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

June 6, 2012, 1-3 pm

VACO, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Conference Room 830

1. Welcome by Georgia Coffey, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI), and VADC Co-chair. Mr. Rafael Torres, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Management (HR&A), was unable to attend.
   1. Introduction of attendees in person and on the phone.
   2. New VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan introduced. Handout provided.
   3. May 7, 2012, VADC Meeting Minutes approved.
2. Yvonne Rannels, Equal Employment specialist, ODI, led a discussion on the Secretary’s Third Annual Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program:
   1. A total of 32 nominations received this year from all three Administrations and some Staff Offices.
   2. Nominations are in the security check phase.
   3. Instructions to the Screening and Judging Committees are forthcoming.
   4. The Office of Resolution Management (ORM) is still accepting nominations for the Secretary’s Alternative Dispute Resolution Excellence Awards Program through June 29th.
   5. ODI is coordinating with ORM to hold a joint awards ceremony in conjunction with the ADR Excellence Awards Program for the same time as last year (October).
3. Ms. Coffey led discussions regarding the following:
   1. FY12 Diversity and Inclusion Critical Sub-Element for SES. The new Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Critical Sub-Element for the VA Senior Executive Performance Plan has been approved and was disseminated. The D&I sub-element appears under Critical Element 2 – Leading People and reads: “Advances goals of the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan and meets the Department’s hiring goal for individuals with a targeted disability, as applicable.” Ms. Coffey offered the services of ODI to provide further guidance on meeting these goals.
   2. New FY12-16 Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Strategic Plan. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) held its first D&I Strategic Plan Feedback Roundtable where VA officials presented the status of VA’s D&I Strategic Plan. The Assistant Secretary for HRA, Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for ODI, and several other DAS participated in the meeting with OPM, the Office of Management and Budget, and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission officials. OPM commented that VA’s D&I Plan was “the best of all 50 agency plans submitted” and formally recommended that VA’s D&I Plan serve as a “government-wide best practice.” Quarterly meetings with OPM will be held to assess progress on the implementation of the Plan. The Council will be informed of developments over the next few weeks.
4. Carolyn Wong, Director of Training and Communications, ODI, discussed the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (DISP) Implementation Plan and quarterly report to OPM. Handout provided.
   1. Acknowledged the creation of videotaped diversity and inclusion messages from VA leaders (Deputy Secretary and all three Under Secretaries) to be shown before trainings.
   2. Reviewed DISP Implementation Plan handout which contains information found in the Management Directive 715 and other reports prepared by ODI. In an attempt to simplify data calls, ODI is relying on David Williams, Director of Workforce Analysis, ODI, to create an automated input capability due the end of the fourth quarter of FY12. This will be due from the field to ODI on a quarterly basis after October 1, 2012. The quarterly reporting task will be issued through VAIQ. Brenda Martin, ODI, will be consolidating information received from the field into one VA report to OPM.
5. Arlene González, Equal Employment Specialist, ODI, discussed the Hispanic Employment Program. Handout (slides) provided.
   1. Guiding Principles aligned with OPM Hispanic Council recommendations and D&I Strategic Plan to enhance what was in place, increase percentages of Hispanics in the workforce, and to raise awareness. Less than 1% increase of Hispanics in the workforce since 1977.
   2. Shared goals and short-term strategies.
   3. Diversity Index to be introduced by Ms. Coffey on Friday, June 8th, at the next Monthly Performance Review meeting.
6. Taylor Njagu, Equal Employment Specialist, ODI, discussed the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Program.
7. EEOC issued a ruling on April 20, which protects gender identity. An employer who discriminates against an employee or applicant on the basis of the person's gender identity is in violation of the prohibition on sex discrimination contained in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The decision applies to both public and private employers throughout the United States, including 34 states where non‑discrimination laws based on gender identity do not exist.
8. ODI delivered training on how to handle and address LGBT issues. Ms. Wong stated her team is ready to provide face-to-face training to any organization. ODI is currently updating mandatory training for supervisors, managers and new SES. Carolyn Williams, Equal Employment Specialist, ODI, will be sharing this orientation for all at VACO; however, ODI needs organizational assistance to communicate information to the field.
9. LGBT workgroup recently launched and meet twice a month. It is developing observance events, a website, email account, and quarterly employee resource group.
10. LGBT Pride Month Observance to be held on Monday, June 19th. Mr. Njagu will send an outlook invitation to all VADC members and alternates.
11. David Williams discussed the upcoming State of the Agency briefing to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Under Secretaries. Handout (slides) provided.
    1. Briefing is scheduled for Wednesday, June 7. Mr. Williams discussed the presentation that will be addressed at that meeting. He shared the slides, focused on items of interest, and discussed the new VA Diversity Index which shows positive trending.
    2. Ms. Coffey discussed the call to action as active and robust plans to engage organizations and lead some of the initiatives.
    3. Those corrections identified in the slides will be made prior to the presentation to senior leadership.
12. Christy Compton, Equal Employment Specialist, ODI, discussed Schedule A. Handout (slides) provided.

a. Employees with targeted disabilities increased from 1.65% to 1.74% from October 1, 2011 to May 31, 2012.

b. VA Central Office has not met the 2% goal.

c. There is a glass ceiling at the GS 12 level for this group, which needs to be addressed.

1. Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm. The next meeting is scheduled to be held September 5, 2012.