

**STATEMENT OF
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U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL WORKFORCE,
POSTAL SERVICE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Introduction

Good afternoon Chairman Davis, Ranking Member Marchant, and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the General Services Administration (GSA). Since its establishment in 1949, GSA has served as the Federal Government's premier acquisition agency. During the 1970's, over 40,000 employees worked at GSA. Today, we are an organization of 12,000 that relies on a highly competent and engaged workforce to accomplish its mission. We strive to ensure that all GSA employees receive training and development, performance feedback, leadership support and guidance, and a supportive work environment to foster an engaged and highly productive workforce. This is evident in the fact that GSA was just recently named as one of the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government for the third consecutive rating period. I am honored to be with you today. I will focus on three areas:

1. GSA's response to the 2003 GAO report on the Senior Executive Service (SES);
2. Diversity in GSA's SES and GS-14/15 workforce; and
3. GSA's efforts to increase recruitment and development opportunities for women and minorities.

2003 GAO Report

In their 2003 report, "Enhanced Agency Efforts Needed to Improve Diversity as the Senior Corps Turns Over," the Government Accountability Office (GAO) warned of the impacts of an aging workforce, particularly in the Senior Executive Service. Specifically, GAO stated that "[m]ore than half of the 6,100 career SES members employed on October 1, 2000, will have left service by October 1, 2007." In this report, GAO estimated that by the start of Fiscal Year 2008, GSA's percentage of women members in the SES would increase from 28.6% (as of October 1, 2000) to 32.9% and that the percentage of racial and ethnic minorities would decrease from 14.3% (as of October 1,

2000) to 12.9%. As of April 15, 2007, the numbers estimated by GAO are close. We currently have 83 SES members on-board with 27% female and 12% minority.

The GAO report further suggested that the “wave of near-term retirements and other attrition will provide the Federal Government with both a challenge and an opportunity.” GSA concurs wholeheartedly with this finding, particularly as we face 31 current vacancies in our SES workforce and we know that SES members will continue to retire.

Current Level of Diversity

In response to the President’s Management Agenda and the Strategic Management of Human Capital, GSA established a comprehensive Human Capital Strategic Plan that provides a well-rounded framework to evaluate and continually improve human capital programs, processes, and operations. Improving workforce recruitment, executive leadership, and diversity are three of the seven human capital goals of GSA to achieve a highly talented, competent, and diverse workforce. It is GSA's goal “to ensure that we have a diverse workforce that reflects society,” not only in its SES, but across the entire agency.

We believe our workforce is diverse. Women comprise 49% of the workforce. Workforce representation among all groups is high in comparison to the civilian labor force statistics (2000 Census Data), except for the Hispanic workforce –

Race/Ethnicity	GSA	Civilian Labor Force
White	63%	73%
Black	27%	11%
Hispanic	5%	11%
Asian	3%	4%
American Indian	<1%	<1%
Other	<1%	<1%

In terms of the Senior Executive Service, GSA has 114 permanent SES allocations. As of April 15, 2007, 83 are filled leaving 31 vacancies. Currently, 27% of the SES are women and 12% are minority.

In addition to the GAO projection of the shortage of SES members, GSA's ability to hire new SES members was impacted by the resignation of former GSA Administrator Perry in October of 2005. In the eight months prior to the arrival of Administrator Doan, GSA was subject to the Qualifications Review Board (QRB) moratorium that took effect with the public announcement of our former Administrator's departure. The QRB moratorium during this period precluded GSA from doing any significant SES hiring. In addition, 34 executives left the agency from October 2005 to April 2007. This turnover was due to retirement (50%); transfers to different agencies (29%); and resignation (21%). We expect this trend to continue since over 50% of the current SES workforce will be eligible for optional retirement within five years.

At the same time, GSA has been undergoing significant organizational change with the stand up of our new Federal Acquisition Service (FAS). This large-scale reorganization impacts approximately 4,000 employees throughout GSA nationwide – over 30% of GSA's total employment. In addition, other significant organizational changes have recently occurred inside GSA to better position the agency to carry out its mission. These reorganizations include the establishment of GSA's new Office of Emergency Response and Recovery, and organizational changes in the Office of Government-wide Policy, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, and the Board of Contract Appeals.

During the current fiscal year, our efforts in increasing diversity within the SES have been nominally successful as 36% of new hires have been female and 9% minority. At the GS-14/15 level, the pool of potential women and minority SES candidates has remained relatively stable over the last few years. Currently, 41% of employees at the GS-14 grade are women and 29% are minority. At the GS-15 level, 39% are women

and 20% are minority. We are hopeful that the increased visibility of our agency leadership programs, which also targets employees at lower grade levels, will have a positive impact on these numbers in the future.

Efforts to Increase Diversity in the Workforce

GSA recently submitted its *Fiscal Year 2006 Management Directive 715 Report* to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. We also completed our annual Workforce Analysis as part of our ongoing human capital strategic planning effort. In preparing both of these reports, GSA thoroughly reviewed and analyzed our diversity levels across the entire agency. In both instances, the reports identified three areas that GSA plans to explore in more detail –

1. The percentage of individuals with disabilities has decreased over the prior year and indicates a need to examine issues related to individuals with disabilities at GSA.
2. The distribution of GSA's workforce at Grade 13 and above indicates a need to examine grade distribution by race, ethnicity, and gender.

GSA's workforce percentage of Hispanics continues to fall below civilian labor force data and indicates a need for further examination.

Transparency is the key to improvement. We plan to share this information with senior leaders across the agency and GSA's workforce analysis is readily available to all employees via the agency's internal web site. We are also very focused on the development of our current staff. In February 2002, my office launched the GSA Leadership Institute to create a cadre of leadership talent to steer the agency to continued excellence. The Leadership Institute provides GSA-specific leadership developmental programs that focus on employees in current leadership positions and employees seeking leadership positions to ensure that our leaders have the essential knowledge and skills to create world-class workplaces and results. This five-tier

program includes the Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP) as a component of the Leadership Institute intended for GS-13 through GS-15 employees to identify high-potential individuals for competition for top management and executive positions. Participants undergo a rigorous competitive selection process before entering the 18-month program. Highlights of the program include:

- 89% percent of the ALDP graduates are still employed with GSA;
- 42% percent of the ALDP graduates have received promotions;
- 20% of graduates of the program are minorities and 46% are female; and
- GSA's percentage of minorities at GS-15 level exceeds the overall government-wide average (18.58% versus 17.44%).

As part of the Leadership Institute, we recently established an innovative mentoring program to further expand our potential pool of executive leaders. In this program, members of GSA's SES and high-performing GS-15's are selected and trained to serve as mentors to those employees who have been identified as protégés in the pilot program. This special one-year program includes a kick-off ceremony (where protégés are introduced to their mentors), online courses, recommended readings, a series of web-based seminars, and a formal closeout of their participation in the program. This program is just being instituted, and we are looking forward to providing details on its success at a later time.

In addition to the Leadership Institute, GSA also participates in a number of external leadership development programs. These include the Office of Personnel Management's Federal Executive Institute, the Council for Excellence in Government's Fellows Program, and Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government Senior Executive Fellows Program. During the last five years, 55% of participants in these programs have been women and 42% minorities. We are very proud of these numbers at GSA.

World class organizations must invest in the development of their employees to sustain organizational success. During fiscal year 2006, the average amount spent on employee training and development was \$1,440. This dollar amount is at the high range of \$750-\$1,500 the benchmark for "world-class" organizations (provided by the Saratoga Institute). GSA also continues to invest in on-line learning opportunities for employees through GSA's OnLine University (OLU). For example, GSA has developed an on-line training course to educate employees on the Notification and Federal Employee Anti-discrimination and Retaliation ("No FEAR") Act. During fiscal year 2006, the number of registrations for OLU increased by almost 6,000 registrants. This continues to be a great way for GSA employees to enhance their skills and competencies by taking advantage of the on-line learning environment. This is a positive indicator of GSA promoting a culture and climate of knowledge sharing and continuous learning and improvement.

In our external recruitment efforts, we are maximizing the use of web-based technology and other supplemental methods of communication to reach out to new and previously untapped sources of highly qualified candidates. GSA has worked to make progress in eliminating equal employment barriers. To reach out to our most under represented group, Hispanics, we have created a Spanish language recruitment brochure. We have increased registration and the use of GSAjobs, our on-line application process. We have participated in disability job fairs, and we have and continue to conduct targeted recruitment at a number of colleges and universities. We also continue to bring diverse perspectives together by having women and minority members of the SES serve on our rating panels to evaluate applicant qualifications and determine the best qualified for further consideration.

Closing

Chairman Davis, Ranking Member Marchant, and Members of the Subcommittee, I want to thank you again for the opportunity to address you this afternoon. GSA represents a very small proportion of the governmentwide total of employees, but it is

the strength of a diverse workforce that will ensure our continued success. As GSA's Chief Human Capital Officer, I want to assure you that you will see GSA continue to focus on an aggressive campaign "to ensure that we have a diverse workforce that reflects our society." Our methods will focus on three areas: (1) Outreach, (2) Employment, and (3) Career Development. Achieving this goal will require teamwork and leadership among the executives, managers, and supervisors who make the hiring, training, and promotion decisions throughout GSA. We are ideally positioned to enhance the diversity of GSA's employees, particularly at the SES level, and I am confident that we will be successful.