

## Group A

### Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Ten individuals, all of whom were female, attended this discussion.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### The Fermilab Work Environment

*Without giving it much thought, I want you to write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Challenging and sometimes stressful
- Relaxed
- Laid back
- Chaotic
- Enjoyable
- One of the best places I've worked
- Good camaraderie
- Tension, especially during review times and furlough

*Why did you choose these words.*

- Restrictions that are put on sick time are a bit much. We should be able to take it if our child or spouse is very sick. Our vacation time is not as cumulative as those who have been here 30 years, and it never will be. We have to take vacation time instead of sick days.
- You can use up to 3 days consecutively.
- I was told it's 3 days in 3 months.
- The rules aren't applied evenly between departments.
- I don't want to have to get a doctor's note every time I have a cold.

- Generally, the idea that one person has one interpretation of guidelines, and one person has another is very common here.
- Your immediate supervisor is usually the person who makes the decision, but I also ask my coworkers.
- It's clearly stated in the policies manual, but it's applied differently by each of the managers.
- You can't tell people that they have the days, but then can't take them. They are asking us to save them up in case something major happens.
- I think it's usually very clear who is abusing the system.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

*Okay let's move into our more specific conversation about diversity. Let's talk about your general impressions regarding how Fermilab handles diversity today.*

- I think the initiatives that they are making now as far as nationality are a great effort. I'm sitting on a diversity council, and everyone on a broad spectrum feels that this is a good step.

*Have you had trouble moving forward due to gender?*

- No. (Group agreement.)
- As a Hispanic woman, I've never had problems. It depends on your attitude, too, some people feel they get picked on, but I haven't.
- I haven't seen anything either.
- I was really impressed by the respect I'm given. I'm an equal. I work with a lot of physicists and nationalities, and I'm treated with respect. It's not even offensive to anyone if we have language barriers. We just keep trying to understand each other.

*Do you regard Fermilab as a respectful workplace? Why or why not.*

Yes. (Group agreement.)

*Any exceptions?*

- Maybe one time a scientist yelled at me for something, and I went to my supervisor and he apologized. He just had a bad day.

## **Fermilab Hierarchy**

*One issue described in the APS report is that of the hierarchy of prestige and importance of different jobs at Fermilab, which recognized that research physicists were generally perceived as being at the top of the peak. Some employees suggested that this has led to an environment of elitism and arrogance in the workplace. What are your thoughts about that?*

- Years ago you saw some of that but not in the last five years. The workplace has changed a bit, partly because of the new director. Each time we've had a changeover things get looked at and resolved.
- I agree.
- I couldn't tell you who was a physicist and who was a student.
- They're the reason we're all here. There's a hierarchy, but it's not a negative thing.
- I haven't seen it in the thirty years I've been here.
- I've only seen it on an individual basis. It's not lab-wide.

## **Women and Minority Advancements**

*Another issue described in the APS report is one in which woman and minority advancements are perceived as preference picks and not a result of individual qualifications. What are your thoughts on this?*

- I think it used to be an issue, but not now. I don't see it. (Group agreement.)
- It's a fair process for people moving up and coming in.
- I think when it's a male dominated group, and the organization feels pressed to get a female in to not be perceived as discriminatory.

## **Affect of Different Work Groups and Projects**

*Fermilab is a complex organization with many different projects and work groups and many different organizations having employees working at the laboratory. These different groups often work with a great deal of autonomy and different management structures and approaches. What are your thoughts on this?*

- It would be nice to see more groups working together and sharing information, but it seems like it's one company with all these little companies working within it.

*Are there communication barriers?*

- Yes, there are some issues communicating between groups, but it's really more about staying within your set of guidelines more than not being able to pick up the phone.
- I don't feel like I have a problem sending mail or picking up the phone, but it would be easier if the guidelines were better communicated.
- In our department, they are all separate little groups and they don't communicate with each other. You don't want to step on someone's toes or cross the boundaries. We're all one group here, and we should be able to communicate with one another. Each division has their own way of doing particulars and trying to get along to do the job can be hard.
- An undercurrent of that's just how it is.
- I've tried to look at a policy, then I choose one person that I work with regularly. If I go around to too many people, it's too confusing. Even within the same division.
- We've just figured out workarounds.

## **Communication and Transparency**

*One area of concern expressed in the APS report is that employees do not understand programs and options available to them, have you encountered this? Is lack of communication or transparency ever an issue?*

- It's getting better but it's not where it should be. Just like with that sick leave policy. There should be one policy for everyone.
- All the info is there and on the web, it's just up to interpretation.

- It's the way that the managers filter it down to employees.
- People may not know where to find the info, so they ask people and get different interpretations.
- You can get easily lost on our website.

*Did you have a good orientation when you started working here?*

- It was a lot of information given at once, and it's overwhelming when you don't even understand the subject matter yet.
- I don't remember being told, "here's where you can find the master manual." My supervisor just asked me to do my research within my group.
- I think everyone is willing to help if they can.
- It would be helpful to have a sheet at orientation that tells you who to call for certain things.
- We used to do that, but I don't know about now. It's still a nice thing to have.
- The paperless thing is fine, as long as they tell us where to find it online. It's not a user-friendly site.
- Orientation follow-up would've been really helpful. Doesn't even have to be from HR. Within the division would be helpful, too, even though everyone is willing to help.
- Re-orientation would be nice, too.

### **Work/life Balance**

*How many of you would say that Fermilab does a good job of providing flexibility and care in supporting its employees?*

- Some workdays are overwhelming and demanding and if you have to miss days for some reason, you have to work double-time to keep up. Flextime would be nice to have. Some divisions get to utilize that flextime.

- Some areas you just can't have flextime. We tried it and they stopped it after the pilot period and we were never told whether it would happen or not.
- There's flextime in the policy online, but it's up to the individual managers.
- It would be beneficial and would boost morale for those departments that can handle the coverage.
- Someone in my group did ask for flextime and they were told no because the hours that they are needed to be here are set.
- Flextime needs to be defined. It's a general term, and everyone has a different idea of what it is.
- You're forced to use vacation time, rather than make up hours.
- Some groups have that flexibility, though.

*What about other policies?*

- The finance department gets to telecommute one day a week, but that doesn't work in my department.

*Do you feel like if you have an issue that you have someone to go to?*

- I really enjoy my group and if I have a problem I can go to several people.
- I was impressed that during the furlough that there was a site where you could ask a question and get a response.

*Tell me a little more about communication during the furlough.*

- Very much a challenge. It was nice to be told a little something, but then no one knew enough. Questions and fears. Six months of walking on eggshells. Maybe there wasn't quick enough communication.
- It was a double-edged sword. We heard the news right before Christmas, and it was a lot of unnecessary stress. Maybe they should've delayed the announcement until they really knew something. It was just mayhem.

- The voluntary retirement/layoff wasn't really voluntary. You had to be approved. Some people tried to do it, but were turned down.
- In my department, the ones who retired are still here as guest scientists. They're just not on payroll anymore.

*What are the long-term effects?*

- Underlying mistrust.
- Before this I thought this was a really stable workplace, but not now.
- Every year, with the budget getting approved, it's a panic. This time was an extreme.
- I know people who are taking classes just in case. People want to be here but they're afraid.

*Any other work/life balance issues?*

- I looked into the maternity policies and sick leave, and it's great, but for maternity leave you have to use all of your vacation and sick leave before your family leave goes into affect. Some companies use short-term disability for maternity, and some don't make you take your vacation and sick time first. There is also a vacation day donation program.
- As far as childcare, the lab has great facilities and access is open as long as there is room. They have a waiting list, too.
- Personal days would be beneficial. Do away with sick leave, and just give everyone personal leave.
- I don't earn a lot of vacation and I was willing to donate a few hours of it, but you have to donate a full day. That should be changed.

## **Mentoring**

*Employees often identify access to a mentor as an important part of career growth. Thoughts on mentoring programs?*

- I would've liked to have had a mentor from the beginning. It wasn't mentioned as an option. They may not offer it to admin professionals.

- It would be good to have a job-share program or something like that.
- (Agreement in the group that all would've utilized a mentoring program.)
- We'd have to have time carved out for us to become mentors.

### **Access to training and other development opportunities**

*Are there appropriate and sufficient opportunities? Is access to these opportunities fair?*

- We do have access, and if the lab doesn't offer it I can take it somewhere else.
- Sometimes people may not have the opportunity because the department doesn't have the budget. Even though it's at low cost.
- I chose several things that I wanted to take training for, but my manager narrowed it down to two based on job-pertaining. I thought it was offered so I could grow. Maybe it was because of the budget.
- I think the tuition reimbursement program is fantastic.
- When I first started it was limited to job-pertaining. The manager can decide, though. It is unevenly applied.
- One supervisor told his employees no to all because he didn't want his department to pay for it.
- I maintain some web pages and I want to learn more. They're more than willing to train me on that.
- If the money is in the budget, you generally have good access.

### **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

*This is our chance to talk about what a positive and empowering workplace would be like.*



- Flextime and equal access to it would be beneficial.
- More clarity around policies.
- Management needs to come up to par. A lot of them are not doing a good job.
- I have a small area and it's not a big issue.
- Incompetent managers don't really know what's going on and they don't communicate and that makes the job more stressful. If there happens to be a problem with an employee, and they go to management for help, they always stick up for management. (Agreement in group.) I have personally felt worried about my job because of it. You just keep doing your job as best you can. You just drop it and deal with it a different way. There really isn't anywhere to go with these issues.
- You go up the chain only so far and then there is nowhere else to go with those issues. It dead ends without resolution or response. You ask yourself if it's really worth it. Will it affect my raise or job security?

*How pervasive is this? Or is it more isolated?*

- Somewhat isolated to just bad managers who shouldn't be managers. They just moved up the chain.

*What makes a bad manager?*

- Lack of knowledge and then they can't communicate. They don't know, but don't want to tell you they don't know.
- The lab offers management training. The ones that need it don't go.
- They are making it mandatory, but it's up to them if they want to implement it.
- Communication is so important.
- You can only let people do so much. Some people completely abuse the system.
- It comes down to training in the area I'm familiar with. Some people see that others are able to take the training to advance, and then in the same area they are not promoting it. They

just go day to day and do their job. They're not encouraging it. Everyone has the same access, but some managers promote it and some don't. Sometimes the job just doesn't allow you to get training. Time constraints. But there should be that time. The system can be unfair, I moved on because of that. I was stuck.

- Lack of people skills is a problem. One person is condescending sometimes.

*Are there mechanisms to identify the bad managers?*

- You can go upstairs to EEO and talk to them. I have no grievances, but if I had one and went upstairs, I would be singled out.
- It's not a private area and everyone can see that you're going. Need privacy.
- I know someone that had an issue with a manager and went to EEO. The manager took classes. She transferred out of the department, and the person who moved into her position complained and the manager had to take another class. They just keep sending the manager to classes and not doing anything.
- The employee is supposed to transfer out, deal with it, or quit. There really isn't any other solution. They don't reprimand managers.
- Is there any policy to say that we've had to send this manager to a class five times, now what?
- That manager's manager just protects them. Upper management will never see the problem because of that.
- We had a supervisor who was complained about for years and then finally they told him he had to retire rather than fire him. But it went on for years and years.
- The lab has been very kind to people like that, whether they should be or not.
- If you're going to file a complaint, it should only go to EEO. It's almost as if the complaint should go outside the lab for evaluation.
- A lot is left up to individual interpretation.

*Anything else you'd like to see improved?*

- As far as cost of insurance is concerned, the family plans are triple the amount of the single. So even if I'm just trying to cover my spouse it's overpriced.
- Being able to go outside the lab to voice concerns especially about upper management. Everyone knows where you're going when you go to EEO. The offices even have windows, and when the blinds are drawn, everyone knows what's going on.
- An independent company could monitor complaints and the number of complaints against a particular person.
- A lot of people aren't complaining to the EEO because of people seeing them going in there. (Group agreed.)
- You can even hear through the walls in those offices. They moved the person to a more private office, but it's still on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor. It's obvious. There is a stigma. It's almost a last straw.
- I've never heard of a positive result coming out of EEO.
- I've only heard people say, "I complained to EEO and they helped me move to a new position." I've never heard about them actually solving the problem. They just help you out of your current position.
- I filed a sexual harassment complaint and I never heard any follow-up from it and it's been several months. I mentioned it to my supervisor and she called to file a complaint. I still see this person on a regular basis, and I don't get the impression that anything was ever said to him.
- I'd be angry if I never heard anything about it.
- This is why people don't file complaints.

## Group B

### Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

This discussion was attended by six individuals, including one woman.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### The Fermilab Work Environment

*Without giving it much thought, what are the first words that come to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Great, best job I ever had, clean, safe, everyone gets along well, nice place to work
- Entertaining, get along well with everyone, interesting assignments
- Overall a good place to work, but there's a great divide between management and employees
- Nice place to work
- It's just a job
- Fun.

### Fermilab Approach to Diversity

*Do traditional diversity issues play a role here at Fermilab? Is advancement available, etc.? Does the lab handle these issues well?*

- Fermilab has learned to handle it well. I've been here 25 years, and it's just easier now because I'm not questioned anymore. I just do my job. One day I answered the phone, and someone didn't believe I was in my job because I'm a woman. That was 20 years ago. Doesn't happen now to me. Sometimes you get stereotyped, and sometimes I stereotype.
- It's handled well in my small group of 5 people. Mixed races working quite well together.
- Amongst ourselves in individual shops it works well, but if something makes it to HR things get blown out of proportion. People get disciplined for every little rude or possibly sexist thing. It's needed, but it's too severe.
- I've noticed that slips of the tongue can be resolved between people, but once it gets to HR

it gets blown up. Someone will end up suspended. Management must have a directive to report things to HR.

*Do you regard Fermilab as a respectful workplace? Why or why not.*

- We all have our bad days but most of the time things are fine. I've had difficulty over the years with someone going to management and them telling us how to behave. I think sometimes individuals think there are some diabolical plots by management, and sometimes maybe there are, but most of the time not.
- Some people didn't want to come here because they heard this meeting was being recording.
- There's a big attitude that the lab is trying to get rid of the unions.
- I've noticed it, too.
- When I first started there were 40 people and 40 different pay scales, and it was all about who you knew. The union made it fairer. That's part of the reason that everything goes straight to HR in our group. It's some kind of directive. Management doesn't want to deal with it so it goes straight to HR.

*Do the union issues create tension in the workplace?*

- Creates an issue during negotiation time. It sometimes creates an attitude of union vs. management. We like the lab, we like working here and we're not trying to pull a fast one on Fermilab. Most people come here every day to work and do what they can.
- I get the impression that the union members feel it's us against them and are always are looking over their shoulder. It's like that everywhere, though, not just Fermilab.
- As a union member, I've been with my group for 20 years and I'm kind of detached from the main group. I don't have too much contact with anyone else. I think the union here is powerless and I don't understand why we have one here.
- We have one to prevent 20 different pay scales.
- I left the union because they made a certain position non-union, and I took that job.

*What are your feelings on diversity in general here at Fermilab?*

- Sometimes I think they're too sensitive. Last year at Halloween, we had a skeleton up, and someone said it looked like a black guy and they made us take it down. A lot of people got in trouble for this.
- I used to enjoy the fact that you'd be able to see different cultural beliefs, I learned from that, but now you can't have anything at all in an attempt to be PC and we've lost the human side. Next we'll be back in uniforms. We should be allowed to be diverse. They've stifled the talking between employees because everyone is afraid to be sent to the 15<sup>th</sup> floor. They should spend time teaching people how to deal with things rather than just punishing people for ignorance. People should feel more open to go to each other and address grievances.
- People walk on eggshells here talking to women here because they're afraid to be sent to the 15<sup>th</sup> floor. They're afraid of just being overheard in the hallway.

### **Fermilab Hierarchy**

*One issue described in the APS report is that of the hierarchy of prestige and importance of different jobs at Fermilab, which recognized that research physicists were generally perceived at being at the top of the ladder. Some employees suggested that this has led to an environment of elitism and arrogance in the workplace. What are your thoughts on this?*

- Yes, definitely, that's true. Sometimes the physicists won't even step out of your way if you're standing there in the hall and need to get by. They're very demanding. We just try to help them out and get them out of our way.
- They seem to be very intelligent but lack common sense.
- No courtesy.
- I spent two years in Europe in the military and they have a very aristocratic attitude. If you move around the lab you know that certain people are going to be difficult. I call it aristocratic. "I'm educated and you're not" attitude.
- They don't even consider that you may have a college degree. They look down on you because you work with your hands. They assume that you wouldn't choose to work with your hands and that we do it because we can't do anything else.
- They're not all like that. Some are nice and polite but there are a few who are problematic.

- I think they're working really hard to change the attitude but they are really driven to achieve their goal, and we're here to make sure it's done safely and correctly, but they want in now. It's changing a lot, over the past 5-7 years. They're realizing that we have things we have to do.
- One thing with us maintaining things and different infrastructure stuff, they don't bother to think about what goes into it and how hard it will be to maintain it. They don't consider that. They do things their way and don't take into consideration what goes into it. They don't look at long-term maintenance. They're like kids with a toy. They want it now.

## **Women and Minority Advancements**

*Another issue described in the APS report is one in which woman and minority advancements are perceived as preference picks and not a result of individual qualifications. Again, have you experienced this perception of preference?*

- Seems like the review process isn't an individual review, but a group review. Advancements are based on the amount of time you're here, or your race.
- They went to a new way of evaluating staff, and it's just more important that you comply, comply, comply. They just tell you what you didn't accomplish, and they don't consider what happens in the rest of the lab. It probably affects the percentage of your raise. There are only so many advancements you can make. You're waiting for someone to retire, die, or get fired to advance.

*Is the review process fair?*

- I think the process is the same as it's always been. In a way it's good because everyone has a goal.
- It doesn't affect me because I'm union. My advancements are predetermined.
- Just starting over a year ago, they restructured our department because our lead guy is retiring. They split his responsibilities up among three people. They just gave the employee review responsibilities to the guy who has been here the longest, but he doesn't even know how to use a computer. Someone else ended up giving me my review. I understand they want to be loyal to him, but just because he's here and responsible for it, doesn't mean he deserves a bump in pay.

*Are people being advanced who haven't been trained well?*

- Yes, I see that with supervisors outside of my group. They can't deal with the responsibilities, but they get the promotion.

- There's a probation period and training, but there's just no time to see people in action. By the time they get their training, probation is over. People don't want to take the management promotion in our shop because they know it's not stable. They're going to bring someone in from the outside this time. We've had three supervisors leave their positions recently, and no one's looking at that. Why doesn't that throw up a red flag? One guy was fired, one guy just left, one guy went to a different, lower level position. The negativity comes from up top, and these people are trades-people and take a certain amount of pride in their work, and they get sick of getting second-guessed all the time.

## **Communication and Transparency**

*One area of concern expressed in the APS report is that employees do not understand programs and options available to them, have you encountered this?*

- Group agreed that the lab was doing a good job.

## **Work/life Balance**

*Is there fairness of benefits between groups?*

- This was a non-issue for the group.

*What about flextime? Is that being implemented fairly?*

- Some areas are flexible with schedules, but our union shop has set times. As long as everyone works the proper number of hours, it's fine.
- Management is much more rigid with union workers.
- Unfair treatment between hourly employees and salaried employees. Some management is much more strict about time than others.
- We have some employees who think that they'll be rewarded for coming to work when they're sick, but all they do is get everyone else sick. They should take advantage of that benefit. They think they will be looked upon by management as better if they don't take sick leave. Management compares us all to him, and it isn't fair. He's ridiculous.
- I used to come in early because I didn't want people to bother me, I had coffee, read the paper, etc. But if I started working early, they paid me for it.
- There's pressure not to take sick leave. People take vacation time instead of sick leave.



- I was told not to use sick time unless it was a bridge to long-term disability leave in case I was injured. My supervisor told me he didn't like it when people used sick leave.
- You're supposed to call medical to call out sick, but no one ever does that. We just call our supervisors directly.

*Is it easy to get answers or know who to go to for policies and procedures?*

- I can ask coworkers and supervisor, or on the website.

### **Access to Training and Other Development Opportunities**

- I think there's a lot of over-training, actually. We have to take so many classes that are totally unnecessary.
- The safety training can be overkill at times.

*Is there access to advancement training?*

- You just have to ask your supervisor.
- For the trades, you'd have to go to the college, but you could be reimbursed.
- Sometimes the education office will look at your request and they want it to pertain to your position.
- I was told that I could go take anything I wanted as long as the degree pertained to the lab. You just have to get it approved.

### **Mentoring**

- For us they're not hiring anybody, so there aren't opportunities.
- For us, we have a lot of different equipment and the same guy's been running it for 20 years and he's going to retire. One guy has been trying to get the older guy to teach him, and it doesn't happen. But now they have to go out together so he can learn. Once he's gone, the little things that are specific to that machine will be lost.
- Several people in our department are going to retire soon, and they're not really giving us opportunity to learn their jobs. It's not being taken into consideration. Potential for a lot of

lost knowledge.

- Our bosses are very open with us, and we don't have any problem with that. We rotate jobs every two weeks so everyone can do them. Our bosses inform us of changes immediately. It's a great place to work.

### **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

*This is our chance to talk about what a positive and empowering workplace would be like.*

- Flexible work schedules. Some groups it works better than others. We have so few people in our group right now, that it wouldn't work. We need a few more people in our group. We can't get any smaller. Other groups are noticing that we are understaffed and are complaining about the slower response times, and some are understanding because they're also in small groups. They're not hiring because they don't want to have to lay people off later. It all comes down to money with federally funded projects.
- Fermilab is a good place to work but there are some areas that could be improved upon.
- Management has to prioritize tasks. Rank has its privileges, and we should respect that, but I don't think that when Mrs. Odonne asks for her flower bed to be done that she means for us to drop everything and do it immediately at the detriment of our other work. They're not abusing their power, but our management doesn't respond efficiently.
- There are certain people who think that they are higher up than they are, and demand an immediate response.

## **Group C**

### **Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group**

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Eight individuals participated, including six women and at least two members of minority groups.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

## The Fermilab Work Environment

*Without giving it much thought, I want you to write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Stressful
- Low morale
- Challenging, committed
- Relaxed and stressful. Work is stressful, but the environment is relaxed.
- Uncertainty tied to the budget situation. Diverse across divisions and sections.
- Chaotic.

*Looking at the more negative terms here, tell me about why you chose these words. What is challenging about the environment?*

- The amount of work. There is too much work and not enough people to do it. We are always under the threat of losing people. At times, we even go all the way through the hiring process and then are told that we cannot hire the person.
- Can't get the tactical plan done because all year we're changing things. There are layoffs, budget problems, and can't execute what we've planned. Sometimes half of my team is off doing a special project without forewarning, and then we can't meet our goals.
- We don't know the priorities of the lab. They're not set or they change constantly. If you go up to the top levels of the lab, they can't tell you either. If you are set to go in one direction, and then Congress decides another direction, what does the lab do? Our main program is going away and we need a new focus, but do we need twenty small projects? Every day the priority changes.
- Priorities may change quickly and we have to respond. There are new DOE orders, self-assessments to be done, policies and procedures that need to be done, and turnover of staff. We need to make sure that we address emergencies immediately, and then that brings issues regarding the work that does not get done.
- You will drown here if you can't multi-task.
- I also think that one will never become the Director unless one has a PhD in physics. You have to be the type of person that knows where the corporate ladder ends. People here expect new job positions based on additional degrees, but you'd have to at least have a PhD in physics to make it to the top.

*Where do the other ladders end?*

- Our pay scale is much lower than indicated on the streets. The last few people I hired had to take pay cuts to come to the lab. And on top of that they only get the standard 2% raises.
- Some of us can't move up. We're at the end of the line in our field here.
- I don't think that they make it clear that there isn't a lot of room for promotion if you're hired at the top end of your job category and pay scale.
- I have a certain pot of money that I can give to my staff and that forces me to give them less than excellent reviews, no merits, no promotions, and sometimes these people have to work 60-70 hours a week for me.
- If you're at the high end of the job scale there is no incentive to do any extra work. People have loyalty to the lab so the work gets done. If you don't have the loyalty the work will not get done. Some groups in the organization have that attitude.
- In a broader picture, the average age at Fermi is around 54, so those of us that are still here are generally a loyal core of people, and now that we have to hire new blood we're having a challenge because we're not offering enough financially.
- A new person was hired, and left after a few weeks because his pay was cut 12%, so he went somewhere else. There should've been an allowance to let go of some of the deadwood staff after the furlough. People have protections and sometimes people just can't be let go. It's not honestly evaluated.
- We're too kind.
- It's very difficult to fire someone here. You need documentation, and it takes a lot of work and honesty. Layoffs aren't the way to get rid of people.
- Low performers just get moved around to other managers. It takes a commitment of 15 hours of work a week to get someone let go.
- This is the only place where a large percentage of our employees have ever worked. We inherit problem employees from other managers. A manager who wants to tackle the problem has to go through the trouble of getting it done. Some managers just have no idea how to handle it.

- We've been trained to do this, though. If you don't do it, that's your problem. Some managers are thrown into management, but just don't want to deal with the people part.
- The training is offered by Human Resources, but a lot of managers don't have the courage to do it.

*What are the ramifications to managers for NOT tackling those employee issues?*

- There are none whatsoever. They stay in their positions and remain managers even when they are incompetent when it comes to employee problems. If all of a sudden you have an employee with 20 years of good reviews, and you have a problem with them, it's very hard to explain.
- It does terrible things for morale.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

*How does diversity fit into that? Are there trends here? How does it play out? Is it fair?*

- I personally think the lab bends over backwards to help minorities. The preference for the physicist is so overwhelming that it's the only minority we see sometimes: physicists vs. non-physicists.

*Do others agree that there isn't a traditional minority issue? Those of you who are minorities, what have you experienced?*

- I've heard of prejudice here at the lab, but haven't experienced it. I don't get the physicist thing. I wouldn't have any animosity against physicists. If you don't like supporting physicists, then you shouldn't be here.
- I think that minorities are underrepresented here. If minorities and women were getting more engineering degrees, maybe they would come here, but maybe they'd go somewhere nicer like California. This is a predominately white male culture here.
- From my experience - since I've been here so long - working with scientists is the best. It was back in the 70s and 80s in the service industry when I last felt discriminated. I work with great scientific personnel. There are certain scientists who feel they have tenured positions and that they're untouchable. Up until last year, they never had to go on furlough. I've been here 30 years and last year was the only time they felt that stress.

- A lot of people that left had marketable skills and knew they could do much better elsewhere. The people who like it here, generally, want to stay.

*What are the ramifications of the physicist vs. non-physicist environment?*

- There are people in management who shouldn't be in that position. Just because you have a degree in physics doesn't make you a good manager. A lot of people are given management positions because they're physicists.
- The lab may want to look at developing the same structure as a hospital: one branch of scientists and one branch of administration.
- At Argonne and Fermilab, and with the scientific community in general, you hit the glass ceiling by becoming a scientist or a division director. Some people screw things up in management positions but they got their pay increased, and then went back to being a scientist.
- They have the option of saying that they want to stay at Fermilab, but that they don't want to do this management job anymore, and go back to just science. They have that option; no one else does.
- When people go to the project side, it's all PhD physicists. Every five years we have different bosses. Supervisors change constantly because they change their minds, but keep their management pay.
- That group is being seen as being able to choose what to do, while everyone else is assigned, and if they don't like it they can leave.
- Regardless of what changes, or the cuts you've experienced you're still expected to deliver.
- That goes all the way up through DOE, too.

*Do you regard Fermilab as a respectful workplace? Why or why not.*

- I think in large part it is a respectful environment, and even more respectful if you're a physicist. Everyone makes exceptions and bends rules for the scientists.
- It's a respectful environment, but there are exceptions. One individual here lost a great deal of government property. He lost tens of thousands of dollars of equipment and yet he remains at the lab and they look for projects to put him on. Upper management is afraid to tackle these kinds of issues. A support person couldn't get away with that.

- Physicists are coddled and their behavior is overlooked.
- When I came here I found it refreshing because I came from a place that had rampant sexual harassment.
- We don't see that here.
- People have been harassed here because of religious beliefs. A car was vandalized in the parking lot, their work environment became hostile, things went missing from their cubicle, verbal comments were made. The manager looked the other way and didn't deal with this employee to employee harassment. It has been reported without success. The manager is a physicist.

*Is a system in place to give support to employees?*

- People know to go to HR for help, but they're probably not comfortable going there.
- If I go to HR, then everyone knows. Managers know, and it becomes public.
- I began in HR, and I feel there is a place to go. And if you go to the manager, and ask it to be kept confidential, then it is.
- The community is so small, though, that the managers will come to know who made the complaint.
- Just being seen on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor would draw suspicion.
- It's well known the EO office is here so Fermilab doesn't get sued. They work for the lab, not the employee.
- There are so many smaller hierarchies here that people would eventually know who made complaints. People would feel stigmatized and singled out. Would add stress to life.
- This is a problem for Emergency Management because it brings to mind Columbine, Virginia Tech, and other events like that. People get angry and don't feel heard and could lash out. These things take time to build up.

- Impacts morale for the organization when issues with difficult employees are never addressed and are allowed to go on and on.
- If you're a scientist, you bypass procedures and get on Pier's calendar.

*Do you believe that many employees don't feel comfortable going to supervisors for support?*

- Varies by department.

## **Work/Life Balance**

*Would say that Fermilab does a good job of providing flexibility and care in supporting its employees? Would say that Fermilab is fair in providing access to its various work/life balance opportunities for employees?*

- Haven't seen it being implemented unfairly.
- I would think that some people can't telecommute due to the nature of their work. Maybe that's what people are seeing as arbitrary.
- Think it's dependent on the type of job.
- There are employees who push the envelope on flexibility. The employee who uses up sick leave as soon as they get it and always leaves early won't be as likely to get flextime.
- Essential and non-essential employees should make sure that things are covered here.
- Half my group is on-call and they don't get extra pay or benefits. There is animosity between groups that are on-call and get the same pay as those who are not tied to their homes all weekend, etc.
- I don't have the same issues, but half of the women in my department are mothers with young children, and they ask for flexible schedules sometimes and we're very flexible in accommodating. But that's tied to performance. Good solid performers will get more flexibility. We've even had to take on a technician who had medical issues who couldn't be around certain machinery so we moved him and he's doing quite well.
- The lab goes above and beyond the call to accommodate the employee, and has spent tens of thousands of dollars to do so.



- Regarding comp time, it would never occur to me to give comp time because someone has to come in on a Saturday. That's just part of the job.

*Should there be more uniform rules lab-wide, or should departments continue to make their own decisions?*

- I think it should be more uniform.
- How do you balance it? If one section is doing it, why can't another? Sometimes you just have to be here because you are an essential employee.
- My employees who have been here for 30 years feel it has become more restrictive and they bring it to my attention.
- The rules are very vague.
- Managers and supervisors are not required to take management development training and there are a lot of important things in there about dealing with these difficult topics. Maybe half have never had this training. Should be mandatory. Could've helped them deal with a lot of these issues.

*So management training is available, but not everyone takes advantage of it? Is this a common problem?*

- Resources are available and you can go to the training center, but following through and implementation aren't always there.
- I heard that there's some resistance from the department manager if there is a course that costs money. There is a charge to the department for these courses.
- Physicists are the ones who don't take it.
- Management does require us to take the training. Maybe it's just certain departments who don't?
- Your manager is supposed to require you to take certain courses and then follow-up very regularly by email until you do.
- Many people could go and then not take any changes back to the department.

- Management training is just a one-time thing. No follow up or mentoring.

## **Mentoring**

*Is it your experience that there is a lack of mentoring? Have you sought or had a mentor? Would that help you?*

- It would definitely be an advantage to have a mentor.
- Not aware of any program.
- One of the things I deal with regularly is difficult behavior problems or that sort of thing. If mentoring was available, I would want them to do that. Performance reviews can be difficult. Some agree with their faults and some deny. Managers really need mentoring. It's the sticky situations that make you need mentoring.
- When I needed to put an employee on notice, I had the assistance I needed.
- It requires courage to take the next steps. It's unpleasant and time-consuming, people don't want to deal with it.
- In order to have mentoring, you have to have an organization that recognizes the management of people as a specific skill.
- Mentoring takes time, and no one has time. I can't even take on summer students anymore.

## **Communication and Transparency**

*What's your experience with communication and transparency at the lab?*

- Kind of shocked when the director was upfront with us. It was the first time.
- It's Improving. It used to be much worse. People are more vocal about the problems now.
- One of the things that we've found during hard financial times, is that the personnel policy is online, but is very hard to find or it disappears. It's happened a few times. And it changes.
- I'd rather have a hard copy to consult, but it's only online.

- Problem employees go through it with a fine-toothed comb looking for what they can get away with.
- I was on the WDRS site recently with a new hire and purposely took her to the site to check info, because she only had the 4-hour training period, but you don't get a tour of what is on the site. Need key points of information. Difficult to find on site. Trying, but it's not well-organized.

*Is there orientation for new employees, or people being promoted?*

- Yes, there is an orientation, but once you go back to your desk you're on your own.
- Contractors are not employees and are not being reached out to. Some of them have no idea about processes or how to do anything. Somehow that piece is being missed. They are contractors with sometimes high-responsibility jobs.
- It was just brought up to me about the fine line that Fermilab has to follow so non-employees don't assume that they're eligible for the same benefits. These are joint-appointments. No one has taken the time to show these people the systems and they don't know how to navigate the lab and policies. Probably don't even know that they're violating rules.
- Those people are not typical of Fermilab employees. Can't spoon-feed things to everyone. Wouldn't be difficult to have a link to the policies on the front page of the site. The policies are listed under "forms".
- My observation is that we've had more on-hand meetings and management is more forthcoming with this director.
- The lab does put a lot of info out to Fermilab Today. It's read regularly. New experiments, new findings, functions, power outages, etc.
- At our lab director level it's good, and lower levels not as much.
- Don't always get the info we need to do our jobs. I have found out things through Fermilab Today instead of my managers. There's a lack of communication. Passwords get changed and procedures get changed, and I have to go ask the questions.
- I've had two people walk in on a Monday morning and say, "I work for you now." No one told me.

- This is endemic in a group of scientific professionals, generally speaking they are bad communicators.
- The training is there.
- This group needs to over communicate just for us to get normal level of communication. They shout at each other; they don't even speak in normal levels.

### **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

*Given everything that we've discussed, What would it take to make Fermilab a leader in diversity and a world-class environment? What would that look like for you?*

- More financial stability.
- People were shocked last year that our lab director was taken by surprise; he should not have been surprised.
- People would be interested in hearing about what's going on with Fermilab in Congress. There are two schools of thought financially: do you tell people ahead of time so they can find other employment, or after the holidays? I'd rather have a heads up.
- Ideal situation would be a balance, and bring the people skills up. The policies are here.
- We wouldn't be willing to give up the excellence in science to bring up the people skills.
- But most people here do care about excelling in science and want that.
- The team spirit is gone. Shouldn't be them vs. us. We should all want Fermilab to succeed together. This place would be nothing without the science. We all make it work. Can't do the science without the support staff.
- The normal person wouldn't choose to go right to the director with their issues, but the scientists do go to him.
- It should just be the same procedure for everyone.

*How would you like the director's ear?*

- I don't think Pier would care that I felt physicists were favored over others.
- You'd have to be careful about the session and structure of the discussions with Pier.
- Pier is more open and provides more communication but any organization has to work on the management. Has to start with managers. He doesn't have time to meet with the frontline people but he should be sitting down with managers.

*What cultural aspects would you like to see throughout the lab? Are things going well in some places or departments?*

- I can't think of any group that I would hold up as a stellar department.
- I've been in three departments, and the particle physics, director's office, and HR have been the best.

*What would you like it to be?*

- Better sense of direction.
- Training and funding.
- Required to have continued education or training each year. Must keep learning. We need more cross-organizational groups to address specific problems, then the group disbands. That helps people feel that they're solving a problem. Makes you feel like your input is important.
- Couple of specifics: management training for all supervisors needed, some kind of evaluation of the methods that we have to recognize non-scientific employees, need merit and employee performance awards. Need to focus on non-scientific employees, too. Their raises and awards are much higher than ours. Same people get them over and over again. Not enough ways to monetarily award non-scientific staff.
- Supervisors have vaguely discouraged us from using the "outstanding" rating in performance reviews. They know they don't have enough money to give the appropriate increase. Several of us are asked to change people's reviews so raises aren't given. It's demoralizing. One Russian employee said, "I thought I left this behind me."

- I write into my reviews that they were excellent, but that due to budget constraints I was unable to give a monetary raise.
- Should change percentage of increases instead of change the rating on the review.
- Some groups are getting pressure to change reviews, and some aren't.
- Now we can give non-performers zero raises, which we couldn't do before. No minimum raise.
- Used to love coming in everyday but it gradually changed over the years. Budget decreased, employees decreased, pressures have increased over the last several years. This is a good place to work, but we need to bring it back to what it was. There are still loyal people here.
- I've only been here for three years and I still love to come in everyday. I don't have a lot of work with scientists. I hear people saying these things.
- We can't afford to shovel snow anymore. We have to walk down the middle of the road because the sidewalks don't get plowed. Stuff like that is demoralizing.
- Many of us have been here over 10 years.
- We used to have a chef in the cafeteria and benefits like that. People get disappointed. We don't have a Christmas tree anymore, etc.
- Times really have changed in the country, though, not just the lab. We live with the rest of the world.

## Group D

### Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Seven individuals, all of whom were female, attended this discussion.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

## **The Fermilab Work Environment**

*The first discussion I want to have is a general one regarding the work environment at Fermilab.*

*Without giving it much thought, I want you to write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Exciting
  - Challenging
  - Varied
  - Used to be fun, too serious now
  - Stressful, heavier workload
  - Enjoyable
  - Was interesting, but now it's just busy
  - Feel like a drone now
- 
- The workload is going up, and the staffing is going down. I can't ask for help, but I can't keep up. Things have to be perfect the first time, and on time.
- 
- Things are done at the last minute and we try to keep up. Not as fun as it used to be. You don't have time to actually think about things, I just process things as quickly as I can. It's not unusual in busy periods to be months behind.
- 
- It's getting very busy and the lab has fewer employees. Enjoy my work, and I worry about how things would get done when I'm out so I don't take time off.

*What's the impact of this work pace on your experience?*

- You can never get close to getting caught up.
- Rat on a treadmill. More of the same, deadlines have to be met.

- As far as people giving me things at the last minute, it gets piled on me at the end of the day.

*Are people understanding of your workload?*

- They want you to get it done regardless. Everyone's priority is the most important one. If I do something late, I have to fill out additional forms saying why it was late. We're just short people. My boss' priorities are not the priorities of the scientists. They want their things now. They don't understand process.
- They don't care about policies or procedures, they just care about science.
- So much more paperwork and processes now, and it's hard to get things done.
- I have one guy who was absolutely astounded, he went to the managers meeting for the first time and they talked about travel regulations, and he came back and was so nice to me. He emailed everyone saying that they shouldn't get mad at me and that it was the rules from above my head. I've had people shout at me trying to get things faster. Only one guy understands it.
- Managers don't have management training.
- They don't want to know how.
- Managers are required to go through training, but there is no feedback to them about how they're doing afterward.
- Employee feedback needs to get back to the managers.

*How does this manifest itself?*

- They have unrealistic goals, and try to keep you isolated from other people to get things done.
- Can't get people to sign off on things. Answers have to be given. I need input; I can't let things ride.
- There're no repercussions for them not doing what needs to be done.



- Sometimes it takes all day to get certain paperwork done, and they want it now.
- Physicists are put into a management positions, and they are just a different breed. They don't always make good managers. A couple of them are fine, but majority are not. They are thinkers. Some aren't "people" people. They go into management because they have nowhere else to go. People just take turns being manager.
- Their excuses are that people don't understand what physicists do, so they need a physicist manager. I can understand that they can't have an accountant as a manager, but they just aren't good managers.

### **Fermilab Hierarchy**

*One issue described in the APS report is that of the hierarchy of prestige and importance of different jobs at Fermilab, which recognized that research physicists were generally perceived at being at the top of the peak. Some employees suggested that this has led to an environment of elitism and arrogance in the workplace. What are your thoughts about that?*

- Arrogant.
- Elitists.
- The report hit the nail on the head.
- When I first started here, they laid off the workers, not the physicists. They say that if the physicists weren't here, we wouldn't be here, but it goes both ways. They know they're important, and they aren't accountable to anyone. Half of them aren't even here. They run over to Paris and Italy and combine business trips with personal.
- I've never seen a travel request denied yet. Each leg of the trip is another set of paper. I've heard guys talk about all getting together to go to lunch. I've been here three years and no one's ever said hello. I'm invisible. Just to be ignored like that. Two guys yelled at me and never had to apologize. I didn't report it to the 15<sup>th</sup> floor because I knew it wouldn't do any good.

*Where can you go to ask for help? Do you?*

- I don't. The few times that I did, no one helped me. I've gone to the AP, EEO, HR. I've gotten nowhere fast. I have been written up for taking time off for important personal matters, like family deaths and they told me not to take it personally. They are not understanding if you have to care for a sick family member. I take vacation and unpaid time off, I'm not abusing anyone. Sometimes I take work home, but they want you in the office. I

have sometimes wondered if I will be able to keep my job, but it is a stable job for me here at the lab, so I stay. I know what it is like to be laid off, there are so many problems this year at so many companies.

- I understand this issue about taking time off. My current bosses are great. But in an earlier group, my boss was not at all understanding. If I had to take a sick day, I felt it was held against me, even though I had plenty of sick leave.
- However, the senior staff is allowed to do whatever they want. Take half days, work from home.

*Is this reflective of the managers or Fermilab?*

- A lot of it is who you work for, but a lot has to do with the environment and how managers deal with the employees.
- I was told that Fermilab valued family, and that's why we had the trails, daycare, gym, etc. That's great, but once I had a sick child in the hospital, and I had to wait for all of my forms to be completed and signed before I could go to the hospital. A lot of people have family situations come up, and if you're not a scientist, it is hard to get access to this flexibility. If you are a scientist, no one keeps track of you, you can stay home for months.
- There is a lot of "working" from home going on. Some of them really do, but many of them do not.
- That is not true in my group. Our group expects that if you're on salary, you're expected to work the hours.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

*Okay let's move into our more specific conversation about diversity. Let's talk about your general impressions regarding how Fermilab handles diversity today.*

- The divide is between how monthly employees are treated vs. staff. It's a status issue, not a race or gender issue.
- Fermilab community is so diverse to start with, I don't think there's any gender issues.
- I see that they're trying to get more female physicists.
- It's depressing to not be able to celebrate any holidays.

- That's what I mean that it not being fun anymore. Someone complained to the 15<sup>th</sup> floor about us putting up decorations for different holidays. I don't put up anything anymore because it's too controversial now. I don't say Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays anymore.
- They don't have the tree up at Wilson Hall that the kids used to decorate.
- They've taken the "people" out of Fermilab. You don't see kids around anymore.
- People are afraid to talk in the hall now for fear of being perceived as not doing work, or making too much noise. Physicists have yelled at us for things like that. Fan is too loud, music is too loud, etc. Very irritating. They can do whatever they want.
- The main issue is physicists vs. everyone else.
- I ran into a problem with my job classification not being done for two years, while men were moved around and it was getting done. Happened to another woman, too. It's a gender thing.

*Do you regard Fermilab as a respectful workplace? Why or why not.*

- Depends on who you work for.
- I'd say it was a problem with individuals.
- I just see a lot of indifference. It's not open disrespect, but I'm not given the chance to even reply or be heard.
- There was an admin who is quite pregnant and there was a physicist in her personal space and someone else had to say something to him. People don't hold the door open for you. People just don't care.
- I work in an individual section, but I feel respected.
- I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.
- I don't see the scientists watching what they say. Jokes, etc. I have to be careful and watch what I say. I'm a second-class citizen in comparison.

- If we complained, the physicist's word is taken as gospel.

*Do you have somewhere to go to talk about this?*

- No, nothing's going to happen except to you because you've complained. (There was general agreement with this statement.)
- No one reports things and we're told not to talk to the 15<sup>th</sup> floor, keep your voice down, etc.
- We vent to each other and to family.
- They should be able to come back to you and tell you what the resolution is. You don't get that feedback if you report something.
- A few weeks ago, someone made a racial/gender slur, and reported it, and didn't hear anything back. Went to the department head, and they said that they would just see if he did it again, and that they couldn't let that person go anyway because of the short staff.
- I know someone was let go recently because of a racial slur.
- Guess it depends on whose ears it falls on.

## **Women and Minority Advancements**

*Another issue described in the APS report is one in which woman and minority advancements are perceived as preference picks and not a result of individual qualifications. What are your thoughts on this?*

- I have a friend in another division, and a different division head told her that she was actually at the bottom of the pay scale, and that she should demand more money. Her actual supervisor said she had no idea, and then she was given an adjustment. How many times does that happen?
- How would you know? Unless someone tells you. You can't get an answer from the lab.
- I couldn't get an answer about what the average income is for the admin employees. Last year my raise didn't even cover my insurance. I wanted to know if that was average. I was told that noone got a raise, and then I heard from someone else that they got four times what I got. I went right to the 15<sup>th</sup> floor and they said that they did not have the information.

- Everybody in our group was complaining about their increases this year. In this environment we're lucky to get anything. But it's upsetting to know that the new hires will make more than those being promoted from within.
- My husband said, "Let's just accept the increase and be happy you have a job." But this is two years in a row that I've felt this way. I'm the sole supporter of the family, so I can't go out on a limb and risk getting fired.
- Interesting how they published the salaries of the admin staff, but not the scientists. It isn't even a pay scale you can see.
- They probably think that the admins typically don't have a degree, let alone multiple degrees, and the scientists are all doctorates, and you can't compare the two.
- Working where I do, I know it's really stressful for the managers. They get a pot of money and they have to distribute it accordingly. The general population just doesn't know how these funds are distributed. The perception is that they're keeping the good stuff for themselves, and I'm sure that's not true.

### **Communication and Transparency**

*One area of concern expressed in the APS report is that employees do not understand programs and options available to them, have you encountered this? Is lack of communication or transparency ever an issue?*

- I think in some ways we can see that a piece of the puzzle is missing. We're not asking specific questions, but we just know something is missing from the story. We have a manager, but we're assigned to a different departments. My department manager doesn't even get a say in what kind of review I get.
- We get the big picture and our individual details.
- A lot of employees think it's a really unfair review system. Employees aren't given a lot of communication about the review process. You lose employee morale.
- Or you're told that the department has to average out the reviews, and you know only certain people can be exceptionally rated. Everything is geared to averaging, you can't have two exceptional people. If you are highly paid, you get held back so everyone else can catch up, your performance really doesn't play into it.

- They also got rid of the merit system. This causes low morale. And if you are at the top of your pay scale, you are already at the maximum, there is nowhere to go.
- I've lost count of all the little things I do that are over and above my job, and I don't get any recognition for it. Not even a pat on the back or a letter in my file.
- Someone from our department got a good job outside and the day she was leaving she was offered more money to stay. She was really mad, she had not gotten a merit raise in seven years and now suddenly there is money available?
- When they announced the layoffs, it seemed that the scientists were traveling more than ever. We were told that it's just how they do business.
- Why not cut down on foreign travel and do video conferences instead? Cutting down on foreign travel would make a huge difference on the lab's budget.
- They go on vacation at the same time, and they bring their families. These trips can be \$7,000 for one plane ticket. The scientists just want to travel to a certain destination, so they see that a conference is being held there, and they go. They don't even write a paper. Maybe they do a poster or something.
- And I've been questioned about the exact times I take my lunch or breaks.

### **Work/life Balance**

*Would you say that Fermilab does a good job of providing flexibility and care in supporting its employees?*

- Yes, depends on who you work for.
- People stroll in from 8 to 9:30AM, really all times of the day, and some stay late, but who knows?
- I can set my working hours within reason but then I have to stick to that exactly and without any exceptions. Support staff do not have flexibility. If a kid gets sick or if I have a flat tire, I have to take leave without pay.
- It depends on your manager. I'm fortunate to work for a manager who doesn't work like that. I can call and say I have a problem and that is fine. I make up the time.

- It's up to supervisor's discretion.
- If I needed to work 40 hours and I needed to make sure everything on my list, that's fine, and they are fine with me staying late to finish my tasks, but if I need to be 15 minutes late because something happens, then I am in trouble. I have to take the time off without pay.
- It's in the policy that we don't make up time, though. If I need to be late then I take vacation. There is no make up.
- I want to make up the time because I need the money. I'd work overtime if I could. I personally think it's handled on an individual basis.
- They don't want you to come in if you are sick, but you get written up if you use too many sick days. One time, I was out with pneumonia, and I came back before I was even fully well and I was still written up for having excessive time off.
- If you take two sick days in one quarter, you get talked to, if you take three you get written up.
- We get talked to, and talked about, even if we take a day off for a headache.
- I started new medications for illnesses and had to go back for adjustments and I was getting written up for it, even though I was just following my doctor's directions.
- They give you the time, but then you're not allowed to use it. Then you get written up if you do use it when you are really sick. It's offensive.
- I haven't had this experience.
- I had pneumonia and was out for one week. I was expected to be back the following week with a Doctor's note.
- There are some people here who don't carry their weight, and they got to stay when the furlough/layoffs were cancelled. It's a huge problem here. Others have to work more because some people don't work enough.
- Higher management is notorious for not carrying their weight.

- I didn't realize that we even had flextime.
- Flextime is not fairly implemented. Not an option in many departments.
- I can see how it wouldn't work for admin people.

## **Mentoring**

*Employees often identify access to a mentor as an important part of career growth. Thoughts on mentoring programs?*

- We don't have anything for admin mentoring, just scientists. I'd like to have that.
- Yes, that's something we'd use.
- It would be great for those just starting out.
- It would be tough to be a mentor with our work requirements, but it would be nice.
- We need more backup training for positions. There is no attempt to train people before they leave the lab. The new person is just hit or miss. Very common.
- No universal system or training.
- I update the manual I was given in the beginning.
- I keep a daily log.
- I created a binder with all of my procedures.
- I have a color-coded task list for days and weeks.

## **Access to training and other development opportunities**

*Are there appropriate and sufficient opportunities? Is access to these opportunities fair?*

- I've been told that there are no funds for admin training.



- I know people who are told they're required to take some training, but managers won't always pay for the courses. Scientists go to conferences overseas, but we can't take \$40 required training.
- I've never been able to take anything that isn't absolutely required.
- I wish that I could take software training classes. I'm allowed to go outside of the lab to take them, but it's more expensive. I can't get the ones inside the lab approved.
- For \$95 you can take an online course. Maybe that's a possibility?

### **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

*This is our chance to talk about what a positive and empowering workplace would be like.*

- All of the DOE paperwork and tracking has been difficult. It takes so many people to process all this paperwork, and you wonder why such simple things are so difficult.
- I think our IT team is either not good, or not trained well, but so many systems should be combined and aren't. The paperwork is all manually generated.
- I'd like to see more processes in writing. If we got together as a group once a month, it would help, but they don't want us to get together. They want you to stay isolated. And if you're talking, you're not working.
- I'd love to see an admin lunch once a month for networking. I've done this at a past job, and it was good for exchanging ideas and questions.
- Once a quarter I'll get the latest updates about policies, forms, etc. from my supervisor, but that's just her talking to us.
- If we have a problem, I can't go to someone else on my team to work together on a problem. I have to only go through my supervisor, and she doles out who can help whom. We don't have anyone in the group who is a go-to person for certain subjects.
- I don't like how jobs are put up for bid. They aren't posted regularly and doesn't create enough fair competition. Sometimes you apply and you never hear back.
- There was one person who was even flown in for an interview and they were never contacted one way or another. I think that's appalling.

- Fermilab culture is that you never hear another word. You're supposed to treat people with dignity, and they don't even respond to you.
- It takes months and sometimes a year to fill some positions. It's excessive and ridiculous.

## Group E

### Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group

The following is a summary of a one-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

This discussion was attended by seven individuals, including five women and at least three members of a minority group.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### The Fermilab Work Environment

*Without giving it much thought, write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Interesting
- Challenging
- Diverse and understanding
- Interesting
- Challenging, stressful, sometimes routine
- Love Fermilab
- Great coworkers
- Sometimes stressful, love coming to work
- Can be frustrating, rewarding
- No complaints about Fermilab
- Wonderful place
- Good environment
- Daycare isn't included in the general life of Fermilab, like parties. Often feel disconnected.

### Fermilab Approach to Diversity

*Let's talk about your general impressions regarding how Fermilab handles diversity today. Is it handled well or poorly? What are your thoughts?*

- Yes, it is handled well. I'm in the union, and I was chosen as the steward and have been part of negotiations. There were some misunderstandings but we worked through them. I don't feel any type of discrimination. I have heard of reverse discrimination here.
- (Group agreed that it was handled well. No additional specific comments.)

### **Fermilab Hierarchy**

*One issue described in the APS report is that of the hierarchy of prestige and importance of different jobs at Fermilab, which recognized that research physicists were generally perceived as being at the top of the ladder. What are your thoughts and experiences?*

- No, not me. We deal directly with them and I haven't seen anyone who acts that way. You usually don't even know that they are scientists by the way they dress. They treat us as equal or better. I don't see any elitism.
- I think the physicists think we just cut grass or something, but we do so much. Really we only interact during the budget process.
- I've had a couple of times when the person I was talking to called me names or yelled at me on the phone, and I had to have my boss take care of it.
- I don't know if it's just the physicists. I think a lot of people at the lab look down on us in our department.

*Do you regard Fermilab as a respectful workplace? Why or why not.*

- I feel like I'm treated with respect.
- Not a major issue. (Group agreed.)

### **Women and Minority Advancements**

*Another issue described in the APS report is one in which woman and minority advancements are perceived as preference picks and not a result of individual qualifications. What are your thoughts on this?*

- There is nowhere for us to be promoted to in my particular department.
- No issues. (Group agreed.)

### **Communication and Transparency**

*One area of concern expressed in the APS report is that employees do not understand programs and options available to them, have you encountered this? Is lack of communication or transparency ever an issue?*

- No problems (Group agreed.)
- If anything, I get more information than I need.

### **Work/life Balance**

*How many of you would say that Fermilab does a good job of providing flexibility and care in supporting its employees? How many would say that Fermilab is fair in providing access to its various work/life balance opportunities for employees?*

- Sometimes it is just the nature of the job. Sometimes in the shop, people have different roles and they can only do their part of the project for a couple of hours, while others work for many hours. That's not discrimination; it's just the nature of the positions.
- No issues with flextime, maternity leave, etc. (Group agreed.)

### **Access to training and other development opportunities**

*Are there appropriate and sufficient opportunities? Is access to these opportunities fair?*

- I've taken college classes that the lab has paid for.
- Me, too. No problem.
- We have training available if we want it.

### **Mentoring**

*Employees often identify access to a mentor as an important part of career growth.*

- We help each other out in our department.

- Easy to find information about policies (Group agreed.)
- In our department they encourage the buddy system, but because we are unionized we don't have any special programs.

### **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

*This is our chance to talk about what a positive and empowering workplace would be like.*

- I have observed that people are hired as one position and then they retire 30 years later as the same position. There's room to grow within your position, but there are only a certain number of job titles available. I've brought it up before. The answer was you either stay in the position, or you lose the job. People need something to aspire to.
- There's just nowhere to move to in our department.
- It was discouraging when the lab did away with the merit raises. If there's no promotion, then maybe we need another incentive.

*What are your thoughts on the current evaluation system?*

- What I hear from a lot of people is that they feel it doesn't do any good because the lab only gets a certain pot of money. Little incentive when there are only a limited number of positions.
- The evaluation system just doesn't work for our department. We evaluate on a different set of criteria and we amend the process accordingly, but it still doesn't cover what we do. We've talked about creating our own internal system.
- Excellent isn't an option for reviews, and that's a problem.
- I've heard a boss say that if you give an outstanding it means you walk on water. Everyone expects a commendable even when they deserve an excellent.
- The money has to be spread out. If one is excellent, than one has to be average. It's not fair. What would be the point of keeping an employee if they were not excellent?
- I'm told how to write reviews, and who I can give excellent reviews to.
- They say that there will be bonuses or something available but there aren't.

- The reviews are designed to make everyone average. It's just not fair.
- If someone deserves a raise they should get it. The person here 30 years shouldn't have the same raise as the person here for a few years.
- We're still being asked to meet certain goals and are expecting much less of a raise. It's just disheartening.
- One area of the lab, because of the furlough, came in and just did nothing. They figured they shouldn't bother to work if they wouldn't have a job.
- We worked harder during the furloughs.
- I heard that salaried employees get better benefits than the hourly employees. When it comes to benefits it makes a difference. Why are they considered better? I've heard people complain about it.
- Our supervisor is salaried and I wouldn't take that job because she puts in ten times more hours than I do as an hourly position. I get paid for the hours I work.

*How about the performance of managers?*

- I have seen bad managers over the years. One was like an overgrown child. Very immature in the way he handled employees. He retired recently after giving people a hard time for many years.
- For a long time I was ready to advance and educate myself and I did, but sometimes I couldn't reach my employment goals here. I was going to night school to better myself, and I applied three different times for my current position, and was told that I wouldn't get the job because it was going to someone's husband. I said, "If I don't get an opportunity to move up here who's going to help me." Then a few years later I tried again. I was given the job, but they took \$2 an hour away. I cried about it. I have a family to support and a mortgage to pay. I was well-reviewed for all of the years I was here, but they put me on probation. I took the job because I had a family to support. My management now tells me they will help me if I go and learn. They took me off probation so I could make a little more money. Fermilab is a great environment, but it was hard for me. I have a great teacher. It was a struggle for 20 years.
- This is why the union came into existence here, to protect us from things like that.

- I've heard that family members are not getting hired just because they are related to employees.
- That's not fair. I work here, my husband and daughter work here, but we don't work together at all. We're all completely separate.
- In our group we have a young man who is deaf and mute and they didn't want to give him a chance. He got the job and he's excellent at it, but some bosses just put him down from the get go. Some people just assumed that he couldn't do it. If it was your son or daughter would you want them not given an opportunity?

## Group F

### Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Ten individuals participated, including two women and at least two members of a minority group.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### The Fermilab Work Environment

*Without giving it much thought, write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Difficult or stressful. Challenging in an exciting technical way. Fun.
- Challenging: changes year-to-year, interesting.
- Stressful, challenging, fun. New things.
- Challenging due to lack of staffing, but amazing, fun, and relaxed.
- Challenging, stressful this past year, interesting.
- Pleasant, really like working here, different people all the time.
- Relaxing, challenging for those looking for challenges and opportunities.
- Rewarding, opportunity, encouraging, diverse projects.
- Interesting, challenging, sometimes stressful.
- Motivated, professional. Challenging and stressful, but some people thrive on that. Diverse, great place to work.

- Like sushi: not for everyone.

*The APS report indicated that there can be a clear pecking order with physicists at that top and everyone else below. The report indicates that this can result in “arrogance” or “elitism” from physicists. Have you experienced this?*

- For example, I try to hang out at the Director’s Coffee Break to talk to different people. Some residents of the lab, some visitors or physicists will look down on me for doing “just” computer support. Some brutal interactions occur there.
- I would absolutely say it’s true, but definitely not every individual. Many are approachable, but it does happen.
- In the Technical Division, it would make sense to have an engineer in charge, but it will never happen.
- There are two classes of people at the lab: scientists and their groupies, which are about 400 people, and then everyone else. All of our efforts focus on the 400 people. Some people are put off by it and some people are ok with it. It is a continual bit of tension between the two groups. I base that on the parade of people that come through my office. I do a lot of organizational things and I get a lot of input. I always have an open door, and people feel free to unload.

*Does everyone agree that this exists?*

- Yes, there is an atmosphere of elitism and arrogance.
- What happens is an undercurrent of “we vs. they” when issues have to be resolved. It takes much longer to come to a resolution or game plan because of that. Too much “we vs. they” interferes with how fast things can be done and how efficiently. Majority of problems are with newer scientists; they are not (nor should they be) experts in every area. Don’t come to my office and assume you know everything. Sometimes you have to be assertive and aggressive with them. One physicist had to be reassured by another supervisor that I knew what I was doing.
- Sometimes they come to you with requests and you have to tell them strongly that you know what you’re doing. After a relationship is established, it runs smoother. I wouldn’t use the term arrogance at all.
- Although I jumped on the idea of arrogance, I’ve been here over 30 years and I love it. Some people left because they just couldn’t tolerate it, and saw they weren’t going to go very far, but in many



other areas people enjoy solving the problems and aren't worried about hierarchy. Some personalities just fit in better.

- It's a complicated thing because this is the top physics lab in the world and has to attract the best people. Those people generally don't have great people skills. Most will adjust and will acquire skills over time. Some will never get it, but they shouldn't be in charge of major groups of people.

*In technical organizations, it is common for people move up based on their technical skill and then are asked to show some level of personnel skill. Is that common here?*

- That's a default practice at Fermilab.
- If you're a research physicist and your project is going to be built at Fermilab, who is put in charge? It's the physicist who has never cut a piece of metal, who has no skills in scheduling or budget or staffing, but he's in charge. We promote these people without skills. They go out and pick their own teams and it's the epitome of the "good old boy" network.

*What are the ramifications of that kind of hierarchy?*

- Putting a physicist in charge of a layoff? How do you think that worked out? For example, if we need to lose 10-12% of the physicists, that means that administration also has to lose that much without any rational thought to the fact that administration is already lacking in staff.

*You mentioned earlier that people often come to you to "unload." What are people unloading about?*

- People are basically saying, "This was the day that the last straw was placed on my back and I need to talk about it." I try to help by listening or changing things if I can. It's part of what my job has evolved into. It's an informal thing, and it tends to be all engineers or administrative people.

*Are there any other avenues employees can pursue?*

- People need to be able to trust and know that your vents will stay there. This is not happening now.

*Do you know who to go to for help?*

- They are just not there, period. As a minority, there is no one to talk to, and the higher up you are, the fewer people there are to talk to. You can only talk up or laterally in position, and a lot of those people don't have people skills.
- We had an experience with one of the guys, and he became the department head and everyone was afraid because of past discussions had with him. People treated him like he was a spy.

*Where does that come from - that suggestion that you can't talk to higher ups?*

- It's human nature. In all workplaces, when someone talks to a higher up, people naturally think the negative way instead of the positive way. You just need to build relationships over time.
- Human nature. Happens in other workplaces, too.
- Agreed. It happened at my last place of business as well.
- To some extent I'm hesitant, because I've only been here three years and I'm not in the scientific community. I can identify, but haven't personally encountered this. My own perception of "we vs. they" is central administration vs. rest of the community. We deal with whatever is left over. We're feeling like we don't always have an outlet. You just deal with it. Toe the line, and just keep doing it. That increases challenges.
- There is a "we vs. they" that is human nature. Similar groups come together, and if you're not similar it could be a little difficult to make bonds.
- Assumptions are made about your education, etc. that are not necessarily correct.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

*Do traditional diversity issues play a role here at Fermilab? Is advancement available, etc.?*

- (An African-American) Yes, I think so. For example, I work with four white guys, and if I walk up to a group of guys with my white coworkers, it's assumed that my coworker is the manager. And I've just let that play out numerous times.

*What impact does that have on you?*

- Has to just roll off my back, it's how it is. It's part of working and getting into the mainstream.
- Personal relationships play a role in who is trusted and who is not, which relates back to who you get along with: someone similar to you. For the past couple of years, people who don't know me became my supervisors, and it appeared that those people were favored. I'm sure that that would hinder a minority or woman more.

- I understand the culture and people because I've been here a long time, but if three of us are in a meeting, a lot of times my advice is just discounted for someone else's. Someone who is more similar to our supervisor even though their advice doesn't work. I've come to the realization that my advice is free, and I will always present it to you, but I don't clean up after their problems. That can be very irritating.
- You have subject matter experts in these fields, and their advice is ignored and then they're back in your office asking for help to clean it up. Easiest way to say it is that the advice from some of the administrative professionals in the lab is just not valued.
- Our upper management doesn't evaluate what's been done in the past.

*Does this lead to an unhealthy culture?*

- I wouldn't call it unhealthy, but there are unhealthy aspects to it. There are also lots of things that work well.

*What works well in the culture? How could that be strengthened? What are your thoughts on which of these issues are cultural and which are more structure?*

- Structure varies according to department.
- There are different cultures in different departments.
- Culture differs by manager and director. I agree that it isn't unhealthy. By comparison, it's not much different than other places. In fact, it is healthier than other places.
- Racism, gender bias, etc is societal and not unique to Fermilab.

*Nothing that Fermilab is doing specifically perpetuates these experiences?*

- The way I look at it is that this is a place that is run for and by physicists, and there are just things that don't make it to their radar screens.
- I also think the lab is not securing diversity, women, childcare, etc. Policies are not implemented throughout the entire lab. Some departments embrace it and some don't. It's driven by the director of the area. Internally, that creates some unrest when others are experiencing benefits that you think you should have.

*Does Fermilab have good programs to provide opportunities to minorities?*

- If you have your paperwork in place you can do just about anything. The right degrees, right education.

*Is it harder for a well-qualified black person to get ahead here?*

- Yes, I think so.
- I think so. And when you are female and minority it is a double whammy.
- In most cases, if you're a focused person you'll get what you want or you'll move on.
- You have to be downright aggressive and assertive, and have a thick hide to get ahead.
- Physicists are trained to question everything and are very literal. They don't play nice in the sandbox.

*Is there a lack of support and programs to help employees advance?*

- No, there are no programs, and as far as career is concerned you have to drive that yourself. Tuition and books are paid. We could use more general training classes for all employees. There are always funding issues. My problems haven't been with physicists, but with upper management. There are issues with unequal pay, and assumptions made about educational status and learning abilities.

*The APS report noted that some people perceive that some get ahead because of race or gender, and some perceived that people were held back because of race or gender? Have you seen that play out?*

- In order to gain advancement here as an engineer, you are somewhat at the mercy of the opinion of the physicist or department head. Their opinion depends on a working relationship with you. What I've seen with the woman who work for me is that the physicist chooses someone who is similar instead of different.
- One female straight A student interviewed for over 30 jobs here and didn't get one offer. She had been here already for over 15 years and didn't get the job offers.
- Haven't noticed any of the advancement stuff, but I have noticed that there are certain combinations of people who don't work well with the four women in my department. We try to avoid that combination of people. Two of the females have problems, more problems than the others. They're younger and they have problems making decisions.

- Haven't really seen it in my areas at this point.
- I cannot say that I can see this type of discrimination.
- We wouldn't get many minority applicants.
- I agree that Fermilab is great for tuition, but when it comes to promotion through ranks, it becomes difficult because promotions have to be approved by 15<sup>th</sup> floor. How much do they know about these people? Maybe it doesn't have an impact on diversity, but it has impact on the way we promote people.
- Funding stops promotions for almost everybody, though.
- Although the timing is suspicious, the real culprit is DOE and Chicago people invading the 15<sup>th</sup> floor. They applied the government standards to promotions instead of Fermilab standards. Felt it was a negative impact, and it flows throughout the laboratory.

*Has that made it less fair and open?*

- Made it more fair and open because we have to all do it the same way now. It's caused issues, though. Intended to be for the good but don't always get a great outcome. Part of the problem was communications when it was explained. It's difficult for people to come to grips with it.
- Upper management didn't filter the information down to lower management. It was left up to division section heads.

*Do you regard Fermilab as a respectful workplace? Why or why not.*

- A respectful style of communication is greatly encouraged here.
- Agree that respect is very much stressed here. Any disrespect is unintentional. A lack of personal skills is very apparent, but never corrected, and has resulted in good people being hurt or made to feel uncomfortable.
- Easier to ignore it. Supervisors don't know how to deal with it.

- “Just have to deal with so and so. That’s how he is.”
- Some employees take it very personally and it affects their work. Happens all the time, and it isn’t being visibly addressed.
- Over the years there have been people legendary for their tempers, and in the heat of the moment will really mistreat an employee. It was not corrected. Employees have come to me upset looking for an outlet, and for reassurance that this wouldn’t impact their careers.
- There are supervisors who belittle employees, maybe unintentionally.
- Generally, very respectful.

*So it’s not a cultural thing, but individuals do act that way?*

- There is a different way of thinking between the scientific community and the rest of lab. It can be a difficult environment.
- Discussing political opinions can cause a disrespectful environment at Fermilab. If you don’t agree with the majority, you don’t discuss it. But maybe we shouldn’t be discussing politics at work. There have been cases where people have been made to feel uncomfortable because of their political leanings.
- Shouldn’t be talking politics at work anyway.
- Politics is interesting at the lab because it affects things around here. You need a thick hide to discuss politics at the lab.

### **Communication and Transparency**

*Does management communicate effectively and transparently so that you have the information you need to do your job well and understand important work-related issues?*

- We’re not transparent, but the intent is to be as transparent as possible and it’s getting better. Communication flow is a challenge. Most people get their news from Fermilab Today instead of from their supervisor, which should be the place to get important news. Some things should always be communicated by supervisors.

- We have classes advertised on how to get better with communication and issues, but people who need it don't know they need it.
- Just went through reclassification of job titles and that was a joint thing between the 15<sup>th</sup> floor and select people, and people didn't really know what happened until it was over. Could've been handled a lot better.
- Information is out there for me to go get, but sometimes I don't know where to look or I forget. In areas like goals and job priorities, there is a lack of communication that I attribute to a lack of certainty. There has been an attempt to improve that recently. Nature of the work can leave gaps in communication. That's a source of challenges and stresses.
- Even when you think you have a budget, you may not. Seems clear that physicists aren't the best at doing politics.

### **Access to Training and Other Development Opportunities**

*Is the right training available to employees to help advance communication and diversity? Did you have the support and training you needed to become managers?*

- There is a lot of on the job training. There is formal training available, too.
- You go to your supervisor, but otherwise no, not sufficient training just for supervisors. Many people don't know what to do, and just ask the boss for general guidance.
- There is the classic way at Fermilab, but people don't seem to take advantage of the full suite of courses that are offered. It's mandatory now, but several years ago it was not. When you are promoted you must take these seven courses. Wasn't always that way and those who haven't been exposed still lack those skills. Don't know if it was grandfathered.
- Most of those courses are oriented to the legal side, but isn't exactly supervisor training. I remember training on how to interview people, and it was much more detailed, but that was it.
- Agree that sometimes they are much more extensive than we all need, but many DO need that. There's a fine line between supervisors having to go and what they are going to get out of it by force. The ones who need don't think they need it.

*Are there things that could be done better to bring supervisors more into line with the expectations of the lab?*

- I think that employees, supervisors and managers need to get a grip on reality. Certain behavior can land you in court, and the lab can decide to help you in court. If you haven't complied, the lab doesn't have to help you. An individual can be sued, not just the lab. People should pay a lot more attention.
- The official courses were helpful in knowing what not to do. I went through them last year. There is not enough mentoring, a horrible lack of it. I've only seen a few informal instances.

## **Mentoring**

*Is formal mentoring a program or opportunity? Do you seek out mentors on your own?*

- It is difficult to find people who are willing and have time. In my current position it was difficult, because I had to be transitioned out of an old job.
- We do have a mentoring program, but who is it focused on?
- Not a priority for technical people. The emphasis is on solving problems and the young engineer views it as an interruption in getting the work done. Depends on the supervisor, but in general, it has not been given a priority. Every level should understand that mentoring is a legitimate use of time.
- Mentoring is not addressed in job descriptions or reviews.
- Some people go and find mentors who have been here longer than them.
- I've been fortunate because two department heads I've had have made time to meet with me if necessary and provided guidance.

*Are there any female role models or mentors?*

- There was on the onset, but once you've been chugging along, you're expected to just do that. There is no regular contact unless there is a specific issue. Feel like you could be swinging in the breeze someday because you may not be comfortable going to someone. There may not be the resources or it may not be the priority.
- We do not have a mentoring system at the lab and it's causing a lot of problems, especially in admin. Those are single jobs without a team or a manager who can relate to what you're doing. I found a mentor in another DOE lab to discuss things with who gives me negative and positive feedback. My



upper management doesn't really understand what I'm dealing with. We go to DOE meetings and I met him there. He was open to helping me, and I talk to him 2-3 times a week.

*Have you tried to hook someone up with a mentor?*

- I've had several new engineers over the years and there is a sink or swim mentality, so I've tried to play a mentoring role in the small group because I was the one available. I tried to explain the day-to-day expectations.
- There should be a book on how to understand Fermilab culture because it is very unique.

*Is there a Fermilab culture that pervades all?*

- I think it's lab wide. The organization regards itself as a very high performing organization that emulates the management system that you see in a university - same hierarchies and problems - and happens to be connected to DOE. We've hired a team of people to keep DOE away and keep giving us money so we can keep doing science. Took me three years to figure out that what people wanted was to just keep DOE away. It's hard to figure out how this place works. Not always easy to determine your own personal path through Fermilab. Young people have to flounder.
- Used to not be that way. People were ramped up. Now they're just hiring higher up and not grooming the lower level people to be promoted.
- Seen a lot of that. Senior engineers are the only ones who know what's going on.
- There's a high-level tech here who operated as a mechanical and electrical engineer because he had been here so long. He gave them a year and half notice, and when he retired, his division head was having a heart attack! He was working 3 days a week and they needed him even more. He got fed up and left for retirement early.
- Agree about DOE stuff, need to drop everything and do reports just to make DOE happy or fulfill requirements.
- Always tried to keep DOE pushed to the side for 40 years. Senior people running the lab aren't going to change.
- I would say that as an engineer our meetings tend to be intellectually challenging and even competitive. Many people have a personal goal of proving they're the smartest person in the room. It's a competitive atmosphere regarding intellectual capacity.

- One-upmanship.
- Scientists want to come here, but you can't ignore the rest of the people at the lab. Scientists need support people to assist them in meeting their goals.

### **Work/life Balance**

*How many of you would say that Fermilab does a good job of providing flexibility and care in supporting its employees?*

- A few years ago someone in the technical division decided that part-timers were no longer welcome. This affected women mostly who were working and supporting a family at home. They were told that they had to resign or go full-time. One was my employee, and I didn't enforce it. She is still part-time. No one has ever told me that the policy has lapsed. A couple other women have resigned or have been laid off. Depended on what the supervisors wanted to do.
- Normal day-to-day issue at Fermilab is that some departments take advantage of benefits and some don't.
- My experience is that it's been completely disregarded as an option. There are those who will take advantage, but those who will not. They say there is no time to analyze it, and we're left with other departments doing it. Do you want to lose good employees because they are just trying to take care of their kids?
- People come in at all different times at Fermilab, though.
- The policy is that it is up to the supervisor to decide, but that's not necessarily the best policy.
- When you're dealing one on one with your supervisor, they can say yes or no.
- We tried every other Friday off on 15<sup>th</sup> floor but as a service department, we just weren't able to serve if someone was sick or on vacation, etc.
- It's the lack of uniformity and accommodation that seems to be the issue, especially with young families and those taking care of elderly family members.
- There are good aspects on both sides.

- Many governmental agencies work from home without security issues. Why can some, and others cannot?

*What would you say morale is overall?*

- Last year destroyed moral. We narrowly avoided layoffs.
- Employees are scared.
- It's been low for many years.

### **Future Work Environment**

*What kind of work environment would create a higher morale?*

- Common goal at the lab, and we don't have that now.
- Our physicists would like to see something built here, and that would be a common goal.
- There are inherent uncertainties due to funding.
- A year ago, there was an ILC, and now there is none. It had a future and now it is much less defined. ILC would have kept us at the forefront.

*What are practical things that could be done?*

- What can we do about it? The lab will have to downsize. Budget has to be taken care of first.
- What you have is a result of transparency. At Fermilab everyone knows what's going on and it puts everyone in a lot of stress. With all of the uncertainties, everyone is wondering what's going to be going on after March 6<sup>th</sup>. Pretty low morale. There are people at senior levels in Washington who are working for Fermilab, but we still have to have something of scientific value to do.
- Problem with the ILC was that it was a project meant to just keep us going until the next project came along.

- Lead-time on these projects are 10-12 years and that makes it difficult.
- Other countries need to invest money and they won't send us millions if their projects can just be turned off.

*Responding to this report, what are some practical things that you can see that could come out of this process?*

- Learning to value the employee.
- The idea that ALL the employees have unique skills, not just PhD physicists. Necessary to the laboratory, and should be valued at equal level.
- Resolve some difficult issues coming up and there has to be a team approach. Get clear communication and be able to work on solutions. It has to work that way. Need to analyze why things don't go the way you plan. That's a skill to build.
- Reevaluate what we offer employees. If we offer certain things to certain people, then it doesn't do any good.
- People want to move to 4-day week to reduce their commute, or are nearing retirement, but we're also a service organization. Layers of people above us would need to be convinced.
- Seems that the things you offer for employees, should be for ALL employees. For instance, if you transfer a scientist, there is a network to assist your spouse in finding a job. That's not offered to everyone, and it should be lab-wide.

*Any parting thoughts?*

- I would like to see a really good class on communication skills offered that supervisors and managers are required to attend.
- Real change happens from the top down, and Fermilab needs to learn how to lead that change.
- People have to value their employees.

- Have to look at people's actions not just the words they say.
- More people skills at the uppermost levels.
- Also feel that our employees have been very sheltered from the outside world. No basis of comparison. I've stayed because I've enjoyed it, some things could change, but I wouldn't stay if I couldn't move up and get the raises I wanted. People tend to dwell on negative and forget why they're still here.
- Fermilab is a great place to work, and the comments should not be taken as horribly negative.
- Some physicists are great to work with and some have issues working with people.

## Group G

### Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Thirteen minority individuals, including six females, attended this discussion.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### The Fermilab Work Environment

*Without giving it much thought, write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Unfulfilled when I leave, I always feel I could've accomplished more
- Not included
- Totally invisible since the budget issues started and the experiments stopped
- Stressful
- Underutilized
- Overworked, lack of people
- Accomplished when I can complete a task
- Defeated

- Ambitious, but after the budget issues depressed and bored
  - Challenging
  - Interesting
  - Hard to balance
  - Some days accomplished, some days slow
- 
- We are pulled in too many directions, especially since the ILC was proposed. We find ourselves involved with too many projects and not enough people. There are constantly shifting priorities and lack of direction and always unfinished work.
- 
- I wish I had never come to Fermilab. Before I came here I was well known in my field, and now nothing. I'm underutilized, and I see incompetent decisions made every week.
- 
- It seems like there's a group of people here who get you involved in a project, and then once it gets going, they come in and take over.
- 
- They don't involve you in project meetings that you should be invited to. There's a weekly Monday meeting that I've never been invited to. They send people who don't know anything about the projects to meetings instead of those who are involved. I go to people and ask for input. I finally got to go to a relevant conference this past year.
- 
- My supervisor has favorites and chooses who to communicate with. You're either on the A-team, or you're not. They decide what we need to know about and what we don't.
- 
- I've experienced this, too. I'm not invited to the weekly meetings so I don't know what's going on. For those who feel underutilized, those meetings would be a great place to see where you can contribute at the lab, but people aren't getting invited. It seems to be up to me to find my place. They're not actively looking for places to use people, and there's no money and no projects. But I'm not getting the information about what they're actively pursuing.
- 
- Management is not experienced in these things and they have no idea what to look for. They don't know. I would blame management. Many people are sent to management classes, but it's not working. It's absurd. This is a broad, massive problem.
- 
- They're scientists, and not managers, and there's no training.
- 
- I patterned my work after my previous female boss, and I thought the way she handled her staff was good. But she had problems with her physicists. A number of scientists worked at home during the furloughs.

- Our department head is doing a good job.
- I agree. He makes sure we have work and a place to fit in. He gives me challenging assignments.
- I had a good manager, too. I would've never moved up to where I am without him.
- The good managers are the exception. (Group agreement.)
- It happens a lot; you have to go off and get your degree and then come back. Then you're treated with more respect.
- In my section, management is very competent and there is good communication.

### **Fermilab Hierarchy**

*One issue described in the APS report is that of the hierarchy of prestige and importance of different jobs at Fermilab, which recognized that research physicists were generally perceived at being at the top of the peak. Some employees suggested that this has led to an environment of elitism and arrogance in the workplace.*

- In my experience as a former technician, once I got my physics degree, it was great. Now when I have to work with technicians, it doesn't work. Even though I was one of them in the past. I don't know why the technicians don't work with me in the same way.
- There seems to be a first- and second-class here.
- The physicists don't include us in the project planning meetings, and we're not challenged at all.
- Many of the engineers have advanced degrees, and they're still not treated well by the physicists.
- People are hired for very specific talents that they have, and then the physicists don't use them.

- There are a few of us who are over utilized. We don't even have time to be chosen for a specific project. We just run from one to the other.

*Do you get assistance in understanding priorities?*

- I go to my supervisor and he tries to prioritize, but there just aren't hours in the day. It's overwhelming. Spread in too many directions, and it keeps you from not doing your best on any one project.
- Some engineers are support persons, and some are project specific. That makes a difference.

*Do you feel that management is trying to bridge the gap between being under and over utilized?*

- I will not sit at my desk and wait for someone to feed me crumbs of work; I go out and find my own loaf of bread.
- I feel like my manager really tries to find things for me.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

*Let's move into our more specific conversation about diversity. Let's talk about your general impressions regarding how Fermilab handles diversity today. Do you feel there is discrimination based on race or gender?*

- Hard to tell. Sometimes I feel there is, but I'm just not sure. I could see certain management getting together and they watch the news together at breaks, and I hear little racial comments, and it makes me wonder.
- When I started here I really felt the discrimination because I was a woman. Over the years it has changed and I got some recognition in the department I'm in now. But I wonder, do they forget to include me because my office is far away, or because I'm a woman?
- I've never really had a problem with the gender thing, but definitely with the scientist thing.
- In my case, I don't feel that discrimination is an issue here. There's a lot of flexibility in my group, and I don't think it's an issue. My problem is just a lack of people.
- The majority of people are very accepting and fine with everything. My overall experience is that no one really cares one way or the other.



- I find diversity a big plus here. Some people have problems with their English and others have trouble being patient and trying to decipher what that person is trying to say. Sometimes the Americanisms can be confusing to those who speak English as a second language. I enjoy the diversity.

*Is Fermilab a respectful workplace?*

- Yes.
- It's changed dramatically for the better over the years.
- One of the things I've noticed is that some Blacks and Hispanics here tend to blame their out shortcoming and inefficiencies on racism, and it's just not the case. I've noticed that.

### **Women and Minority Advancements**

*Another issue described in the APS report is one in which woman and minority advancements are perceived as preference picks and not a result of individual qualifications. Also, what are your thoughts on the review process?*

- I started as a lab technician, and there were advancement opportunities. My boss really took care of people in the group. I had promotions and merit raises. I got my degree and got a job as an engineer. When he retired, my new boss never gave me another promotion or merit raise, while other people were getting them.
- Until they had the job descriptions online, you had no clue how to advance. My former boss encouraged me and I found a mentor. Encouraged me to get a degree and was there to help me. No clear rhyme or reason on how to get promoted.
- I personally am not happy with the review process. We used to get them written and get an appropriate rating, and you'd get your raise separately. Now we get great reviews, but then your ranking is low because the supervisor was forced to make you average based on available money. We know the lab has no money, but allowing that to affect the performance ranking is bad for morale.
- The raises were already predetermined. What's the point of the review?
- There are still clearly people who don't even write their reviews. The supervisor writes them. I had a supervisor change all the numbers on my review after another supervisor created it, but I had made a copy.

- I have been forced to downgrade reviews from excellent to average.
- Does anyone even read them afterwards? What happens to them? Who's supervising my supervisor?

*If you have a challenge with your supervisor, is there a place to go?*

- I went to my department head and transferred.
- I would go straight to the division head.
- I would not feel comfortable going to the division head, and I don't want to create problems.
- I would never go to HR. I don't want to cause more problems. I always view HR as interpreting something as a male/female issue, and not just a personality conflict. For me, I'd rather just find another group and ask for a transfer, and that's what I did.
- Going to HR doesn't do any good.
- I don't know anyone who has gone to HR in 20 years.
- I know people who have gone repeatedly, and nothing happened for years. Some are discrimination things and some are safety things. HR is just out of touch.
- My experience in my group has been pleasant but I've only been here one year. Our boss does a good job.

### **Communication and Transparency**

- I get all of my information from Fermilab Today.
- The unemployment compensation information during the furlough/layoffs discussion was not adequate.
- There isn't a department-wide meeting to keep everyone updated, and there should be.
- I get all the information from the website. I think that is sufficient.

### *What about communication between groups?*

- Across divisions it's difficult to communicate. There are probably opportunities missed. There wouldn't be some people overworked and some under. There's no effort to balance things.

### **Work/life Balance**

- Doesn't affect me.
- There is access, and some employees in our group use the benefits like flextime.
- I know people whose supervisors won't let them use these benefits, and they find it frustrating and unfair.
- Sometimes your job just doesn't allow it.
- I'm actually very supported in taking care of my children during the day in the daycare here, or as issues arise.

### **Training**

- Most things I've just learned by myself. The training costs a lot of money so I don't really have access to the training that I'd like to take.
- As far as university degree programs are concerned, they really worked with me. But when I've asked for another type of training for my job, I was turned down three times.
- I've been able to take classes here, and I'm working on my PhD and they've been very flexible and helpful.
- Sometimes supervisors won't sign off on the training. Schooling was free, books were free, but I still had to pay for daycare and travel. It was difficult. If there were more teleconferenced classes, I'd pursue that.
- I've had positive experiences with onsite classes. I've never had any problem getting approved for those.
- It is all up to your supervisor.

- I've had positive experiences, too.
- I also had good experiences.

### **Mentoring**

- If I hadn't had a mentor, I wouldn't have pursued higher education. I've had other people that I did homework with, too.
- I don't think there is a formal process of designating someone as a mentor. For those who come in mid-career, it'd be very helpful to have a designated mentor to help you. There's only so much time a supervisor can spend with you.
- My informal mentor really helped guide my career.
- My supervisor told me that I could always ask people around me whom I can talk to.
- More experienced employees have helped me and talked with me. It would've been more helpful if there were someone who I could formally go to about this industry and the lab.
- I wish I could have a mentor here, especially being from a different culture. I would like assistance on the culture and history of projects here.

### **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

- Right now, we don't know what projects are coming up for us. We don't know where to go to find something else to do at the lab with my skills.
- We need to find more funds.
- Everyone is concerned about what's next.
- In the past we had a clear idea about what would happen next, and we don't have that anymore. I have no place to go and I can't see what's coming up. When all of your projects are cancelled or postponed, what do we do? Management doesn't seem to know any more than we do.

- There seems to be a disconnect between physicist groups, the projects, and the funding. At the upper levels there is confusion about what the future holds. It's very hard to have any kind of vision about your career here.
- We spend all this time putting documents and estimates together for the government, and then they pull the funding. It's a waste of time. It's different for the physicists because they can keep thinking and thinking about things. We have designs coming in before we have the people and budget to do them. We have to keep our current machines running and do the new projects, and it's just too much. People are getting pulled in too many directions before they even need to be.
- I feel like we have a lot of problems because too many things are up to the supervisor's personal discretion. Who to involve in meetings, things like that. I'd like to see better guidance and training for managers. They are scientists and they don't know how to manage.
- The supervisory training here should be looked at again.
- I learned quite a bit from the supervisory training, but there should be more practical things. I need to practice it. I've been an engineer for quite awhile.
- It takes six days to complete the training, and once you start you have to commit to going. You get so busy sometimes, it's hard to go for six days.
- Management is completely disorganized. Managers should have regular meetings, so everyone knows what's going on. At least we have Fermilab Today.
- Managers have to be competent enough, or at least try to be trained.
- There should be more about working in a scientific culture. Seminars, workshops. Here there is nothing.
- I think the lab is not wise in how it spends money. I see waste everywhere.
- I see everyone has multiple flat LCD monitors. Do we really need multiples?
- We were supposed to have meetings every week, that lasted two weeks, then once a month, then once every three months. We've just been busy and it hasn't happened.

- If we don't use the money that we get, we won't get that money again. It's hard to figure out how to spend the money. If you have money left at the end of the year, then you have to hurry up and spend it.
- Our department has a weekly meeting, and it's really helpful.

## Group H

### Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Eight individuals participated, all of which were Caucasian males.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### The Fermilab Work Environment

*Without giving it much thought, I want you to write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Redeeming
- Different
- Unstressful
- Busy
- Diverse
- Optimistic
- Overwhelming

*Tell me about why you chose these words.*

- I don't believe that the support will be there for the projects being built outside of Fermilab. They'll find a way to do it, but it won't be efficient or pleasant. We had a number of groups in the research division, and the business model was changed and most people were pulled off. What was left was moved to smaller areas. That attitude carries over today. Seems to be accepted that if the person has a specialty and it's not being used that person can just sit.
- We used to do cross-training as standard.

*How does this affect your work environment?*

- It doesn't really. I just concern myself with my tasks, and do the best I can.
- To oversimplify, there are people who are self-motivated and those who are not.
- Research has more of a problem with that; we have things to take care of here.
- My experience is that management doesn't do enough to differentiate those two types of people in the review process.
- The review process stinks. Everyone is pulled toward the middle.
- Not always true.
- Biggest problem with the system is that the higher you are in pay grade, the higher ratings you have to get to get a comparable increase. Pay grade is not a good indicator of "best."
- I was a supervisor for a group for many years and had a boss come to me and tell me that I had to give an employee an astronomical pay raise, and HR felt that the person had to be brought up to standard pay. They didn't get an increase previously because they were not a good performer.
- When I transferred to another group a year ago, I was told that I didn't make enough for the jump, and the minimum pay grade was so big that DOE wouldn't approve it. I was qualified, and ended up getting it, but it's ridiculous that the question was even raised. Had I come off the street it wouldn't have happened.
- It's a great de-motivator.
- The lab took approximately 130 employees and changed them to hourly. The lab says you're not being demoted, but it's not true. You've been staff for years and you get in a routine with fellow staff people, and all of a sudden you're stuck with an 8 hour day, and you can no longer put in the effort or time needed. Another thing is that some of the people were at the upper end of the pay grade and there were no other opportunities for increase. It's hard to get a promotion after that.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

*How does Fermilab approach diversity? How does it play out? Is it fair?*

- No evidence of people being hired or fired due to race that we've seen.
- Quite a few years ago I was told that I must hire the female applicant because she's female, and wasn't the best qualified, but nothing since then.

*What are some of the positive things?*

- The lab is very open in that you're not sitting in a single spot for 8 hours. It's easy to go straight to people who know what to do when you need help.
- The culture dictates open communication.

## **Communication and Transparency**

*What's your experience with communication and transparency at the lab? Is it transparent?*

- Not from the management perspective. Over the last several years, they're bringing these business models in and it's very discouraging. I just do my job, so it doesn't immediately affect me. If you had a problem you could go to your manager or to HR, but now if you go to the 15<sup>th</sup> floor everyone thinks you're leaving or getting fired. Everyone is very worried that they're going to be reprimanded or let go all the time.
- In the past, management would've been included in the actual work, and now they are in their offices doing budget things, and we're all working like bees behind the queen's back. The 15<sup>th</sup> floor is a segregated third party who doesn't know how we work.
- One group is trying to change the culture here. They want to change how everything is run, and it's failed before.
- The 15<sup>th</sup> floor changed 10-12 years ago and it's fair to say that that single group has really caused the quality of our jobs to go down hill.
- HR should be liaison between management and employees, and should be unbiased. You do not get help from them regarding working conditions.
- We just bury it and try to work it out amongst ourselves.
- There are some managers you can go to. It's a quiet thing. The scientists don't want to be bothered with this stuff.



- They reinforce the fact that you should follow your chain of command.

*Is there evidence that there is a culture of non-helpfulness, or is it that managers aren't trained or prepared, or some other reason?*

- Everyone is worried about getting sued now.
- You go back to the days when this place started and everyone did everything. Laws have been changed and OSHA has been forced upon us, which is not all bad, but most of us still have that can-do attitude even though it's stymied by fear of making a mistake or being punished for it. It's less team-like.

*Is there a physicist vs. non-physicist environment?*

- Just depends on the physicist. Some are easy to work with, and some aren't.
- Don't know if it's elitism.
- This is an educational culture and a degree has a lot to do with it.
- I don't feel discriminated. It's not a lab cultural thing. It is in HR, though.
- There is a difference just because they are different departments. It could also be a difference in managers.
- 
- Many of the divisions view the technical as a factory, whereas other places are a university atmosphere.
- Makes sense, though. It's the nature of the beast.
- Compared to the lab, it *is* a factory-like environment. There is a cluster of managers who come from factories and that contributes to the environment.
- We get this reputation because years ago we didn't need highly skilled or highly educated workers, and then as those unskilled positions became obsolete, we tried to move those people into other departments. Sometimes it worked out and sometimes it didn't. Some people still carry that bias.

- This past spring we had the furlough issue, and in our group it seemed that those with unique talents didn't want to cross-train others for fear of being laid off. They tried to hold on to their special talents.

*How much does the budget affect the morale and environment?*

- The furlough paralyzed the lab for a few weeks. The 6-7 month period following was filled with anxiety and was bad for morale.
- They shouldn't have let everyone wonder for so long.
- Pier is good about giving heads up, though. We appreciated that.
- HR is just one screw up after another, and it creates so much anxiety.
- They were talking about laying off 200 people, and it wouldn't have been the dead weight. It was a mix of people.
- In my last two reviews, my manager told me that he feels that higher level technicians will be let go because of the pay levels. We all say we have dead weight, and this was a perfect opportunity to get rid of it.
- When Pier mentioned that the layoffs were imminent, and they decided to give out papers to people, it was a very small group. It should've been at least 51%.
- You don't feel that the physicists are elitist, but then you hear something like there is a disproportionately large technical staff to support the physicists. They're essential, and you're not.

*What lingering effects is this having on morale?*

- Dramatic. Are we going to go through this every year? Projects are on, then they're off, etc. You have to evolve to just work the best you can, but this other deal with the budget is completely separate and it was a wake-up call. And you saw a cloud of untouchable employees.
- Individuals feel they need to retain key information and not cross-train in order to protect their jobs.

- Management is frustrated with this attitude that people are specialists in their fields. We're starting to feel the crunch on this, and they want all-around technicians again.

*Is this something that has been discussed at the lab, or is it an undercurrent?*

- It's an undercurrent. I see department heads starting to question the current policy.

*Let's talk about communication and transparency from management, down. What was the challenge with HR?*

- In one of the talks that Pier was having, someone in the audience said, "what do you do about unemployment benefits?", and HR stood up and said, "you'd have to talk to management about it." Another person stood up and said, "that's your job, and all that info should be here."
- In my experience, HR didn't know, and they could've gotten the answers in a phone call, and they didn't.
- Mind-boggling the things that go on here. They make huge mistakes and there is no accountability for it. They put out a personnel manual, and then had to take it right back because it was wrong.
- I avoid HR.
- When I was brought in for a meeting about exempt and non-exempt employees, I asked specific questions to HR and they were never answered. Not unreasonable questions. I asked how many complaints had been made specifically from staff at the lab? I was never answered.
- There's not a lot of trust between us and upper-management. They just say this is dictated by DOE and we don't know if that's true or not.
- HR is a different staff entirely. They're a consultant of some sort. EG&G. The head of HR retired and then a new person came in and changed the staff. My opinion is that it isn't a good thing.
- We can go to our managers, but they're frustrated, too. There isn't a place to go for help.
- I read the APS report and starting thinking about how we deal with minorities and women, and there are a fair amount of women who came here after graduate school. Part of being treated differently it is their own fault because they allow themselves to not do things

because of physical restraints. I don't believe that there is anything that I can do that a woman can't do.

- Individual basis, I've worked with many minorities and women, and it's never been an issue. There is mutual respect.
- If you are a minority non-producer, it's harder to lose your job.
- Went to a safety meeting similar to this one a year ago to talk about how to implement things, etc. and people made suggestions and they never were addressed.
- It wasn't perfect in the past, but it was better than it is now.
- There's been a business model change, and they're trying to apply it to the laboratory. It is my sense that the lab is years behind commercial industry in all things. Maybe we're just old. We liked what we had before in the "good old days."
- I've been here for only six years, so my perspective is different. I agree with a lot of what they're saying, even without having the "good old days" perspective.
- I also agree with what everyone is saying.
- We've been so stuck and we're just venting now. Trying to think of corrective actions right now.
- A lot of us feel that there is something wrong with the present management technique. We don't know what to do. We just see the end results it's hard to put in words, or put your finger on it.
- I'm assigned to a project so I'm somewhat isolated.

### **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

*Given everything that we've discussed, what would it take to make Fermilab a better work environment? What would that look like for you? Recommendations?*

- A more cohesive place to work, more interaction between divisions, would make happier people, with infectious can-do attitudes.

- People are still excited about the work. Any level of line technician can see a problem bring it to an engineer and be able to enable the most recent revision of something because you're not making changes to millions of things. We don't need corporate decisions on small changes.
- We have a staff of engineers, designers, technicians. We bring in projects. The engineering staff seems to be overwhelmed, and at times it seems like they're not qualified to do their jobs well. Design and drafting - can't get anything out of them, and what happens is that the project managers and engineer come up and say, "can you design this?" I'll do a quick sketch and have it assembled before it even goes through drafting. Why has that not been fixed? It causes problems.
- They've tried to integrate departments, but it just didn't work.
- Management is not well thought out. It's cumbersome.
- Some of the new safety regulations are good. It was a pain to get through, but good ideas from the Tiger Team in the 80's.
- Seems like upper management doesn't get decisions communicated to the next level and then there's just chaos. Decisions don't make it down through the ranks well. We changed a couple groups here to accomplish a goal, but then we maintained that structure even though we didn't have the same project or goal. Is that a management mistake?
- The performance review process is just so wrong. The supervisor apologizes to you for having to give you the review. They have to average it so it's not even real.
- Does your job description really tell what you do? No. But you're reviewed on your job description. We have people described as technicians who aren't technicians. They're just assigned a title and job description. Doesn't mean that they're not good employees, just that HR has provided a job description that doesn't fit the job. There is no way to create or amend a job description.
- I think most of us, if we have a project issue, can go to a manager. With personnel issues, we have to go up the chain.

*Do you regard Fermilab as a respectful workplace? Why or why not.*

- All agreed that it's a respectful workplace.

*Would you say that Fermilab does a good job of providing flexibility and care in supporting its employees? Would say that Fermilab is fair in providing access to its various work/life balance opportunities for employees?*

- My experience is that it is not fairly applied. It's an abused system.
- The supervisors make decisions for their own departments.
- Hard to write a policy on that.
- Don't think it's a huge issue, but I guess it's a problem for someone.
- Think it's based on trust of the employee, or on the staffing in that department.
- You're not going to tell them the real reason that you won't give them four ten-hour days is that you don't trust them.
- Applies to very few operations here at the lab.
- I would look at it as a perk, and not a right.

*Is there access to training and career opportunities?*

- Education is available, but they may not have a job for you in a higher position when you're finished. Other training is available.

## **Mentoring**

*Is it your experience that there is a lack of mentoring? Have you sought or had a mentor? Would that help you?*

- We have a crazy situation in our department. We develop manuals and we have people who are actively trying to retire, but are willing to stay on part time to train new employees. You're not allowed to hire the replacement until they've vacated. There's a person willing to jump through hoops, and we're not allowing them to help the lab.
- This has been going on a long time. Management has gotten themselves boxed in and they don't see the assets in their employees. HR doesn't know what people do and they don't care.

- In my new position here, I've had access to mentoring. My previous manager was bad, though.
- A person can be a good engineer and a bad manager. They've done it with physicists, too.
- Years ago, we would have a rotation in management.
- The best engineer I've ever seen is in upper management and is banging his head against the wall due to personnel issues, and there are meetings upon meetings about these things, and his talent is completely wasted.
- The review system is a total failure. You can't have a group of "excellent" people. You have to rate someone high and low to average it out. It just doesn't apply to everyone. It's not performance based at all.
- Used to do merit raises but that was just a "good old boy" thing, patting people on the back.
- I've personally benefited from the system, but it's still wrong.

*How would we create better job descriptions?*

- Doesn't matter unless you really want to make a fair and equitable workplace. They would have to start at the department level. Has to go up a chain of command.
- HR is so disconnected from what actually happens that they wouldn't know how to make the job descriptions. They talk about averages and norms for industry, which don't apply here.
- You can have two people here with the same job descriptions in two different groups doing totally different things.
- The only reason we need these descriptions is because of the way they do reviews.
- HR needs a tool for hiring, but the evaluations are different. Should be judged against peers, not against the whole lab, or by other industries.
- Just had a major job descriptions overhaul in our department, and we had the same problems. It's been worked out through a committee review process. Most people are happy with results.

- So things *can* get done, but no idea *how* it gets done.

## Group I

### Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Eight individuals participated, all of which were Caucasian males.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### The Fermilab Work Environment

*Without giving it much thought, I want you to write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Redeeming
- Different
- Unstressful
- Busy
- Diverse
- Optimistic
- Overwhelming

*Tell me about why you chose these words.*

- I don't believe that the support will be there for the projects being built outside of Fermilab. They'll find a way to do it, but it won't be efficient or pleasant. We had a number of groups in the research division, and the business model was changed and most people were pulled off. What was left was moved to smaller areas. That attitude carries over today. Seems to be accepted that if the person has a specialty and it's not being used that person can just sit.
- We used to do cross-training as standard.

*How does this affect your work environment?*

- It doesn't really. I just concern myself with my tasks, and do the best I can.



- To oversimplify, there are people who are self-motivated and those who are not.
- Research has more of a problem with that; we have things to take care of here.
- My experience is that management doesn't do enough to differentiate those two types of people in the review process.
- The review process stinks. Everyone is pulled toward the middle.
- Not always true.
- Biggest problem with the system is that the higher you are in pay grade, the higher ratings you have to get to get a comparable increase. Pay grade is not a good indicator of "best."
- I was a supervisor for a group for many years and had a boss come to me and tell me that I had to give an employee an astronomical pay raise, and HR felt that the person had to be brought up to standard pay. They didn't get an increase previously because they were not a good performer.
- When I transferred to another group a year ago, I was told that I didn't make enough for the jump, and the minimum pay grade was so big that DOE wouldn't approve it. I was qualified, and ended up getting it, but it's ridiculous that the question was even raised. Had I come off the street it wouldn't have happened.
- It's a great de-motivator.
- The lab took approximately 130 employees and changed them to hourly. The lab says you're not being demoted, but it's not true. You've been staff for years and you get in a routine with fellow staff people, and all of a sudden you're stuck with an 8 hour day, and you can no longer put in the effort or time needed. Another thing is that some of the people were at the upper end of the pay grade and there were no other opportunities for increase. It's hard to get a promotion after that.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

*How does Fermilab approach diversity? How does it play out? Is it fair?*

- No evidence of people being hired or fired due to race that we've seen.

- Quite a few years ago I was told that I must hire the female applicant because she's female, and wasn't the best qualified, but nothing since then.

*What are some of the positive things?*

- The lab is very open in that you're not sitting in a single spot for 8 hours. It's easy to go straight to people who know what to do when you need help.
- The culture dictates open communication.

## **Communication and Transparency**

*What's your experience with communication and transparency at the lab? Is it transparent?*

- Not from the management perspective. Over the last several years, they're bringing these business models in and it's very discouraging. I just do my job, so it doesn't immediately affect me. If you had a problem you could go to your manager or to HR, but now if you go to the 15<sup>th</sup> floor everyone thinks you're leaving or getting fired. Everyone is very worried that they're going to be reprimanded or let go all the time.
- In the past, management would've been included in the actual work, and now they are in their offices doing budget things, and we're all working like bees behind the queen's back. The 15<sup>th</sup> floor is a segregated third party who doesn't know how we work.
- One group is trying to change the culture here. They want to change how everything is run, and it's failed before.
- The 15<sup>th</sup> floor changed 10-12 years ago and it's fair to say that that single group has really caused the quality of our jobs to go down hill.
- HR should be liaison between management and employees, and should be unbiased. You do not get help from them regarding working conditions.
- We just bury it and try to work it out amongst ourselves.
- There are some managers you can go to. It's a quiet thing. The scientists don't want to be bothered with this stuff.
- They reinforce the fact that you should follow your chain of command.

*Is there evidence that there is a culture of non-helpfulness, or is it that managers aren't trained or prepared, or some other reason?*

- Everyone is worried about getting sued now.
- You go back to the days when this place started and everyone did everything. Laws have been changed and OSHA has been forced upon us, which is not all bad, but most of us still have that can-do attitude even though it's stymied by fear of making a mistake or being punished for it. It's less team-like.

*Is there a physicist vs. non-physicist environment?*

- Just depends on the physicist. Some are easy to work with, and some aren't.
- Don't know if it's elitism.
- This is an educational culture and a degree has a lot to do with it.
- I don't feel discriminated. It's not a lab cultural thing. It is in HR, though.
- There is a difference just because they are different departments. It could also be a difference in managers.
- 
- Many of the divisions view the technical as a factory, whereas other places are a university atmosphere.
- Makes sense, though. It's the nature of the beast.
- Compared to the lab, it *is* a factory-like environment. There is a cluster of managers who come from factories and that contributes to the environment.
- We get this reputation because years ago we didn't need highly skilled or highly educated workers, and then as those unskilled positions became obsolete, we tried to move those people into other departments. Sometimes it worked out and sometimes it didn't. Some people still carry that bias.
- This past spring we had the furlough issue, and in our group it seemed that those with unique talents didn't want to cross-train others for fear of being laid off. They tried to hold on to their special talents.

*How much does the budget affect the morale and environment?*

- The furlough paralyzed the lab for a few weeks. The 6-7 month period following was filled with anxiety and was bad for morale.
- They shouldn't have let everyone wonder for so long.
- Pier is good about giving heads up, though. We appreciated that.
- HR is just one screw up after another, and it creates so much anxiety.
- They were talking about laying off 200 people, and it wouldn't have been the dead weight. It was a mix of people.
- In my last two reviews, my manager told me that he feels that higher level technicians will be let go because of the pay levels. We all say we have dead weight, and this was a perfect opportunity to get rid of it.
- When Pier mentioned that the layoffs were imminent, and they decided to give out papers to people, it was a very small group. It should've been at least 51%.
- You don't feel that the physicists are elitist, but then you hear something like there is a disproportionately large technical staff to support the physicists. They're essential, and you're not.

*What lingering effects is this having on morale?*

- Dramatic. Are we going to go through this every year? Projects are on, then they're off, etc. You have to evolve to just work the best you can, but this other deal with the budget is completely separate and it was a wake-up call. And you saw a cloud of untouchable employees.
- Individuals feel they need to retain key information and not cross-train in order to protect their jobs.
- Management is frustrated with this attitude that people are specialists in their fields. We're starting to feel the crunch on this, and they want all-around technicians again.

*Is this something that has been discussed at the lab, or is it an undercurrent?*

- It's an undercurrent. I see department heads starting to question the current policy.

*Let's talk about communication and transparency from management, down. What was the challenge with HR?*

- In one of the talks that Pier was having, someone in the audience said, "what do you do about unemployment benefits?", and HR stood up and said, "you'd have to talk to management about it." Another person stood up and said, "that's your job, and all that info should be here."
- In my experience, HR didn't know, and they could've gotten the answers in a phone call, and they didn't.
- Mind-boggling the things that go on here. They make huge mistakes and there is no accountability for it. They put out a personnel manual, and then had to take it right back because it was wrong.
- I avoid HR.
- When I was brought in for a meeting about exempt and non-exempt employees, I asked specific questions to HR and they were never answered. Not unreasonable questions. I asked how many complaints had been made specifically from staff at the lab? I was never answered.
- There's not a lot of trust between us and upper-management. They just say this is dictated by DOE and we don't know if that's true or not.
- HR is a different staff entirely. They're a consultant of some sort. EG&G. The head of HR retired and then a new person came in and changed the staff. My opinion is that it isn't a good thing.
- We can go to our managers, but they're frustrated, too. There isn't a place to go for help.
- I read the APS report and starting thinking about how we deal with minorities and women, and there are a fair amount of women who came here after graduate school. Part of being treated differently it is their own fault because they allow themselves to not do things because of physical restraints. I don't believe that there is anything that I can do that a woman can't do.
- Individual basis, I've worked with many minorities and women, and it's never been an issue. There is mutual respect.

- If you are a minority non-producer, it's harder to lose your job.
- Went to a safety meeting similar to this one a year ago to talk about how to implement things, etc. and people made suggestions and they never were addressed.
- It wasn't perfect in the past, but it was better than it is now.
- There's been a business model change, and they're trying to apply it to the laboratory. It is my sense that the lab is years behind commercial industry in all things. Maybe we're just old. We liked what we had before in the "good old days."
- I've been here for only six years, so my perspective is different. I agree with a lot of what they're saying, even without having the "good old days" perspective.
- I also agree with what everyone is saying.
- We've been so stuck and we're just venting now. Trying to think of corrective actions right now.
- A lot of us feel that there is something wrong with the present management technique. We don't know what to do. We just see the end results it's hard to put in words, or put your finger on it.
- I'm assigned to a project so I'm somewhat isolated.

### **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

*Given everything that we've discussed, what would it take to make Fermilab a better work environment? What would that look like for you? Recommendations?*

- A more cohesive place to work, more interaction between divisions, would make happier people, with infectious can-do attitudes.
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*Is it your experience that there is a lack of mentoring? Have you sought or had a mentor? Would that help you?*

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- Years ago, we would have a rotation in management.
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*How would we create better job descriptions?*

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- So things *can* get done, but no idea *how* it gets done.

## Group J

### Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

This discussion was attended by six individuals, all female and at least two members of a minority group.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### The Fermilab Work Environment

*What are the words you describe being a graduate student or a newly minted graduate student at Fermilab, what are the words you use?*

- Frustration, not completing work or just working on one project all day long.
- Frustrating, the frustration comes from working with fellow collaborators, they treat you like a “baby grad student”. But I feel extremely lucky to be here and excited to get up in the morning to start the fight all over again. It’s very exciting to be here. I think the challenge from my fellow collaborators is because I am young.
- The overall experience is good. As the days roll by you do see some success and I appreciate that.
- Overwhelmed by what needs to be done. Constantly meeting with my many supervisors who all give different suggestions, do I try everything? There is not time for that and I don’t have enough experience to judge so there are a lot of uncertainties of what I should be doing but at the same time I am thankful that there are a lot of people giving suggestions and ideas and helping out. It’s intense, a bit overwhelming, but productive.
- Frustrating and overwhelmed. Part of the frustration is that there are so many people waiting for me to finish up my analysis. It is very easy to fall through the cracks in other areas of physics but at Fermilab it is very difficult. Most of the frustration is from trying to get all of your work complete and not falling behind.
- It is a very supportive atmosphere, but sometimes I feel that I am letting people down if I do not keeping up with what’s expected of me. I planned on staying for less than a year and have been here for two years and don’t want to leave now.

### Fermilab Approach to Diversity

*How do you think Fermilab handles diversity?*

- My project has been my “eat, sleep, breath, dream, wake up and have for breakfast” life for the past years. I speak to a lot of my friends and I tell them about people that I have to meet with everyday at strange times because I have collaborators around the world and that is “super cool”. The majority of the collaborations and experiments are like that. I don’t know of many other fields where that is true.
- Sometimes there are language barriers, but I find that in other classes as well. On my project everybody is given all of the recognition that they deserve for their work, it is really a healthy environment for that. You really learn how to listen because of the accents but you have to work hard to understand their analysis but everyone takes the time to listen very carefully to hear what they are trying to explain scientifically. All languages and accents are respected here.
- You really understand the meaning of globalization here. It’s difficult in the initial stages when you have people from different countries with accents but you learn to appreciate a person for what he or she is presenting and you have to learn to listen. As far as the challenges go, they are equal for male and female grad students.
- I think that everyone has already said everything. You really do learn to listen, straining to hear but you learn good listen skills. It’s amazing how you can use that skill elsewhere. It’s pretty cool.
- I am outgoing and I found people that I wanted to make friends with here because that is who I am. I don’t know what’s actually been done to help assimilate for international students who do not have English as their first language but for me, when I learn that someone is new I reach out to them.
- English is not my first language, but I came to the US when I was a teenager so I was much younger compared to some of my grad school classmates. They may not be as outgoing since they are not speaking their native language. They are trying to speak but you’re not sure what everyone is saying and if everyone understands each other, there is a lot of smiling and nodding. It is more difficult to ask questions because of the language barriers. The students get lonely when they don’t know how to go out or don’t have a driver’s license. A lot of them do not have much to do other than work.

*Does the lab do anything to help people in that situation?*

- I don’t know.
- For graduate students, there’s the Grad Student Club where they meet in the bar but I have never been. They first assume that you have the means to get there.

- It's hard to go because you don't know who is going or if your buddy is going and I know so many people who decide not to go.
- I have a friend in the program that is Korean. I have noticed that there are a lot of Korean students and they all come together probably because they feel most comfortable that they are with people who can speak their language, but you also see the same thing with the Spanish students and the Russians and the Italians. They do find each other but then they don't practice speaking English.
- I don't know how much the lab can do because this is a personal, social thing.
- As we mentioned, we work in small groups so you make connections, but outside of the work setting you may be lonely or something but in general you will safe and comfortable with your small group.

*If you have particular questions or challenges, where do you turn to get the answers?*

- I feel that if you really feel that you are being put down then the network of trying to get the questioned answered needs to be answered by grad students. You need to ask the dumb questions to other grad students because otherwise you'll get slammed for it. Why? I don't know, it was just the luck of the draw of the "wonderful" team that I got to be a part of. But I found out that when I had problems, a friend did the same type of work and he helped me out. You need a network of grad students who have gone through the same problem.
- I had an advisor that was pretty helpful, he didn't know a lot because he was a professor but he knew where to go to speak with others who have done this kind of work. I learned as an undergrad to ask stupid questions and if they give you crap, then that's their problem. You get the answer that you need and move on. But most of them are willing to answer my questions even if I keep coming back to them but I could only imagine for foreign national students how difficult it would be.
- I have seen Fermilab employees who have reached out to international students but the students have to be willing to meet halfway, you have to start talking to people no matter how scary it can be, it's a personal thing.
- Especially with collaborations with hundreds of people. There is no way that there can be only one person or group of people who can be responsible for their happiness.
- It also can depend on the type of people who are in a particular group.

- My supervisor introduced me to a lot of different people, which was a big help with the first connections.
- I have found that if you ask then people will take the time to sit and explain things to you in great detail.

*Any particular issues from the standpoint of being female and graduate students in high-energy physics?*

- I've not seen anything because I'm a woman. I want to be a professor so I know my career path. I know where I want to go so I ask people what I need to do to get to that place.
- Everyone I've worked with, all of them being male, I don't think they see me any differently and I don't see them any differently. They talk to me and assign me the same amount of work they would any other male graduate student. I wish there were more women but you take what you can.
- As far as career plan, I have no clue. Who knows what is going to happen four years down the line?
- In my experience, men in physics cannot speak to women. I've met a few men who are able to and they are married and have children. I feel that when women are working on a project slightly different questions are asked, and problems are handled slightly differently because I do not believe that men and women think the same, no matter how many gender-equality lectures I attend. I have my bachelors in math and physics and my masters in physics, completely dominated by men, and you can see why there are so many women that run out of the field kicking and screaming. I know that part of it is the lifestyle, when and how can I fit in a baby? We have had so many meetings for a two-body problem, with both members of a relationship who work in academia and you want to fit in a family. Do you wait until you're 42 and have tenure or do you just wing it while you're a post doc or just have it when you're a grad student and then they can't look twice at you all the way through? It's difficult going through such a high degree in academics you make sacrifices. I made sacrifices to live far away from my family; others have done it also because this is the lifestyle that they think that they want. I don't think that it's a healthy environment for women all of the time, sometimes a lifestyle is forced on you whether you want to accept it or not.
- My experiment is in Europe so I don't deal a lot with the projects here, but when I go to Europe there is one person in particular that is terrible, chauvinist, a typical Argentinean male. But I make it my priority to not deal with him because I know that he is someone who is not worth my time. But as far as here within Fermilab, it is fine. You see a few successful women in physics and it's not a coincidence that they own a bunch of cats. You don't want to be like that, you want to have a job and actually like your job and have time to entertain other things in your life that you're allowed to like besides physics. You

do your job eight to five, not six a.m. to twelve midnight, like it is here, and someone says, "Oh, you're leaving now?" I have a baby to take care of.

- There are going to be jerks everywhere and I don't want to say that you only find them in physics, but I have had some serious situations here. One happened when I expressed a disagreement with a shift supervisor and he told me that I was being a whiney grad student and I should just shut my mouth because I'm probably just tired and not thinking clearly. I said, "That sounds like an excellent idea." And I grabbed my coat and said, "See you later, have a great day." I'm like, whatever, that's him. He has talked to me like this my entire grad student life and this isolated incident is probably going to be no different than what's going to happen next week. As I am trying to leave and get my things out of the neighboring office, he comes into the office, shuts the door and pins me in the corner screaming at me to the point where I have to physically move him to get out of the office. This office has one door and he towers over me by five or six inches. So I think if I were anyone else I would have been pretty intimidated by him. He follows me out of the office screaming at me telling me to stop being such a smart-ass. Eventually, the lab did everything that they were supposed to do but it was a crazy situation. Why he is still allowed to work here is beyond me. It is not just me, I have actually had another grad student's advisor call me and ask me, "Does he talk to you that way, too?"

Is this story an exception? Do people generally treat each other with respect at Fermilab?

- Meetings can get very heated especially around the times when you're getting results from groups and people can get aggressive. They are passionate because have spent the past year working 70 hour weeks. They are passionate about this but it is not personal aggression at you. It's not negative; it's focused on the science or issue.
- I think there's a general understanding amongst most people if not everyone in the physics community that we respect each other, it's physics, and it's hard. I'm not too proud to say that this stuff is hard. Even if you don't like a person on a personal level you at least respect the fact that they're intelligent, they're smart and they're not here because of a whim or a bet or they want to work for free. But yes, some people can be jerks.

*The APS report suggested that there is a culture of arrogance and elitism that kind of happens with physicists. Have you experience that?*

- Fermilab works with everyone together. If different divisions don't help each other, we don't get our data. I cannot afford to look down on any other people.
- I think that physicists do tend to be more arrogant. Maybe that's just a personality trait that type of personality is strong anyway. Even at our universities they tend to be more on the top, so you start from a young age getting this feeling built up inside of you that you are elite. That's maybe not healthy but I do get the feeling that a lot of people tend to be arrogant. Maybe that's just a personality that is drawn to this type of work.
- The thing that I just can't get over is, okay, so you're smart but what use are you to society if you can't communicate what you know? I've seen physicists treat technicians poorly, "They don't know what they're talking about, they just have a two-year associates

degree.” I’m like, okay, fine, take that board over there and solder it together. Our electrical engineers can do it on one foot with their hands tied behind their back, blindfolded.

*Is this poor behavior the exception or the rule?*

- The exception.
- I don’t know about that. The PhD physicists do not take the technicians comments seriously, I see that in pretty much all of the meetings.
- It’s almost as if they cannot appreciate what the technicians know how to do. It’s most prevalent when things go wrong. I don’t really know when the Tevatron was being built if the people thought that it was going to work this well. It’s because of so many people’s hard work, but they don’t ever take that into account. It’s “those stupid main control room shift operators, they don’t know anything, they didn’t know that X was going to effect Y, they can’t understand that”. You can hear it in the control room, people talk like that.
- Exactly, everyone has to bicker.

*So, this leaves me with still the same question which is, does that paint a picture of a workplace where everyone needs to pitch in and everybody needs to be appreciated for what they do and work together? Do you see that more often than you see the problems? Is it some of both?*

- When I talk, I do talk about one specific experiment and yes we all do work together. I personally have never seen a physicist look down upon a technician because a certain board wasn’t soldered well or some repair did not work out well, I have not seen a physicist look down upon someone like that.
- I have to agree, it actually is a fantastic place to work where everyone respects everyone, it doesn’t matter if you’re a PhD or anyone else.
- I think a big part of it is that we are all working towards the same goal. We all want to advance our science, we all want to advance our field and so we’re willing to put aside any personal differences in order to achieve that goal. I think a big part of it is that we are focused enough to do that.

*Is there a particular person or manager who sets the tone?*

- We do have an integral technician coordinator who is very efficient. He is very efficient and he will talk to you about anything you want, he is very concerned about the day-to-day running. Nothing is too small for his notice.
- Because we don’t see our spokesman or technical integration coordinator, the top brass, there is no disrespect for others, we don’t even think about that. “Hey, you’re supposed to do that or you didn’t do your job”, we don’t think like that. We would rather go and do the job four different times than put the blame on someone.
- Definitely a countable amount of times when people act inappropriately. There is a senior faculty member who everyone has just accepted that’s how he is and just because you’re ignoring the problem it doesn’t mean that it’s not there. There are point sources for these occurrences, there are a select few, but these select few end up influencing so much. But they put themselves in the field where they do just enough things right that you can’t get rid of them.

- A side topic, just as you mentioned establishing between physicists and non-physicists on a general level, do we think that there is a sub-division in physicists themselves? I mean grad students, post doc, junior scientists, and senior scientists? For example, in a group where we might have grad students, post docs, scientists, and professors working together. Is there a difference in attitude? For example: "I'm a post doc and I know more than you and I am not ready to listen to you too much, why don't you just work on what I am saying?"
- I have sort of seen that but it kind of makes sense because as grad students we have to prove that we know what we're doing and we have to work hard to get their trust and I don't think it's a bad thing. It really pushes you to be articulate and to work hard.
- When you're trying to prove your point and you think that it is correct, and there is always a possibility that you are wrong, but somebody has to hear you out completely and argue on your level to prove you're wrong.
- I've always had fairly good experiences in that, they will listen to me, I may have to say it three or four times for it to sink in, but they are willing to listen and usually there is more senior person in the group that will advocate for me and say "she is right".
- Since I got here I have been surprised at the extent at which people have listened to what I have to say. Even though they have been doing this for years.

*Do you feel like you can get the information you need and it's available to you? How about for career planning?*

- I would say yes. We have a web site and any news that comes from the management and that we need to know, trivial or big, is up on their web site or you can special emails for that, you sign up for them. Almost everything does percolate down to us.
- And the physics coordinators or anyone at the top are very willing to help you with whatever you need and they'll have sessions where they help you to figure how to get a post doc or how to get a professor job and they're willing to sit down and work with you.
- Once or twice a year they have sessions for grad students who recently got post docs will give a talk and spokespeople have made themselves available if you want to do practice interviews with them, they're willing to sit down with you. They do the same with post doc to professor as well
- On my project we have great spokespeople and that is the highest management that I have dealt with, but I really feel that if I had a problem like I did before I could easily walk into them and they'll take my problem seriously and if it were to require any kind of action that it would get done. Or if I had any kind of concern about anything that was going on, all I would need to do is knock on their door or drop them an email.
- The physics group I work with, there are three or four little groups and we're all working on the same analysis, technically I would be in charge of my own analysis because I am my own supervisor but I have people who are like mentors that I would talk to about it. I feel that it runs as effectively as people with a lot of opinions can run an organization.
- I was abandoned as a grad student, my advisor packed up his bags and headed to a different university and told me that I was more than welcome to come as a grad student there, all I had to do was to re-do all of my classes and retake my written exam. That's it, that's all I had to do and then maybe I would be accepted into the graduate program. So, I got a different advisor and my university did a great job in making sure I didn't fall through the cracks. I think that questions is going to differ, we are all visitors, so we're all employed by our respected universities and just let loose here. Once you get into the lab community, you end up being your own boss with your analysis but you still have to



answer to the larger physics working group. Through the many conveners that I have had, all of them have done a very decent job in making sure the publications that we took out of the collaboration and making sure that the talks that grad students took to larger conferences, are well prepared, everyone knew what they were doing and they were able to do their job as well as they could. So the micromanaging is good from the university standpoint in my experience.

*What about mentoring? Do you have a specific person that you point to as a mentor? Do you wish you did?*

- I wish I had a woman to talk to. There was a post doctoral researcher who was in the office next to me for a little while and she was great. You know, "Want to talk about anything? How's it going? How are you feeling?" I was like, wow, thanks, I kind of needed that, the human interaction, not "you are a programming robot this needs to compile by 3:00 p.m. tomorrow." As far as a formal mentor, I don't think I really have one, I kind of make them up as I go along. You make friends and the friends become more senior to you and you keep talking then poof, you have a mentor.
- Some months ago, Young Kee started mentoring groups for engineers and women post docs. I am not sure if they are with the grad students yet, as far as I remember she did send an email in December and if I remember correctly grad students who wanted mentoring then they were to give their names or something, I'm not sure, I would have to go and look at the email again. I am quite sure that there is some structure now, maybe in small form, for women post docs, engineers and other professionals at Fermilab. We, as grad students, probably also need some mentoring; I'm not sure where that stands right now.
- I haven't heard anything lately and I don't think that there is anything.
- This was a question raised right in the first meeting that we had. I think we need more interaction with women who are better placed in our field.
- That might be nice, I started out with the convener of my group was a woman, she was very open but she was only here for a month or two before she got transferred away so I couldn't have her. But I did find another mentor, a guy, it would be nice to have a woman.
- Usually the mentors are a senior scientist in your group, but then we work in small groups and it's not always possible to find a mentor. In my group, I don't have a mentor; I would love to have one.
- In terms of mentoring, what do you mean, a mentor helping us with our actual analysis or a mentor helping us with life issues?
- It starts out helping with the analysis and getting stuff up and then that person ends up mentoring you for your career.
- In my undergraduate I had a very small department in a very small school and I had a female mentor. I still talk to her.
- My advisor was willing to do a lot of life mentoring type stuff with me.

*What about work/life balance issues?*

- We touched on the two-body problem where you have the two people in the relationship are both in physics so then the question arises: what's going to happen we want to get a

real job? Are we going to want to stay here? What if one of us gets a faculty position and not the other one, what's going to happen?

- What happens when it's the woman and she wants to take six months off?
- Within my group my advisor is pretty blunt and he said something along the lines of one of you has to work and one of you has to clean the house, who's it going to be? Naively I say "why can't it be both of us?" I'm not too proud to tell my boyfriend to get down on his knees and scrub that toilet, it's got to get clean, I have to do it too. We both put in the same amount of time at the lab, we're both graduate students. But, as far as the future, how do you plan that? He's in physics and he is further along than I am, different university, same experiment but different groups. That's how we're able to live with each other, if we did the same thing, no, it wouldn't be working out.
- Because there are so many universities on these experiments, everybody's coming in with different levels of comfort, there needs to be some kind of universal healthcare that is given to employees and visitors. A lot of our university policies really don't cover what you need to live here.
- My university assumes that you are going to go to the clinic at the medical center there. It does cover up here but I am also on my husband's health insurance so that eliminates any other issues that I might have.
- The healthcare issues also are important from people coming from Europe, my university provides a very nominal health insurance that we have to have to be here and yet it has a 250 British pound excess on any appointments, I basically have to pay for it out of my pocket so I store things up and wait until I get to England where I can claim it for free.
- My friend from Germany does the same thing. She just waits and says, "it doesn't hurt that bad I'm going home in three weeks."
- If it were an emergency then I would go but I can't afford to pay \$300 for an appointment out of my pocket so I will put things off.
- Let's just go worse case scenario since that's what your healthcare should be able to cover, I remember horror stories of some kid at Fermilab, a grad student, who shattered his leg to pieces, how he did it I don't know, an accident somehow. He had to suck it up and get on a plane because he couldn't afford to do it here.
- I think this is an issue that URA should address. If they want to joint own Fermilab, which apparently they do because they changed all of the signs on the high-rise, they need to address the fact that if they have people coming in and saying this is where their employment is, you know? I hate saying that I work at Fermilab but my paycheck comes from somewhere else, it's crazy. But the thing is, if they want that to happen they have to make it work.
- I think maybe for the most part, all of us can say we make our own schedules, we can either work 9-5 or we can work 5 -1, we just have to get the work done. But as far as maternity leave, it's hard for graduate students; maybe some universities will give you six weeks leave if you're a female. I don't know if you're a male if they do that for you, if they don't I think they should. Fermilab doesn't have something like that for their male or their female employees. I think they should have both maternal and paternal leave.
- It's hard. You can get your work done so that you can have the six weeks that you need and your work's finished. We do make our own schedules. You could stay at home for two months and just dial in to your meetings although it's nicer to have that face-to-face time. I don't know if there's any way for Fermilab to formalize any of this.
- Because everyone, as a visitor their job appointments are controlled by their universities so that is another variable because it is different for everyone.

### *What about work flexibility?*

- If you want to work from home it's no big deal, or you can come in, whatever.
- It really depends on what your responsibilities are.
- If you've got your responsibilities under control then you've got them in control.
- But in general you can make your own schedule.
- In general, when you're a grad student your schedule is very flexible. You can be working at 3:00 in the morning, you can be working at 12:00 in the night, and you can be working at 1:00 in the afternoon.
- That means if you need to take the morning off to go do something, you can.
- You can, and you can't if you are required at a certain place. It's flexible in some ways and not in others.
- That's the whole reason I can take classes and still work.
- Unless you have some real pressing thing that needs to be done, there's a time to be there and everything else comes second. But, that's not every day.
- Usually post docs can do this too. But on my project now I have to overlap with the technicians that are there because that's who I am working with. So, I'm going to overlap with whatever their hours might be.
- I think that's pretty universal when you get hired as a post doc through a university, you are subject to their rules, so any kind of Fermilab benefits or Fermilab anything you don't see because you're still technically a visitor, you're not a lab employee.

### *What improvements would you like to see at the lab?*

- I know that there's the User Center here at Fermilab, but somehow I get the feeling that it is not really a place to mingle with your fellow co-workers.
- Just because the people that I talk to say that they don't go there.
- It's just the same people that go there every night after work. There are different situations when there are activities going on there that tends to draw more people.
- But the dinners are only offered every two weeks or something like that.
- So, to try to make something that was more...not hip...more user friendly, more student friendly. At least at the end of day everyone can say, "I'll meet you here." Someplace that we don't need a car to get to. That would be my suggestion and I think that would help facilitate maybe some of the things that you guys were trying to touch upon today.
- The lab needs to be more vigilant in matters related to career planning, motivation or guidance provided to women here at the lab. Women comprise a substantial percentage of the workforce, we work just as hard as men, we try to make our marks. Sometimes we need to walk the extra mile to prove ourselves. A man probably does not have to do as much. It might come partly due to the fact that I am women that is trying to make my mark in a field that is dominated by men, and so yes, I would appreciate if we had more support groups, the mentoring groups, guidance provided from women in my field who have achieved that goal so that I can look up to them as mentors if I want to, if I need to. That would be definitely helpful for me not only in my academics but also in matters that are different from what a man would face so I can discuss freely about some problems that I have that just pertain to women. I am not saying this because I am a woman because this is something that is very, very vigilant, I am sure that it will be in his report also.
- It would be nice to have more mentoring for grad students as they are working on post docs and engineers.

- It would be nice to have real opportunities where older women were reaching out to the younger generation. I just don't think that that is happening.
- I remember at the lunches the same people would sit on that side of the table and the same people would sit on that side of the table, there was never any effort of one senior woman to single out someone to just be like, "I'm going to talk to you two weeks in a row and catch up with you." I wish I had have something like I did in my undergrad, someone who I could just talk to who went through the thing I'm going through now.
- There is this caveat that we could step up as the younger generation and really ask the older generation but at the same time it would be nice to know that they are looking out for us. We could take that step, I can't entirely blame them.

## Group K

### Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

This discussion was attended by five individuals, all male and at least two members of a minority group.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### The Fermilab Work Environment

*Without giving it much thought, write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- It is an expectation that when you come here you will work a lot. I don't want to use the word rewarding, but I am very involved.
- Exhausting.
- Interesting.
- My wife complains that I don't come home in time.
- Time consuming but rewarding. It never seems like you are done. It doesn't seem like any of my work is not important. They are all important tasks that take a long time to do.
- Fermilab is a very good place to communicate with other experts so you can progress.

*The lab is a very diverse place, how well does Fermilab handle diversity?*

- There are people from all over the world; I don't think I have ever seen a problem where groups don't get along because of diversity. Americans seem to be a minority compared to the others.
- I would call it an afterthought. I think it is more insensitivity than anything, although it is not meant to be malicious.
- Everyone has a common goal and that is work.
- It's a very international place. I have not seen any problems with diversity.

*How do you feel people treat each other here? Is it generally respectful?*

- I have seen people with poor people skills in meetings. But with no bias, that is just the way they are.

*How does that affect you and the workplace?*

- I would think there is an effect to an extent, but with a controversial topic there will always be 3 or 4 that are back and forth with each other. It's usually not personal, but just about the issue. I don't think I have seen personal attacks. But I don't think that is the right way to address disagreements.
- It's not that common or regular, but it certainly happens.
- In some cultures, this may be very disrespectful.
- There is not a culture at the lab that encourages this behavior, but there certainly is a culture here that accepts it.
- I don't think it should be fixed, but that is my cultural bias.
- There have been very few cases where someone gets offended.

*As physicists; have you seen or noticed elitism or arrogance between physicists and non-physicists?*

- I've seen it; I think the workplace is a poor place for it. Rarely do you see people in these two camps mingling. It is quite segregated. I think it is an unfortunate aspect of the field.
- It's invisible. It is a different treatment. Engineers are not going to get into the depths of physics.
- I could be an exception but I have worked with many engineers and it was a very respectful relationship. There are many physicists that never work with engineers and that may set up this mentality.
- In my experience, it has been respectful on both sides. I do still get the sense that they are two different societies.

*Have you seen any bias with advancements with minorities?*

- I would have to say no. (group agreement.)

*How does Fermilab respect family life issues, such as maternity/paternity leave etc.?*

- Fermilab has a great day care. If I have a case where I need to pick up my child, its fine. I think it is a hard career ladder to climb but there are many physicists with children.
- They were pretty helpful with maternity leave. There is a federal standard. The family leave act. If you don't have the amount of leave you need, there is a program where people can donate their hours to you. We had her last week of maternity leave donated.
- I think at that time it was hard not to hear about it. The daycare is very nice. It is competitively priced. If we need to deal with our son being sick, they wont say no. I hear that a career in physics is difficult with children, so I will see how that works out.

*Because Fermilab is such a complex place, is there a bit of stove piping going on? Does it affect the effectiveness of the workplace?*

- I think there are numerous shared resources.

*Is there orientation or training to help you?*

- Not really. You learn how to do your shift, when you show up for your shift. There usually is not a day of orientation.

*Would it be helpful if there was some kind of orientation or training?*

- I think so.
- The way I learned is learning from others.
- It would be more helpful if there were an orientation process.

*Would a formal mentoring system help?*

- I had an official mentor, it was very helpful.

*Is there someone here to help with language and cultural issues?*

- The language problem will always be there. It will just take time.
- If you are working at Fermilab, technically there is mentoring. But the career mentoring is not very strong. It would be nice to have a better career path mentoring. It can be tough to figure out what to focus on as a career.

*How is the overall communication with Fermilab?*

- We hear a lot of the bad news, not much of the good news.
- We have regular seminars to help you keep in touch with the field, with guest speakers. Activities happen fairly regularly.

*Are there ways you would suggest improving that?*

- People are just too wrapped up in work to show up at these events. There's always a bit of pressure about going.
- That pressure is coming from both yourself and your supervisor.

*Are there any other issues you would like to discuss?*

- Fermilab is a lot better than some of the other places to work out there.
- A monthly performance review would be nice instead of a yearly. We need to know where we stand, to point us in the right direction. Also the bureaucracy surrounding the pay scale of the review process seems a bit dumb. It is de-motivating.
- I find that it is difficult to travel as a foreigner.

## Group L

### **Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group**

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Thirteen individuals, all of whom were women and minority women, attended this discussion.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### **The Fermilab Work Environment**

*Without giving it much thought, I want you to write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Challenging
- Frustrating
- Stressful
- Putting out fires
- Accomplishing
- Unplanned, unexpected
- Interesting job
- Satisfaction

*We have captured both positive and negative impressions here. Tell me about why you chose the words you did.*

- It depends a lot on what you're doing here at the lab. I find things to do here that are interesting and from which I can gain a sense of accomplishment.
- Over the course of my career I go away on a daily basis feeling a sense of professional satisfaction.
- I've recently interviewed some people for admin staff, and I found myself saying that the most interesting thing about working here is that there are days that you wake up thinking about what you're going to do that day, and at the end of the day you've accomplished none of those things, if that bothers you, then this isn't the job for you. Most of them think that makes it interesting.
- I feel fortunate. I've only been here 3.5 years, and I love it here. I started out in a different area and it was very stressful, but my days are rewarding.
- We juggle things and we have a smaller staff, but expectations remain the same. Can't expect to get things done from your list, but it is rewarding to solve problems. I think that's more of our atmosphere now since the staffing issues.
- I know that there are times that I've been in a situation where I have too many responsibilities in too many diverse areas. You lose efficiency. With the amount of work always increasing and the HR approach to it sink or float, you've maxed out. You're lower than peak efficiency. Being pulled out of one task that you're concentrating on to work on something completely different makes you less efficient. Too much time spent in transition.
- I agree. And we're just greatly understaffed. Things just don't get done. There isn't the time to reflect on things. It never stops.
- This stress sometimes predated the budget issues.
- I came out of an environment where we worked on holidays to meet deadlines. It's a walk in the park compared to private industry. But I've found that I've become lazy over time, because I don't have to work more than 60 hours a week now. The culture here has allowed me to proceed at a slower pace, but sometimes I just can't work fast enough. There are areas that are woefully understaffed, and some areas that aren't working efficiently and that's a cause of stress.

### **Affect of Different Work Groups and Projects**

*Fermilab is a complex organization with many different projects and work groups and many different organizations having employees working at the laboratory. These different groups often*



*work with a great deal of autonomy and different management structures and approaches.  
Should they intersect?*

- I've been here 8 years and I've seen huge differences between the way groups work. I think it seems that each group just does whatever they want.
- The different divisions have different functions. I think it's stressful that you have to be on top of your game, and on top of what is going to happen next, and worried that you're going to be on the chopping block next. I feel so far that I am viable, but I feel the stress of having to work at the umpteenth level, having my people work at the umpteenth level, making sure that I feel that what we're working on is going to be the supported project in the future, and it causes stress.
- That's true, especially since the furlough and budget issues.
- The culture is changing.
- Since the budget crisis, we not only have to perform at peak level, but we have to sell the case for why we should do this or that, and why the lab should even exist. It's almost as if you're doing your job, and on top of that, there's another level of stress about how you're presenting to DOE and the world.
- I don't think it's just the budget crisis. DOE has new requirements with the new contract. They haven't added more people and there's more work to do. Project management and reporting. Then the budget thing on top of that. One year, DOE compared salaries and had Fermilab employees go without a raise for a full year. Being managed by U of Chicago or URA. They have their levels. The Director has been lobbying in Washington, and he has to use FRA money to do that because DOE doesn't cover that. The Director in Washington was unheard of years ago. They're doing what they can to keep the lab and projects running. We're at the mercy of DOE and politics.
- My father worked here so I knew what the culture here was like before. It was much more laid back before. So many regulations and restrictions now, and we're getting crunched in different directions. Trying to be efficient with the reduction in resources.
- Accountability is important and needed, but we're being pushed into a corporate mold. This is supposed to be a scientific and creative environment.
- This place rarely laid people off and now it's on the plate.
- Fermilab doesn't owe anyone a living, though. We all know there are people who take the easy way out, etc. and it would be good to have them out.

- If one project gets cut, they try to take the most productive people and move them around. Some people take it personally when their projects end.
- I think I object to the words “laid back.” In the early years, experiments were smaller, and there was more of a mentoring and working together environment. The first director would come around and visit with people. It was more of a family atmosphere. It still is, but I see a limiting for someone who is intelligent or with a degree, they’re looking to hire newly graduated people from the outside and they’re looking to trim things. Things are stressful, but it varies with your job. The stress comes from being viably skilled. My interpretation is that there is no free flowing of if you’re a valuable worker you may not have a place to go with your project ends.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

*Okay let’s move into our more specific conversation about diversity. Let’s talk about your general impressions regarding how Fermilab handles diversity today.*

- My opinion is that diversity is pretty good here. Seems like overall people are treated with respect and that a diverse culture is embraced.
- In my projects, one of the things I enjoy is learning about is other cultures from people I work with. Sometimes if they’re a new client to me, I have to go through a couple of projects with them to gain their confidence, and I do think that may be because I’m a woman. Sometimes it takes time to gain their trust, sometimes you just work around that and focus on the project. I think overall I am treated with respect, but it took awhile.
- For me it has more to do with being young. I’m looked at as a young girl or a kid. And people wonder if I’m smart enough. Ageism is a problem here.
- In my experience, I have seen little or no outreach. There is some to particular classes but not across the board. Including Native Americans, Hispanics, Blacks, all protected minorities. It depends on who is managing HR, and what their interests are. It is not handled in an organized fashion. This is the first Director in my tenure who has put some activity behind diversity. Sometimes, depending on the budget, they can’t do as much outreach. If we’re not hiring, no point in recruiting. But there’s never been a lab-wide rule about reaching out. Just depends on who is in the role at that time.
- We have widespread nepotism, which affects hiring tremendously. There have been decisions made that have not been fair to those being interviewed.
- I’ve seen reverse discrimination against the white male. Allowances made for the diverse candidate that wouldn’t be made for the white male. Not fair.

- There has been coercion towards hiring managers when there may be a qualified diversity candidate that's eligible. Coercion to make that person be hired.
- Discrimination based on marital status. I have been the victim of that. If you are single, you are made to travel more. Early on in my career I was told I don't need as much money because I'm single, I attributed that to an ignorant person rather than to the lab.
- I've also seen this in the hiring process.
- I see it with coworkers. People with kids aren't required to work as much as people without kids.
- Someone I know brings his or her sick kids in and gets everyone else sick.
- In my old department, the females weren't considered for things. People have come in and asked specifically for a male.
- In my office, we hear the woman scientist be louder and more shrill because she has to be heard. Then it becomes a competition with the males. It's a game they play to be heard. I've heard people try to talk above her and it's terrible.
- Many of my friends are female physicists, and we've talked about this. The majority agreed that you have to speak louder to be heard. The women state an idea, and no one hears her. Then a male states the idea, and everyone commends them for it. This is widespread here.
- This is mentioned in the report: Sometimes it's unclear administratively who to go to for favors, people leave early to golf, etc. Also, I have found that until you're here for a certain number of years, people don't recognize what you're saying, no matter your education or career-oriented you are. I'm dismissed, and haven't been given the regard and respect because I haven't been here long enough. I've been told that I'm deadweight. I've had varying degrees of satisfaction and dissatisfaction here.
- I remember when I started here, the first 3-5 years I was always asked how long I had been here, and that would depend on whether I was heard or not, rather than basing it on my experience or education.
- When I was hired after college, I wasn't even referred to by my name, just "that girl." It took time to earn their respect. I had to climb the ladder. I had to be aggressive.

- It's demoralizing. There's something different here, and I don't know quite how to put it. Once you pass a certain mark, and the relationships are established, you have the most satisfying days of your career.
- I've been criticized for not doing a lot of socializing with my coworkers, lunches, etc.
- I've worked in four different places here, and each time was a step up. Every time you move, you're looked at as the new person. The amount of persecution you have to go through from your former coworkers when you're promoted from within is terrible.

### **Women and Minority Advancements**

*Another issue described in the APS report is one in which woman and minority advancements are perceived as preference picks and not a result of individual qualifications.*

- (Part of the group agreed that they were not denied advancement for being a woman. Part of the group felt that advancement was delayed because of it.)
- One particular year I worked really hard, and I thought I'd get recognition, but I didn't. I noticed that my male counterparts were having their accomplishments announced and applauded at their meetings. The following year, I got, out of nowhere, a change in pay grade and status, I was told to keep it quiet rather than celebrate it.

*What are your thoughts on the evaluation and review procedures?*

- Well at least you know where you stand now. There's a minimum and a maximum. Before that you had no idea how much less you were being paid than other people. You can tell which zone you're in and I like that.
- I'm not sure that works.
- The way I understand it, there's a small portion of money that is to be divided among a group, so even if everyone is doing an excellent job, you still don't get the best raise.
- They've lessened the incentive, merit raises, you just maintain
- I've only had two, but the process is weird. There's a bell curve, you can't be at the top. No one gets the top.
- I was told that unless you're a Nobel Prize winner, you wouldn't get the highest level.

- They're trying to tie performance to your ranking and that doesn't work here. Recognition is given begrudgingly. It's demoralizing. This year, I showed that I had improved in 4 of 8 elements, and yet I got a lower ranking than the year before because there's only so much money to go around. I've told myself to deal with it psychologically, that I know I'm doing a good job and they wouldn't keep giving me money if I was doing poorly. I take the review with a grain of salt. The dollar amount doesn't always reflect the review.
- Before this system, there were some supervisors who wanted to be the nice guy and give everyone an excellent, and then some tough guys. They came up with this system to spell everything out, and it makes it easier for the managers who have trouble holding staff accountable.
- It drives everyone toward the middle.
- A lot less versatility with those who work very, very hard.
- Every office is its own island, and some managers reward those who perform better than others. There's a "second reader" now for these reviews, but they're all on the same management team.
- I got a merit raise one year, and then was told at review time that I was getting a smaller raise because I had already received a merit raise. What's the point? It's demotivating.
- There are some slackers, but I feel like it gives the person who's reviewing you a chance to say that they only have x amount of money and they'll use the process to mark you lower than you are. There's something wrong with the way that the way the reviews and money are tied together.
- I went six years once without a review.
- I've heard that in other departments. It isn't uniformly administered, but it's getting better. There's not a lot of uniformity that has been laid over this lab. It causes a lot of stress. It's like we have 8 separate companies and you have to learn how each one operates. We've had a huge wake up call with the budget crisis, and it has gotten tougher to allow the slackers to stay. I've heard that we are an 80/20 culture, with 20 percent of the people doing 80 percent of the work. Today, with the lab's culture, it's better than it's ever been with people pulling their weight. Now we have the added concern of not knowing what's going to happen next year, and performance is much more important.

## **Work/life Balance**

*How many of you would say that Fermilab does a good job of providing flexibility and care in supporting its employees?*

- Performance review, flextime, etc. it's all pushed down to the first line manager and there's no uniformity. (Group agreement.)

### **Fermilab Hierarchy**

*One issue described in the APS report is that of the hierarchy of prestige and importance of different jobs at Fermilab, which recognized that research physicists were generally perceived at being at the top of the peak. Some employees suggested that this has led to an environment of elitism and arrogance in the workplace.*

- A new manager is put in who isn't a scientist, and then is not working out, and the comment was made that they'd never take them out of the position because it would look like a mistake. Happens a lot at the lab.
- Definitely a culture among physicists where you have to be right, harder to admit mistakes than average person. Tends to be harder for men than women.
- One person became a division head, wasn't a scientist, and there was a lot of discussion about their capabilities. Scientists respect other scientists. It's part of the kind of personality required to do this kind of science and that isn't going to change.
- There are no real options to improve this.
- There's the appearance of options, but they don't do any good. There is an EEO office and relations office, both with competent people, but I've never seen a manager on the losing end of the argument in those cases.
- Not that they're bad managers, but they just keep moving up, if they have good admin people around them, they could do well.
- Not limited to physicists, there are just some bad managers here.
- Yes, physicists moving up because there's nowhere else to go except into management.
- Management training is offered, but is not working.
- It's not an easy place to manage. I've been offered other opportunities. You have to be wired

in a certain way to do the management. I commend those who do it, and do it well. Learned a lot by watching peers here.

## **Communication and Transparency**

*One area of concern expressed in the APS report is that employees do not understand programs and options available to them, have you encountered this?*

- It could be improved. Getting better with this director. A lot of policies and procedures aren't well known, and little uniformity in them.
- There are 8-10 organizations here and they all have their own webpages.
- There should be a central location. Everyone has different email address conventions.
- When this lab was growing you would expect that informality. You can do that when you're growing, but we're a matured organization now. There're not a lot of clear paths, so many iterations of things that different people do things different ways.
- It can be difficult or impossible to find information, or you find wrong the wrong information. (Group agreement.)
- And we're very spread out here physically, so we don't page each other. We have different email clients.

## **Work/life Balance**

*Any other thoughts on this subject?*

- Each area has its own rules. We miss our lunchtime every day. We are expected to stay there. And then there are groups that insist that people take lunch. I admit that I've set myself up that way and now it's expected. Maybe a policy along those lines? Flextime would be wonderful.
- Only if it's applied uniformly. If some people can leave early to play golf, then I want to leave to do what I want to do.
- I put in lots of extra hours, but I'm still questioned about whether or not I should use vacation for taking time off for an appointment. I just want to understand who gets it and who doesn't.
- It depends on who your manager is.

- When I first started, my daughter was little and I wanted to take her to the bus, and after two weeks I was asked not to come in late. It's a little bit better now. Come in later, stay later. Especially if you're salaried.
- Presumably if you're salaried you get good sick days, and they ask you to try and schedule your appointments together. You're allowed to come in late, with approval. Certain production facilities have to be certain hours, but that shouldn't be the same as other departments. Shouldn't be one only policy.
- There's a lack of understanding of how this is applied.
- I would drop everything at a moment's notice for my boss because we respect each other. I'm just asking people to be human and considerate and respectful.
- I ask for more than that, actually. Our salaries do not compare to industry. We want something a little more academic and creative. A lot of things in my division are flexible, but the policy is that you have to be here at particular times. People need to have a life. I'm not going to take people harassing me about that. I expect that they know that I know what I need to do, and that I will do it. I don't want to have to fit into rigid boxes, and there are some shift things where people have to be there, but there should be a liberal leave policy. Part of the joy of working here is quality of life. I feel strongly about it.
- No one in our department has a place to go unless you want to commit career suicide and go to the Director.

*Is there a place to go for others?*

- I had a situation where I was being sexually harassed by someone who had been here for some time, and I was told it would be confidential, but my name was brought up to him, and I wasn't made aware that the man knew my name, and everyone knew that it was me. I wouldn't want to report it again.
- That area of HR should not be part of the lab. I would feel uncomfortable, too. Who is monitoring them? It should be a neutral person. It would feel safer and more confidential.
- People have been accused of harassment, have retired, and then have been rehired back. Shouldn't there be some kind of blacklist?

## **Mentoring**



- They've made attempts and none of them have grown, but we do need it desperately. We have a lot of trouble recruiting younger people. They come in and they don't see their age represented here. If they do come in, they don't stay. I would love a formal program. I've been fortunate to have my own manager mentors. It's not formal, and it's up to the individual.
- Young technical engineers don't come here because they are market driven, though. They can make more money elsewhere.
- A young female who left a few years ago said on her way out that the lab has no idea what to do with, or how to handle, a young professional.
- We have dinners once a month with grad students. We used to have the social committee and we'd have parties once a month. It was wonderful to meet everyone, and they don't have things like that anymore.
- There is no structure to shepherd a young professional through the lab and it's wanted and needed.
- If we formalize it, would it be an additional stressor?
- It used to be one person in each department who was the person to go to.
- As an admin, people get to know that if you call certain people they can help you. It's informal.

## **Training**

- Better than it was, but the training you take depends on the job at the time. You're supposed to take relevant training.
- That's budget related, too.
- I've taken the management courses, and they're useful to everyone, not just managers. More people should take them. Relationships, trends, topics like that.
- I took one of the courses, and I wish I had had it years before.
- My department is very good about training, and I'm encouraged to do it. I can't find the hours

to do it, but I'm encouraged to do it. I'd have to go offsite but I'd have help with tuition.

- It was like pulling teeth to go to grad school. I was dragged through the mud with it. HR told me to just keep my chin up. It's a benefit here. It was an incentive to get me hired, and then when I decided to do it years later, it was difficult. I was young and I was the new person, and I think those were issues. I was young and inexperienced.

### **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

*This is our chance to talk about what a positive and empowering workplace would be like.*

- Flexibility, with equal implementation
- There is no chain of command for complaints, no resources, don't know who to go to.
- I feel as though I don't see diversity in hiring discussions, broadening to those people of color. There was a diversity meeting a while ago and the white male suggested that the black male go to the meeting. People need to open their minds a bit.
- I hear that people outside of the high rise have issues. Like young women being propositioned by older scientists. Seems to be a cultural thing. Like they don't realize it's inappropriate. A couple people have mentioned that.
- I'm curious to know who manages the managers.
- Perception of management is much different than what actually happens.
- I'd like to ask that you consider putting on the table that management make diversity in hiring a priority. A line item on their reviews. That's how many companies become diverse.
- We have no way of knowing if men and women are being paid equally.
- Overall, I find this place to have a lot of very tolerant attitudes. If I've ever felt dismissed, it was because of a mistake I made, and not because of my gender. Attitudes toward women and minorities are tolerant and happy. It makes it a more interesting place.
- In the scientific staff, there are people who want to bring diversity to the lab, but you still have to choose from the pool of those who are applying for the job.

- The lab is not attracting diverse professionals. I would suggest there's a reason why that exists, a historical thing. Perhaps Pier will make it different, but it hasn't been welcoming.
- My son (a minority) didn't want to work here because the pay was too low.
- We can't compete with all the perks that other companies have to offer.
- We need to reduce nepotism.

## Group M

### Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Four individuals, one female, and all minorities, attended this discussion.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### The Fermilab Work Environment

*Without giving it much thought, write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Fun
- Lack of recognition
- Work and political
- Stressless, go at your own pace
- Don't know how much you contribute, need feedback
- There is not enough incentive for the supervisors to do their jobs. When you work in a group, direction is important.
- A supervisor should not take more students if he is unable to give direction.

- Three or four students to a supervisor. That's too many. There is not enough time to communicate with them. Two is optimum. There should be supervision and mentoring.
- The politics are everywhere, unfortunately. Not just at Fermilab. I have experience working in labs across the world. Even international labs tend to group people by ethnic groups. These groups are communicating with each other sometimes in a strange way. You have to get used to it.
- As a grad student, I don't feel the politics; I come from different communities in Fermilab. I have several supervisors here, and they are good. Sometimes I'm confused because the guidance from them is not very clear. They can only help me on the side because they are busy. I have a feeling that I'm not getting a clear picture. Overall, the working environment is good.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

- I don't see anything lab wide. You see concentrations of people within working groups, though. Sometimes I find the language barriers difficult. Language and culture barriers exist on certain projects run by American universities.
- Groups that are completely American seem to not be aware of the problems encountered by those from other countries. When you arrive in a place that is foreign to you, you don't know what the priorities are, and you need some guidance.
- I've never felt that it was bias, just unawareness. (Group agreement.)
- If a collaboration is more international, then the awareness exists more from the beginning. Many people working toward one goal.
- I overheard a conversation in which one person said that someone from a different background wasn't "one of us" and that we needed to help them because the language is different. They noticed this difference, but they wanted to help. This is a good thing. I've never noticed any discrimination.

*Is Fermilab a respectful work environment?*

- Yes. (Group agreement.)

## **Fermilab Hierarchy**

*One issue described in the APS report is that of the hierarchy of prestige and importance of different jobs at Fermilab, which recognized that research physicists were generally perceived at being at the top of the peak. Some employees suggested that this has led to an environment of elitism and arrogance in the workplace. What are your thoughts on this?*

- That's a personality issue, not just this lab. I wouldn't say this exists as a rule, it is an exception. (Group agreement.)

## **Women and Minority Advancements**

*Another issue described in the APS report is one in which woman and minority advancements are perceived as preference picks and not a result of individual qualifications. Again, have you experienced this perception of preference?*

- No, I don't see that. There is only one black physicist that I know. I was working with some minority students in the summer.
- I don't think that should be an issue. All students and personnel should be chosen by their qualification. I don't understand why the United States focuses on this issue so much. It should be based on qualifications.

## **Communication and Transparency**

- The general information is missing. Like when someone comes from abroad and they don't know how to do basic things like get a car, or travel, insurance, visa.
- For me, information is just passed down. It isn't lab wide.
- There should be a users office, someone who channels the information that is needed to the people.
- Communication should be improved with the users. The lab needs more people to help with this.
- When I worked for the lab directly, there was a lot of confusing information about what the benefits were, and how things work here.
- You just have to dig it out and find it yourself.

- It's time consuming. It shouldn't be; it should be transparent.
- There is someone on site to ask, but the first person I go to is my supervisor or my friends, and then they tell me where to go. I get the information I need then.

## **Mentoring**

- There is one official supervisor, but I have unofficial mentors. It just happened that I built relationships with people who are nice and knowledgeable.
- I have people to work with, but nothing official.
- It would be helpful to have official mentors. (Group agreement.)
- You don't know your Fermilab supervisor well before you come here. They're the person that takes care of you formally, on paper, but when you actually work on your project you need a lot of other mentors and you have to pair up with people on your own.
- I think it would be hard to formalize the mentor process. When I need things from different experts, I go to different departments. You need people from different fields.
- A mentor isn't necessarily technical. A mentor is a guide to help you find out who to talk to, or if you have issues with your supervisor.

## **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

- Long hours in the cafeteria would be great. You could stay later and then meet with people in the cafeteria. At other labs, people gather in the evenings for discussion. We need to have dinners served here.
- There is a lack of that social interaction here.
- We have a student organization that encourages interaction.
- There is a user center with a bar and pool table. It's small and noisy. For relaxation purposes only. But we need a cafeteria with no music where people can just gather and talk. For example, I didn't have a car for a long time, and that was difficult.

- We need to increase transparency and feedback. When someone is doing work, they don't get feedback to know if it's being done fast enough,
- When a student is working with us to find a job, they need assistance from a mentor here. It can require that there would be more feedback.
- It would be nice to have more strong leadership in the groups. It's unclear who is responsible. Everything is ambiguous.
- Project schedules are ambiguous and often delayed.
- It's difficult to have a schedule, though. If something goes wrong with a project, it causes delays. Leaders should foresee issues and plan for problems.
- More social life. It's not a university, but as an international organization, they should offer a centralized, organized social life. I think it's understandable that sometimes it's difficult for a foreigner to get into an American group, culturally speaking. Good for integration. My wife knows no one here, and it's depressing and difficult. There is a group for spouses, but there are no younger people at all, and it's a very small group. It's hard on my family. I don't know how it can be improved, but to even have a cafeteria open at night would bring families together.
- I commute from Chicago with my car, and then I take the train in during the week. If there were transportation from here to the train station, I'd use it.

## Group N

### Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Six individuals, all of whom were minorities and/or women, attended this discussion.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

## **The Fermilab Work Environment**

*Without giving it much thought, I want you to write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Fun at first, learned a lot, but now because of the budget, it is stressful. Overwhelming. Changed for me after the 80's. Family-oriented then. Conflicting personalities.
- Love working here, incredible people, able to talk to all kinds of people. It's a lot of fun.
- Nice, good environment in the beginning. Sometimes hard to get ahead. Gone back and forth between good and bad.
- Very happy here. The group I'm in has excellent managers. Equality. A few have discriminated against me because I'm "just" production. Important to address issues head on.
- New here, like it, and it's a diverse workload. People have been very helpful. Uneasy with the budget process and furloughs. Uncertainty.
- Like working here and the diversity, but the economy is so bad and I'm afraid of layoffs.
- Site has campus atmosphere. I learn a lot, and teach a lot. Exciting and prestigious.

## **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

*Let's talk about your general impressions regarding how Fermilab handles diversity today. What have you seen or experienced at the laboratory regarding diversity that you would classify as positive or empowering? What have you seen or experienced at the laboratory regarding diversity that you would classify as negative or discouraging? Can you share some specific experiences that you have had related to diversity?*

- I've had lots of problems with this personally from certain people in groups. I took a human relations course in college and that helped me to recognize it, and I think it's predictable. Fermilab culture was that in the beginning certain groups and positions were abused, but recently it's getting better. You can't change a culture overnight. One bad apple spoils the bunch. There were many bad apples and it influenced several people. They realize now they can't continue because one person was fired for it.
- It's a "good old boy" system that I've seen for 26 years. People with no management experience whatsoever are made managers. People get extra duties over the years, but no promotions, it's been that way for years. I think engineers should be engineers and not managers.
- I have experience in a group that I was running and one person had family problems. They wanted me to fire her, and I wouldn't do it. I talked to her about her tardiness problem, but that she did a good job. She changed and did a better job. You get raises if you're liked. I was going to write letters to the directors about it because it's not right. I've been here for 15 years, and they make more money than I do. Seems like it's getting better, though.

*Has race or gender affected the general condition of the lab?*



- I think it's just the people who have been here a very long time. As they retire it gets better little by little. You just put up with people until they retire. You cannot shake the entire organization because of one person.
- I've never personally gone through it because my line of work is different. My work is in a small group.
- I've only been here a short time. I'm a person who hates downtime, so I get in there and work hard. I'm a quick learner, and I'm praised by managers. I want to prove myself. When I got my raise this year, I wasn't expecting tons, but I was really disappointed. Even my manager felt that I should get more. She told me that my next raise would be better, and that the lab was just going through a hard time. They told me they'd support me going to school, though, so I can't get too upset.
- I have no specific experiences. I keep to myself and I hate confrontations.
- I've taken on so much responsibility over the years that I can't go to school because I'm always on-call. I'm one of three who work on this machine, so I'm really always on-call. The supervisor says that I'm technically only on-call on certain days, but I'm always on-call because I have the most experience. A lot of people have gotten so sick of waiting for promotions and raises. People are going nowhere and it's hard, especially for a woman. There are just a couple of us here. I like to be busy, too, but I feel lied to and I'm always waiting.

## **Fermilab Hierarchy**

*One issue described in the APS report is that of the hierarchy of prestige and importance of different jobs at Fermilab, which recognized that research physicists were generally perceived as being at the top of the peak. Some employees suggested that this has led to an environment of elitism and arrogance in the workplace. First I want to understand if you have experienced this? To what degree and how is this present in the normal workday? How does this affect you in your job?*

- What I find is that the physicists have no management experience. The engineer has a little. Whether it's right or wrong, we have to take what they say at face value. That is the problem. The last physicist I worked for was excellent and paid attention to individuals. He gave everybody a raise, but when he left, only some people got those raises.
- I guess in the field of work I do, we have rules and procedures to follow and that's where I spend my time. If somebody doesn't follow the criteria, I don't care who he or she is, they get treated the same. One time I was working in a high radiation area, and the director at the time came into the building without a monitor, and I asked him to leave the building because

of it. I don't look at people differently because it's safety related. I do what I was taught to do.

- The people with higher education have an easier time communicating, but they still have high dysfunction.
- In my group, everyone is almost retirement age, and they are hard-working men. They stop a problem when it happens, they have an open door policy, and they are committed. If we have a problem we're free to go to our supervisor and he alone handles it. Everyone is treated with respect.

*Do you regard Fermilab as a respectful workplace? Why or why not.*

- I think that is the biggest thing Fermilab has going for it. (Agreement among whole group.)
- I haven't met one person who's been rude or obnoxious.
- I think for me it's just the idea of communicating with people. I like to talk to people about everything.
- Usually after you finish a project, your boss gets an evaluation of you, and lots of times I know I did an excellent job, but they never sent an evaluation in. Everyone else got one, but I didn't. I don't know why that is. Then I just said, "to hell with it." It's just the way it is.

## **Women and Minority Advancements**

*Have you ever seen non-promotions or lack of raises due to race or gender?*

- Not in my group.
- Yes, I've seen it.
- Not a lot of women in my division, so I can't really say. But I hear, "next year, next year" about promotions and my reviews are all good. You can't say anything because you don't want to tick people off. The manager runs the group the way he wants to run the group. It's an issue.

- I worked in a department where the entire group was run by one family, so it was a dead end. I'm happy in my group now.
- I've never seen systematic discrimination. (Group agreed.)
- The merit raise system was very arbitrary.
- But that was up to each boss. The same ones get the same promotions.
- I've always had the same position but I've been treated very well and I'm very happy.

### **Communication and Transparency**

*Is lack of communication or transparency ever an issue? Do you get the information you need from your managers?*

- Yes.
- Definitely.
- The lab was very transparent about the budget issues and helped everyone. They did a very good job.
- In my department we were able to get as much info as we wanted.

*Do you ever feel that it is difficult to be heard? What if you have an issue or challenge? Are there people you can go to?*

- I can get up and ask anyone who walks by freely, and they will take the time to explain. (Agreement in group.)
- You can't always tell your boss everything - like personal things.
- Had problems with a specific individual in the past, and he was removed after several years.
- I've been asked to close my eyes or look the other way for safety things in the past but now we have more regulations.

- I've also been asked to look the other way quite a few times over the past 26 years, but not recently. The lab has changed.
- During the mini-shutdown we were working and one of the guys with me didn't want to do the work the way it was supposed to be done because he didn't want to do the extra, required step.
- Sometimes issues are reported and sometimes people just look the other way.
- Another issue is that people come in sick when they should take leave. If they come in, everyone gets sick and takes leave instead of just that one person.
- There's someone in my department that I don't like to work with because he does everything fast rather than right. I don't like his work ethic. He's not being corrected because I'm not telling the supervisor. Sometimes he has good suggestions, but he's lazy or doesn't care. Everyone else I work with wants to get things done right.
- Don't want to be a tattletale either.
- There are a few people like that in the groups, but not all.

### **Work/life Balance**

*How many of you would say that Fermilab does a good job of providing flexibility and care in supporting its employees?*

- We have some situations where people have different rules. We see that. Some people abuse it, and some people just aren't given access to those benefits. But I've never been denied the benefits. It's not all bad.

### **Access to training and other development opportunities**

*Are there appropriate and sufficient opportunities? Is access to these opportunities fair?*

- So far they've approved me for training.
- As long as it pertains to the job.

### **Mentoring**

*Have you had access to mentors?*

- We all mentor each other in my group.
- When I joined the group, I was taught by several people. It was great.

*What about other kinds of support, we have heard a lot about HR, what do you think about their services?*

- I haven't had personal experience with HR problems.
- They were helpful when I asked questions.
- I've only heard that they're problematic.
- HR should be independent from the lab.
- A friend of mine works for the cleaning crew, which doesn't work directly for Fermilab and she had a problem. I recommended she go to the 15<sup>th</sup> floor, and they helped her with her problem fairly.

### **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

*This is our chance to talk about what a positive and empowering workplace would be like. What is your ideal workplace?*

- I think I work at a perfect place.
- I would like to see some things fixed, but we're all in different groups. We're all divided. Some people have no problems at all. People I work with have gone over and above just to help me move ahead and I am grateful for that.
- Everyone I come across is very respectful.
- The engineers think they are better because of their education, so technicians sometimes don't get the respect they deserve. People need to be encouraged to move up the ladder, but we never know what tomorrow brings around here.
- In my group, we get together and try to come up with ways to protect people. Sometimes it's hard to get those things done, but it's necessary, just like this process.

- Some of the management could be trained to do a better job. It would help all of us out.

## Group O

### Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

This discussion was attended by eight individuals, all male and at least two members of a minority group.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### The Fermilab Work Environment

*Without giving it much thought, write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- I've been depressed the past few years.
- Intellectually stressful. Not necessarily interactions with others. The traditional work stress of trying to get things done.
- A good challenge.
- I don't think many of us are confident that we have a significant future. I have been working here since the 60's, I would hate to see the lab go down like this.
- This is a very exciting place to work in terms of working with people from all over the world with all sorts of backgrounds. A lot of the best scientists in the world come through here to give lectures.
- Everyone would agree this is an exciting place to work. The reconfiguration of the lab for the ILC has been stressful and created a lot of "heat." The uncertainty of the landscape has been stressful.
- Frustrating. We don't have the portfolio of diversity like we used to have. There is a sense that the Lab does not control its future. We used to have more control over our future, now DOE is much more directive, we are at the mercy of DOE committees. We are in an environment where we don't admit problems or face up to our future, because people perceive this as just being critical.
- I think it's very difficult. I don't think there has been a real debate about the lab's role. A lot of people are in denial. That's a problem. Even on individual processes, it is difficult to make constructive comments.
- I think that goes far beyond the Lab. Even interacting with HR is a concern. The communication is inhibited. There is concern about saying the wrong things.

*Can you expand on that? What kind of things are you talking about?*

- The installation of a corporate culture at Fermilab, which didn't exist before, is coming as a shock to some people. It can inhibit conversation.
- I think the norm in business is failure (I realize this is a little outrageous to say), but we actually have a better record than that. There is certainly much we can learn from business, but it is being imposed without our input. In the past, the scientific staff was driving the program, and that is not true anymore.
- Things have gone in the opposite direction. In the most recent layoffs, almost everyone who received letters were scientists.
- There are things you cannot question, like safety. You cannot criticize little things either.
- There are business procedures that I am not happy about.

*Is there a legitimate avenue to discuss these things?*

- No. There is plenty of communication at lunch tables, and plenty of dissatisfaction communicated. But in the meeting room with a full room and the big guys are there, no one says anything.
- There are many ways to discuss things at the lab.
- The lab does many things well; it's just that they can do it better. So it is not as if they are not doing anything at all.
- There used to be weekly meetings with directors and senior managers. I don't know if that happens anymore.
- The Director and division heads do meet regularly.
- But we used to have a science advisory group where we would meet with the directors, and more junior scientists were involved. These kinds of meetings don't happen anymore. I don't think that the directors don't want to do it; I think they are just too busy to do it. We are all overwhelmed with work in terms of political work. It's a more global system than it used to be. Nevertheless, there is something that is missing.
- The notion of the lab culture has disappeared. It is no longer recognized that culture is an important part of how we get things done. Past directors understood leadership and culture and many of the things we have to day are the results of this, like the Saturday morning physics program. Cafeteria hours are a symbol of this. At CERN, much of the work is actually done in the cafeteria. We have lost that here, we don't have the get-togethers that we used to. The New Year's Eve party at the Director's house used to be the highlight of the year. These things have all been crushed out of the culture.
- A lot of these are budget decisions. The whole idea of not having places where people can meet is not good.
- Many of these are choices made outside of the lab.
- We are still hanging on to some things (Directors coffee, wine and cheese, Chez Leon) and this gives the lab an important identity.
- We should be using the FRA fund for this.
- Making this a fun place to work results in greater staff performance. The number of people here on the weekends is now a fraction of what it used to be. It still happens at CERN, but not here.

*What else is done to communicate?*

- The lab directors really try to open up the channels of communication.
- When we send e-mails to the director concerning lab issues, we expect a reply or at least an acknowledgement. But often the director simply ignores them. Even the DOE secretary promised that he would answer every e-mail from Fermilab people
- I take exception to that. I think that people expect too much to get an immediate email response from their directors. How can you expect Pier Oddone to get back to you quickly when he gets 500 emails a day?
- This is not easy, many things are beyond the Director. The people controlling the lab are at DOE, I am not sure how much we have any control.
- I am not sure that is true, there are these outside committees, but that is only part of the picture. The lab can still control some things, but it takes leadership and vision. SLAC did it. If we establish a clear vision, we can do it.
- It is not that we have no say, but the Director does not control things like in the past.

*Overall, how do you think the Lab deals with diversity?*

- I think it handles it remarkably well. You just get used to the fact around here that you will be talking to someone from a different culture.
- Everyone you work with is from a different culture.
- We used to have a lot of qualified minority candidates from veterans of the Vietnam war and they got preference and that worked well, but there are not as many candidates today.
- The control room tries to hire women and minorities, but it is difficult.
- Getting a woman to apply for a recent job opening was difficult.
- A lot of the work is on a 24/7 schedule and many women can't accommodate that work schedule. It's a very tough schedule.
- The control room is a starting point in a career though.
- Women ask to get out of that schedule quicker, because the schedule is incompatible with their life goals.
- There are lots of women and minorities in the computing division.

*Are there any other challenges regarding minority issues?*

- I think the lab is very open.
- Most people in management are very cognizant of this. I think they try very hard to mentor people. This lab has trained a tremendous amount of young people that have moved on to a better job. We probably do a better job mentoring young people than any other place does.
- One of the challenges about hiring people from other places is that we are a DOE lab. It has been hard to run an international lab in the recent climate. Foreign nationals have felt disrespected by some of the lectures that happen at the lab regarding current policies. There is a culture of suspicion.
- It certainly complicates our ability to hire foreign nationals. Visa challenges have also been a problem though it has gotten better recently.
- People need to face up to the fact that this makes things challenging.



- It is foreign to the lab culture. We brought Russians here during the Cold War, we should be able to better handle the current situation.

*Would you say the Fermilab culture is respectful overall?*

- The science tier of the lab is very tolerant. Once you get down to technician levels, it is more conventional. Between non-scientist and non-scientist, I think more cultural biases exist.
- Nearly every nationality has contributed to science, this is an important part of our culture and how we work.
- I think the employees here have a much broader view of the world because of the different cultures present.
- I can only think of two instances of diversity-based conflict, but it wasn't because of discrimination, more because of personality.
- In science, we are always competing with each other for better ideas. People are going to challenge bad ideas. The only one's that are discriminated against are the incompetents.

*Do you ever see minority issues as an impediment to advancement?*

- If you look at all the highest management levels, you see very few minority groups represented.
- Actually, there are many departments where you have women at the head.
- Yes, at the department level.
- There are not qualified candidates being held back due to diversity.

*Is there elitism and arrogance displayed between physicists and non-physicists?*

- I have a problem with that. There certainly is that perception, but I don't think the physicists are elitists. But the non-physicists certainly do think of us that way. I think it is only a perception.
- I think it's based on not knowing what the other person actually does. If you want to get rid of the perception, you need to better explain the life of the scientist to the non-scientist.
- My position within the hierarchy is not important to me as a scientist, but it is important to others. I have a lot of flexibility that they don't have but it is necessary for me to do my job. It is not a perk.
- This is a scientific laboratory. Fundamentally, scientists should have a certain respect in a lab like this. Where else would they get the respect like this? This is the paradigm in a lab like this, it is true of every organization.
- There is also a very strong anti-intellectual tone in American culture these days, though less so at Fermilab.

*Is this elitism perception a recent occurrence?*

- Oh, I think it has been here since I have been here.

- I think there has always been a respect for the support people at the lab.
- There is a difference between being the elite of the lab, and being elitist. I think this is more about how people are being treated.

*So does poor treatment of staff happen, is it common or an exception?*

- In our science meetings, we are always in heated discussion and lots of give and take and sometimes we forget that we have to change our tone outside of discussions with our fellow scientists.
- I've been in situations with new staff where they say that I am yelling at them, but that is not what I feel I am doing. I don't mean to, sometimes I am just in a high expectation mode. It is hard to walk out of a science meeting and then dial it down to talk to staff in a different way. Those instances cause trouble.
- People sense that scientists treat each other differently, we do not pay attention to organizational titles or positions.
- People listen to everything that you say and can hang on to it, and it is shocking. I have had that issue of moving from one meeting to another.
- We as scientists know each other well and cut each other slack, and are less likely to take offense.
- There is no room at the lab for a person that cannot handle criticism in science. That is what science is all about. Your peers are your quality assurance; their job is to tear your ideas to shreds. You get used to this kind of interaction.
- We do need to learn to dial it down and be a little less ferocious.
- We are used to thinking out loud in science meetings, but that is not a good thing to do as a manager.
- Language hygiene is something I have had to learn going into management.
- Physicists take on a lot of management positions, without much training.
- Scientists live in a horizontal culture and staff live in a vertical culture. As scientists, we can talk to and challenge anyone. That is not true elsewhere.

*Without that training, is that a challenge for managers?*

- When I first got to the lab, I was given a budget to manage. I had no idea how to do it. I am not an accountant, so I had to let them know that it was silly. All they told me was that as a scientist, I should be able to figure it out. And that is what happened.
- I think there is a role for formal training, but it doesn't mean I endorse all the training I have received; some of it has been kooky.
- There is also a lot of on-the-job training. Once, I was told that I criticized an engineer in a meeting, and not to do that again in front of other engineers. I didn't know that but I learned. At a scientific meeting, that would have been normal.
- You don't get a PhD, and then want to do personnel management.
- There is a terrible tension here, because we need to do good science and we also need scientists in decision-making positions.
- There is the idea that a good manager can manage anything, but that is completely contrary to everything the lab stands for. The Director used to be picked because they were the hottest physicists around, not because they are a good manager. Europe grows managers in the way we don't. It is important to find people who understand the science and can do management.

- We had examples of empire builders in the past and that is a disaster, we don't want people hanging on to power.
- Upper management has to get the feedback about which managers are effective or not.
- However, you need to be careful not to set up a system of rewarding bad managers by letting them have more time for science.

*Are there the right systems in place to receive the feedback?*

- In many cases yes. It could be put in place.
- The scientific staff has to convince its employees that they have a future.
- We are in a state of uncertainty. But you don't want to convey that to your staff.
- We need to provide them a path for career opportunity, they can understand that they live in an uncertain world.

*Is there good mentoring in place?*

- It's spotty; it's not as good as it should be.
- It's called survival of the fittest.
- Post-docs here have huge problems, they need tremendous mentoring.
- It's much harder given the environment, funding-wise.
- Upper management has to set the tone and pass it down.
- The funding agencies have just put a damper on our work.

*How are you dealing with the uncertainty that you mention and talking about future projects?*

- In the last year we have had these conversations.
- Somehow we need to get this information down to the staff. They all see a future that is empty. We just need to tell them they will be busy.
- The threat of layoffs didn't help.
- People are discouraged because every project has so many barriers.
- It's more of the external pressure that says the lab may not be growing.
- We are busy because of the budget shortfall, we are short staffed.
- These are primarily issues for the scientific staff. The technical and engineering staff are overloaded.
- What motivates people is the enthusiasm in the scientific staff, but most of the scientists are down in the dumps.

*Is there stove-piping that is going on? Does that effect the work environment?*

- Probably yes, but people are too busy.
- Inter-division communication has always been an issue.
- I think it has gotten better over time. There used to be very little sharing between the groups.
- I would say that my group has more flexibility than most other places, but not as much as the scientists here.

- If you don't like where you are at the lab, you look around and find elsewhere within the lab to go. I think that is still very flexible.

*Do you see this flexibility extending to women's workplace needs?*

- There are some instances of part-time work but not many. There are no shared positions.
- When my children were in the day care center here, it was just as common to see men using this as well as women.
- The tension here is the supervisors that can implement this. As far as telecommunicating, how do you know if they are really working at home as opposed to really working here at the office? How do you know they are really working?
- The training here is not universal, there is a range. The performance appraisal here is unfortunately not universal, which is a problem.

*How well does the performance review system work?*

- I think it's relevant to the principle issue we are discussing here. People are willing to do a lot when there is fairness. They get nervous and upset if there is a level of unfairness.
- People want to feel if they are doing their job well, they should be rewarded. I want my salary increased to reflect my performance appraisal, but that is impossible.
- Promotion has always been a problem.
- Anyone that comes in on the low end of the salary bracket is in big trouble. It is hard to move them if they are doing very well.
- Part of the problem is that most of the people don't take it seriously, and the staff doesn't either.
- There will always be tension between staff and supervisors.

*Are there any other issues you would like to discuss?*

- There are many issues the lab doesn't control.
- The paternity issue, I can't believe still hasn't come up in this day and age.
- There is also a problem of a sufficient technician pool. Young people today would rather be at a computer than fixing their cars, which is how I started.

## Group P

### **Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group**

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Thirteen individuals, including one female and three minorities, attended this discussion.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

## **The Fermilab Work Environment**

*Without giving it much thought, write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Great atmosphere
- Flexibility
- Informality
  
- You're given an opportunity to learn new things and move around and do new things. (Group agreement).
  
- If you have an idea you'd like to pursue, you're given the flexibility and support to do that as long as it adds value.
  
- All I had to do was speak up and ask for a new opportunity and I got it and now I'm doing what I want.
  
- I have a friend who wanted to move to a different area and she left the lab because she wasn't allowed to move. My sense was that she was treated unfairly.
  
- It depends on the manager.
  
- Sometimes the manager doesn't want you to move for one reason or another. Sometimes you just get stuck in a position.
  
- I know someone who was also stuck and left the lab. They couldn't move to a new position.
  
- I agree that this is a flexible environment. I went somewhere else for a few years, and came back.
  
- Throughout the lab there seems to be some groups that are more flexible than others.

- Sometimes your job just requires you to be here.
- The lab is not run like a typical business. Departments are focused on themselves and not on the lab. There is no authority to change that. For me it's great. I've got lots of flexibility. The things we do here are unique compared to other industries.
- I really enjoy the diversity here.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

- Every Wednesday I meet with two Russian ladies and speak French at lunch, so it's just really unique and I appreciate it. Chinese, Russian, French... It's all very cool. I don't think there are any negative issues.
- I've noticed speaking to some of the Russian men, they come over here with some experience from Russia and they're not as used to working in such an open environment. It takes them a little while to ease in and accept the flexibility.
- Coming from India, my experience has been that the higher the education levels, the higher the awareness. The education level here is very high and people understand my culture. They are very tolerant because of that education.
- As a woman I feel a gender bias. I'm trying to think of the last time we had a female in a certain higher level position. I'm not sure if it's the pool available or bias. My old group was more balanced, 40/60. Seems like over the years it's tended toward more males.
- I've gotten 20 resumes for a position and none of them are women.
- Regarding a woman being head of a particular division, there were always males before her.
- I don't think that women are being held down. There are brilliant women who are moving up in our division. It's your talent, ability, and ambition.
- I haven't felt the gender bias myself because I'm very capable and have received two awards, but I work very hard.
- I don't think I've been a part of a racial bias. I've moved into other positions without a problem.

*Is Fermilab a respectful workplace?*

- I've realized that the behavior toward me is based on education level. Just a few instances.
- I've seen a person in a management position treat people like dirt, call them names, put his hands on you. He was fired over a safety issue, and everyone was glad. It took them 20 years or something to get rid of him. He was more of an exception.
- Overwhelmingly positive, but I have heard stories like that.
- Unique personalities work here. I've seen name calling in meetings, throwing a book, and childlike behavior. Nothing happens to people who do that.
- (Group shared specific stories of managers misbehaving, and that it's a fairly regular occurrence.)
- I see it almost daily with one particular person we work with and it's just the way he is. He has run-ins with our boss.
- I think it's both tolerated and ignored.
- I went to personnel over an incident and another person, too, and nothing ever happened over it. I'm the one who got in trouble for reporting it. We both got a memo in our files against us.
- Physicists get tenure and there's a brotherhood. I've seen them lose their temper and act like children and they just get tolerated. That behavior is very common to this lab.
- It's a physicists club.
- I have to remind myself that if we go away, the physicists will just do things themselves. If they go away, we go away. We're here to help them, and I try to keep that in my mind.
- There are a lot of highly educated people who have been here for a long time, and some conversations gets to borderline arguing and people are convinced they're right and are not willing to listen. It gets very heated. That just comes with the territory here.
- The arguments are between physicists and all other types of people.

## Fermilab Hierarchy

- Not all are like that. The minority. Most are very open.
- I would say that if I ever wanted to climb to a certain level of management, I know that's not available to me because I am not a physicist. But I wouldn't consider that elitist.
- There were certain management positions that were filled by physicists, and I wondered why a PhD was needed to fill all these positions. There aren't many ways to get ahead here. It would be great if they offered some advancement curriculum here, rather than driving to Chicago to go to classes after work.
- If you have a physicist who works for you, you cannot give them a bad review. They can't get fired. They're a different class. Some are tenured. I went to personnel for the procedures, later that afternoon a division head called me in and said they heard I went to personnel, and that it wouldn't happen again.
- There have been physicists who violate safety procedures and they're just told not to do it again. Someone could've been killed and they just insist on spending the money and doing it themselves. They get a quarter of a billion dollars to play here, and if they don't succeed there are no consequences. We're a teaching community. We don't have to produce anything.
- There are different cultures. There's a physicist culture, a technician culture, engineer culture, etc.
- I had an incident when I was yelled at and he said, "If I had a gun I'd shoot you!" This was a man picking up the recycling (a non-Fermilab employee.)

*Is there anyone to go to about issues?*

- I wouldn't even know who to report things to.
- I've heard so many negative things about HR, that it doesn't seem that your concern would ever go anywhere.
- I've never even thought about going to HR. I just go to my boss. Safety issues are different. I know where to go with that.
- I wouldn't like to go to HR, but I would if I had to.



*Do you feel the managers are doing a good job here?*

- Overall management is one of the weaknesses here. It is disorganized, there is no big picture overall, advancement is non-existent through that chain, and there is no structure. We can't seem to get a chief IT person here like at other corporations.
- There is a lack of true management. You just grab who you need team-wise and get things done. It's like: we're all smart, and we can all do everything, and we don't need management. That seems to be the culture.
- There is a person titled as a project leader, but actual project management doesn't happen. Some people don't even know who the project leader is.
- Sometimes you get to the point where you are just thrashing back and forth between multiple projects. It's gotten so bad because you feel like you can't get anything done.
- The lab is doing a lot to get us trained but it's time to turn physicists into good managers. Physicists hate being management and they want to go back to science.
- There is no discussions about qualifications, they just put available people in the spot.
- You have to have trained professionals in these management positions. You shouldn't necessarily promote technical people to these positions. It's just a different skill set. The desire is not there.

### **Communication and Transparency**

- This was brought up long ago and they started this monthly magazine in our group, and it's useless. It's got anniversaries, births, and that sort of thing. The information coming out of the meetings are not filtering through. Some managers do it and some don't. This was supposed to fill in the gaps, but it's not.
- I can't say that the layoffs were handled well, but I don't know how it could've been handled differently. It dragged out much longer than it should have, but we were told that it was all out of their hands. There was just silence and we asked that even if there was no news, that they at least say in Fermilab Today that there was no news on that day.
- There was a complete void of information.
- One day someone saying that they weren't even looking at our group, then the next day they would tell us to look out that our group was being targeted now.

- I always just talk to my boss first for information. Beyond our department, I have no idea where to go.
- You had to read the newspapers to know what was going on around here.
- I heard from a physicist during a car ride that the ILC was completely dead everywhere. You shouldn't have to hear big news by rumor or chance.
- It's too tailored to physicists.

### **Work/life Balance**

- I've never seen a written policy about this flextime issue.
- I heard from my supervisor that there is a policy, but it wasn't clear.
- When I was an assistant group manager, someone wanted to work from home and even though it wasn't conducive to the project, we let her.
- I'm on pager 24/7, so my supervisor would let me work at home if I had to work at 2 AM, but others could work from home anytime. The same manager who works 4 ten-hour days doesn't let us have flexible hours.
- My supervisor is pretty flexible with hours. It is more important to get the work done, no matter the location and hours. I want to be in the environment with my peers, so I come in at normal times.
- My impression is that it's just completely different from boss to boss. My experience is that it's been accommodating.
- I think there needs to be a more uniform policy about working from home.
- I've gone from having a very flexible boss to a non-flexible boss. It's been very difficult for me to make that adjustment and I feel that I've been less productive and less happy under this new environment.

*What are your thoughts on the current evaluation system?*

- I think it's a joke. (Group agreement.)
- I think they write the goals for you. You can't take it seriously if you cannot get a premium rating. I got a glowing review and it was given back to my boss and he was told to add negative comments.
- I'm in the upper quadrant of my pay grade because I haven't been promoted in 12 years. My raises are practically zero and they're trying to get everyone back to center.
- They shouldn't change your evaluation based on the lack of money.
- They've come up with iterations of this over the years and it just gets worse.
- A few years ago there was no one above group leaders who were even getting appraised. Managers weren't being appraised.

### **Training**

- As a person in my position, now because of something that's been put off for three years, I'm upgrading two systems. I asked for training and I don't know when I'm ever going to get it. Someone told me I could do it online. When? In my spare time?
- People in your position are stretched too thin and they need more people.

### **Mentoring**

- I'm the youngest guy in my group and I've been here for 12 years. Turnover is so low here.
- I'm one of the oldest members of our group and the person who would mentor me is my supervisor and he doesn't have time. I have to develop relationships outside my group, and it all depends on whether people have time.
- I find that when you hire someone new you want to give them a mentor. There's the right way, and the Fermilab way. People need to understand how to get things done here and it takes a long time to learn.

### **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

- Reworking the performance appraisals. People should be reviewed on what they actually do and not get the goals as they get the review. It doesn't really mean anything now.

- At an old job we mapped out ways to get to new positions. We don't have that here.
- There are distinct cultures within each division and they don't interact well. There's competition between divisions for the same money, and it's bad for the lab. There are stereotypes about groups and it's counterproductive. Everyone is trying to get their hands on the same pot of money and it really needs to be addressed.
- Somebody higher up should've seen the ways that these groups are working and how they fit together. We shouldn't come to solutions by accident.
- There should be a vision from higher up. No one's looking at the steps to get things done. Too many steps for something that can be done in one.
- If we're doing things wrong, then we need to straighten up to keep our funding long-term. We're not the top dog anymore and we need to be competitive.
- This field is very competitive. There is a culture of competitiveness.

## Group Q

### Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Seven participants, including four female and three minorities, attended this discussion.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### The Fermilab Work Environment

*Without giving it much thought, write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Fun, it's true. My boss is not breathing down my neck and I choose the projects I want to work on. It's very interesting. I have been fortunate not to have bosses that are micromanagers. It's challenging and fun and we get paid to do it.
- I have to agree. The freedom to work with who you want and how you want, you can't find that anywhere else. It's challenging and exciting, but also a little stressful. A good kind of stress. The group is very diverse, I like that.
- I am spread too thin for all of the responsibility I have. In the past 2 or 3 years my responsibilities have increased due to staff and budget cuts. It's stressful.
- The work itself is fun and interesting. Working with others sometimes is exasperating. There are cultures that collapse with each other.

*In what way do you mean?*

- Some groups think they are the boss.
- I think arrogance is a requirement of being a scientist.

### **Fermilab Hierarchy**

*In the APS report, there were accusations of elitism and arrogance. Does that arrogance translate into people being treated poorly? What are the manifestations of this arrogance to you?*

- There is this subtle discrimination going on from theorists to experimentalists and vice versa. I think they are not being very honest.
- It's like a power struggle.
- They are dominating and want to keep it.
- It's very open for me and people are very easy to talk to.
- Busy. There are some people who are so horrible on some days. It's neat to work here; it is so interesting, new and exciting.

*When you go home and talk about your horrible days, what are some of those horrible things?*

- Backstabbing, being talked down to. It's a power struggle.
- That happens everywhere though.

- That happens everywhere, some places are more obvious about it. People come from different cultures and take it different ways.

*Overall, is the workplace respectful? In dealing with cultural differences in ways that people act?*

- Yes, for the most part.
- It really depends on the manager or the boss that is in the room at the time.
- It is more respectful in the last 20 years, it has improved greatly. It's because of the time and the location.
- There are ways to criticize someone at work respectfully.
- I have been publicly chewed out by a senior manager, but some of those folks talk a certain way and I'm getting used to that. When people sound disrespectful for so long, you just get used to it.

*Is there evidence of disrespectful behavior is less tolerated of females than males in your experience? Are females expected to behave differently than males?*

- I think it is just social etiquette.
- It's hard to say because there are not enough statistics.
- I don't get that sense.
- It's the tone of voice, being talked down to.
- People are respectful within groups. There is elitism inside Fermilab; it could be the whole academic environment.

*Does this happen to you?*

- Not in our group per say. If you have a question, everyone is approachable. I do understand what they are saying. There are only a few spots and everyone wants to stand out. It does exist in the academic environment, but I don't see that here, they are friendly.

*Are there any other issues with respect or hierarchy?*

- It does seem that groups are cliquish.
- Most of us depend on the managers.
- At one point they treated me like a grad student. Meaning, basically they don't want to impart information to me. I don't think it was because of my race.
- It takes a while to be accepted into a group at the Lab.

*If groups aren't working well with each other does it affect you?*

- I think America is too competitive, in my country there is not a lot of rivalry.
- I have seen apprenticeship elsewhere. They don't have that here. You would be lucky if you got some help.
- All those managers are competing with each other.
- Everyone has to be either a project manager or a person manager.
- That is why I think there is a problem. It's like they get protective.
- With all the different cliques, there are so few post docs that we try to get them to join our department. The department head places them, when really the post docs should be choosing where they want to go. There seems to be more stove-piping then there should be.
- It seems that the people that are the most obnoxious are the ones that get the resources, because they're the ones everyone doesn't want to get mad.
- I think there are new people that come in and their managers don't even talk to them. Some people have no social skills and are managers. The people that come into their departments that are not extremely gregarious end up leaving the Lab.

*What is your experience when managers aren't managing well? Do they get the help they need?*

- No, people just talk about it.

- There's no real structured way to tell them that they need help.
- There are people in management positions that are not great managers, but they are old enough that they aren't sent to management courses, and they don't think they need the help anyway. In fact, very few managers at the lab get any training in management.
- Our situation is very different, we don't really have managers. As post docs we come in and choose one or two professors and work with them. We work, and we hope we are good enough to get the next job.
- We judge for ourselves if our work is good enough.

## **Mentoring**

*If you had a mentor, would that be a benefit for you? Would you take advantage of that?*

- I think so, who wouldn't benefit from a mentor?
- It depends on your mentor.
- Assuming the mentor is worth it.
- I think the person you work for unofficially becomes your mentor. It's very person dependent. Sometimes, I have had great mentors I have worked with. Other times, not so great experiences. You just hope you pick the right person.
- The whole process is totally non-transparent. I came in as post doc; I was the only one that got promoted to associate after 3 years. It was pure luck. I bugged them at every interview about my promotion. I was promoted before the transition; other friends of mine were not promoted after the transition. I am just lucky.
- I think outside of Fermilab, the performance review means everything. Here at the Lab, it means nothing. It's my understanding that everyone has to come to some average within the department.

*What are the ramifications of that as an employee?*

- I have no idea how I am doing.



- I think you really have to look out for yourself. It's much easier to ask for forgiveness than for permission. As a scientist you have to know what you want to do.
- The culture says be aggressive or else you won't get what you want.
- For us, the reviews give us hype and nothing else. It doesn't affect me, as a post doc, I just need a reference for the next job.
- As employees, this is our once-a-year way to know how we are doing, but it doesn't work that way.
- This is the only formal way of letting us know how we are doing, and it is meaningless.

### **Women and Minority Advancements**

*Is it harder for a woman or a minority to get a promotion?*

- Maybe only because in general we may be less assertive, and we accept too many responsibilities that aren't the ones that get us promoted.

### **Communication and Transparency**

*How transparent is management overall in terms of communication?*

- The director contradicts himself; I emailed him and asked why he was doing this. He said he wants to dispense information as soon as he gets it. In my opinion, a little less haste would be better.
- My perception is the opposite. They emailed us and told us everything that was going on.
- They don't have full information and they make decisions based on that.
- This is where I think HR doesn't know what they are doing.

*Do you feel comfortable going to HR for assistance?*

- I can't imagine it. It's not my direct experience, but I think they are involved in a lot of CYA and they're unable to give out information that is completely public. They are unable and unwilling to change their rules to fit the situation in an appropriate way to make something happen.

- So highly bureaucratic.
- Yes.
- It's outside of the way Fermilab helps people. It's just different up there.

*Are others having the same experience?*

- Back to mentoring, I do not know if there is anything set up or not.
- There was no orientation or training for mentoring.
- The program set up specifically was just for women.

### **Work/life Balance**

*How is the work/life balance here? Do you have access to the flexibility that Fermilab offers employees?*

- Transparency would be good. Understanding what is available to everyone would be good. Maternity leave for fathers would be a miracle. Some people fight for part-time work, because the culture of the job, you can't get part-time work.
- There is a perception that if you work from home one day a week or work part time, you don't take your job seriously.
- If a person is a significant person to the lab, the lab should consider how to make it work if they wanted part-time work or working from home, etc. Unless they are required to be there.
- There are a lot of ways to create job flexibilities without harming productivity.
- There are some women that want to have children but are afraid because of how they may be perceived. I have never seen any physicists that are pregnant.
- As long as you do your work, it seems to be ok.
- In our group, flex hours is not an issue.

- It is always about perception.
- We need to feel that if we want to have children as post docs, whatever, then it's ok. It's a concern among young post docs that want to have children.

*Are there any other issues with work/ life balance?*

- With weekend work related activities, I think it affects women more because of their children.

*How frequent are you required to work weekends?*

- They are about 4 times a year. This affects everyone that wants a life outside of the work.
- I am very low on vacation time, because when my kids are sick, I have to take a vacation day, not a sick day. That is different from everywhere else that I have worked. Also the number of vacation days is very low.

*Is there anything that we did not discuss that you want to say?*

- My biggest issue is the transparency of management. I don't think even the top managers don't talk to each other. I think my division head and my director are not on the same page as far as what we are supposed to be working on according to the DOE. I think a lot comes from the DOE, trying to micromanage everyone.

*So is it difficult for you to understand your priorities as a result?*

- For me, its additional paperwork. It doesn't change what I am working on but its more paperwork on how I make purchases for my projects. It's useless. A waste of time.
- They don't tell us the requirements of the publications.
- This Lab has a huge staff. Everyone is fighting over resources. At a meeting to discuss priorities, everything was a priority.
- The transparency issue - Scientists get a packet that includes recommendations from division heads, so they are reading your application for promotion. If there was better transparency for FIXA(?), then it would make the transition between division's heads easier. That is part of the problem when new bosses come in and the priorities change.
- There is no transparency for post docs on how people get picked to talk at meetings or conferences.

- I've heard that post docs here at Fermilab do not have the same mentorship as elsewhere.
- I've noticed here at Fermilab that you will get good help from someone that is willing to help and no help at all if the person is a jerk. It doesn't seem to me that speaking English is important, but cultural domination is important.

*Overall, do women have a harder time than men?*

- Only in the maternity leave.
- The fact that men have to take vacation days to take care of their new babies or sick child, but women get 6 weeks maternity leave.
- The day care here is great.

## Group R

### **Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group**

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

This discussion was attended by five individuals, two female and three male and at least one member of a minority group.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### **The Fermilab Work Environment**

*Without giving it much thought, write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- A lot of times it can be boring. I sit in front of a computer all day, unless you actually get up to see someone, you're isolated and just looking at data. Meeting deadlines can be a little stressful.
- I would agree. I was working 16 hours a day, nothing else.

- Its fun at the lab, it's always been exciting at Fermilab. Most of the time my work is in front of the computer, but the fun part is talking to the scientists. Always something new to learn. Challenging.
- It's good. Sometimes stressful. No good central air.
- I agree with stressful. Very frustrating because I haven't been here for very long. There is a lab culture that exists, and it is hard to get in. They require the grad students to do a lot of legwork. They want us to do a lot of work, but not enough to have their own jobs threatened.

*Why do you think that culture exists?*

- I think that culture has existed for a long time. The work balance has always been a problem.
- The scientists do nothing else. It is their life.

*You feel there is pressure to be here long hours?*

- Yes, it is very strange but as my own boss, there is no judging. But you want to be seen. It seems for a lot of people just being here is the way to go and not necessarily what they are doing while they are here.
- For me, it's being accessible. People are always dropping by your office and it's good to be there for them when they show up, often after 6 at night.
- You want to be the one to be quick to respond to email.
- Some of that varies according to who you are working with. If you are in a group that works 16 hours, you most likely will too.
- As an intern, I had to present weekly to the experts, the overall environment is not really that bad.
- The physical work environment for some people is pathetic: trailers, bad desks.
- You just don't want to look unprepared or not knowing what you are doing.
- Most people are great to get along with.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

- Groups tend to stick to their own groups and stick with their own.
- We all work well together though despite all the different groups.
- The language can cause misunderstandings.

*Is there a good recognition of these challenges?*

- It varies widely. There are a lot of cultural differences. People need to recognize that their cultures are different from that here in the U.S. There are cultures that treat women differently.
- I've never seen the lab do anything special to recognize that and fix it.
- The lab could teach people to speak and write better English.
- There is a level of precision needed for science. Being able to write clear emails and communicate clearly is important.

- My take is a little different, our experiment pushed hard to increase the Latin American participation and a lot of the kids did not do much work. They hid behind the language barrier to not perform well for many months but could speak English quite well actually. They got lots of attention and guidance, but took advantage of the situation, The people who come to the lab should have to meet certain expectations.

## **Women and Minority Advancements**

*For women and minorities, are there challenges in moving up in a career in physics?*

- I try to talk to people that have been there before. I can't think of anything that is against me or racial.

*You haven't felt any disadvantage with your path in the physics community?*

- Not really. I can't think of anything offhand. It could be that I am still in the learning stage and not a threat to other people's positions. In general, scientists just are not that sociable. I have been lucky I guess with great supervisors.

*How about as women? Are there any challenges with that?*

- There is lack of role models. There is also some pressure to succeed at a faster rate as women.
- There is no choice about it, we can't be a failure. We have to succeed.
- So much is given up to try to get tenure.

*Is this why women make more conscious choices when it comes to having families?*

- The thing is, it's not a choice for men, and they have their wives for this.
- When you are expected to work such long hours, it's hard to take time for maternity and then come back into it. Women come back from giving birth within a week or two.
- In this specific field, many female physicists are married to physicists.

*Are married couples at the lab an issue?*

- That is a huge issue. There is your work persona, and a personal persona, I don't think it is healthy to overlap the two worlds; it crosses too many boundaries.
- It gets in they way of cooperation.
- Everyone here is driving to get tenure.
- We shouldn't be getting things done because two people in our experiment are married to two other people, it is just not professional.
- This is why we have people here for 12 hours a day doing nothing, because they "have tenure."

*Do you think that is true of academia as a whole? Or is it specifically more challenging in physics?*

- I think it is academia as a whole, but it is more in particle physics than any other area. We are the most remote out of the applied sciences. We are very isolated while in grad school.
- If you are not at the lab 16 hours a day, or dating someone in the lab, or activities with the lab, then you are not in the “bubble,” you are just outside looking in.
- Coming back as an intern, it was like I didn't exist. I don't think it's a racial thing; it's just some physicists don't talk.
- No one in my research group is a woman. And you can feel it. For someone that doesn't speak english, I don't know how these women survive.
- It is hard to interact with the men as women.
- Activities outside of physics does help break down the barrier. It's mostly a white male environment, and as a black man, it is very challenging to break down the barrier, to make people feel at ease when you are there.
- If everyone is in the same bubble and the same culture, there would be no huge leaps. People keep trying to fit into these bubbles that they are not doing effective work.

*Do you feel the same isolation as a woman?*

- Yes.

## **Fermilab Hierarchy**

*Is there an environment of elitism and arrogance here?*

- It's a negative thing for the engineers. The ones that have to work with physicists day in and day out may feel like second rate.

*How does it manifest itself?*

- Physicists are very egotistical and arrogant. It is just how they are.
- There is a lot of arrogance here. I hear a lot of “I have a PhD, and you don't.”
- They don't like to explain themselves; engineers want to have an explanation.
- Physicists see themselves at the top of the pyramid, and everything else is below physics.
- It gives us a lot of problems with the Fermilab Computing division. They are supposed to take care of all of the software and other IT needs and they don't work very well with us. They don't understand that they have to ask us first when things are updated and they take our database off line. There is no good communication.
- If there was better communication it would help, also Fermilab keeps bringing in new people and they are not familiar with us.
- Back to being on the outside looking in, that also happens between physicists. We can spend all week working on something and present something, and then the PhDs will talk among themselves as if you are not even there. Its like I have this knowledge and you don't so I don't have to treat you well.

*When this sort of behavior occurs, does anyone correct it?*

- I think if there was a serious problem, then yes there would be. But not the daily problems. There are just too many cultures trying to get along that there is no unifying culture that overrides what we might consider bad behavior.
- At any other job, a lot of this would not be allowed.
- I think some of that serves a practical purpose, it is just trial by fire.
- I disagree, there are ways to do it in a civil way. Too often it goes into the personal attack; that is all they know.
- 80% of the time the line is crossed from robust conversations about science to personal attacks, people just don't see the difference.
- There is almost anyone saying, "that's enough, we don't behave that way"
- It doesn't change the long term behavior.
- It is a higher level physics issue. It really points to terrible management of physics projects. It is the same at CERN.
- This is part of why I left physics. I do similar work but I get paid better, people are nicer, and people laugh and joke around. My boss always checks in to see how I am. That never happened here.

*What impact does this have on you when you attend meetings where this kind of behavior occurs?*

- Usually, after the weekly meeting, I go to lunch just to get away. It does have a detrimental effect, but I don't want to become bitter. I have to get over it. You can take all that negativity and turn it around and make yourself better at your work.

*So what kind of people are we talking about who behave this way, does it create a sense of expectation about behavior in order to be successful?*

- Well, perhaps if you are seeking tenure, that could happen to folks and they could see this as the right way to behave.
- There is always a condescending tone when you come into meetings, you can feel something is wrong.
- I heard a story that the way to get tenure is to make others look stupid. There is just a culture of this is how its done In experimental physics. It's a contact sport. The theoretical physicists seem more civil about it. That is what I see and I am trying to figure out how I navigate through all that.
- I don't know how much it affects people, I've seen people move up because they were good - good physics, good managers. They don't cross the line. My advisor is nice and laid back at the end of long successful career and I just don't see him behaving that way.
- The more aggressive jerks I see seem to be covering the fact that they just aren't as good at their jobs.

*You mentioned poor management in high energy physics? How does that manifest itself?*

- I saw one example where someone was leaving the lab and refused to share information that was needed to continue the experiment, he just refused to train and provide information



to his successor so the project could continue. It took a really strong manager to come in and make it happen.

- The whole organizational structure is incoherent. The whole model seems wrong. High energy physics collaborations are so spread out that there is no clear structure and that is a problem. There is no clear path for training students and creating a path for them to continue their thesis and start their career. No one is there to help you. It's sink or swim.
- It was very difficult to know where to get information, particularly at the University. I'm ok now, but four years ago, it was extremely difficult.
- Yeah, if I did not work here for a summer, I would be lost. There is no real orientation for you. Must be even worse coming from a different culture and language.
- When you first come here as a grad student, a lot depends on the people around you and the quality of your advisor. A lot of it is luck. There is no real structure in the experiment.
- There is also a lack of documentation in the projects. No one writes stuff down or shares information which causes a lot of rework. There is no transfer of knowledge and none of this is simple or common stuff, it is unique complex electronics. It is expensive to maintain and we are wasting time and money not having any procedures.

*Do you think this is a commonly understood problem?*

- Everyone knows it, but no one takes the time to do anything about it. They just assign grad students to do it, but we have no clue how to do it.
- A lot of it is just laziness. It goes back to the management structure.
- Management is just a problem here. There are too many universities and organizations in the mix. There is no overall person that you know to go to in order to solve problems.
- Sometimes it works and sometimes it does not, it really depends on the individuals.
- Sometimes it is hard to know who is in charge, sometimes people are doing exactly the same thing competing with each other. There is no one to tell them no.
- Well, sometimes it is designed that way. In some cases the redundancy makes sense, but at the end of the day, you need to choose one path, like with software programs.
- People often just decide their own job description and responsibilities. There is a fundamental lack of accountability in academia, they really don't have to do anything they don't want to do. People want the titles but they only do what they want to do. They can't be fired or even reprimanded.
- Actually, I had a tenured advisor that did nothing. He got fired. So now I have no manager. I am now effectively the PI of an experiment at my University.

## **Mentoring**

*Do you think there is sufficient mentoring here?*

- I did have a mentor. It was ok. If they think you are smart, then they will go forward with you. If they don't think you are smart enough, they will mentor you but they won't go forward with you.
- I agree, when you first start off, there is just not enough training.
- I had a good advisor and a post doc that I worked closely with and was very lucky and learned a lot from them.
- People think they can get things done faster if they are a jerk about it.
- I've never had a mentor as a graduate student.

- I don't think there are enough female physicists that can be mentors.
- I think men can be good mentors for women. They have to have the awareness of the experiences with male and females.
- They have to be able to relate and to care. They have to have a personal interest.
- Awareness in general, is something physicists do not have. It is not something you can teach.
- Awareness is what is important.

## **Work/life Balance**

*Are there any issues with work/life balance?*

- For me as a grad student, they want you to stay on site; they don't want you to do anything else. But there is just no social life here, and if you don't have a car you are just stuck.
- For post docs and grad students, there is no work/life balance.
- There is this sense of "well I had to go through it so you should too."
- The professors have children and have to leave early and work when they can. We are expected to be there and available to them when they are working which is all night long, so you end up working all the time.
- Professors have their work/life balance and then that affects their students, they expect you to be available when they need you. It is expected that you are always available, but that culture has to change, there needs to be limits.

*What about having families and having children? Is this a challenge as you go through the system?*

- I know a lot of professors have kids. I know that the day care is excellent. Female professors mostly don't have kids. The other females I have spoken to have children but want to work full time. People do come back to work right away after birth.
- As a grad student your work schedule is flexible for children, but we make no money. Then as a post doc you have no money and you are working 20 hours a day. I have no idea how people do it.
- Maybe it is just too high an expectation to be a good professor, a researcher and a good Mom.
- It is difficult to work part time here.
- To be an effective physicist, you have to work 16 hours a day. But you don't have to do that to be successful. People just think they have to do that. I think the Lab would accommodate you but many people assume they won't.
- Women that came back from maternity, they have said it was hard to get back on the track. Fermilab needs to have programs to allow women to take a reasonable amount of time off, 3 to 6 months and come back.
- I think we need to adopt more of the private sector approach. They make it work. They have programs that are more flexible to meet modern needs.

*What would it take to make it work better here?*

- I think it can be done, but there are cultural obstacles. It is best done in a gender neutral way. Men need to be able to take time off for new babies, both parents need to be able to take care of their kids.
- I think that does happen to some degree, it is actually easier for men.
- We actually don't work for the lab, but we are part of the lab community and they can set the tone and say this is how we do things here, then I would be in a position to go back to my university and get permission.
- There really is not an overriding culture at the lab except for safety.

*Does the safety culture work?*

- We can't ignore safety.
- That is one thing that is a Fermilab way. We all know that safety is first whether we agree with the rules or not.
- So that could be done for other things.

## **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

*If this was an ideal workplace, what would it be like?*

- The managerial role needs to be scrutinized. There is too little accountability, no ramifications. The only thing Fermilab cares about is if you are getting results out, they don't care how you get there. There needs to be clearer goals and expectations of behavior.

*If there were better managers, would there be better results?*

- If you have a deadline 3 years from now, you might do nothing for 2 years and get on it the last year, because there is no management. There is no framework.
- Fermilab would look more like a private industry. Less emphasis on individual universities, more universal policies and culture. Need a centralized path, a coherent program for high energy physics.
- People are leaving the field because it is hard to scratch out a life.
- The management structure, we have been more flexible.
- I don't think it's too hard to establish yourself here. People just lose sight of what's important. The field is just not large enough to accommodate all of us. Some of the better people leave.
- If you want to be a high energy physicist, you have to be here - this is the fate of high energy physics.

*So Fermilab has an obligation to shape tomorrow's physicists.*

- This is why I have high hopes for the upcoming mentoring program. I think that will be very useful for the young people who come here to have guidance and get just basic help like even writing a good resume, how to get a post doc.
- This lab is a big fraternity, and here we are 'rushing' and that lasts a really long time. Again it's the whole "I had to go through this, so should you."

- There are simple things that can be done, we once had an opportunity to just talk with Pier and ask questions and that was great.
- I want a lab job, I don't want to be a professor. However Fermilab is not hiring for a decade, and we are going to lose a generation of physicists. We are losing a lot of good people.
- Me too, I don't want to be a professor, I want to be in a lab. We get a lot of people becoming bad professors because it is the only path.
- On the other hand, there are a lot of marginal physicists here who could not get university jobs and there is no way to get rid of them.
- Fermilab needs to help think through a whole new culture for shaping young physicists and creating long-term career paths that make sense.
- It should be hard to get a PhD, but it should not be inappropriate and the lab needs to help identify those boundaries.
- Fermilab should think about its own graduate program so they would have their own PhD program.
- It already exists to some extent, so they just need to extend it and formalize it.
- A mentoring program.

*How would it work better than what you have experienced?*

- The problem is just starting out so there are no expectations.
- It would help if there were specialists. Soft skills specialists.
- A program for foreign students to help them adjust.
- Different types of training.
- Better train managers on how to manage people.
- People skills classes would be good for everyone.
- There has to be more accountability for people in management positions. There are no set guidelines or rewards.
- A lot of this is experimental collaboration issues.
- If the experiment happens at the lab, then the lab has the responsibility.
- If you are using the facility, then there is a basic standard.
- Another thing is just how important these diversity issues are. If you keep pulling from white males, the pool you are pulling from gets smaller. You need to expand to women and minorities.

## Group S

### **Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group**

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Nine participants, including seven women and four minorities, attended this discussion.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but

otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

## **The Fermilab Work Environment**

*Without giving it much thought, I want you to write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Project was a wonderful experience, ups and downs, exciting
  - Difficult, challenging
  - Exciting and frustrating because I want to do even more
  - Frustrated with not being able to do more because bureaucracy gets in the way
  - Challenging
  - It's a job, parts you enjoy, parts you don't
- 
- Bureaucracy has gotten worse, part is from DOE, and part is Fermilab's response. About a year ago or two, the lab decided its interpretation of the weekly/salary regulations. People who were in salaried senior positions were now told that they were weekly and had to track time. It had a huge impact on the team. It was handled so poorly and hurt a lot of people I worked with. We had no clue it was coming.
- 
- When I first came here 25 years ago, the place had no security, and we could come and go anytime. I was told that the amount of money for security was more than what was actually being stolen, and I thought that was a decision made by reasonable people. It has changed. It's all about what DOE wants to know. I get frustrated with the DOE bureaucrats.
- 
- I think it's Fermilab management more than DOE. They overdo the effort to support bureaucracy. The lab is showing the impact of becoming just a paper mill and not doing anything. It impacts my work. This morning there were three techs standing around waiting to get in, and the safety person would not put a key in a box because he was not authorized. It's an example of the growing bureaucracy.
- 
- I don't know why we accepted that people with business degrees can run science labs. Also, anything having to do with safety is not reviewed. They can do anything in the name of safety.
- 
- There are some areas in the lab where people are working in the trenches doing the work that DOE has us do. We have some people who try to fend them off and explain why certain things don't work.
- 
- I have a sticker on my laptop from PPD that I'm required to have that instructs me to never turn my laptop off. It's a regulation, and it makes no sense. It's laughable.

- Personnel has taken on an unfriendly attitude toward employees. People aren't treated congenially. They've pushed their authority too far. An example is the reading of the equal employment practices. Personnel feels that they can apply any penalty they want to people for minor difficulties. It's an arrogance from personnel. There is no willingness to be a team player. I am trying to hire people and personnel is assigning salaries that are far too low.
- There was the employee handbook fiasco. The handbook told us we weren't allowed to write recommendation letters, which is a normal practice in the field. We were instructed to sign this thing saying we could not write the letters. There was rebellion and people didn't sign it. Then the pages were never even collected.
- The 15<sup>th</sup> floor doesn't understand what they are running. It's a science lab.
- They make rules that cannot be followed. Like the turning the laptop off rule, and the handbook thing. You've clearly gone down a road of disrespect that can be toxic.
- It's non-productive. Like the safety rules.
- The place was paradise for a while and the handbook marked the descent. At least five years ago.
- We are scientists and we're used to scientific risks, we invest our time, we are not used to, and we hate to, put our lives in the hands of bureaucrats. We invest five years in an experiment and then have a DOE bureaucrat cancel it. They don't understand what we're doing. I've heard people say that it's the last time they'll work for the U.S.
- I'm not really against management, organization, or safety. Physicists are like a herd of cats. There should be structure, but there is a disproportionate amount of self-propagating, self-interest in the bureaucracy. They want their own job security. It's like a cancer cell.
- It's typified by the performance evaluations. More like a recipe and less like a discussion. The 15<sup>th</sup> floor has legislated these very insulting forms. You get a score, and then the departments are told to make it all average. So it doesn't matter anyway. And there's no merit pay. No way to reward employees. They're motivated to just make it standard. They've take control from the supervisor.
- What I thought about this lab was that people were put in positions of power to make decisions. Don't put restrictions on top of that person. If that person isn't working out, or can't be trusted, replace them.

- In one department, a tech was given a low raise because of poor performance. The 15<sup>th</sup> floor overrode the review, and gave that person a 20% raise to bring his salary in line with others who had been here equally as long. We didn't find out until the envelope came with the raise documents.
- DOE requires guards around the perimeter of the lab, so we have them. They do the minimal required, and there is no value-added. We don't do it because it is reasonable; we do it because they tell us to. It's a waste of money.
- If you look at the history of the lab and saw when it worked best, it's all before this bureaucracy.
- It gets in the way of doing good science. (Group agreement.)
- It makes the ability to build a team very difficult. There's no motivation.
- The scientists in this lab have a fear of working in a U.S. lab.
- They didn't need to spend two years doing cost studies on the ILC when they already knew the cost would be prohibitive.
- This lab used to be run by scientists and the director. Now it's run by DOE.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

*Let's move into our more specific conversation about diversity. Let's talk about your general impressions regarding how Fermilab handles diversity today.*

- Though I was not born here, I'm a US citizen and I've been treated like a white U.S.-born male. I'm equally annoyed by those who cannot communicate clearly. In my opinion, there is zero gender or race bias. Just ego.
- It's always been my experience that if you're good at what you do here, it hasn't mattered what you look like, how you dressed, where you were from, etc.
- My pet peeve is that the lab does not assist people in getting green cards. We're very behind. We lose people because they lack assistance. At least for the past 5 years. People pay their own way and get their own visas because the lab is so bad at supporting them.
- I've seen a lack of legal advice.

- It's extremely important to attract bright people here at the lab and if you can't get them here, that's bad.
- Universities are better at doing this than the lab.
- As a non-US citizen, but a permanent resident, and a permanent Fermilab employee, I'm annoyed that I have to renew my ID card here every year. It bugs me.

*Is there a gender bias?*

- As a woman, I've never experienced serious gender bias here and it's never impacted my career here. But then again, I don't have kids and I don't have to juggle that.
- Over the years, it used to be that spouses couldn't get jobs at the same lab, but that has changed a lot. It has made it easier for two professionals to work in the same city.

### **Women and Minority Advancements**

*Another issue described in the APS report is one in which woman and minority advancements are perceived as preference picks and not a result of individual qualifications.*

- No place is perfect, but the general culture is very good.
- We're getting close to some age discrimination issues. Not using older people effectively, and assigned and fitting them into places that work. Retirees and medical benefits may be an issue and trying to separate the older people from the rest of the workforce.
- The voluntary retirement thing this year, the first list of people allowed to leave the lab had an average age was 65, and it was very unfair.

### **Mentoring**

- There's lip service to that but it doesn't happen. No one keeps track of that.
- The Fellows are supposed to do their own thing but it's not supervised.
- The students are coming from universities and you have a chance to work with young people, but that's not happening. I don't have a solution to that.



- In principle, since Fermilab doesn't have a PhD program, we don't have that responsibility. My experience with students is that just because Fermilab works with students, we go beyond what we're paid for. If anything, I would suggest that we try to work with students.
- I don't think the lab does a particularly good job mentoring post-docs.
- I would say that I think the lab is a place where people are hired to have jobs. There's some thinking that the lab is just a place where you can wander around and just do whatever you'd like. I think people should have a job, do the job, and let the mentoring take care of itself.
- Post-docs aren't being told that doing science will get them their next jobs. It's shocking. They need to be uniformly told that. There has to be a record that they've had some scientific thought. Some people have good mentors that do that.
- These are supervision issues, not mentoring issues. It would be better to train the supervisor to do the mentoring, than have another mentoring program.

#### *Would management training help?*

- Workforce evolution here is a problem. Ineffective managers and employees stay in place, and it's a culture of a lack of supervision. It starts at the top. People aren't let go or reassigned. It's complicated, but a lot of times an ineffective supervisor may be effective in some other way. You hear the tension that exists here because of handling things in a bureaucratic way, and our HR department has that tension. It's a very complex thing. We do have a large amount of freedom and personality, and that makes it harder to say this isn't working and we'll move you into something else.

#### *What would work better?*

- Having focused projects, a vision, and time to get there.
- The lab has 20 or 30 projects now, it's in trouble because it's spread too thin. The lab needs a single large project that is a uniting force.
- I don't agree that we need a singular project, but we do need vision. Even with the approved projects, we don't have enough resources. Balance has to be struck between focus and new ideas. We're completely directionless now.
- The particle physicists should drive what happens here. What physics do we want to do?

- The second floor knows what Washington will support, though.
- We need better theorists.
- If you work in an experiment that is very successful and you're a young post-doc, you'll have better opportunities in the future. That's just part of the scientific environment.
- A few months ago there were discussions about female mentors but it turned out there weren't that many who wanted mentors.

### **Communication and Transparency**

*How well do you feel that management communicates?*

- It's not good.
- It's not clear that decisions are even being made.
- We knew that a decision was made, but we don't know the thinking behind it.
- Policies aren't communicated well.
- Performance reviews, why is it like that, why no merit pay? There were no discussions about this.
- The layoffs and furloughs just dragged on and on. We were told things too late.
- Pier was transparent during that process, though.
- We lost a lot of good people during that time. They left, and there's deadwood still here. Another group knew they were going to be laid off and then it didn't happen.
- The paper trail is questionable because managers and supervisors are told what to say. It's already predetermined. The performance review should be a tool for the supervisors to talk with the employees, but if a supervisor is only talking to the employee once a year, they should be fired.

- I know of an employee who didn't get a review for four years. His supervisor didn't talk to him for four years. You want to see changes in the way things are handled, but you need processes and that involves paperwork. It takes time and preparation and uniformity. You can't arbitrarily vote people off the island. You have to have a uniform process.
- I find the review is an exercise to evaluate myself. The raise is irrelevant because the pot is fixed. You can improve your performance and never see more money. The evaluation shouldn't be tied to the increases.
- Something that hasn't come up that bothers me is matrix management and the responsibilities and division of responsibilities. Over the years the responsibility tree has become more and more fragmented and it's not clear who is responsible for what. Many supervisors work elsewhere and don't talk to their employees. It's hard to find a balance and hard to know how to improve.
- From the supervisor's side, there are people who really like to pit the experiment side with the line management side, and you don't know if your employee is doing what they're supposed to be doing. There are people who want to exploit the freedom here.
- I've been doing performance reviews for 15 years and if I ask myself what would have happened if we had done none of it. My feeling is that it would be no different. I don't think any of my projects would have gone better or worse if people didn't get those reviews. Doesn't make a difference. The nature of what we do changes too frequently. You write your review, the supervisor changes it to look like his words, and no one ever refers to it again.
- Group leaders are very parochial. More supervision or doing the reviews at a higher level could solve that. All of that involves lots of paperwork. Should we spend a lot of time trying to do this well, or do we just continue to give everyone an average score?

### **Work/life Balance**

- I wear a pager, and my contract is that I have to come in if something breaks. That's just my job.
- The lab doesn't have an official work at home policy. It's up to the individual groups. Some jobs you have to physically be here.
- If you move the decisions up to the higher levels then the uniform policy won't apply to everyone. It should be considered by the supervisors in a case-by-case basis.
- One person will abuse the policy and then no one will be able to do it.

- The supervisor should confront the individual.
- What should get more weight: fairness or productivity? If we're not productive, we'll disappear. It should be up to the supervisor. If the supervisor thinks he will get more from you at home, then that's fine. If he feels he won't, then no flextime.
- But what about matrix management? Define supervisor. It may not be someone who works with you. If the group that you're working with doesn't include the person who writes your review, who gets to decide how productive you are and if you're eligible? It would aid the process to have more flexibility to determine these things. One size fits all doesn't work.
- Unless you feel morally obliged to be a good supervisor, there's no incentive to be one. If you're good, you just get more staff to manage.

### **Physicists vs. non-Physicists**

*Is there elitism by physicists toward non-physicists?*

- I think there are scientists who behave as elitists, but not everyone.
- I think it's an exception.
- It was the way the lab was originally set up. It's gotten better over the years. Back then, the physicist was in charge of everyone else on the team. There's some bitterness within the engineering community, and yes, some of us are arrogant.
- Some of it is cultural. The non-scientists tend to be more professional.
- Physicists by nature or education seem to have huge egos. We try to work around our huge egos, but it's a physics lab and should be managed by physicists. On the other hand, there are scientists, engineers, and others working shoulder to shoulder, and it doesn't matter your level. Yes, there may be some friction, but overall I think we work together.
- I don't know why elitism is a bad word. We have gone through a training to think rigorously, and we hold others and ourselves to that standard. I don't think I'm God's gift to science. I look at my mistakes every day I see how stupid I am. But sometimes there is no compromise, and if someone has a bad design you have to point it out. We shouldn't confuse scientific discourse with personal issues. I don't feel like I work in a very elitist place.
- There are some people who are elitists, but that's not the case in general. There is a hierarchy.

*Is Fermilab a respectful environment?*

- Yes. (Group agreed.)
- People who are abusive don't last long.
- That's not completely true. When the 15<sup>th</sup> floor comes out with some edict, it comes down with so little respect. It's insulting.

### **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

*What would a more positive and empowering workplace would be like.*

- Pier should talk directly to the people, and tell us the direction of the lab. He's an outward looking director, and people feel at loose ends.
- Pier's job is to set a direction. He has advisory groups and others to consult with. He needs to set clearly defined goals. People get too entrenched in their particular position. Reorganize and scramble the positions. We shouldn't be fighting each other; we should be working together.
- A lot of organizational anomalies have been set up over the years, and we need to look at these structures.
- Fermilab used to be a leader and now the Europeans lead. It's not clear where the U.S. labs are going next. It has to come from the leaders.
- I'd like to stress the need to create a bureaucracy that actually helps science.

## **Group T**

### **Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group**

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Nine individuals, five of whom were women, and all of whom were minorities, attended this discussion.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

## **The Fermilab Work Environment**

*Without giving it much thought, write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Unorganized, poorly managed, could be better.
- I would agree, but it has been happening the past few years when we have few people, and they are not hiring. Everyone is getting more and more assignments and getting overloaded, It's very stressful.
- My previous job was very stressful and I always wanted to quit. I have never felt this way about Fermilab. There has been an increase in workload; I have to work at night after the kids go to sleep. I am willing to, but after a while, I think "why do I have to do this?"
- If it was better organized, people wouldn't have to spend so much time cleaning up. There are more people managing than there are people working. They create more problems for the future. A vicious cycle that never ends.
- It's like trying to stop fighting fires. If you stop and make a plan, you can stop fighting fires. But when you don't have time to plan, you just create new fires.
- Then there are the heroes who put out the fires and they get all the attention and reward, but we should not even be in that position.
- Managers could manage the job better. Even when I was on vacation, I had to still carry my laptop around in case they needed me. One person has a unique skill that no one else has, so they are so dependant on that one person.
- There are these groups within groups, and they get all the awards. Sometimes you also want to be recognized, and you have to try to get into the group. They seem to exclude you when doing things. They know how to play with upper management. They go out, eating, drinking, but management is so disconnected to the rest of us.
- I agree with that. You can get to know people while at work, instead of always socializing outside of work. If you don't get to know these people, you can't get any recognition. You have to break into the circle.
- At events, there is always someone left out, such as a vegetarian. And no one, including upper management seems to care.
- It is very different from group to group and different managers.

*So things differ from group to group and it seems to be because of management. Is that a challenge here?*

- It depends on the manager. I had a great manager, and then another that I had to work really hard at understanding him. Right now, I am facing three major projects that are made for three full time people, but I am the only one working on them.
- There are no goals made. There is no plan.

- A lot of your work is dependant on other people. Someone has to do their work, before you can do your work, if they don't do their work, you can't do yours. Some days you have no work, and some days you are just overloaded. Long-term projects should be planned out.
- I have never figured out how I compare to others when it comes to performance reviews. Everyone just gets normalized based on the available money. There are people that watch YouTube videos all day long.

*Are there people that really watch movies during the workday?*

- Oh yeah, they do.
- People play solitaire all day.
- Some just play the stock market and cards.
- The majority of projects are so big, we need to be using the software tools we have to managed our projects.
- A PhD in physics will know nothing about software while working on a software project, but he knows how to write code, and most of the developers are like that, so we cannot impose software engineering principles on these people.
- It has nothing to do with what degree you have.
- I think it has to do with how much creativity a person has to get the job done. Some situations you need to leave the creative people alone so they can go crazy with the work.
- I try to help them as much as possible. You have to follow the principles.
- You don't want to use rules to stifle creativity, but you need to get the work done.
- There is no defined career path here. Promotions are based on not your career path, but personal preferences and your friendships. There are people sitting here waiting for the right time to leave. They are good people.
- My problem is that lower management has no clue what people are doing. They walk into one office, but they only talk to one person. The same one person every time. They have no idea what we do. They have some managers that have no idea what's going on and some that are super micromanagers.
- People that work here are really smart and want to get their work done. They don't need micro management.
- We are only heading in one direction.
- I've been here for a long time, everything everyone is saying is true. There is a lot of disorganization. We have two things here, research and nonprofit. That makes it different.
- This is a relaxing place, when I had my interview, it was very relaxed. Compared to outside, I'm staying here.
- So you just traded stresses. Freedom has its own stress.
- I like my stress now, it's much better than a micromanager.
- It depends on the manager. My old manager was like that, but my new manager is on top of it. He does a real good job.
- The disorganization is a problem I have here. The first two years here, I never knew what my defined goal was.
- I just came in and worked myself up to assistant manager. My group has gotten a lot better about being organized.

*Why did it get better?*

- My manager's mindset changed a little bit.

*The performance evaluation system is important, can you tell me more about that?*

- The old way, you had a meeting with your manager, that decided things with him, and he writes it up and you take a look at it. Now, you don't see it at all. Whatever they write is written in stone. True or not.
- The same happened to me.
- The review system is a big problem. My boss told me I was doing a terrific job, but he couldn't give me a perfect review.

*Is this everyone's experience?*

- Yes.
- There is no feedback process. On my evaluation, I only saw only half of the things I did that year got reviewed. Some things I did were not on there, and my new boss didn't bother to do the update. I asked him to, but I don't know.
- On my review, I had something that I did two years ago.
- The review should be done before the review period ends. This way I have time to negotiate if I do not agree with something.
- Department and division heads will rearrange things different from the supervisors.
- We need to get what we deserve.
- I got a promotion without a raise, this is weird to me.
- This happens a lot.

*What effect does the whole system have on you?*

- Low morale.
- When you hear that you do well, but they can't say you are doing well on your performance review, you don't feel that great.

## **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

*What effect do you think diversity have on any of these issues?*

- The cases I've seen, it has something to do with it. It's gender matching. I can't say that there were any ethnic issues there.
- I've seen that there was a time where they were giving offices versus cubicles. It seemed to be based on social friendships. There were hard working people who have been here for many years that had a cubicle.

*Do you think the social relationships have a racial bias or a gender bias?*

- Yes.
- I was in a group one time where they would go out to lunch and such, I would try to include myself, but it was clear they did not want me to go. They never asked me to go. I feel very



insulted that I have never been invited to any of the social gatherings. Socialized relations are a big problem for me.

- Other times, there are group lunches but nobody cares about dietary restrictions and some people cannot attend.
- One of the groups I've tried to get into, they have game nights but they serve alcohol. I tried to have an event at my house without alcohol and no one showed up. It gives me an uncomfortable feeling. We feel like outcasts.
- I eat everything, I drink everything, and still I am not accepted.
- As a minority, I don't speak the language well, but I have a lot to offer. I am never given the chance to do presentations, and I just want that chance.

*Do most of you feel as though you have to self promoted?*

- I have never been allowed to make a presentation. Except for one informal presentation. I have to submit papers to go to conferences. This is a huge issue for me. I am never allowed to present. This is complete discrimination because I am a foreigner, and a female.
- In my position I have a lot of connections. One of the patterns I've noticed is that there are groups that are more patient and follow all the rules that have to wait a long time for services. But some just know how to work the system.
- Even getting a bigger desktop monitor, you have to know who to talk to.
- If you have a manager that likes you, great, if you have one that doesn't like you, tough.

### **Fermilab Hierarchy**

*Another point of bias that was brought up was elitism among physicists. Do you come across that?*

- I don't work directly with physicists often but they know how to work the system to get their way.
- This doesn't bother me, I have had high positions and now here I am a computer professional. Some computer professionals make more money than physicists. It bothers me in casual conversation. I'm sure it bothers a lot of people. That culture needs to be changed. That elitism does exist quite a bit.
- I've seen it too. Mostly the theoretical physicists think they know more about computers than computer professionals.
- It's not really an issue.

### **Work/life Balance**

- It depends who your supervisor is. I've seen women going home early because they are pregnant and get tired. They get more done in three hours than some people that sit in front of the computer all day. The daycare here is expensive.
- A lot of people that need the daycare can't afford it.
- The only good thing is the daycare is that it's onsite. There should be a discount.

*Is there an unfair distribution of the benefits?*

- I think so, but I think the people that get the special benefits don't want to lose it, so they don't tell you.
- Things like working from home, it depends on the manager. I can do it, but in the back of my mind, I know my manager doesn't like it. I don't feel comfortable thinking that it is part of my benefits to work from home.
- I've needed several times to work from home because of sick children, and no one has complained. When you have kids, your lifestyle is different from someone who doesn't.
- Some groups can do that.
- I feel fairly treated. It is very flexible for me.
- I am in the same situation.
- It all depends on the manager. A bad manager once told me I took too many sick days when I only took four days out of the year. I was in a senior position at the time.
- I have had to take vacation time instead of sick leave.
- One time I had was very sick and in the ER; I came back and was sent in and told the policy sick days, even though my boss knew I was having problems.
- If you are sick too much they may think your job won't get finished and they will have to get someone to do the job.
- The communication is a problem here.

### **Communication and Transparency**

- *Fermilab Today* has helped.
- In seven years, I have only been invited to eight group meetings. That is all.
- Our group meetings are basically useless.
- Communication is such a problem. You have to be very proactive to get anything, to be visible.
- Some can say females are not very proactive.
- We communicate very well in my group. Information trickles down.
- They made a newsletter because everyone says communication is bad, but it's just "fluff."
- It could use more content, but it is better than nothing.

### **Mentoring and Training**

*Do you have access to mentors to help you with your career path? How is access to training and skill development?*

- It's all tied together. It is available to you if you ask. Here you just meander. There is not really a career path.
- I've had training, but I've never been able to pursue it. It was useless.
- Trying to socialize outside of work, may help you move in the company, but if you can't break into the group, then oh well.
- I try to not confuse racial discrimination or just human greed.
- The managers should try to make everyone feel at home.
- It's not only they don't care about minorities, they don't care about anyone.
- Managers need to be more sensitive to the diversities of their employees.
- I have not gone to training in many years.

- It is a career path issue. If you know that you will be doing something next year, then you will go do training, otherwise why would you go to training.
- In spite of all the imperfections, I want to still make it work, it's working as a whole, and I still get paid for my work.

## **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

*What suggestions do you have that would bring on positive change?*

- Each employee should be like a point of sale.
- Do a career day.
- We need to educate our employees first and then go out to the community.
- If you are getting rewarded for what you are doing, it shouldn't always be money. Not everyone wants that. Recognition is good.
- I feel the same.
- Fermilab has been very good about giving me time off, but that goes back to being proactive.
- Everything we are saying is there. We just don't know where it is.
- This organization needs all sorts of people. Fermilab is good for stable people. You need to know what stage of life you are in.
- There's no way the department heads can make all the decisions, this is why they need all the people to help be involved in the projects.
- They should have formal classes for the students.
- When you are unhappy with your job, it translates outside of the job. If you make your workers happy, then they translate good things about the lab.

## **Group U**

### **Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group**

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Eight employees, all male including three minorities, attended this discussion.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### **The Fermilab Work Environment**

*Without giving it much thought, write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Interesting and busy, never boring.
- Fun. In general, when having a bad day, I look back at my previous jobs, and say to myself, "nothing could top what I have."
- Everyday is very different than the day before. Never stuck in the same task. Always good things to say.
- In general, interesting job. Every day is never the same.
- Sometimes it is fun; mostly it is just an average working day.

*Are there any particular things that cause challenges or frustrations here that are unique to Fermilab or are issues that are dealt with recently that are new?*

- Where I work is a one of a kind place; it is a very challenging environment.
- The radiation exposure to component makes it very challenging. We feel pressure to keep our spare pool healthy. If something breaks we can be called on in the middle of the night. I have worked days that are 32 hours, but you feel compelled to be here. We feel a personal investment to be here.
- I deal a lot with the Department of Energy, and there has been a lot of confusion this year. I have never seen anything like this, it is a peculiar challenge and it gets filtered back into the laboratory.

*What kind of impact has that had on the workplace for you?*

- I am dealing executing plans and committing the lab for the next seven years for meeting the government's goals and they don't even know what the goals are. The government is arguing as they are reviewing plans and asking us to commit to plans that they have yet to finalize.

*Has that had an affect on people in the workplace? Do they find it more difficult to work? Has it been more frustrating to work?*

- It trickles down, but we work through them. It has been a real challenge. We are all in suspense and there is a great deal of uncertainty.

*How about at the project level?*

- We are all wondering if we are important enough to keep our jobs here. We don't know what the managers and top management think is important. We know producing is a big deal.
- I don't think our leaders even know where it's going. It leaves you in a state of suspense.
- It doesn't help that the focus is being changed all the time. That is a big problem that we don't have continuity. The lack of direction is one of the most important problems.
- We are all in suspense, we don't know if we will be working in a couple of months.

- I think I am a little bit more insulated from it, because my focus is on software, I sense that there is a hardware or mechanical problem. The software I was familiar with got canceled, but I was easily moved to other software projects.
- We expect the future to be solid, but we never know.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

*The focus of the APS report is diversity, this is a diverse place, and overall do you think Fermilab handles this well?*

- Compared to where I used to work, this place is phenomenal. You have so many different people here and they attempt to get along very well.
- They had to respond to the APS Report because some of the comments on there were so severe.
- I was thinking this (the APS Report) doesn't sound like the place where I work.
- Going back to when Wilson was here, I had the sense of being at the center of high energy physics that brought together people from all over the country and the world to work together and to work on something brand new. This is a wonderful thing. A centerpiece for our culture.
- Glancing at the report, I thought that in my environment it has been very smooth. But in the experiments when working with Post-Docs and Professors and such, I've sensed a little bit of a class system. It is those "University people" from "Washington" that come here, and bring "that" here.
- It is not really a Fermilab cultural issue, it was an academic issue that was at Fermilab at that time.
- Exactly.
- That didn't seem to be indicative of who they were talking about in that APS report.

*Coming here from different countries and cultures have you experienced any problems or challenges?*

- I can only see good things.
- At least in my division there are no problems.
- I am treated fairly and nicely. I have met many friends. I am still here; I have survived here because of the people. I don't know what they are complaining about.
- My feelings are the same. This is a good place to work. Is there a diversity standard we are supposed to meet? Or is this just to get our input?

*We are looking for any evidence of a systematic problem here, any evidence of people who are treated poorly or unfairly because they are minorities or have a hard time here getting advancement.*

- I was appalled at the report to think that these types of things have happened at Fermilab. There should be a clearinghouse office set up for these types of complaints. This report recommends that Fermilab become a model citizen for diversity in the workplace. Fermilab has to respond. There will be resources needed, but not a tremendous amount. We need to track down mistreatments, these have to be dealt with right away. I had a situation with a

summer student that did surveys for me. When she got there; the contractors had made some comments to her. I called EEO that minute and had her and the contractors in to settle it immediately. Those contractors were told that behavior is just not tolerated.

- I think the lab goes out of their way to recruit minorities and women.
- I came out of industry and this place is a dream compared to that with regard to diversity. The only problem I have ever had is with experimenters that have come into the lab thinking they are better than others. But that has nothing to do with diversity.

## **Fermilab Hierarchy**

*One issue described in the APS report is that of the hierarchy of prestige and importance of different jobs at Fermilab, which recognized that research physicists were generally perceived at being at the top of the peak. Some employees suggested that this has led to an environment of elitism and arrogance in the workplace.*

- I have seen that from people coming from outside the lab. I don't see a lot of that anymore within Fermilab.
- Most of the women here have gotten smart enough that they do not take sit back and take these kinds of remarks anymore. Even a lot of the male colleagues will push back.
- Sometimes in the past you were not even considered for a job if you were not a physicist.
- We had a big safety culture change in the 90's. People had this arrogance about the experiments, but the safety change brought a lot more understanding and a lot more working together.
- The real problem is outside physicists. They are so competitive for grants and new technicians.
- They have time and resource constraints. They have a lot of pressure on them.
- A lot of the experiments are collaborations, in general they work together well and treat each other well. There used to be a lot of arrogance, but in the last five years I have not seen that. I see women physicists treated better than the men.
- Everyone wants to win the prize. I can be exciting to be around these types of projects. We come in knowing the game and what it is all about.
- Sometimes the scientists come in and tell you your business and you know he doesn't get it. That is the worst of it for me.
- A lot of that has changed though, these days anyone can go to a function and sit down next to the Director. It used to be a lot more cliquish.

*Would you say it is respectful here? Do people treat each other with respect?*

- Absolutely.
- Yes. (Group agreement)

## **Women and Minority Advancements**

*Are there any obvious issues with advancement of women and minorities?*

- I have a feeling with the report that we only get one side of the story, we can't judge just from the report.

- I can't think of anything firsthand.
- In the last 5 years, the lab has gone out their way to make sure women are equally treated.
- We lost one of our best women last year. She was worried there may not be a job for her. So she found one that would guarantee her a job
- This has been one challenging year with the budget issues and layoffs.

### ***How do you think that was handled overall?***

- People were under such stress. It was six months of hell.
- They had to do that, instead of going along letting you know everything was fine and then you are suddenly laid off.
- They should have made it known early on who may be let go, instead of having everyone wondering. It was very stressful and unfair those who were left wondering. We ended up losing a lot of people.
- This list is a very bad idea. People would get the idea that they would be laid off, and leave.
- In our division, everyone in the department got the letter, but we knew some were not going to be let go.
- That was the manager's choice to do that. The thing is that they knew who they were going to let go, they should've let people know.
- I would like to know if I was going to be let go in the next 6 months, so that I can prepare.
- Friends at a similar industry let the people that were being let go know ahead of time so that gave them time to prepare, and the company helped them prepare. Luckily the majority was not let go.
- If you knew you were on the list, or if you were not on the list, you would still think you were not an essential person, although you were not laid off.
- No one should know if there was a list.
- They should have just prepared us.
- I don't think there is anyone that doesn't think there is a problem with the government showing interest in this field. If there was a terrorist attack and they were in need of money, this would be one of the easiest to be shut down. We are all here because we realize the uncertainties.
- You are right; the lab did do a good job.

### **Communication and Transparency**

#### *How well does senior management communicate policies, direction, and vision?*

- Given the fact that we have committed to this, I think we have to be transparent and let people know why we are doing things. Many people would be surprised at what is going on. We have to level with people.
- Earlier we had meetings to describe where everything stood, and they were very open and clear about what's going on. They are trying to do their best.
- I agree. On a previous project, management was very transparent; however there are things outside the box that not even they knew.
- They didn't handle it very well. They never presented their plan on how to deal with a crisis. There just wasn't any coherent plan. I still don't understand how it was resolved.
- It is all politics. What is important to sciences takes a back seat to politics.

- I don't understand why we cannot ask for funding. We need to present to bigger companies such as Microsoft and ask for funding. It makes me feel like our people do not know what they are doing. There is work to be done, and in my point of view there is no coherent fundraising effort.
- We have to be careful because Fermilab is funded by government.
- He is trying to understand what efforts were being made.
- This is for just in case, but I have never heard that we tried.
- I think this was unexpected for the lab. They are doing better at understanding the funding.
- It would be nice if there was someone asking Washington what is going on.
- Someone asked if there were lobbyists, and yes we do have lobbyists. Maybe we should have new ones.

### **Work/life Balance**

*Different groups were run differently, dealing with flexible work schedules and compressed work days, some managers allow it and some do not. Is it being fairly applied?*

- It depends on what supervisor you get. Their personality and the people they deal with make a big difference.
- It's a complicated problem. Some places have shift work.
- There are some jobs where it won't work.
- It's possible to move to other jobs that have flexible schedules.
- Even with the holidays, if something breaks, I will be here. People on shift work, feel the same way.

*Is information regarding policies and such easily accessible?*

- Absolutely.
- Go talk to your supervisor.
- Accessing information is not a problem.

### **Training/Mentoring**

*How well is the lab doing at preparing people to do their jobs, particularly younger employees?*

- There is just no money to hire back up's so we bring in new.
- There is no money to hire one of a kind position. A lot of the women engineers are going to the higher tech companies that pay more money. For my position they can hire someone out of college for as much money as I am making.
- To take on mentoring is a distraction and a tremendous burden. To throw that load on top of people who are full up, is difficult to ask.

*Are people overworked at the lab?*

- Back in the 80's this place used to be hopping. We would work for 48 hours and loved it. We loved it though. But a lot of it is the spirit. I have mentored people and it is a lot of work, but it



is rewarding and you feel good doing it. It may be less rewarding now because we don't have enough people doing it or enough money. We feel more stress now. But we do need to keep that level of camaraderie. I think it is still there. We love our job, we love the place. We have choices to make about the future but we are smart enough people here. We can understand and deal with the uncertainty.

- I think the director has gone out of his way to make us feel we are a part of what is going on.
- We have 4 or 5 women in our department and one of them is project manager. There are lots of senior women at the lab. I never run into any situation when a female student would have problems. It is not tolerated. I am surprised that Fermilab is the subject of such complaints, these have to be such isolated instances.
- I think all of these issues should be publicly supported and made visible so people see the issues. Protect the victim of course but make it clear when this happens and that it is not tolerated.

*The quality of managers and supervisors are important here, are there any issues with that?*

- Adjustments get made over time. Supervisors that may not be the best for whatever reason get moved around.
- I agree, in my division, some have been given opportunities to manage and trained to do so. In some cases, that doesn't mean they are ready.
- It is really hard to judge when a person is really managing well or not.

*Are there any additional issues that should be raised?*

- The process for hiring is extremely difficult now.
- The lab has no tolerance for human error. Everyone makes mistakes and they should give them a chance. They have to have better ways of dealing with people and giving them chances.
- I had an experience with not hiring within. An engineer 2 could not apply for an engineer 3 position. So the outside person actually got preference. Somehow it is easier to get a job from outside than inside. It is a policy which management follows.
- I agree with you, this is absurd.
- I have also experienced this directly.
- This is just another case of HR is overstepping their bounds.

*HR has come up in a lot of the groups. Do you have specific concerns with HR?*

- I personally would stay away from HR. Over the years, HR has gotten to be like FRA and they are operating in the best interest of that corporation and not in the best interests of the people of that corporation. I don't get it.
- Someone up there is making decisions unilaterally that are just terrible. People have been fired for a first offense
- There have been other instances where people that should have been fired have been given chances.
- Policies should be uniform and apply to everyone. One screw-up and you are out is just wrong.

- When it was busy, we were hopping, when something went wrong, we weren't blaming any one person. We took risks, and we dealt with things fairly
- When the culture shift was made and we came more under DOE, we started playing the blame game. Part of it is we want to believe in the Lab and what's going on. It's hard at a time like this to communicate vision, though. Back in Wilson's day we were able to talk about why we were important. We want to be as diverse as possible. It's very hard at this time and age to communicate our vision, but it's very crucial.
- I've seen a lot more of the blame game coming from Washington. It's a lot of paperwork to find out whose fault it is, even for the most minor infraction. They are looking for someone to hang. It's not coming from the Lab.
- We have heard that the Secretary of Energy is reading these little incident reports. Doesn't he have something better to do?
- There is just tons and tons of paperwork that costs the lab money. As a result at HR, they blow things out of proportion.
- It's sick.

### **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

*This is our chance to talk about what a positive and empowering workplace would be like. Is there anything else that you would like to recommend to improve the work environment?*

- Pay engineers more money.
- Get the new Secretary to change the work rules to eliminate the beaurocracy and let the labs get back to doing science.
- The Director actually sits down with us at breakfast to see how things are going. He has meetings with the engineers every month and he answers questions directly, even if they are belligerent. I give him a lot of credit. I've seen a lot of changes and I hope he will be able to push more changes through.
- I don't see what the Director can do with all the politics. If the lab has a chance it's the new Secretary and the new President.
- He is our front man though and needs to go out to the politicians and bring back money.
- I would like to see outside projects in the lab. Some things to do with industry so we are not so singularly focused. I know we can build some of the things I see out there in industry. We are not utilizing our full capabilities. Computing is another area where we have a lot of resources.

## **Group V**

### **Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group**

The following is a summary of a three-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Four individuals, all of whom were from countries other than the US, attended this discussion.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### **The Fermilab Work Environment**

*Without giving it much thought, write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- As a researcher, I don't do anything that is not interesting. I enjoy it, even though I am not paid for as many hours and days.
- We are enjoying it. Otherwise I would not have done it.
- It's different all the time. It's never the same, I like that.
- Even though I am a lab worker I've been spending a lot of my time writing proposals to get funding for the project I am working on. I'm writing to DOE.
- I have a big family, and the physicists understand and accept my schedule. I'm happy to be participating in this very important experiment.
- There is not much time spent with family because of the long hours.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

*Fermilab is very diverse. How well does Fermilab manage its diversity?*

- I don't see any difference regarding diversity in my group. (agreement)

*Does management create a respectful environment dealing with the different cultures?*

- In my department it is very respectful. (agreement)

*Are there any actions by management that support or hurt that situation or is it neutral?*

- We don't see upper management much.
- We are left alone to do our work.
- I'm free to choose the direction of my research. After reading the APS report, I disagree with some of the points.
- At the time of the report people were getting laid off. People were angry.

*Based on the APS report, that is not the work environment that you see?*

- I don't think they handled the lay off very well. If someone got a package, and didn't know who else got it; it's easy for them to feel singled out. They should have either sent it to all, or not sent the packages at all.

### **Women and Minority Advancements**

*Have you ever seen people be denied of advancement because of who they were? Or is it fairly based on work performance?*

- I don't know of any cases of that. Maybe a few people ended up on the wrong track, but not because of gender or diversity. There are different science paths that one can take.
- Language can be a barrier here.
- The language may directly or indirectly slow you down. Not being able to communicate clearly in English can be a challenge to explain your ideas clearly.
- Reading legal documents can be difficult for many people. It is hard to understand.

*Is Fermilab clear on what is available to you when you need help? Are you comfortable going for help? Such as language help, etc.*

- It depends on the personality. Different nationalities will behave differently. Our purpose is science, so that is our "language." English is our way of communication. If they are shy and have problems, and don't ask for help, this is their personal problem.
- There is amount of personal responsibility when overcoming language barriers to understand what is needed.

### **Communication and Transparency**

*How is communication from upper management? How can they improve?*

- When dealing with the lay off situation, they were too transparent. They were telling people more than they needed to know.
- This caused a lot more tension than was necessary.

- When the packages were sent out, they told us how many people were getting the package and how many were not. In this case, transparency was actually harmful as it was perceived that those who got the letters were not needed by the laboratory.
- It was a package of an option to buy out. They sent this to about 700 people.

*So you think that had an impact on morale?*

- I think a lot of things have an impact on morale. That was the prime example of something unnecessary.
- It was a couple months of uncertainty. It was stressful and unfair feeling for many people. A lot of insecurity.

*Has it not caused long-term effects on morale?*

- People have left.
- It has long-term effects on people that have a possible life outside the lab such as engineers. We are considered a government job, which comes with security. When that security is taken away, it scares people.
- There is a lack of candidates for hiring, specifically Scientists. It takes half a year to get a large pool of candidates.

*Why is that?*

- In the scientific world, everyone knows everyone. It's a small world. The job insecurities have been passed around.
- The basic problem is funding.
- Management, in my opinion, is doing their best.
- There are things that could have been done better, but management is doing well.
- It's more of a money issue.

*Are benefits and policies different for different departments of people? How does this impact people? How can they make it more uniform across the Lab?*

- It is very specific to the supervisor. It's a personality problem with the supervisor, and not necessarily a policy problem.
- Most people have very flexible work hours anyway.
- Many people work a lot, it is the nature of the job.

### **Work/life Balance**

*Does Fermilab accommodate work/life situations well? Is this an issue?*

- I don't think that is an issue, in science, people have flexible schedules anyway. (agreement)

### **Mentoring**

*Have you ever looked for mentoring for any situations? Do they exist? Should they exist to enhance the skills?*

- I think there is a mentoring program for the students.
- We have a group of people that are experts in case of problems.

*How well is that program working?*

- It is not necessarily educating people; it just helps them find their way.

*Are there any other issues with professional growth of younger scientists?*

- There is always a desire to do better. We don't give degrees here.

*Are there any special challenges of how they are treated?*

- One problem with post-docs is there is limited money for travel.

- It depends on the program.
- For some of these post docs we can send them to one conference a year. I'm arguing for more travel funds for the younger scientists to get recognized.

*How well prepared are supervisors to do tasks that are before them?*

- As a supervisor I had no training. Certain things are tough when dealing with people.
- What supervisors need to take is sexual harassment training. They need to take these courses by law.
- It varies a lot with certain people.
- I get the impression that the lab offers these courses so they don't get sued, rather than to do the job better.
- Management training needs to be more focused on the actual jobs that managers perform, there are many different types of supervisors. It would be good to have the information cascading down through the ranks so you are building up an institution over time.

*You mentioned the evaluation system earlier, how is that working?*

- They made a huge improvement last year to be able to better address individual employees, but they have compartmentalized it so much that it has not really changed anything. They did this whole overhaul and it didn't change much.
- It is useful to look back and look forward as long as it does not take too much time, overall it is favorable and it allows me to reflect on the year.
- The process itself is extremely useful to understand what you have achieved, how it gets mapped to the lab as a whole and tied to your salary is a completely different question.

*Are there any other general suggestions to make the workplace more respectful?*

- This is a rumor: A man retired early, apparently because he said something "stupid" and was forced to resign. There is a feeling among certain people that the 15<sup>th</sup> floor has total power over these things. Maybe he said something racist or sexist, but there is a feeling that it was "zero tolerance" and people can get fired after a single incident. There is more than one person here at the lab who feel this way, but I don't know if this specific rumor is actually true.

*Are there any other issues with HR?*

- I was just fired. The treatment was interesting. They were not friendly on the way out. Coming in was very different than going out.

*Do you go to the 15<sup>th</sup> floor for assistance?*

- No. I go there for my visa only.
- People say the 15<sup>th</sup> floor is disconnected with Fermilab culture. They are trying to turn this place into the postal service or something. They are fairly bureaucratic.
- I went through an exit interview about four years ago and did not have any of the negative feelings expressed earlier, but it is fairly bureaucratic.

*Are there any other issues you would like to raise?*

- In general, the lab has bigger problems than what we are trying to solve in this meeting.
- We hope that these problems will get resolved. And try to resolve how to maintain the workplace while solving these problems.

## Group W

### **Summary of Fermilab Diversity Focus Group**

The following is a summary of a one-hour discussion held with Fermilab employees some time between November 21, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

Nine individuals, including two women and one member of a minority group, attended this discussion.

No responses have been attributed to any individuals and specific information that would personalize a response, such as names or departments have been deleted or generalized, but otherwise this summary represents that actual conversation. All wording in italics represent direction or questions provided by the facilitator.

### **The Fermilab Work Environment**



*Without giving it much thought, write down the first word or two that comes to mind when you think about the work environment here at Fermilab.*

- Long and stressful
- Busy and stressed
- Challenging, but fun days too
- Always interesting
- Interesting and the days go fast
- Busy
- Routine, but challenging at times
- Very challenging
- Same functions day after day
- Hectic at times

*What makes it challenging?*

- In my line of work, there tends to be a lot of input into how the work should be done. I'm a liaison between a contractor and the lab, and the amount of input from safety and different programs, the customer, can be overwhelming. It's stressful.
- DOE regulations make it challenging. Safety is challenging all the time. Deadlines are stressful.
- The roadblocks are frustrating. Jobs that used to be routine are not now.
- Sometimes a little more common sense should come into play with safety rather than the regulations. It bogs you down.
- You're getting direction from multiple places and they usually don't line up and the direction changes, sometimes in the same day. You're left on your own to try and get clarification. Sometimes the requestor doesn't know what they really want. I make my own determinations and assumptions.
- On top of that, when I have a problem or get input, I'll make a decision about how I should approach the problem and then I'm second guessed or get overruled on what I see as a good solution. Makes life a little miserable.
- My challenges are more specific to the type of job I do rather than Fermilab itself.
- Sometimes you have to experiment to see what works, and no one complains, but no one commends me for my work either.

- Stressful contributions include excessive work hours. Normal work weeks are greater than 50 hours and the excessive hours have been consistent for years. It just piles on. The competent person gets the work piled on.
- I agree with that. (Group agreement.)
- There are people who are not doing the work, and they just go merrily along.

*How does that affect morale at the lab?*

- I complain about being overloaded all the time, and my bosses don't do anything. I don't mind working hard, or coming in after hours or on weekends, but you lose people and they don't replace them. Someone that I relied on for one of my projects is gone now and no one bothered to find out what he did before he left, so now something that took him a few weeks at a time to do is falling on me. It's unreasonable and it goes over their heads.
- There are no peaks and valleys here. Well, there are no valleys.
- Group agrees about excessive workloads.
- A lot of this is being driven by the budget and furloughs and a lot of us took it personally and tried to work extra hours to prove something. There is some dead weight here and that's hard to deal with. The managers treat them the same as the hard worker.

## **Communication and Transparency**

*One area of concern expressed in the APS report is that employees do not understand programs and options available to them, have you encountered this? What are your thoughts on the review process?*

- The new process is driven toward the center. It was an attempt to equalize things, but every time HR gets involved it makes things worse.
- Our raises now depend more on DOE and the budget instead of our performance.
- The APS report mentioned transparency, and it's just as opaque as it can be. When it comes to making the determinations about pay rates and evaluations, it's not at all transparent. Increasing communication and transparency would be a boost to morale and trust. No one understands how these decisions are being made.

- The performance goals are stupid. I'm a support person, so my goals have a pretty low priority when others need something. You either have a good work ethic, or you don't.
- Driving things to the middle is evident especially if you're a smaller group. You know they can't give you the higher rating. They change your rating to fit the average. What's the point?
- Safety has been extremely transparent, what, why, how, etc. Good example area. We know the lab's position on safety. It's really good.
- I think the furlough situation was very transparent.
- Pier did a good job of getting out in front of that and making sure people knew what was happening.
- There were a lot of people in my division who were offended by the selection process for reductions. A lot of people had no clue or hint of how the letter selections.
- I agree. The letters sent out were not done well at all. It wasn't sent out to a large list at all. Why didn't they just send it to everyone? They created endless hard feelings about people who got the package and the people who were ready to leave didn't get buyout packages. I can't believe they did it that way.
- A guy worked that with me took the buyout and then they cancelled it, and wouldn't let me hire a replacement.
- I would've taken a furlough or a pay cut so people could've kept their jobs, but that was never considered.
- Another area that failed during the furlough, it wasn't explained well how to get unemployment benefits and some people missed out on it. It was a benefit that they were entitled to, but they missed it. It affected the hourly folks more. They didn't come out with the complete information in time, and it was mysterious and confusing.
- There were some people looking forward to the break.
- When you take vacation, you're never really on vacation. You're expected to be working.

- I have never taken a vacation day or sick time that I haven't already worked. When the department is small there's no one to do the work while I'm gone. I still do all the work while I'm out.
- I have to check in about an hour a day while on vacation. If you didn't, you're so far behind when you get back.
- That's ok with me because it's part of the same idea that my job is mine and I have autonomy and I make decisions. It's part of a bigger thing that I like.
- When I do go on business trips for the lab I work in, and I check in at nights, but I feel it's a normal part of the job.

### **Fermilab Approach to Diversity**

*Let's talk about your general impressions regarding how Fermilab handles diversity today. What have you seen or experienced at the laboratory regarding diversity?*

- It's a little bit of an issue everywhere in general.
- I think it's fine here. People from all over the world work here, and women are in high-ranking positions.
- It's improved over the years. It was tough a long time ago, but it's gotten better. People are more mature and educated these days. It's improved quite a bit over the last ten years.
- I would say that I haven't felt any discrimination about being older, either.

### **Women and Minority Advancements**

*Another issue described in the APS report is one in which woman and minority advancements are perceived as preference picks and not a result of individual qualifications.*

- A lot of senior management positions, there is a smaller pool of women to choose from, but I don't feel that they're getting jobs because they're women.

### **Fermilab Hierarchy**

*One issue described in the APS report is that of the hierarchy of prestige and importance of different jobs at Fermilab, which recognized that research physicists were generally perceived at*

*being at the top of the ladder. Some employees suggested that this has led to an environment of elitism and arrogance in the workplace. What are your thoughts on this?*

- When I started here, they told me that physicists could do anything they wanted to do. Why are they being promoted to management? They're not meant to fill that role.
- Yes, definitely there is elitism. But it's fine with me. I don't see it as a problem. It's the nature of our business.
- The best physicists in the world shouldn't necessarily be a manager. Some are outstanding, and some are not.
- They don't take enough care to find out how these people are with people before promoting them.
- Project manager positions are given to physicists but they normally have little or no experience in managing projects.
- We are so run by DOE, that to me, nothing gets done because of all the structure. They're so busy with structure that when do they do research?
- There're good ones and there're bad ones.

*What happens when someone is not a good manager?*

- They stay and you just wait it out for another manager. Sometimes they stay for political reasons.
- In the old days, department heads and managers were changed every few years as a matter of course so that people didn't get stagnant. That doesn't happen anymore. There was hope then that the next person would be ok.

*Is there arrogance and elitism?*

- Not consistently, but you see it.
- It's bad for morale.
- You might try to ask a question, or have a conversation and they just ignore you. Some are just not people persons, but you learn how to just not have it be an issue and you keep on

going. The grad students talk sometimes.

- They give you a reaction as if you were an idiot.
- There're two extremes.
- I would say it's just some who are bad.
- There are quite a few women physicists who are rude and condescending, too.
- I'm working with some good people now with my projects.
- They're just not managers. They seem like they don't even like it. The management part just is in the way for them.

### **Effect of Different Work Groups and Projects**

*These different groups often work with a great deal of autonomy and different management structures and approaches. Are you aware of this autonomy and complexity in your daily work routine? How does it affect you?*

- Departments look at their needs only and they don't go to another department to ask if the resources available there. Some departments feel they should be self-sustaining. The lab may not necessarily lack something as a whole. It's expressed at the higher levels that you should go between departments to fulfill needs. It's not easily thought of though because of past experience.
- From an admin point of view, there's not that kind of time anymore to help across divisions and sections.
- At the tech level, some people have tons of work and some have none.
- One of the biggest problems in our group is that we're given a budget to fill the salaries for the entire year, and we have to use the "charge back" system. We charge a section our hourly rates to fulfill our budget. It's not well received. It's a battle.
- And then you don't feel like one lab. Defeats the purpose.
- There's been a movement to get rid of that system, but management wants it.

- We just stopped a few years ago because it was such a small amount of money, and it's so much better. Feels like a real team.
- Spend more time tracking the time than you do working.

## **Work/life Balance**

*How many of you would say that Fermilab does a good job of providing flexibility and care in supporting its employees?*

- I used the flex schedule while caring for my father while he died. I worked four ten-hour days per week. I'm very grateful for that.
- We've always kept strict schedules. It was never flexible, but people are used to it.
- It's pretty flexible in our department. You set your schedule based on the projects you're working on, as long as they put in 40 hours. Salaried and hourly do this. The supervisors know the typical start times.
- My group gets a bad taste in their mouth because everyone's got their own rules. Like a bunch of different factories. Can cause animosity.
- I appreciate having the flexibility, but I make up my time.
- Lab has the tendency to not want to address the options and leaves it up to the individual managers. Causes problems sometimes.

*Is there confusion around lab policies?*

- One of our recent divisional policies addressed people with time off with medical purposes, and I wouldn't think that a division could have a different policy than the actual lab policy. That's not right.
- If you're traveling on business there's a per diem rate, and some divisions change the amount.
- That's more for people who are asking to go instead of being sent, I think. It's the lab's way of controlling travel costs. Gives a feeling that we're not one lab.

## **Access to Training and Other Development Opportunities**

*Are there appropriate and sufficient opportunities? Is access to these opportunities fair?*

- As long as the budget allows. It's self-directed.

## **Mentoring**

*Employees often identify access to a mentor as an important part of career growth. How many of you feel that having a mentor is important? How many of you now have or have had a mentor? What are your thoughts?*

- We've had high school and college students that were mentored. That was successful.
- It would be helpful in certain areas. The transfer of knowledge would be really helpful. We have a large population moving toward retirement and we're not actively taking charge to get the information we need from them. There need to be better ways to get knowledge from people leaving.

*Do you consider Fermilab a respectful workplace?*

- Yes. (Group agreement.)
- There's still a fairly strong sense of camaraderie.

## **The Future Workplace at Fermilab**

*This is our chance to talk about what a positive and empowering workplace would be like.*

- We need additional staff. We work in a multidiscipline area, and we're suffering in some areas, and it's a big hole. We used to have several people, but we've been cut back. They advertise for the positions, but we can't get the money to fill the positions.
- We've had quite a few good guys leave in recent years, and they leave a gap.
- It's well known that this is a problem, and we're told to just do the best we can until something goes wrong.
- In the divisions, there isn't a firm direction on what is priority and what isn't. Everything is high priority and it's hard to decide what to do since we're so short on resources.
- I'd like to see a little push-back against DOE.



- At some level yes, but this Director pushes back much more than previous directors.
- One thing about the hierarchy with physicists, an impression I've got is that it's an "old boys club" and even if a complaint is brought up, it wouldn't be addressed.
- There are times when I feel resentment, but then I think that we're here to support them. I just wish that some of them were better managers or better with people.
- There're some that are primadonnas, but some that are down to earth. You can usually work around it.