

Special Edition

Intercom

U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION
ADMINISTRATION

ALASKAN REGION

No. 92-A February 1992



RMT Representative Work Force Steering Committee

by Jessie Barksdale, AAL-9

What is it? It was called the EEO Steering Committee when it was established by the Regional Administrator in September 1990 to be a catalyst for improving diversity in the regional work force. Since then, the steering committee has undergone a few changes — including its name, membership, and task list.

Priority List. During one of the regularly scheduled meetings in 1991, the committee developed a priority list of items to focus on and established milestones for their accomplishment. At the same time, the Regional Administrator recognized the need for a bonafide charter. By September 1991, a charter had been drafted and approved by the RMT. A couple of elements that were affected immediately by the new charter were its name and membership. It seemed only fitting that the name should reflect or emulate the primary purpose of the committee and that the membership would include managers who had authority to effect change in their organization.

Top Ten. These were the initial items adopted by the committee which became known as the top ten:

- Upward Mobility
- KSAO Video
- Career Path (Brochures)
- Regional Outreach Recruitment Plan
- Alternative Training
- Research and Analysis (CO-OP, Predevelopment)
- Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- Developmental Bids
- Merit Promotion Plan
- Mentor/Sponsor Program Role Models

Upward Mobility. Spirits were high as the committee swung into action in 1991. The group was focused and motivated to accept the challenges that each item provided. For example, the Upward

Mobility Program was revitalized in the Alaskan Region. Upward Mobility is a program that focuses on the development and implementation of specific career opportunities for lower-graded employees (at GS-8 and below or equivalent) who are in positions or occupational series which do not enable them to realize their full work potential. The committee's efforts paid off when division managers identified and confirmed targeted positions for Upward Mobility Recruitment. These positions were advertised, candidates were rated and ranked, and selections were made. Having an active Upward Mobility Program in the region allows employees to enhance their qualifications and progress in career positions. It also motivates employees and creates a climate conducive to increased morale and productivity.

Special Training Programs. When the committee placed Research and Analysis of Special Training Programs (Alaskan Region) on the top ten list, it was thinking that Cooperative Education Programs could be an effective means of reaching a representative work force by the year 2000.

Pay Dirt. AAL-10 struck pay dirt last summer when it began coordinating new Cooperative Education Program (CO-OP) agreements between FAA and the University of Alaska Anchorage. The certification process was completed in October 1991. A signing ceremony between FAA and UAA took place on November 1, 1991. Currently the Alaskan Region has pre-hire programs for air traffic controller and electronics technician careers.

1992 Goal. There is much to be done in 1992. Issues such as work force diversity, career counseling, individual development plans (IDP) are all on the list. The committee's goal is to increase diversity in the agency. One way to reach that goal is to keep plugging away at the task list. Looking back on 1991, several items from the initial top ten list were completed — and to the RMT Representative Work force Steering Committee, that spells progress.

Individual Development Plans

by Kris Conquergood, AAL-17E

How do I get ahead in this organization? What are my career opportunities? What is my goal? What do I want to do? How do I as a supervisor assist an employee in achieving career goals?

Questions from employees...questions from supervisors. To help employees and supervisors answer these questions and support individuals in career planning, the Regional Administrator established the Alaskan Region Individual Development Plan (IDP) Program in January, 1991. The Organizational Effectiveness Branch developed and issued Order 3410 with attached IDP handbook. AAL17 held Train-the-Trainer sessions for a cadre of instructors who in turn conducted special briefings for supervisors on the IDP process and how to coach their employees. All-employee briefings were held to explain the process and discuss employee responsibilities.

Not stopping there, the Region offered IDP work sessions where employees were given time to read and study IDP material and to prepare a draft plan. Coaches were available to explain the process and answer questions.

Some employees were initially skeptical. However, they were encouraged by the work sessions and IDPs are now bearing fruit.... **Boots**

Fluharty, Merrill Field ATCT, attended a work session and comments, "The session was very helpful. It brought together individuals from all parts of the organization. This broadens our horizons. We brainstormed what basic skills and knowledge we need to know to progress in the FAA." She went on to say, "It is hard to do an IDP. It takes time to decide what you want to do or be. This got me started."

Kati Thompson, Anchorage FSS, knows first hand that developing an IDP works. She discussed her developmental needs with her supervisor, **Tony Moulton**, and completed a plan. When a detail in EEO was publicized, Tony acted immediately to obtain the opportunity for Kati. He knew her career goal and the steps they had agreed on to support her.

Dolores Coates, Federal Women's Program Manager, encourages employees to develop IDP's. She states, "If you don't know where you are going, it doesn't matter what road you take. I believe an IDP helps a person focus on a career destination and the specific steps that are necessary to get there." And she emphasizes that whether you have an IDP is taken into consideration when allocating tuition assistance and in allocating quota for training courses.

Use a Career Path

by Chuck Moody, AAL-43

The RMT Representative Work Force Steering Committee has been working on a plan to identify barriers so they can be eliminated in order to assist the Region in achieving a representative work force. The issue of "Career Paths" has been identified as of foremost importance. To reach a diverse work force will require advancement of current employees as well as new recruits.

In working through the significance of career pathing and the lack of data, it became very apparent that this is an FAA-wide issue. To ensure a "One Agency" response, the Associate Administrator for Human Resource Management, AHR-I, was asked to prepare an agency "Career Pathing" brochure. The Alaskan Region offered to assist in working the issue.

Ann Rosenwald, Director, Office of Human Resource Development, AHD-I responding for the Associate Administrator, stated they would look toward starting the project in early 1992.

Upward Mobility

by Jacque Holland, AAL-14

Upward mobility is an agency program that focuses on the development and implementation of specific career opportunities for lower-graded employees (at GS-8 and below or equivalent) who are in positions or occupational series which do not enable them to realize their full work potential. The program strives to provide employees with opportunities that will enhance their qualifications and progress in career positions. With emphasis on motivating employees, the program aims to create a climate conducive to increased morale and productivity.

For supervisors/managers the program provides a broader base for selection of personnel for technical, administrative, and professional positions which will in turn diversify the employee population in those areas. In addition, the program affords an internal recruitment strategy to assist managers in accomplishing their affirmative action goals and objectives.

The program is projected to accept applications once a year during open season. The first annual announcement opened October 9, 1991.

Aviation Career Education in Alaska

by Dave Brubaker, AAL-17

On Friday, November 1, 1991, the University of Alaska became the first university in the United States to sign two pre-hire development agreements with FAA. These agreements enhance the University's air traffic and electronic technician students' opportunity to go directly to work for FAA after graduation.

The "**AIR TRAFFIC Pre-Hire Development**" program will place selected graduates of UAA's Air Traffic Program in on-the-job training (OJT) positions in FAA towers or air route traffic control centers. This will allow the students to by-pass many developmental requirements at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, increase their employment opportunities with FAA, create greater opportunity for women and minorities to be employed with the Region, and allow FAA new-hires to begin working toward full performance levels much more quickly than in the past.

The "**ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN Pre-Hire Development**" program will place selected graduates of UAA's Electronic Technician Program directly into OJT positions in FAA Airway Facilities organizations. This program provides the same benefits as described above. The by-passing of developmental FAA training will save the students and FAA 1,110 hours of basic training at Oklahoma City. The University will provide the basic developmental electronic training while Oklahoma City becomes the "FAA Graduate School".

Also on November 1, 1991, UAA's Consortium Library was designated as an **Aviation Education Resource Center** for Alaska. This Resource Center, provided by FAA, will maintain quantities of

printed materials, video tapes, slides, K-12 curriculum materials, and computer education software for use by the public, the media, and the education community.

On December 2-3, 1991, the University Aviation Association, located in Opelika, Alabama, completed its review of **UAA's Airway Science Program** in a site visit at the UAA campus. Their approval will allow anyone involved in aviation the opportunity to obtain a higher level degree in Airway Science. It also makes UAA eligible to apply for national Airway Science grants.

These giant leaps provide Alaskan aviators, its aviation industry, its University, FAA's Alaskan Region, and the residents of Alaska the most complete aviation education program in the nation. Fine tuning of several of these programs, *e.g.* new simulators for piloting/ATC and aviation laboratory equipment for ETs, could make Alaska and its UAA the premier aviation education facility in the Nation.

Merit Promotion Is Alive and Well

by Dottie Taylor, AAL-14

In this age of special emphasis programs, diversity, veterans preference, and pre-hire efforts, is there still a place for merit promotion of employees?

The answer is definitely "yes." In 1991, 274 positions were advertised under the Merit Promotion Program and over 90 employees were initially promoted. Others were reassigned to positions with promotion potential, and some accepted lower-graded positions to obtain diversity or career enhancing experience.

"One example," says Regional Administrator Ted Beckloff, "was a hire for a staff officer. The individual had 12 years of specialized and managerial experience. It was a bonus that the person was a woman who brought some diversity to the Regional Management Team (RMT), but clearly the quality experience was there."

Merit promotion is a program designed to ensure a systematic means of selection for promotion according to merit. The program ensures fair consideration and merit selection.

RMT Representative Work Force Steering Committee

Ted R. Beckloff, Jr., AAL-1
Bobbie Gorden, AAL-9 (Chair)
Cecelia Hunziker, AAL-40 (V. Chair)
Tom Stuckey, AAL-200
Hank Elias, AAL-500
Helen Wall, AAL-506 (PWC Rep)
Linda Gentry, AAL-402
Lu Rembish, ZAN-AT
Robie Strickland, AAL-400
Grace Davis-Nerney, AAL-10
Gail Crouse, AAL-460 (PASS Rep)
Bernadette Queen, AAL-211
Dolores Coates, AAL-17B (FWPM)

Keep Up With Diversity

By Jessie Barksdale, AAL-9A

In 1987, the Hudson Institute released "Workforce 2000," the now-famous study of the work force of the future, which was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor. This study offered predictions about changes that will occur in the demographic composition of the United States population and work force by the year 2000.

Among the startling projections were the following: White males will account for only 15 percent of the 25 million people who will join the work force between the years 1985 and 2000. The remaining 85 percent will consist of white females; immigrants; and minorities (of both genders) of Black, Hispanic, and Asian origins. The Hispanic and Asian populations will each grow by 48 percent; the Black population will grow by 28 percent; and the White population will grow by only 5.6 percent.

As you can see from these projections, change is inevitable. The American work force is rapidly changing in all kinds of ways - in age mix, gender composition, racial background, cultural background, education, and physical ability. These changes are having and will continue to have a significant impact on the organizational environment. Why is this so?

Diversity is about setting aside, temporarily, what "I" perceive to be right or the best way, etc., and making an honest attempt to understand another's belief and behavior in terms of that person's culture.

In the past, when the employees of an organization represented much less diversity, there was less variety in the values that governed organizational operations and work performance. Now, because of increasing diversity, there are conflicting values among workers—conflicting messages about how to do things. Changing demographics, along with economic factors and the high cost of turnover, have convinced organizations that they need to make every effort to retain employees, to develop them, and to promote from within. This trend means that it is increasingly important for employees to learn to understand one another and to work together effectively and in harmony.

Without a proper introduction or orientation on diversity, managers, supervisors, and employees might find it difficult, if not frustrating, trying to decide what diversity means. Diversity is about valuing differences. It's about setting aside, temporarily, what "I" perceive to be right or the best way, etc., and making an honest attempt to understand another's belief and behavior in terms of that person's culture. Diversity training is only the first step in the process of managing diversity in an organization. Unless the organizational climate honors and supports cultural differences, training will have little impact.

Certain key elements must exist within an organization in order for cultural sensitivity to be increased; *i.e.*, training and orientation programs on the topic of diversity, and always management support. This approach represents a departure from EEO programs which denied differences and instead promoted the idea that acknowledging differences implied judgments of right and wrong, superiority and inferiority, etc.

Organizations that recognize the value of diversity and manage diversity effectively have realized these benefits:

- ✈ Diversity brings a variety of ideas and viewpoints to the organization — an advantage that is especially beneficial when creative problem solving is required.
- ✈ Employees are willing to take risks. As a result, creativity, leadership, teamwork, and innovation are enhanced.
- ✈ Employees are empowered and have a sense of their potential in and value to the organization.

As the above tips point out, the best way to deal with diversity in the work place is to recognize, identify, and discuss differences.

Intercom

Office of Public Affairs
222 West 7th Avenue, #14
Anchorage, Alaska 99513
(907) 271-5296

Intercom is published for the employees of the Alaskan Region by the Public Affairs Office.



Women's History Month

*Remarks by Barry L. Harris
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Professional Women Controllers
Annual Meeting
March 20, 1992*

Good morning!

March, as you know, is Women's History Month. I recently had occasion to read an article in *The New York Times*, written by Gloria Steinem who made an interesting point. She said that Women's History Month tries to fill in the missing half of the human story. When I consider the role women have played in history, I suspect they account for more than half of the human story. Anyway, I was interested in her account of a woman pilot named Jerrie Cobb.

The glass ceiling...

Back in the late fifties, Jerrie Cobb completed all the grueling tests that were used to select the original seven Mercury astronauts.

She wasn't supposed to pass the tests, of course, but she did. So NASA issued a new requirement. All astronauts had to be test pilots. This effectively ruled out virtually every woman in the United States. The only way to be a test pilot was through the military, and, back then, the military didn't allow women to fly.

Today we would say that Jerrie bumped up against the glass ceiling. But to her, it must have felt like running into a brick wall.

I know many women and minorities in this audience and throughout the FAA are encountering their own glass ceilings: those invisible barriers that keep them from moving up in the organization.

My goal before I leave the FAA is to remove forever as many of those barriers as I can.

Run by white males...

But let me back up a little and tell you what I saw when I came to this agency almost 3 years ago. I saw an organization of some 53,000 people run largely by white males. I saw an organization that said it wanted to "do the right thing..."; that said it was committed to equal opportunity; and that said it wanted to improve its record on affirmative action.

But I also saw an agency that had made very little progress in increasing the numbers of minorities and women in its work force. And what progress had been made was in the lower grades.

I saw an agency that conducted seminars and workshops about how to succeed in the FAA. It had a strong black coalition, a strong Hispanic coalition, and good mentor programs. But the sad reality was that minorities and women had been virtually locked out of the top jobs.

After 20 years of affirmative action programs, the culture had not really changed.

Now some people will say, "We don't talk about affirmative action any more. We talk about work force diversity."

The definitions...

I think it's important that we understand the definitions. Affirmative action is the action we take to eliminate artificial barriers to the recruitment and promotion of minorities, women, and the handicapped. Diversity in the work force is the result.

I think it's equally important to understand what affirmative action is not. It is not somebody

getting something that they don't deserve at someone else's expense.

Managers tell me they would like to promote more minorities and women, but "there aren't enough good candidates."

I can't buy that. I can look at the records in any region and find where scores, even hundreds, of minority and women candidates were passed over for supervisory promotions by the selecting officials. When I see a region that promotes over 300 white males but only 20 minorities and women, I have to ask "why?"

"No presumption of competence..."

In a speech last year at the Diversity Summit, Santiago Rodriguez of the Apple Corporation said, "There is no presumption of competence for people of color or women in non-traditional jobs. If we hire a minority or a woman who turns out to be a superstar, we pat ourselves on the back and say, 'We got ourselves a good one.'"

No presumption of competence! I agree with Mr. Rodriguez.

We who are white males are lucky. We were born into a society that presumes us to be competent until we prove ourselves otherwise. Some of us just don't get it: Minorities and women must prove themselves every day, lest they be presumed incompetent.

Valuing the differences...

Managing a diverse work force is about valuing the differences in people. It's about understanding, accepting, and appreciating those differences.

If I could accomplish only one thing while I'm at the FAA, it would be to change the way we value people. To give everyone a fair chance, while encouraging differences. And I believe that's really what all of us want—just a fair chance.

I don't want to leave you with the impression that the FAA's affirmative action programs have been unsuccessful. We are bringing more minorities, more women, more handicapped employees into the work place. White women, in particular, have made real headway at getting into supervisory development programs and competing for promotions.

And while we can take pride in this modest achievement, I've put our managers on notice. It isn't enough to improve the status of just one group. I expect the same level of progress for all minorities and disadvantaged people in our work force.

Help someone else up the ladder...

And now a word for those women who have already made it up the ladder. You probably didn't get there by yourself. Someone probably helped you, and you need to keep in mind that there are hundreds of

others coming up behind you. This is your opportunity to give something back—to help someone else up the ladder. It's the best way I know to earn the respect of your peers and leave a legacy of true success.

What troubles me is, more often than not, women and minorities who rise in the organization tend to abandon their peers. If you are going to successfully overcome the pernicious effects of the old boy network, you're going to have to supplant it with a network of your own.

Make a lasting difference...

The FAA has been what it is for a long time, and I'm often asked if I really believe that I can make a lasting difference in an organization that has resisted change for a quarter of a century.

The answer is "absolutely." Take a look at some of our latest SES appointments. You'll see people like Fanny Rivera and Woodie

Woodward...Gerald Franklin and Dick Rodine.

Maybe you don't know them. Woodie is a white woman and our new Southern Region Deputy Administrator. Fanny is the Deputy Regional Administrator in the Western Pacific Region. She's Hispanic. Jerry is an African American and the Deputy Administrator in the Central Region. Dick Rodine was just recently selected as the Superintendent of the FAA Academy. And while he's a white male, he has distinguished himself as an agent of change.

A creative mix...

But these people weren't picked just for their cultural diversity. These are people who share my values and my vision.

They believe, as I do, that differences in color, gender, and ethnic background are differences that make a difference. They are differences which ensure a diversity of thinking in our agency...a

creative mix of viewpoints and attitudes...an environment in which new perspectives on old problems can flourish.

Change in the way we screen...

On another front, we've made an important change in the way we screen applicants for air traffic



controller jobs. The new screen takes a single week, so it doesn't require applicants to quit their regular jobs. And it's totally objective and blind to color, race, and sex. We'll begin using this new screen this spring. In fact, you can use it for yourselves while you're here at this conference.

Trainees hired under this program will also benefit from improved training programs which will allow them to become full-performance controllers much sooner than was possible under the old program. This is good for everybody: the employee, the agency, and the public.



ATC a young work force...

But it also highlights a problem: Air Traffic has a very young work force. Almost everyone has been hired within the past 10 years—including many who are now in the supervisory ranks. We don't have the normal age gradations which tend to make room on the career ladder. Many of you are now ready to move up that ladder. And you're frustrated because you can't get into any of the supervisory development programs.

The reality is that most of our air traffic supervisory positions are already filled by people who are still relatively young. Most of them are going to stay in these jobs for a very long time. So there's the problem, what's the solution?

It depends on you...

The fact is, enriching your work life and creating advancement opportunities is going to depend mostly on you. You must be prepared to move laterally: to search out openings anywhere in the organization which will broaden your experience. You must become a well-rounded professional with a risk-taking resume—not a narrow specialist who never strays from a safe, straight-ahead career path.

You've got to decide whether you want a career in air traffic or a career in the FAA.

For those of you interested in Senior Executive Service positions, and I assume many of you are, horizontal assignments are virtually a requirement. And the competition will be keen. The FAA employs some 50,000 people, yet there are only 188 SES positions in the entire agency. Air Traffic has only 20 of those. Those who make it are going to have to be very, very good.

Candidate Development Program...

We do have programs that will help. The SES Candidate Development Program now includes a woman who was selected from the GS-14 ranks. That's a first.

We're making Individual Development Plans available for all minority and women employees at the GS-13 through 15 grades.

SOAR...

Just this week we began the final round of selecting candidates for the new System of Advancement and Recognition program, which we call "SOAR." Far too often, we find that women and minorities were being steered into support positions that have no real promise.

The SOAR program moves them into line organizations where they can develop their management potential.

These and other programs we think will raise that glass ceiling, or better still, eliminate it. Studies show that one of the biggest barriers for women seeking line jobs, is that men feel uncomfortable working with them. One of the goals of our diversity management programs is to change that perception.

Shock!

And while I'm on the subject of the work place relationship between men and women, I'd like to talk about another important subject.

Last December, with my management team, I attended a workshop on sexual harassment in the FAA. I was shocked and appalled at what I heard. The Regional Administrators and other top managers who were with me were all convinced. This conduct has to stop!

Stop sexual harassment...

As a result of that meeting, I directed that a special agency-wide action plan be developed that would end sexual harassment in our work place. The action plan includes a strong policy statement, which you will be seeing shortly, and a letter to all employees that will be included with your pay slips in April.

The plan also calls for continued emphasis on training in cultural diversity to confront our biases head-on and to make clear to all of us the consequences of our behavior, whether it is intended or unintended.

We don't have the resources to take that training everywhere at once. But when we look at the pattern of sexual harassment complaints, we find that an overwhelming percentage of them come from one organization...one organization alone: Air Traffic! So we're targeting large Air Traffic facilities first, and the top management in each region, to undergo some serious awareness training. Once you've been through this training, you'll see how powerful it can be.

Dignity and respect...

Let me be very clear: I expect all employees to be treated with dignity and respect. Sexual harassment demeans the individual and it demeans the FAA. It must stop.

So, let me sum it up.

Work force diversity is about fairness, about doing what is right, and about respecting differences. It's about allowing all America into the work force. And providing training and development opportunities so that everyone has an equal chance for a top job. But mostly it is about recognizing that we are all part of the human family.

These are personal values that I have believed in and tried to live by all my life. I hope that what I have done at the FAA has communicated these values.

Necessity will eventually compel us all to change. But I would like to think that as an agency we don't wait until circumstances force us to act. I would hope that our sense of fairness will move us to eliminate all arbitrary and artificial barriers and to welcome into our ranks all those who share our love of aviation and our commitment to public service.

The FAA is a very special organization, like no other in Government. I have come to love it as I know you do. Let us demonstrate the leadership that I know we possess. Let us set the example for Government, industry, and all of America.

Thank you.

