what we've been using for communication purposes, one is we have quarterly All-Hands meetings. And in those cases, we try to come up with topics, deliver topics that we think would be of interest to all across the office and in attendance.

Recently we've been following those quarterly

All-Hands meetings with Pot Luck lunches, or with snacks afterwards, and what that does is affords everyone the opportunity to leave the meeting and then to have just some time where they can sit down and dialogue with their peers, and with the other managers in the office.

We also have a newsletter that we periodically publish. We call it The Scoop. In The Scoop, articles range from those that are applicable to the Agency, as well as taking topics that are within the office. We talk about births, weddings. We're already starting planning for the next generation of the staffers coming to NMSS, so we start accomplishing and recognizing them early.

We also have open doors at the division level and the office level. At the office level, Scott Moore and I hold open door meetings twice a month, and they're giving staff the opportunity to come in and chat with us. We've seen over the last year items coming in from areas of Cathy, Scott, can you help me with, to I've got a great idea, you know, why don't you think about this? And we've been able to execute and operate on those, and it's been very helpful in the office.

We also have a weekly meeting with branches where Scott and/or I will go out and meet with a branch. We try to do it once a month and pick a different B- I mean, once a week and we try to pick a different branch. And that gives, again, that informal opportunity for dialogue.

Then we have an ad hoc basis where we communicate through box announcements. These are emails that go out to all staff. Typically, those are something that just happened today, or it could have been as easy as hey, there's an EEO briefing today. Why don't you go to that? So, we use those for all different types of communications.

The last thing that we have is more recent where we have what's called a SPIRIT Team. And this, in case, SPIRIT refers to Start Promoting Invigorating Relationships that Inspire Today. This is somewhat of an ad hoc group that managers and staff that come together once a week to talk about how can we keep the environment invigorating in the office, as well as how can we continue to communicate? So, we've been very active in this area of communication.

Moving to 3:00 on my clock, I'd like to refer to recognition. Recognition can take many forms. One of them, obviously, monetary in the case of an annual performance awards, to the point of where if we have a near-term achievement, something we want to quickly act on, Scott and I will send out emails to the staff or to the division thanking them, and recognizing their efforts.

The other way that we do is to look for some out-of-the-box ways to just recognize people, and we recently ran an article in our Scoop where we titled it, "Where's Cathy and Scott," which was a takeoff on Where's Waldo? And we had our technical assistants take a picture of us in front of one of the locations in the NRC complex, and awarded staff for identifying where we were. It was a way of getting staff out to see the complex and where we were, and the individuals received a $5 gift card from Starbucks. So, as I say, it can range B- recognition can range from the very large bonuses all the way to as simple as a $5 gift card from Starbucks.

So, if I move to 5:00 now on my clock, let's talk a little bit about cooperation. And I really believe that cooperation is critical for a healthy environment because we are working side by side, and we're trying to achieve personal and organizational objectives. And two examples that come to mind when I think about cooperation, both with inside the office and outside the office, is really our effort on the Waste Confidence or the Continued Storage of Spent Fuel rulemaking effort. And also, last summer our work on staff's review of documentation submitted by Honeywell, which is one of our fuel cycle licensees. And this was the evaluation of the technical information that was submitted that would allow us to evaluate whether we could give the authority for them to restart or not.

Moving now to 7:00, talk a second about education. And here, again, both formal and informal education because we both know, all know that leading B- education leads to a highly skilled group of NMSS employees, as well as NRC employees.

In the case of education, referencing back, we heard earlier about the SES Candidate Development Program. All my current senior executives have entered through the Candidate Development Program, and are routinely attending the Executive Seminars. Forty-four percent of my Branch Chiefs have graduated from the Leadership Development Program. And then all my technical and administrative staff have completed training programs that brought them to NRC and to NMSS.

At 9:00 we see community outreach, and we all believe that in order to be successful we need to engage both internally and externally, and by doing so we can learn and expand our horizons, we can help others understand the NRC mission, and we can bring together a diverse workforce. And in this area we've done presentations at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on our specific areas relative to spent fuel storage. At Auburn University we've presented twice with regards to NRC's mission. We participated in recruitment fairs. And, again, looking at the range we've had staff that have gone out and recently participated at Thomas Johnson Middle School in Frederick, Maryland where the focus was on nuclear engineering, and it was keyed to a career fair that was held at that school.

At 11:00 we see workforce development. And this is, again B- it doesn't stop, education doesn't stop with just when you enter the door. We want to continue to support the education and development of our staff, and we do that through rotational assignments.

This year alone we've had 18 rotational assignments either into the office or from NMSS out to other organizations. We're actively hiring through programs such as the Nuclear Safety Professional Development Program, the Summer Hire Program, the Co-Op Program, and the Military Spouse Program. And we've definitely leveraged the Minority-Serving Institution Program.

And at 12:00, just to come back to appreciation, we're successful in adjusting to the change in carrying out NRC's mission because of the staff that work in NMSS, and within NRC, and I definitely appreciate all that they do.

So, I'd like to close on this slide by just saying that our efforts in the Human Capital area are truly around the clock. And with that, I'd like you to move to the next slide.

So, continuing my focus on Human Capital, I'd just like to highlight one of our recent initiatives, and that being our work on emotional intelligence. Working within the office and with our SPIRIT Team a decision was made to focus on emotional intelligence. And our view was that by doing this we could increase self-awareness so that we can build on our strength and identify growth opportunities. And in this case, emotional intelligence refers to five things. One is stress management, second, self-perception, third, self-expression, fourth, interpersonal relationships, and lastly decisionmaking.

As part of this effort, we all recognize that emotional intelligence was a two-way street. It was staff to management, and management to staff. And with that in mind, we used a multi-prong approach to addressing the training in this area. The first thing was working with OCHCO. We trained the managers, and after training the managers we had the managers take the message and the information down to staff where they had dialogues about what of the specific elements of emotional intelligence should the office work on, should the branch work on, should the division work on. We just brought it right into everyone's backyard.

Our next step in the fall will be to hold some cafés, or groups discussions where we could further discuss what we learned, what areas, and do some benchmarking across the office.

So, with that I'd like to go to my last slide. And in this case, I think it's truly a picture worth a thousand words. This is a picture from last year's NMSS annual picnic. And what you see pictured here is the NMSS band. And I think I can use this to highlight a few of the items that I've spoken to.

First of all, we'll talk about appreciation. It comes in many ways, as I said, the monetary awards, or it could be as simple as the softball trophy that's awarded at the end of the tournament, and by just saying the time to say thank you to our staff for all that they do. It shows a commitment to worklife balance. Many playing here in the band, obviously, volunteered their time to this band, but they started practicing weeks ahead of time after work, and we're getting ready to start for this year's band, so the conference rooms on Three White Flint at about 5:30, you'll hear them practicing.

But it also B- we have some that play professionally, we have some that play B- volunteer their time to community bands just so that they can show that we have this commitment to worklife balance. It also shows our support for cooperation and independence.

This diverse group started practicing a week ahead of time, and it was really to give everyone time to prepare and plan for the day of event. And I would say that while making music or writing a safety evaluation report, we are all successful when we bring together a group of diverse individuals with diverse skills that are dedicated to the project and the mission. And with that, I'll conclude my presentation.

MR. SATORIUS: Thank you, Cathy, and thank you to all the panel members for your presentations.

In closing, I'd like to reiterate, as Miriam mentioned at the beginning of the briefing, three things; that it's critical for the Agency to continue to make the appropriate and measured investments in the workforce. Second, that health and well being of our employees along with employee development will continue to remain a high priority amongst the staff. And lastly, the NRC will continue to insure that our employees feel engaged, and that we maintain a positive culture by using all of the tools available to evaluate our performance, and then provide feedback. And with that, we're ready for your questions.

CHAIRMAN MACFARLANE: All right. Thank you guys very much. First questions will be from Commissioner Ostendorff.

COMMISSIONER OSTENDORFF: Thank you, Chairman. Thank you all for your presentations, very informative and helpful. I look around the room and see the tremendous turnout for this meeting which has been consistent with prior similar meeting attendance, and I just think it's a very positive tone and atmosphere that brings people to the meeting room today for this session.

I have just a couple of questions, and I'll make some comments on various presentations. I'm going to start out with Miriam, if I can, please. I know that all the Commissioners from time to time speak to people in other federal agencies about our Human Capital practices, and things I frequently cite about things that stand out at the NRC. Just two examples, one of them is the rotational opportunities which I think is a real strength. And I know that Cathy mentioned that with 18 rotational opportunities in NMSS. And, also, targeted training. I know Jody gets involved in this, but the difficult conversations, the cafés and so forth.

You mentioned I believe, Miriam, that you had recently been to some type of a national conference dealing with Human Capital Officers and perspectives. Are there things that other agencies are doing that you picked up on that we ought to be considering? I'm curious as to how you see the rest of the federal government.

MS. COHEN: Well, it was actually a national HR conference and it was mostly private sector, so I came back really energized, and then I realized where I worked, and I realized there's a lot that we can't do. But I think there's some really best practices and good ideas we can try to tap into.

I think when I talked to my colleagues, the other fellow OCHCOs, I feel very, very good about the NRC. We're fortunate, we're not that big, 3,700 employees. We're very nimble, even though sometimes it doesn't feel like we are. You know, we're not dealing with a 25,000, you know, large organization that they have to move incredible amounts of people and processes to make changes, so I think the fact that we are small makes us relatively agile. And I also think because of the highly skilled workforce that we have people still want to come here. I think it's an attractive place to work, and so I think when I look at other agencies that have larger issues that they have to contend with, a lot of turnover and major gaps in critical skills, we don't face that. So, when I'm in those dialogues with the other

Chief Human Capital Officers, they're always looking to us for how can they learn from us, what can we share with them?

So, I think a lot of what you heard this morning is that we have to continue to do the things that we're doing. And I use that language very carefully, you know, appropriate and measured because we don't want cut any of these programs that make us a great place to work, so I think as we delve into difficult issues about our future and what scenario, and what we think is going to happen, it's real easy to pick areas that seem ripe for potential cuts, but these are all things that make us a really good place to work. So, I think that investing in our employees is something we absolutely have to do.

COMMISSIONER OSTENDORFF: Thank you. I'm going to add a comment to your response to my question, and that is I think that you all do a terrific job in the NRC Reporter of talking about what's happening across the Agency. And I always look forward to reading it. I think it's very relevant, and I encourage you to really keep that up because I think that's one of the best mechanisms I have as a Commissioner to kind of see what's going on. So, I applaud those that are involved in its development.

I want to turn to Jennifer just for a moment, just kind of comment. One, appreciate your review of different programs here at the NRC. I'm looking over at Marv Itzkowitz, my good friend from OGC, and I've not been able because of surgery to be at the Fitness Center for the last three weeks, but I always enjoy going to the Fitness Center and seeing Marv. We're frequently on the ellipticals next to each other. I won't be back there for another three or four months probably, but I just use that as a small point. You know, I see people in the locker room, I see people in the Fitness Center. I know the Chairman goes down there, and others do, as well. I just think that the community atmosphere that it provides is very important, and I appreciate your bringing that up because I think it's very relevant. And it's an example, but one that has manifestation across other programs for the Agency.

I also want to take this opportunity to publicly thank Jennifer for her work and that of others in Human Capital in the veterans hiring initiatives. Jennifer attended an inter-agency meeting with me earlier this spring down at the Executive Office building. I appreciate very much what you're doing there, Jennifer.

MS. GOLDER: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER OSTENDORFF: I want to turn to Ben just for a minute, if I can. I appreciate your review of the individual development plans, and I wanted to kind of see what is your sense as to how widely are they used here at the NRC?

MR. FICKS: We had about 212 people attend those workshops, so I think that there's an increase in use. I don't have a particular number to share with you in terms of overall for the Agency, but we plan to continue the workshops and actively promote them.

I have had some discussions with senior managers, like when I visited Region II, Vic McCree has been actively promoting the individual development plans. And I asked him whether or not it should be mandatory because you guys asked me that question at last year's meeting, and he said, "No, not at this time. We need to continue to promote them." So, our strategy has been promoting them, and we can continue to monitor and give you better data.

COMMISSIONER OSTENDORFF: Mark, I'm going to ask you if you have any comment, because I've asked this question at a prior meeting about how widely is this program embraced and utilized? I think it has a lot of merit to it. I'm curious as to your thinking?

MR. SATORIUS: I think it could be more utilized. When I was a first line supervisor, the thing I used to pester my staff with is you need to have an IDP because it'll track out what you need to do in the future. But the most important thing is you've got your supervisor's name on it, that he agrees, he or she agrees, so there's that leverage to make sure it happens.

COMMISSIONER OSTENDORFF: Okay. I think it's important, and I'm not suggesting mandatory implementation but I do think that to the extent that it can encouraged as a tool, I think just the process of having people sit down with a supervisor and discuss what are career objectives and goals, that by itself is huge. And it goes back also, I think, Jody, two years ago you were talking about those difficult conversations. A piece that we're trying to institute to talk about performance evaluations and feedback. I think it's all part of that same mosaic as to how we communicate at different levels within the organization.

Mark, I want to thank you for your EDO update this week. I know that all my colleagues to my left, we've been discussing service in Commission offices. I talked to Miriam about this several times this year, and I appreciate the EDO update to encourage the employees in this Agency to be alert for opportunities to serve on Commission staffs since we have a changing composition. Thank you for doing that. I think the people that have worked in the Commission offices have had the chance to witness and be part of broadening experiences. Thank you for your communication efforts, Mark.

MR. SATORIUS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER OSTENDORFF: Tony, I appreciated the Inclusion Quotient discussion. I'll watch my clock here. And I know that others have also talked B- you and others have also talked about the engagement piece. I think our experience collectively for everybody in this room is when people get out of bed in the morning, they come to work, they want to be successful. They want to be part of a team. They want to be contributors and have that contribution recognized, and engaged the way you're talking about. So, I appreciate your mentioning that.

I'm curious from your long and distinguished career in the Navy if there's anything else we need to be doing in that area from your Navy experience as it might apply to NRC?

MR. BARNES: Thank you, sir. I'd like to believe that after spending 31 years in the Navy that I know a little something about leadership and about people.

COMMISSIONER OSTENDORFF: You do.

MR. BARNES: And in my opinion, people want to be led. They don't want to be managed, or supervised, or any of those other words that are necessary evils. They want to be led, so leadership starts at the first line leader and goes all the way up the chain. And leadership by example is what people look for, positive leaders that you want to be like, you want to aspire to be. That job should look like it's fun; otherwise why want to be a supervisor or a leader one day if you see that the person you work for, it's drudgery for them to be a leader. So, those are the kind of engagements I'm talking about, positive examples of what a true leader should be like.

And when we talk about how do you avoid the possibility of having a EEO complaint wedged against you, my answer is always the same, just be the best leader you can be and you will rarely give someone an opportunity if you show that them that you are valued, appreciated, respected, and appropriately annotated in your performance evaluation that this is what you do. So, leadership by example, we've got great leaders in this Agency. I echo Miriam's comment about going to Diversity and Inclusion events across the city here, and my colleagues in other agencies always surround the NRC attendees and ask those questions. What is it you guys are doing over there that allow your scores to be high and people to have, for the most part, fairly high satisfaction scores? And I think it's a result of good leaders that we have here at the NRC.

COMMISSIONER OSTENDORFF: Thank you for that response. Cathy, I don't have time to ask you a question, but I do want to thank you and your leadership in NMSS for all you've been doing under a very dynamic changing workload and environment, so my hat is off to you. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

CHAIRMAN MACFARLANE: Great, thank you. Thank you all for your presentations. It was very comprehensive and I think it was very helpful, so I appreciate it. I have a few questions here. Let me start off with Miriam or Mark, the high-level questions.

So, what do you guys think are the top two or three Human Capital challenges facing the Agency over the next two to five years?

MR. SATORIUS: I'll start and I think that that's to have the staff that retains the agileness to be able to shift as we see the horizon shifting, and as Aim.2020 is going to help us with. So, I think it's the pedigree of the staff, and the skills that they have that we need to be very, very closely involved with that, and looking at where we need to go, and what shifts we need to make to the staff to do some retraining as that becomes more evident.

Miriam, did you have anything?

MS. COHEN: I would just amplify just a bit to say that, you know, we've been talking about change for so many years it seems like well, maybe it's just all the time. So, we're no different than any other agency. I think if you look out the next five years, I don't think anyone is really seeing big budgets coming, or any massive influx of federal employees. So, I think given our unique place in the government, and where the industry is going, and things that we probably don't even know yet, I think sustaining employee engagement during times of uncertainty is really key.

So, we've tried in the past three or four years in all the meetings that I've been in to really focus on what we can control, because we don't control whether there's a pay raise, we don't control if they're going to cut our awards. But I think if we can sustain people's engagement through meaningful work assignments, having people feel empowered about the work that they do, that they're contributing, that they have a say in how work is being performed, and having supervisors that can cultivate and develop their employees, we'll probably weather the storm. Are we going to weather it better than other agencies? I certainly would hope so, but I think sustaining that momentum amidst all the changes is really going to be critical.

CHAIRMAN MACFARLANE: Okay, that's helpful. So, let's talk about some of those areas you touched on. One is training. So B- and a number of you talked about it in your presentations. It seems that folks at the Agency based on FEVS and whatnot are not so happy with the training. The trend is going down. Some of the numbers I have, you know, from the 2013 FEVS is that answers to questions like how satisfied are you with the training you receive? It's down eight points. In response to I'm given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization, it's down six points. So, in response to that do you think that our training program is adequate, and is it sufficiently resourced?

MS. COHEN: I'm going to let Jody take that.

MR. HUDSON: Yes, and I invite Ben to jump in, as well. We don't know exactly why the scores dropped as they did in FEVS around training. One can speculate when you look at what's going on in the broader operating environment. Certainly, one thing that did change was the amount of money that was available, so the rate at which we had approved external training particularly for what one might consider premium training, things like the four-week FEI experience, going to Kennedy School of Government, Brookings, some of those, there was a dramatic reduction in those types of trainings to go to lower cost options that can build the same skill set but maybe not at a premium locale. We feel that that probably influenced the scores. We don't know that for sure, but one can make, I think, a reasonable assumption.

You know, we rely on other means of measuring the effectiveness of our training programs, and we do this in near real time. Every single course, an employee has the opportunity to evaluate. And we have a very high response rate on the post-course evaluations. And across the board the ratings are quite high, as Ben had mentioned during his presentation. Overall 90 percent level of satisfaction across the four or five dimensions that we evaluate the training by, so B-

CHAIRMAN MACFARLANE: Right, but that's one way of evaluating training, but I would say it's not a complete picture because you may have liked the course, but you may not have really learned anything useful, so how do you evaluate that piece of it?

MR. HUDSON: Some of the questions dealing with the post-course evaluation ask specifically about that, about its value in terms of being able to help you do your job better.

CHAIRMAN MACFARLANE: Yes, that's asking the employee. I'm wondering from a management point of view are people getting the adequate training that they need?

MS. COHEN: Well, let me just pitch in just a little bit on this, is that last year B- I'm a little bit more certain than Jody, is that when the Employee Viewpoint Survey was administered last year it was right after sequestration. You know, budgets were tight and we weren't able to fund all the requests that normally have come in.

And I take a little bit more pedestrian view of just training dollars in the federal government which is, up until recently training really was one of the few I would call perks left in the government because everything is being reduced, reduced. And it used to be a nice thing well, hey, you know, I don't control that much, but hey, if I could get someone to go to a Brookings class, or the Kennedy School, or one of those kind of places, it was a really nice thing to do. And as budgets got tighter, those kind of premium courses really became under scrutiny. But I will say from a mission critical perspective that the qual training, the training that the offices record as Priority 1, absolute must have, those were never touched last year amidst sequestration. And then this year, and Ben can correct me if I'm wrong, I believe all external training requests were approved. There might be a couple here and there that maybe were not approved, but there was a recalibration, so we've been touting the fact that the Agency did have dollars this year, and that those traditional training requests that had come in that maybe weren't approved last year were definitely funded this year.

MR. HUDSON: And also there's another measurement that was the Safety Culture Climate Survey, and the last survey that was done was 2012, but on the issue of training we were 3 percentage points higher than the high-performing organization benchmark. But if you drill down into that and understand what that means, the employees rated very high the fact that they get the training they need to do their jobs. They don't necessarily get the training they want for preparing for a different career trajectory, but in terms of the skill sets, the training they need to do their jobs, they are very satisfied, and much higher than the high-performing organization benchmark.

CHAIRMAN MACFARLANE: Right. I guess I would be even more comfortable if there was sort of a management sort of check on it that management thought that they were getting the training that they needed to do their jobs, too. But let move on to another question.

The Leadership Potential Program class, I believe the last class was in 2012. What are the plans for another class?

MS. COHEN: I think we B- I think there's some information in the background book that we're going to plan to launch one in 2015, because we had to launch a very quick Senior Executive Candidate Development Program. That took priority. But we realize we haven't had one in a couple of years, and we still are going to need first line supervisors.

CHAIRMAN MACFARLANE: Yes, exactly. We better not lose track of that, otherwise that will come back and bite us. Okay.

Tony, in the Inclusion Quotient, I note that although we are doing better than the rest of the government, we're still declining, and we're declining at a much faster rate than the rest of the government. So, I'm wondering, you know, how we address that? And

I had a nice discussion with you and Vonna a couple of weeks ago, I don't know, sometime in the past, and Jerome, about whether SBCR could actually help the offices in sort of thinking through that. Do you think that that's a good way to B-

MR. BARNES: Absolutely. That's really my intent, is to sit down with each office leadership team and go through, and make it clear what the tool says. I believe that the real meat of the actions exist inside the office itself. Those leaders know better than anybody else what actions may have driven. I don't think anything is absolute. I think there are external forces, just like Miriam mentioned, no pay raises, turning on the TV and having poor things said about federal government employees, the sequestration, the furloughs that didn't really affect us that much, but there are external forces that office leaders have no control over.

CHAIRMAN MACFARLANE: Sure.

MR. BARNES: But there are individual leadership moves, opportunities, et cetera that might have driven some of that movement. So, using the tool for what it's designed to do, which is just a situational awareness. There's no answers in that tool, just more questions about what kind of decisions did we make as a leadership team that may have driven responses in a certain direction. So, it's my goal to B- those leaders that would like me to reach out to them, I'm not really going to force my activities on anyone, but to make myself available to come in and use the tool for that situational awareness opportunity.

CHAIRMAN MACFARLANE: Yes. So, it sounds like that would be helpful for the Office Directors to avail themselves of that opportunity to learn more.

MR. BARNES: And I've already made some contacts already.

CHAIRMAN MACFARLANE: Okay, great, great, great. Okay. With that, I will turn things over to Commissioner Svinicki.

COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Well, I add my thanks for everyone's presentations which were very well done. Cathy, on your Slide 23 did you have an ugly holiday sweater contest?

MS. HANEY: I did.

COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: I will just note for you that some of us spend the holidays in other parts of the country where such items are worn with no irony whatsoever.

MS. HANEY: So noted.

COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Okay. I'm getting a head nod here a little bit. No, I think it's really awesome, that's great. And I will note the caption there was building camaraderie, so some of those people actually seem to be modeling those very proudly, so that's good.

I appreciate the discussion about individual development plans. I think I had also platformed off Commissioner Ostendorff's comments in a previous meeting. I know their use isn't mandatory. I don't necessarily advocate for that. I've worked within organizations in other parts of the federal government where it was for all intents and purposes mandatory, and I B- but I think the strength of it is that in a performance review you can have sometimes these difficult conversations about where we fall short. And the development plan is a wonderful positive complement to that because it talks about perhaps you aren't equipped in these areas. Here's how over time you could build a plan that would allow you to be performing at the very highest levels that you aspire to. So, I am an advocate of them, maybe not making them mandatory, but it's good to hear that they have strong leadership support, at least in certain organizations where they've been experiencing change, so it's important to equip people for the future.

I also was pleased to see in the EDO update that there was discussion of service in Commission offices. I think everyone on this side of the table has talked about this a time or two, so this is also a wonderful opportunity for me to plug that I know that our SES candidates right now in the program are required to do rotational assignments, so I hope that they will think broadly about that. I know there were some issues with the ability to allow people to move from the Regions to headquarters and back because there's all the living costs for an extended duration assignment. But, you know, it may be that we will have individuals looking for opportunities, and if we run a Leadership Potential Program class that's another chance maybe for folks to do rotational assignments in Commission offices. So, I'm putting in my plug for people to think about finding those opportunities.

Something that I B- maybe this is anecdotal but I feel that I've observed maybe more in other federal government agencies, is a willingness to support interagency assignments and rotations. And

I know that there may be very practical barriers to that, but on the one hand if it's an exchange, sometimes you can have someone come to NRC from another federal agency. And I, at least anecdotally, feel that there's other departments and agencies that make a more vibrant use of that. I don't know what the barriers administratively might be to that, but I think that can be a really big win-win. You know, when I think about all of the attorneys we have here and opportunities to maybe go to the Justice Department and have other people come here, again for temporary periods. It was something that I was very blessed to have the government support for me early in my career. And I think you come back with just wonderful ideas and perspectives on how your own organization could approach things in new and different ways. So, I think it's a real win.

You know, we talked a lot about employee training, but there is kind of development. And I know that we have a strong emphasis as an Agency on the qualification requirements. And I was a junior engineer in the government, and I know you've got your qual card, and you have to go through all that training. But that's really not the training and opportunity that kept me in the federal government for nearly 25 years now. It was a little bit what Miriam talked about, that it used to be something that you could be well supported in saying how could we develop you to be a career-long federal employee, and how can we, given that it's one big government family, how can we look to your future? And another panelist described it as preparing yourself for the career trajectory. Maybe you really enjoy working for the federal government, but you don't know necessarily that you want to be wedded to one thing.

My sense is that is the discretionary types of opportunities that when we look at cutting training budgets is the first thing to be cut. But I know that also we can try to think creatively, because development doesn't have to be classroom training. In my case, even within my own department, it was an opportunity to serve on maybe an audit team, or a task force or something. Now did my own little branch have to do with the absence of one of five people for a period of time? I realize that's a hardship on the small organizational units, but I think that B- I agree with all of the larger situational awareness and description that Miriam talked about, and the conditions that we see aren't likely to change.

I think if we want to be retaining people thinking broadly, and maybe having units or small organizational units be willing to say yes, Sue is going to go off and serve on a team for two months, and maybe we could get someone from another group to come in. But I just B- I know we do a lot of that creative approaches, but I just encourage us to do more. And I know this phrase of doing more with less. The Chairman doesn't like acronyms. If I could strike the phrase we have to do more with less, I would strike that going forward. What I'm hearing more in organizational professional societies and stuff that look at organizations and running large groups, there's less and less talk about doing more with less. There's more and more talk about let's look at how we're doing things. And, again, I think this is a big part of the Project Aim 2020 is let's look at what we're doing, because there are limits to doing more with less. So, I think it's good to have a clear-eyed view of that.

I did want to touch a little bit on Agency action plans. There was a reference to the fact that we get the survey results. We look at where we think targeted Agency action needs to be taken. Could someone address just generally how are those then B- you know, is progress towards the measure, do they milestone dates and things like that for completion? Could someone talk a little bit about that process? I mean, I'm assuming we don't just develop an Agency action plan and not look at it again.

MR. SATORIUS: I know it's B- I'll let Jody take B- but we parse it out and we look at it from an EDO perspective. We'll look at it Agency-wide, but all the offices and business lines get the results of the FEVS, so that they can take look at themselves and focus on hybrid-type activities that they may need to take to address certain issues.

COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: So, they develop their own actions.

MR. SATORIUS: Yes. Yes, they do.

COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Okay. Then they track against those.

MR. SATORIUS: And Jody can probably talk a little bit more about it.

MR. HUDSON: Yes. Every year we analyze results. That translates into action planning either enterprise-wide or at office-specific level. And the expectation has historically been communicated out of the EDO's office that thou shalt develop these action plans. And as the new survey data is available from the following year survey, we re-engage with clients, give them the new data set. And then they're asked to take a look at their plans, evaluate the progress that's been made, and make any modifications based on any new data, new emerging trends.

There's not been a real rigid process around measurement of progress. It's more informal because we recognize that we've been performing very, very well as an Agency. At the same time, we have more and more work to do our plates with fewer resources, and we didn't want to get to the point where we're creating additional stress to excel in an area where we're already excelling as an Agency.

COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Well, and you've pointed out the obvious which I hadn't thought of, which is you get subsequent surveys so you have an opportunity to look at how you might modify an action, or whether something is a successful response to a previous survey result.

MR. SATORIUS: That's true. The challenge is that by the time we get the results of this survey in September and people put together plans, and start to enact those plans, we're ready for another survey in June, or whenever the dates are. So, oftentimes B-

COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: But over time you would still have B- you would develop a sense of the effectiveness of your response actions.

MR. HUDSON: And you're right, it's looking at the subsequent year's data to determine whether or not we've made progress, and whether or not the improvement actions that have been implemented have been effective.

COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Okay, thank you.

MS. HANEY: Commissioner, if I could comment on that?

COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Sure.

MS. HANEY: From an Office Director standpoint, the focus areas of NMSS with regards to communication really can be driven right back to the office action plan following the 2012 FEVS data. When we got the 2012 data, it was one of the low points, and our action plan was to focus on communication and knowledge management. And when we got the 2013, which we did, and then when we got the 2013 results we went back and actually looked at it, changed some of the milestones, changed some of the actions, but we were actually periodically looking back to see are we on track with regards to the milestones that we had assigned ourselves. And I think all the other offices are doing similar things.

MR. HUDSON: And I do want to compliment NMSS and Cathy's leadership. NMSS was the single most improved organization between the 2012 and 2013 results.

COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Okay, that's great. Just as a closing comment, I know that a number of administrative and corporate support functions were affected by the TABS Initiative, and really an ongoing look at how a number of support functions are carried out in the Agency. I would hope you would have as a focus area training and development for individuals affected by somewhat of the reduction of the number of positions in that area. So, I would appreciate a continued focus on that.

MR. SATORIUS: That is a focus area. In fact, just yesterday afternoon myself and the DEDOs got a briefing on some of our corporate support on TABS Initiatives and what we're doing as we move forward.

COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Thank you. Thank you Chairman.

CHAIRMAN MACFARLANE: Okay. Commissioner Magwood.

COMMISSIONER MAGWOOD: Thank you, Chairman. Good morning. How younz doing? I was in Pittsburgh this weekend. You know, while I was driving around Pittsburgh visiting my aunts, I was listening to BBC. I tend to listen to BBC a lot, and they made note of something that I really hadn't heard much at all in watching TV here in the U.S., which was this weekend was the 100th anniversary of World War I, the beginning of World War I. And it doesn't seem like 100 years ago, you know. It just B-

MR. SATORIUS: You can say around 100 years ago, Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER MAGWOOD: Well, you know, I guess I just grew up in a period where people talked about World War I in terms of, you know, their grandfather served in World War I, or there were still veterans alive from World War I through most of my life, and now I think they're all pretty much gone now. But it just goes to show how quickly 100 years can go by, because it just doesn't seem to be historically that remote, you know, when you think of 100 years ago. And I guess it gives you some perspective about where we're going to be looking 100 years from now, and I C-- you and I have had this conversation about Project Aim, look into the crystal ball for just five years. You know, in businesses like, and the sorts of work that the government does, and the sorts of work that we have to do, we often have to think about a decision we make today may have impacts 100 years from now. You know, if you're thinking about your staff, the staff is about to come to the Commission with a new design certification in the next few months, you know, a plant that is actually built based on that technology may well be operating 100 years from now. I mean, it's just B- 100 years isn't that long. Now, what does that have to do with Human Capital? Nothing at all, it was totally gratuitous, but it is something I just wanted to recognize. I like to point out these historical facts.

But one thing I wanted to talk about Human Capital is I want to talk about Miriam for a minute, because Miriam has been the Chief Human Capital Officer most of the time I've been on the Commission. I think maybe the first year was kind of a transition year. And Miriam has one quality of Chief Human Capital Officers that we use, we'll act like we've always used that term, that I've always respected, which is that Miriam very rarely tells me exactly what I want to hear. And that's something I think is very important in your business because you have to be the practical, logical, legalistic voice in these matters. And I B- in these very contentious times we've had and so much flux in the staff, I'd like to just say that I think you were the right

Chief Human Capital Officer for this Agency at the right time, so I appreciate that you were here during so many difficult times and so much flux, so thank you for that.

I appreciate the presentation from you and your staff today. I think that one thing that I often say when I go overseas because I talk to other regulators in other countries, and they really want to understand how do you become an NRC? How do you get as good as an NRC? And it always comes back to this one simple thing, it's the staff. You know, the staff in the NRC is what makes the difference. You know, we do have some good organizational characteristics, we have good legal backing with the Atomic Energy Act, we have lots of things that make us who we are, but at the end of the day it's really just the staff that separates us from others. You know, it's the ability to have experienced people, and also people B- not just people who have been around for decades, but people who are new who get the adequate training. I tell people how we train new recent graduates when they come to the NRC, their eyes grow really wide and they say really? How many years of training do they do? And what's involved in these rotational assignments? How does that work? And you get a lot of conversation about that. So, what we do is really unique, and I think it's something that the Agency should always be very proud of.

You know, I also wanted to B- well, Vonna is not at the table today, but I see her sitting back there. I wanted to recognize Vonna, as well, because I think Vonna has brought her team together in the way which has also been very, very productive in the last, what has it now been, three years, I think? Has it been three years now? Two and a half, three years, whatever it is. It is three years? Yes, I thought so. And I think you've been extraordinarily successful, so I appreciate the work you've done in that area.

And I think Miriam mentioned that OCHCO and SBCR have had some good collaboration in looking at a variety of activities. One in particular I know there's been conversations about the education area. I saw Nancy sitting back there somewhere, the education area, how we've leveraged our Human Capital activities with our education grants the activities. And, in particular, I notice that there was in some of the briefing material a notation about the results of a Commission SRM that was from May 31st, 2013, and how we should emphasize bringing those pieces together. And I think there's been a lot of success. I was pretty gratified to see that, for example, we've recently hired two people from South Carolina State University, and that's an example of the sorts of benefits we get from that kind of interaction.

I wanted to thank Tony for his comments in response to Commissioner Ostendorff's question about leadership. I thought that was B- you almost should write that down. I thought that was really outstanding. I appreciate those comments. And it sort of reminded me of something I observed when I was visiting one of the regional offices, which is the importance of the Branch Chiefs. And we often talk about that, but I wanted to highlight that a bit. And I ask you, and Mark, and Miriam, and maybe Cathy to talk about this a bit, but we have these people at the Branch Chief level. It's the first supervisory spot that you often get. But that really is the place where some of the most important balancing acts are done, some of the most important on the spot decisions are made by Branch Chiefs. And I wonder what B- is there more we should be doing to prepare people to take on those responsibilities? Is there more we should be doing in terms of giving them the tools to be successful in these very, very complex times? Anyone who wants to take a crack at that.

MR. SATORIUS: I'll start, Commissioner. I know when I was an Office Director and Regional Administrator, I was closer to Division Directors, that was one of the things that I always had as a high priority for the Divisional leadership, and that was you need to bring your Branch Chiefs along. You need B- and we, as an office, when we would go on a retreat, the Branch Chiefs need to come with us because they're part of the expanded leadership team. And they're the ones that are the closest. We need to coach them into the good practices of B- you could just write it down, kind of listening to people, respecting people, being clear on objectives, and holding people accountable to do their jobs, all those things. And it takes a whole group to bring them along, and bring the next group in after they move onward and upward. So, that would be my start of that, my perspective.

COMMISSIONER MAGWOOD: Cathy?

MS. HANEY: I would just add to what Mark has said in that I think we can work with our Branch Chiefs to help them embrace strategic thinking. And this is an aspect that I think we need to recognize this in our staff, in our senior staff as they come up from the lower grades on up into the 15 standpoint. But when they get to the 15, by bringing them to the retreats, as Mark said, it really helps open their eyes to things bigger than just the office level, to the organizational level. And I think on a day to day basis at the office level and the division level, we try to do that, but I would say, again, we don't want to be starting the emphasis on teaching strategic thinking or growing strategic thinking when someone is at a Senior Executive CDP Program. We really need to start that sooner in the process.

COMMISSIONER MAGWOOD: Absolutely. Appreciate that. Let me B- I'm running out of time here because of my long discussion about World War I. But let me aim something at Miriam because one thing I've observed, and I've seen this both in headquarters and regional offices, is that B- and Commissioner Svinicki kind of touched on this in her questioning a bit.

The administrative staff, you know, there are many people in the organization who are administrative staff, and enjoy what they do exactly the way they're doing it. We have some very fine people in my office who have worked in that way. But there's also people who want to do something a bit different. They want to get additional training, go back to school, maybe get a degree, and then aspire to do something different. It seems to me that because of the way we're structured it's harder for that to happen in NRC than some other organizations I've been involved with. You know, when I was at Department of Energy, for example, it wasn't uncommon for administrative staff to get some additional training and maybe become, you know, personnel people, or program assistants, or something like that where there's another B- a different career path they could take. Here it seems a bit more constrained. Could you comment about that?

MS. COHEN: I think it depends how and when you look at it. So, for example, when the Agency was growing and there were plentiful opportunities, there are a number of administrative assistants who actually were promoted into GG13-level management analysts. I mean, I know a number of them from when I first came in the Agency that came in because they could get in the door as an administrative assistant, and actually progress to the 13, and some have progressed to the 14 level.

I think what you have is just a shift in terms of the focus on the reductions in the corporate administrative areas, and there's just B- as a fact of life, there's less positions now available. And I also think you need to look at sort of the evolving role of the administrative assistant types. You know, there's some folks that are just tremendous what I'll call executive secretaries, executive administrative assistants, and there's kind of like a dying breed of those folks, that's all they want to do is take care of their bosses.

A lot of people coming in the door as administrative assistants don't really want to be that. They come in because that's how they get into the government, and then there's a lot of cycling, a lot of turnover. So, I just think it's a fact of life change.

We have folks in our office, particularly administrative assistants that are actually taking courses because they're interested in becoming an Acquisition Specialist and whatnot, and so I think those opportunities will continue to exist. I don't think that's going to change.

I would like to touch on something really quick that you mentioned about the supervisors, and that is B- because that is probably the most critical position in the Agency. And I think as a technical agency, we always have to be mindful of not focusing too much on someone's technical prowess to become a supervisor. And I think Vonna would echo this with me, as well, which is we need to put a premium on developing people who can be leaders that have the appropriate interpersonal and leadership skills, because we have very, very good technical skills here. There's no doubt in my mind about that, but we have to put a premium on developing leaders that know how to manage people because Vonna can attest, as well, that we have a lot of business because in some cases that doesn't always happen. So, we can't lose sight of that. Thanks.

COMMISSIONER MAGWOOD: I appreciate that and I'll just B- I recognize in your response about the administrative positions that there is some facts of life, particularly after TABS where those positions just don't exist. But, you know, I guess I would advocate that we ought to look at this more broadly and see if there are ways of giving people a pathway even beyond just the corporate support-type areas. Maybe there are some roles people can play in technical areas, you know, if they have the right training. So, I'd advocate to think about that more broadly.

And just in closing, since I'm way over my time, I just wanted to just also echo what my other colleagues said about Cathy. Cathy's organization has been through probably more turmoil and flux than pretty much any organization in the Agency in the last few years, and the fact that things are B- you're seeing the upside of that now, that's really something you should be very proud of, because I know how difficult it's been over the last few years. So, congratulations with that, and good job. Thank you, Chairman.

CHAIRMAN MACFARLANE: Okay, thank you. Thank you all, again, very much for the presentations and the discussion. I think it was really very helpful and we look forward to hearing from everybody in another six months or so. But before that, we have a presentation from the Union. We have Maria Schwartz, Chapter Executive Vice President and Chief Steward of the NTEU. That's five minutes.

MS. SCHWARTZ: Good morning, Chairman Macfarlane, Commissioners, EDO and fellow NRC staff. Thank you for providing an opportunity for NTEU Chapter 208 to provide comments this morning. As you said, I'm Maria Schwartz, and I'm the Executive Vice President. I'm here today with our President, Sheryl Burrows, and several members of the Union team, including Robert Heard, who is now our Chief Steward, Elaine Keegan, and Peter Hearn, and Ellen Martin.

At last year's RIC, Commissioner Svinicki spoke about the dangers of the single story. She was speaking to the very real danger this way of thinking holds in terms of our Agency's nuclear safety culture. Clearly, the dangers of a single story in this context is that the single story negates almost all the traits of a positive safety culture, chief among them accountability and questioning attitude. But it also changes what it means to be a leader.

When there is only one story, it becomes the definitive story. The entire underpinning of an open and collaborative work environment evaporates when there is only a single story. A single story mind set is no less dangerous to the Agency's organizational culture, again negating the values that support its vitality as a diverse and inclusive organization.

Of course, there's great power in the single story. First of all, those in positions of power are most often the ones telling the story. And they tell the story the way they want it to be heard, as often as they think it needs to be heard, to whomever they decide to tell it.

For example, today we heard about the importance the Agency places on training and growing employees. Additionally, as Mr. Satorius' most recently EDO update observes, the Agency believes it is very important to have a worklife balance. The Agency tells individuals that are being recruited the same thing, these are very compelling stories. And in fairness, we are happy to say there's truth in these stories. There are employees that are getting training, and who see their role in the Agency going in a positive direction. There are employees who get time off when they ask for it, and who work flexible schedules and telework without any problems, but there are other stories.

Employees regularly come to the Union office to talk about their problems with getting their management to sit down with them to discuss ways to grow them, whether they are younger employees who cannot get higher profile assignments to demonstrate their expertise, or older employees who feel their expertise is being marginalized. This includes employees who are being denied credit hours and flexible schedules which would provide a better worklife balance, even though they are good performers who should be able to take advantage of these programs.

When we talk to management about these concerns they provide us with their Policy Statements and procedures, the single story, the way they say policies and programs are being implemented. Management will admit that there are some abuses or misunderstandings about the use of Agency policies and programs, but rather than acknowledging the fact that there are conflicting stories, and even themes, they stick with the single story.

NTEU is troubled by the overuse of the single story. NTEU would like to know that when the survey results from the Federal Employees Viewpoint Survey data is available, our Agency will not spend all of its time and resources telling a single story that promotes the great place the NRC is to work with, of course, those necessary areas for improvement and accompanying action plans.

Instead, the Agency B- we'd like to see the Agency spend at least an equal amount of its time and resources really trying to understand the results of the survey that provide different stories. I wouldn't say that's always a comfortable path forward, but all the stories that created the results of the survey need to be heard and acknowledged.

It's great to be one of the best places to work in the federal government. For most of my 23-year career here at the NRC, I have enjoyed working here. For the most part, I felt extremely engaged in the work that I do and have done, but I am keenly aware that that is not always the case, and it really is okay to say that sometimes the NRC is not such a great place to work. That is really the first step towards forging a success story.

In that vein, just as our leaders must encourage the staff to continually seek and discuss different viewpoints, the Advisory Groups and NTEU must encourage management to listen to the different stories that staff is telling them, to insure that our employees' voices are heard, and their views and feelings are acknowledged.

In closing, the Union sees the damage that the single story can have on an organization that indicates it's striving to have a diverse yet inclusive workforce. The danger of the single story for such an organization is that the single story negatively impacts the organization's integrity, which includes trustworthy and ethical relationships. The single story negatively impacts the organization's sense of service, which includes accountability. The single story negatively impacts openness, which includes transparency in communications and decisionmaking. The single story negatively impacts commitment which includes dedication and diligence to protecting the public health, safety, security, and the environment. The single story negatively impacts cooperation which includes helpful, sharing, team-oriented, engaged employees and management. The single story negatively impacts an excellence which includes our individual and collective actions and our self-awareness. And, finally, the single story negatively impacts respect, which includes the fundamental respect that our Agency should champion, that there is more than one legitimate story, and those stories must be told, and those stories must be heard, and those stories must be acknowledged. And, again, I thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

CHAIRMAN MACFARLANE: Great, thank you. All right. And with that, the meeting is adjourned.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 11:33 a.m.)