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

June 1, 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 Ms. Coffey.
   1. 2011 HR Conferences in July and August
   2. The Secretary’s 2011 EEO, Diversity, and No FEAR Policy
   3. VA Central Office (VACO) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Event: Welcome Home LGBT Veterans.
3. March 2, 2011, VADC Meeting Minutes Approved.
4. Yvonne Rannels, Program Specialist, Training and Communications Team, ODI, reported the status of the Secretary’s Annual Diversity & Inclusion Excellence Awards Program.
   1. A total of 34 nominations were received from the Veterans Health Administration (including Central Office) and the Veterans Benefits Administration. None were received from the National Cemetery Administration.
   2. The Screening Committee will receive and rank the nominations. The top-ranked nominations will be passed on to the Judging Committee who will determine the finalists. The finalists will be submitted to the Secretary for approval.
   3. The awards program will be held on September 14, 2011, in partnership with the Office of Resolution Management’s Alternative Dispute Resolution Awards Program. The next VADC meeting will be held one week before the awards program. Another update will be given at that time.
5. 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. 1,100 participants are expected to attend each of the 2011 HR Conference sessions in July and August.
   2. About 600 are currently signed up for the first session.
6. Ms. Coffey reinforced 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, and education, in addition to recommendations for future initiatives.
7. Carolyn Williams, Diversity and Inclusion Trainer, ODI, reported on the Secretary’s 2011 EEO, Diversity, No FEAR Policy.
   1. Currently in the Secretary’s office for signature. [[1]](#endnote-1)
   2. Parental status and gender identity added to the list of protected categories.
   3. Updated policy will be distributed and briefings will be made to organizations.
8. Ms. Williams reported on ODI’s development of sexual orientation and gender identity training.
9. Ms. Williams reported on the Office of Personnel Management’s (OPM’s) new “Guidance Regarding the Employment of Transgender Individuals in the Federal Workplace.” Questions may be directed to the Office of Resolution Management.
10. Sue Dyrenforth, National Center for Organizational Development, reported on the results of an OPM survey that some sources believe to reveal that women in VA feel less empowered. Upon further analysis, Ms. Dyrenforth reported, both groups of VA nurses feel less empowered and, in fact, male nurses feel less empowered than female nurses.[[2]](#endnote-2)
11. David Williams, Director of Workforce Analysis, ODI, presented a Senior Executive Service diversity data analysis report.
12. Christine Kluh, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Corporate Senior Executive Management Office (CSEMO), reported on initiatives in the area of SES diversity.
    1. The SES Candidate Development Program (SESCDP) has been reengineered but needs to be approved by OPM.
    2. It was agreed that the focus should be on casting a wide net for the SESCDP to ensure a diverse pool of applicants and candidates.
    3. Mr. Williams reported that an applicant flow data system for the SESCDP is currently being designed.
    4. There was discussion about the practice of placing those individuals who have already completed the SESCDP in SES positions without announcing the position.
    5. Ms. Coffey and Ms. Kluh agreed that the VADC will provide suggestions on this topic to CSEMO.
13. Tinisha Agramonte, Director of Outreach and Retention, ODI, reported on the Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students for Disabilities, an eight-to-ten week program. There was some discussion as to the fact that the WRP program requires a FTE position.
14. Ms. Agramonte reported on White House Initiative plans and reports and asked for each Administration and staff office’s cooperation in completing these annual requirements.
15. Ms. Agramonte introduced the new LGBT advisory committee.
16. Durodgio Peterson, National LGBT Program Manager, ODI, provided a briefing on LGBT and on the VACO LGBT Event: Welcome Home LGBT Veterans. There was some discussion as to the use of the word Queer and the various terms this group uses (in LGBTQ, the “Q” can refer to “Queer” or “Questioning”). Mr. Peterson reinforced the fact that there are numerous acronyms for this group (in LGBTQSA, “SA” refers to “Straight Allies”) and that each individual will have his or her own preference for what he or she wants to be called.
17. Ms. Coffey established three committees to focus on specific diversity issues that were of interest to the Council. As stated in the VADC Charter (<http://www.diversity.hr.va.gov/council>), these committees will report their recommendations and advice to the VADC for full deliberation and discussion. All VADC members are invited to volunteer to become a member of any one of these committees. If you are interested, please contact the appropriate lead.
    1. Diversity and Inclusion Communications Committee—Ms. Rannels, Lead
       1. Renaee Allen
       2. Vickie Nitschke
       3. Dennise Sauvage
       4. Lydia Valdez[[3]](#endnote-3)
    2. Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Report Committee— Ms. Carolyn Wong, Director of Training and Communications, ODI, Lead
       1. Martha Orr
       2. Michael Youngblood
       3. Sylvia Dunn
       4. Jose Marrero[[4]](#endnote-4)
    3. Emerging Issues in Diversity and Inclusion Committee—Ms. Coffey, Lead
       1. Irene Trowell-Harris
       2. Maxanne Witkin
       3. Bruce Gipe [[5]](#endnote-5)
       4. Shirley Pratt[[6]](#endnote-6)
       5. Lisa Red[[7]](#endnote-7)
    4. Disability Committee—Ms. Christy Compton, Lead[[8]](#endnote-8)
       1. Perdita Johnson-Abercrombie
18. Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm. The next meeting will be held September 7, 2011.

1. *The policy was signed on June 13, 2011, and is available online at* [*http://www.diversity.va.gov/policy/statement.aspx*](http://www.diversity.va.gov/policy/statement.aspx)*.* [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. *Ms. Coffey and the Emerging Issues in Diversity and Inclusion Committee will look to address this issue.* [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. *Ms. Sauvage and Ms. Valdez were appointed to Diversity and Inclusion Communications Committee by Lisa Red as her replacement following the conclusion of this meeting.* [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. *Mr. Marrero, representing the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, volunteered for the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Report Committee following the conclusion of this meeting. Mr. Marrero is the NCA National Manager for Community Prosperity Partnership & Minority Outreach Programs.* [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. *Mr. Gipe volunteered for the Emerging Issues in Diversity and Inclusion Committee following the conclusion of this meeting.* [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. *Ms. Pratt volunteered for the Emerging Issues in Diversity and Inclusion Committee following the conclusion of this meeting.* [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. *Ms. Red switched to the Emerging Issues in Diversity and Inclusion Committee from the Diversity and Inclusion Communication Committee following the conclusion of this meeting.* [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. *Also following the conclusion of the meeting, a Disability Committee was established by Ms. Coffey who designated Christy Compton, a member of the ODI staff and VA’s National Program Manager for People with Disabilities, as the lead. Perdita Johnson-Abercrombie and Jeanette Mendy volunteered for this committee following the conclusion of this meeting.* [↑](#endnote-ref-8)