

Recommendation to the National Laboratory Directors' Council from the Summit on Women Scientists and Engineers from the DOE National Laboratories

Argonne National Laboratory
November 4-6, 2015



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Summit on Women Scientists and Engineers from the DOE National Laboratories
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Organized by Prof. Geraldine Richmond, University of Oregon and Director of the COACH program (<http://coach.uoregon.edu>) with financial support from the Department of Energy, Basic Energy Sciences

Participants: Women research scientists and engineers from 15 of the 17 DOE National Laboratories

We applaud the renewed commitment of Secretary Moniz and the National Laboratory Directors' Council (NLDC) to increasing the diversity of the workforce in the Department of Energy (DOE) National Laboratories and share the vision that these efforts are necessary to assure that our DOE laboratories are at the forefront of our nation's innovation, discovery, and science and engineering stewardship. We also support the NLDC recommendations on this topic that were developed at the September 1-2, 2015 workshop held at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and offer the following recommendations for this important effort.

Recommendations

1. Commit to a series of sustainable action items and initiatives designed with metrics that can be monitored, tracked, and reported within the NLDC. Members of the NLDC should be expected to hold each other accountable and to extend this accountability to all levels of their organizations.

Management Metrics: Determine metrics for evaluating the quality of the diversity and inclusion plans and programs of each laboratory. Monitor the progress of each laboratory against these metrics and report results on a regular basis. Evaluate the success and impact of new initiatives and action items against these metrics where applicable. Take advantage of regular programmatic external review processes to evaluate success and impact.

Public Metrics: Provide demographic data of the workforce at each laboratory using a consistent classification of the technical workforce with the recognition that this classification may have some variation for laboratories with different missions. We challenge the laboratories to provide this information on their websites as Berkeley and Argonne have done to help demonstrate their commitment to diversity as a laboratory priority.

2. Each laboratory should conduct a review of procedures and practices for hiring personnel including efforts to increase the diversity of the pool of applicants for all leadership, staff, and postdoctoral positions.

- Take action to address inadequacies and areas of needed improvement found from this review process and monitor progress.
 - Work to ensure that these processes and procedures for hiring and promotion are transparent to all employees and potential employees.
 - Encourage regular discussions among managers to assure consistency in recruitment, hiring, and promotion processes.
3. The personnel evaluation process needs to be highly functional, fair and consistent across the laboratory and with procedures and processes readily clarified and accessible to all employees.
- Conduct a review and develop procedures to address any inadequacies found in the personnel evaluation process with attention paid to assuring consistency in annual personnel evaluations, setting of expectations and promotions. Use best practices in the evaluation process that can include the use of cross-organizational promotion committees.
 - Ensure clarity and accessibility of information to employees on procedures and policies for annual appraisals and promotion evaluations, on available career mentoring, support systems, possible career path trajectories and career options both within the individual laboratories as well as across the DOE complex; be certain to include new and potential hires in this explanation. Succession planning also needs to be inclusive and processes should be clear.
 - Collect employee survey data to identify workplace barriers to inclusion that are slowing the science and engineering workforce from achieving their full potential in innovation, discovery, and career advancement. Such surveys would be best administered by an independent group or agency. Develop plans and programs to reduce these barriers and monitor progress to identify the more successful efforts.
 - Encourage regular discussions among managers to assure consistency in evaluation and promotion processes across the laboratory. Provide leadership training of new managers in the expected procedures and policies for evaluation and promotion. Arrange for mentoring for all new managers and offer mentor programs for all staff.
4. A culture of respect and professional behavior must be the hallmark of all of the laboratories to ensure that every member of the workforce can be as productive as possible.

- All levels of leadership and management must articulate the expectation of professional behavior and communication in the workplace and its importance in creating and sustaining a strong and creative work environment.
- Develop channels of communication (e.g. safe zone and/or ombudsman) that allow confidential discussions of inappropriate actions, verbal or written language, and assists in establishing processes to eliminate such behavior. The ombudsman must not be in a managerial position and should be widely known as the contact person for such confidential processes.
- Encourage leaders to get feedback (e.g., 360 evaluations and similar mechanisms) from those whom they supervise.
- Use exit interviews as a tool to understand issues around workplace culture and ways to improve retention.
- Lead and be a continuous force in the effort to reduce the implicit biases across the laboratories in evaluation, hiring, leadership appointments, awards and recognition, workplace dialogue and promotions; recognize and articulate the importance of these issues in achieving the highest level of productivity in the laboratory.
- Develop strategies and programs to make the workforce aware of the importance of having discussions that are inclusive of the opinions of all participants and not dominated by a few of the more opinionated or outspoken colleagues.

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