**VA Diversity Council (VADC) Meeting Minutes**

March 2, 2011, 1-3 pm

VACO, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Conference Room 830

1. Introductions by Georgia Coffey, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion, VADC Co-chair.
2. Welcome remarks delivered by Ralph Torres, Acting Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration, for John Sepúlveda, Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration and VADC Co-chair.
   1. Mandatory Online Training for Managers and Supervisors
      1. 90.17 percent have completed this training but those remaining managers and supervisors who have not yet done so are encouraged to complete this important mandatory training by March 31, 2011.
   2. Emphasis placed on meeting the two percent hiring goal of people with disabilities with a focus on hiring Veterans.[[1]](#endnote-1)
3. December 1, 2010, VADC Meeting Minutes Approved.
4. Carolyn Wong, Director of Training and Communications, ODI, confirmed the volunteers for the Screening and Judging Committees for the Secretary’s Annual Diversity & Inclusion Excellence Awards.
5. Ms. Coffey introduced the idea of the VADC authoring a fiscal year report to the Secretary which would include initiatives the VADC has undertaken such as career pathing, VA’s Annual Diversity and Inclusion Performance Report, education, and the diversity and inclusion memorandum of understanding in addition to recommendations for future initiatives.
6. Christy Compton, VA’s Disability Program Manager, ODI, discussed VA’s plan for increasing employment of people with disabilities in alignment with Executive Order 13548.  Discussion included VA’s goals and new hiring initiatives regarding people with disabilities. Additionally, Ms. Compton discussed the need to train human resources (HR) and hiring officials on all aspects of the disability program, including Schedule A and the reasonable accommodation process.  In alignment with the hiring reform initiative, HR will include the physical requirements/medical standards in each job announcement and inform Occupational Health of the essential functions/physical requirements of the position when a new hire is made.  Reasonable accommodations must be considered if a candidate does not pass the Occupational Health review.  In fiscal year 2010, a high percent (25 percent) of informal complaints were based on disability.  The Council questioned if Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is considered a targeted disability.[[2]](#endnote-2)  The Council also noted that disabilities are self-reported and questioned if the current demographics were even valid.  Ms. Compton responded that all Schedule A hires are required to self-report on the SF 256, which is another reason to use the Schedule A excepted appointment authority.[[3]](#endnote-3)  The Council questioned how Veterans with disabilities entering through the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program are identified.[[4]](#endnote-4)  It was clarified that a 30-percent disabled Veteran may not have a targeted disability.  Ken Greenberg noted that the Secretary hired a 30-percent disabled Veteran but that this individual was not counted.[[5]](#endnote-5)
7. Arthur McMahan, Director, Evaluation and Career-Technical Training, VA Learning University, and Carolyn Kurowski, Federal Management Partners, presented MyCareer@VA, a comprehensive career development program for VA designed to: enable employees to increase their skill sets to better prepare for future roles; send a clear message that VA is committed to employee development and advancement; help employees understand the connections between everyday work to long-term aspirations; and facilitate powerful personal and professional development. Key elements include: providing access to a wide variety of career development information, tools, and resources in an interactive and engaging format; establishing a common organizing principle to effectively integrate information and resources now and in the future; and meeting the needs of both current and potential VA employees. The development process included participation of focus groups. The tentative roll out schedule for each component is June (for non-clinical occupations), July, and August 2011.
8. Tinisha Agramonte, Director of Outreach and Retention, ODI, discussed the possibility of creating a VA Diversity and Inclusion Internal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Service Level Agreement (SLA). This would include the Veteran-owned business and socio-economic goals managed by the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization. Mr. Greenberg raised the issue of ensuring that this SLA is approved by the proper channels prior to roll out. Ms. Wong clarified that any VADC recommendations to the Secretary (as the SLA would possibly be) are cleared through these channels as stated in the VADC Charter. The question arose as to if this SLA should be rolled into a larger Human Resources and Administration SLA.[[6]](#endnote-6)
9. David Williams, Director of Workforce Analysis, ODI, presented VA’s MD-715 EEO and Diversity State of the Agency Briefing.[[7]](#endnote-7)
10. Meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm. The next meeting will be held June 1, 2011.

1. *Greg Alleyne with the Veterans Employment Coordination Service (VECS) clarified that VA’s strategic goal for Veteran employment is 33 percent.* [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. *Ms. Compton clarified that PTSD is considered a targeted disability.* [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. *ODI notes that the SF 256 is the only source data used to code a VA employee’s disability (targeted and non-targeted). If disabled Veterans do not self-nominate their disability on the SF 256, they will not be identified with a targeted or non targeted disability. VA form 4644, the official personnel file, and the DD 214 are the sole sources for a Veteran to claim Veterans Disability Preference (5 pt, 10pt, less than 30%, over 30%). This is just a categorical grouping. It does not identify the type of disability which the SF 256 does. Also, ODI intends to re-survey the workforce so that disability status can be updated.* [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. *ODI is currently investigating if a VR&E employee can be identified in VHA Support Service Center (VSSC) or ProClarity.* [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. *Schedule A hiring information can be found on VA’s Disability Program Web site:* [*http://www.diversity.hr.va.gov/disabilities.htm*](http://www.diversity.hr.va.gov/disabilities.htm)*. For information on Veteran hiring, contact VECS (Web site:* [*http://www.va.gov/VECS*](http://www.va.gov/VECS)*) and VBA’s VR&E (Web site:* [*http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/*](http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/)*). The VADC is reminded that VA could hire disabled Veterans (with or without targeted disabilities) using other vehicles such as compensated work therapy arrangements. Targeted disabilities (as defined by the Office of Personnel Management, OPM, and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) are: blindness, deafness, partial paralysis, complete paralysis, missing extremities, epilepsy, severe intellectual disability, psychiatric disability, and dwarfism.* [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. *ODI is exploring various avenues, including but not limited to MOUs/SLAs to outline program responsibilities in the area of diversity and inclusion. Ms. Agramonte will assemble a tiger team to address these concerns; Bob Snyder, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning will advise.* [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. *Gary Musicante, Director, Strategic Human Capital Planning Service, provided Mr. Williams with the list of VA’s mission-critical positions which will be provided to the VADC.* [↑](#endnote-ref-7)