

**PUBLIC HEARING ON PATHWAYS TO FEDERAL SERVICE FOR STUDENTS AND
RECENT GRADUATES**

OPM CAMPBELL AUDITORIUM

JUNE 25, 2010

10:00 A.M.

[NOTE: While transcribing audio issues were faced and they are identified with square brackets surrounding the text "audio error" and a time stamp, and have been highlighted in yellow.]

PANEL 1: CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

As part of the Hiring Reform Initiative unprompted by the President's May 11, 2010 memorandum on this important topic. OPM has been tasked with proposing a framework for effective pathways into the Federal government for college students and recent college graduates by August of this year. Let me emphasize that the purpose of today's public meeting is to solicit feedback on whether normal competitive hiring is an effective avenue from bringing recent college graduates into the federal workforce and address the three statements that are displayed on the posters to my left. Our focus today is on the future, soliciting this feedback will help form our recommendations moving forward. Today's meeting has been recorded and will be a part of the public record on this topic.

As outlined on the agenda the meeting will consist of three panels, each comprised of different stakeholders. The first panel is our Chief Human Capital Officers followed by the Unions and Veterans Service Organizations and then ending with the Good Government groups and private organizations. At the end of each panel there will be a moderated Q&A followed by a period for questions from the audience. If you would like to ask a question during this time please wait for one of our designees to bring a microphone to you. At that point before asking your question please state your name and organization. This is being webcast as well. So the importance of you waiting for a microphone to ask your question I just really can't overemphasize that, because otherwise we won't be able to capture the dialogue. Thank you again for the attendance today. We value the opportunity to dialogue with you on this important issue.

Now let's get started with our first panel. I would like to make introductions here. To my left is Mr. Robert Buggs, Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of Education. Ms. Mary Lee Fitzgerald, Acting Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of Defense. Mr. Rodney Markham Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of Justice. Mr. Donald Sanders, Director, Strategic Human Resource Planning and Accountability, Department of Agriculture. As a reminder each panelist will have ten minutes for their presentation. And I would like to begin with Mr. Buggs.

Robert Buggs, Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of Education:

Thank you, and I promise I won't take more than ten minutes. I do appreciate the opportunity to represent the Department of Education. And to provide the use of the department on this very important issue. I want to be clear the Department of Education embraces the merit system principles, equal employment opportunity considerations. Veterans preference in hiring of the disabled in all accepted and competitive service hiring activities. I also want to be clear that the Department of Education just as

previously supports excepted service appointing authorities in the spirit and intent to target and attract students, college graduates, and others for federal employment and public service.

I need to bring it back, there you go. Programs such as STEP or the Student Temporary Employment Program, SCEP, the Student Career Experience Program, FCIP, the Federal Career Intern Program, and of course PMI, the Presidential Management Intern Program, do just that, and/or essential tools for achieving this goal. The focus is to attract a developed talent. These programs are critical to the success of many Human Capital professionals in conferring with and supporting managers to integrate an efficient approach to managing the employee lifecycle, that is recruitment, training, and retention and support of Federal business goals. Leverage, knowledge, and experience, increasing employee training and communication as well as ensuring a robust session planning process. Ensuring human capital readiness and capability to maintain and improve public service and eliminate barriers to the full participation in the workforce by persons from diverse backgrounds.

So in STEP 2008, ED has hired 408 employees through STEP, SCEP and FCIP. Of this number, 97, have been FCIP hired. Recruiting a talented, competent, and diverse workforce to meet the challenges facing the Federal service is a key element to achieving and subsequently maintaining the hiring goals set by Federal agency. We face challenges of replacing in place of retire, blemishing [audio problem 05:04] bank and being competitive in the national and global marketplace. To meet these challenges we must develop targeted, recruitment strategies to attract people first and hire qualified workforce. Excepted Service Appointing Authorities are particularly attracted because they enhance the use of scarce, recruitment and assessment of resources by permitting target recruitment in lieu of a general public bill. They also permit relative to competitive appointing authorities a prolonged period of talented element and observation to ensure [audio problem 05:38] or continued Federal employment. For civil employment programs generally there is no right to continued employment where your talent is termed to be unsettled. Research shows that the current US graduation rates continues, yeah, it continues. There is a projected decrease of workers of the high school and college diplomas and a shift in the demographic makeup of the population. This will be coupled with a lengthy, federal hiring process in limited funding.

This should resonate with anyone having an interest in our discussion today. Why? Considered the challenge the Obama administration were made for our nation to globally return to the top by 2020 in terms of college graduation rates. Federal student employment programs and programs designed to attract college graduates and others with comparable talent and work experience are the nuggets providing incentive for young people to pursue higher education and improve graduation rates in the United States. These programs are essential and embedded in the Federal toolkit that help us attract, develop, and retain a diverse workforce with varied skills and knowledge required to perform the business of public service. There are innovative strategies to recruit the best talent, use blended learning and knowledge management practices and convey value in retention of employees and investment and support of the administration's strategic direction and business goals. The Department of Education strongly subscribes to the notion of continuously assessing the human capital infrastructure to get the right people for the right job at the right time. It is how we contribute to the success of the business which again is the public service. The career pathways initiative should focus on developing, evolving, and improving the means and strategies to best accomplish this goal. Thank you!

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

Thank you very much! Ms. Fitzgerald.

Marilee Fitzgerald, Acting Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of Defense:

Thank you, Angie! Thank you! Good morning, everyone! It's a pleasure and an honor to be here this morning to talk to you about hiring our recent graduates for jobs in the Federal government. Sorry, Angie. Can you hear me?

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

No.

Marilee Fitzgerald, Acting Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of Defense:

Okay, so we switch. Can you hear me? Okay, great! Thank you! Let's start with the premise. What do our students bring to our workforce? And I think that is the starting point for this discussion this morning. I think one of the most important things that our students bring to us is an outlook that reinvigorates the workplace and the results. Let me share with you some of those characteristics. I believe they bring optimism. It's optimism for what can be done. It is an unvarnished, unencumbered outlook that actually helps to bypass and navigate the fog of bureaucracy. Would you all not agree? Okay.

They bring to us an eagerness to reap the benefits of their investment, their education. Like all of us when we attend school and bring -- we have a willingness and desire to shape the future of others. And this is an important characteristic of our students. They are eager to take what they know and to share it and apply it. I am sure they are also motivated by the many bills they may have to pay. They want to get to work. And if they don't, their parents do. And they bring to us an innovated spirit, a desire to try new things, to see things in a different way. If it's one-year-old, one year new, is it new to this generation? Look what Apple just did. They had a beautiful screen on their iPhone, well, now you have even a better one. The appetite to see things differently and to try new is vested in this generation of recent graduates. I believe they are change-sensitized, they enjoy change, they like it, they embrace it, they want it, and they need it, our workplaces need it. They bring in intellectual curiosity to our workplaces and to work that must be done. What they bring is their recent history of schooling. Isn't that wonderful that they would enter the workplace with an attitude of continuous learning. Many of them really don't quite know what they want to do. We have a marvelous opportunity to help shape their perspective and their possible career futures and capitalize on their continued interest in learning.

These characteristics that I mentioned are really just a few of ones that advance and refresh our workplace. They implicate us with new ideas, best practices, and help us deliver new kinds of results. So can we get them? Well, the partnership for public service in 2009 said in their report great expectations, what students want in an employer and how Federal agencies can deliver it? And they had made three key findings. Government or public service is the most popular industry choice out of 46 options, 5 of the top 15 ideal employers from the list of 260 are Federal agencies. Government offers the main qualities that undergraduates seek. Now do you think they are interested? I think so. So what do we do? Can we get them, or is IBM going to get them, Apple going to get them? We know that they have a keen interest; the partnership for public service is just one of the many who have told us about that. But, many of them we know also become dissolution because of the inordinate amount of time it takes to hire through our competitive process. It just takes us too long to do our work. In fact, we have a very hard time expressing the work that we need, look at our vacancy announcements, ten pages long, hard to find a word of English in there, hard to find a place where they can take their generic skills, and their information that they have learned and apply that to the vast jobs that we have across our Federal agencies.

So we need to get them to apply, we need to streamline our hiring practices, and we commend OPM for leading the way here. We also need to write understandable job descriptions so they know what they are applying for. Well, we also need to quirk their interest during the application process. We know that, you can't just put them in a resume bank, and let those resumes sit and stew, because when you go to call upon them, those candidates are gone. You need to be able to continue to give them a place where they can check this out as their application. Listen, they just came from college and that's what colleges do. 30,000-40,000 applications in colleges and university, students check, they go on a website, get a password and throughout the entire application process, they are able to check the status of their application. We'd like to think they'd like to talk to us but they actually don't, just like to see a nice website up there, easy navigation tools and get to us. But let's be real here too, we also need quality assessments, so that we can protect the investment that we are making, we have to understand better how to assess quality, and we need quick hiring tools to close the deal. We can't wait a long time to grab that talent. We need to be building hiring cohorts, we need to be thinking about the class of, the presidential management fellows program does this, folks in private industry do it, or you become part of a larger group. Our students, and our recent graduates who nailed into our aging workforce, find themselves lost in a sphere of folks that don't look and feel much like them, wouldn't it be nice to create some energy around the hiring the class of 2010-2011 from across the Federal government? Imagine the expanded networks and the leveraging experience that can go on with something like that.

So let's talk a little bit about how we get them in because this goes right to the heart I believe of the question that you are asking about the competitive hiring process. Let me go back to the recruiting piece. What is the appropriate form of competition then? Is it with a field of experienced workers? Do you think these students can compete with the field of experienced workers? Have we looked at USAJOBS today? Lots of those jobs require experience. So they are aced out right before they get started. All those wonderful characteristics that I talked about the outlook get eclipsed by the experience of people like me who have put their applications, and who say we have 20 years of experience doing something that someone values and thinks is important.

Let's look at the qualification requirements? You looked at those jobs? Even for entry level, are you not amazed of the amount of technical qualifications that are required? How about, let's look at the X118 and its predecessor requirements that we all have created? We require one year of specialized experience, two years of specialized experience, all these things that we create. Now imagine a set of qualifications that read something like this, and I ask you to think differently. What if they read like, demonstration of optimism to vision the new possibilities for the resolution of vague, complex and asymmetric challenges that are in the workplace? Eagerness to work hard, to make a difference, to deliver results, an innovative spirit to identify, assess, and apply new ideas to the workplace and issues, ability to bring new methods and technologies to the work, intellectual curiosity, a readiness to continue learning, honing your skills and building your career. And what if they read like that? Do you think the aperture would be open, do you think they could see themselves in Federal government work, and do you think you could do something with that?

Now, let's go back and ask ourselves that question, can they compete with the likes of people like me and you sitting around the room who have years of experience? This is not to suggest that we should eliminate the merit principles quite contrary. They are the foundation and the bedrock of this government, and they ought to be preserved and I agree completely that the Department of Defense would not disagree with anything that you said, Mr. Buggs, on any of the points about merit principles. So if they are the foundational pillars that we must think and consider, how about a competition that is arranged by peer group so it's done at the colleges and the universities. Do you think the many thousands of colleges and universities has broaden up competition? Do we think

it's a diverse pool? Do we think that pool has our veterans are disabled, a mix of young generation, mid generation and older generation, I think our college campuses are quite diverse, would you agree?

And so if you agree then perhaps we can think differently about what competition means, not that we eliminate it but we think about it. And we get a hiring tool that says once we've assessed them, we appoint and click and bring them in. And we've done this through programs like the Presidential Management Fellows Program, rigorous assessment coming in, an easy entry coming into the workforce, we already have a model for it but we would have to collapse those jobs that talk very precisely about the kinds of technical qualifications that these recent college graduates might have, might be expected to have, and so I ask and then they ask us as if we think and we approach this problem to imagine the world with the qualification requirements are rather generic and they are based upon foundational competencies. Competencies that we believe are lifetime skills and underpin every job, and that we offer competition and a pathway in, that's relevant and enables these students and recent graduates to showcase the kinds of competencies that they have, and then to bring them in as a cohort so they can begin to influence as a group, network across the Federal space so that we move out of perhaps even our own understanding what our own organizations do and broaden our experiences. Allow them to navigate that world and really become comfortable with the corporation of the Federal government. And some hiring tool, we have those tools today, but new hiring tools that see a special career path just for our recent college graduates, that's what we would offer and ask for your consideration. Thank you very much!

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

Thank you very much, Mary Lee! Next, we have Mr. Markham.

Rodney Markham, Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of Justice:

Thank you, Angie! It is an honor to be here. 20 years ago actually this week I started with the office of Personnel Management as a PMI at the time it was the PMI program and my first week on the job I was handed a Furlough Notice. Welcome to Government! That is your pink slip. We got over that, our group of interns and we moved on to some very significant problems and that's one of the things about when you are recruiting kids out of college. They are looking for meaningful work and pay, but meaningful work and projects, and they want to be held accountable and so we always have to keep that in the back of our mind even when we issue Furlough notices.

The complexity of competitive hiring laws and third-party decisions regarding them has resulted in a 300-page plus competitive hiring handbook. This does not result in a highly effective process, and we all know that. The current system is cumbersome, lengthy, confusing, and fraught with exceptions and competing policies. Human resources specialists, managers, and applicants are united in their views of the current process, and we welcome the President's and OPM's reform efforts, and we support you. It is our position that normal competitive hiring is less than effective regardless of the targeted audience. It has a more severe impact however on the hiring of recent college graduates into entry-level positions and actually serves as a deterrent to this applicant pool at large.

The President has renewed the call to public service, citing the rich talent available in our population, especially with respect to recent college graduates. His current hiring reform initiative is a first step in addressing this problem, and we applaud OPM for addressing these complex issues, as there has been no meaningful reform in hiring since President Carter's Civil Service Reform Act in 1979. Our workforce and mission needs have changed drastically during these past 30 years, yet as an institution, we have not kept pace. A legislative package has been drafted to address some of the barriers to hiring.

We look forward to working with OPM to develop additional legislation to tackle the full range of barriers as we move toward meaningful change. We encourage policy changes to qualifications and a call to invest in this process strategically, from a government-wide perspective, or an agency-by-agency perspective through the appropriations process.

The current accepted hiring authority for hiring recent college graduates, the two-year internship program allows agency significant relief from the normal competitive hiring process, while still requiring adherence to veterans' preference laws and regulations in merit system principles. In fact, this authority was established specifically to help agencies with hiring recent college graduates, recognizing the inadequacies and ineffectiveness of the current system as it relates to this group, and management's ability to attract new, educated talent into the workforce on an ongoing basis.

The ineffectiveness of the current system indeed is a problem for the government. The fact that the government has been under a consent decree for entry-level hiring for nearly 30 years underscores this issue. Whether we use scored or category rating methodologies to rate candidates in the current competitive process, the results are largely the same. We continue to apply cultural and institutional norms that are a reflection of our culture and society over 60 years ago. It is time for the government to openly discuss barriers with all stakeholder groups and to forge a new path to developing and establishing an effective hiring system that provides a balanced approach to everyone concerned.

In the end, it is the American people who suffer when its government cannot deliver business. It is unable to attract or reach the best candidate for the job each and every time. Action is warranted to retain the current excepted hiring authority. OPM should develop more clear instructions to agencies on the proper use to the program and future student pathway program and excepted service regulations in general. OPM and its oversight role should enforce sanctions for those agencies that commit regulatory violations. We should honor our veterans and we will. Most especially, the office of management and budget and its advocacy of this initiative should require strategic investment in hiring, i.e., OMB should set aside mandatory funding to invest in assessments, either government-wide or on an agency-by-agency basis. Such assessments are properly developed and utilized, will result in better qualification determinations.

OPM should consider changes to qualification policies that would help to streamline the process. This can be done through the Chico Council to include non-government stakeholders which examines best practices from the private sector, nonprofit sector, state and foreign governments and are certainly not the idea of universities. Lastly, OPM and OMB should continue to collaborate with agencies and other stakeholders to send the Congress legislative proposals that will substantially reform federal hiring. On October 13th, 1979, President Carter called the passage of the Civil Service Reform Act to start of the continuing effort to improve the Federal government's services to the people. By itself, Carter stated, the law will not ensure improvement in the system. It provides the tools. The will and determination must come from those who manage government. That's us. We look forward to our continued OPM partnership and taking hiring reform to the next level, while preserving hiring authorities, supporting student pathways, honoring our veterans, and establishing processes that are transparent. Thank you for your time!

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

Thank you very much! Mr. Sanders!

Donald Sanders, Director, Strategic Human Resource Planning and Accountability, Department of Agriculture:

Good morning! I am Don Sanders. I'm here on behalf of the Chief Human Capital Officer for the Department of Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture surely concurs with all of the positions that the proceeding presenters have shared with you this morning. So, what I'd like to do is to take these few minutes and just share with you USDA's vision for how it will move forward to meet its workforce needs in the immediate and long-term future.

Among the highest of his priorities as the Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary Vilsack has identified the need to ensure that the USDA workforce is strong, prepared, and motivated to face the challenges and opportunities confronting the department. Because of the absolute necessity of recruiting and retaining high-performing talent across USDA to meet our future needs, Secretary Vilsack has asked Dr. Kathleen Merrigan, the Deputy Secretary and Mr. Pearlie Reed, Assistant Secretary for Administration to lead USDA's effort to establish a viable and dynamic USDA workforce and succession planning roadmap. Such planning is in line with President Obama's initiative for the Federal workforce. In fact, one of the President's goal is to provide a transparent, high-performing government capable of addressing the challenges of the 21st Century. As the President pointed out, the American people deserve a government that works where the public interest is prioritized, where the impact of government spending is transparent and held to high objective standards and what results in government, management matter.

In keeping with this vision, Secretary Vilsack has established priorities for the department that would embrace the core tenants of the administration's policy on performance improvement for Federal agencies, and share them with all USDA employees. One of his priorities as Secretary is to build a modern workplace with a modern workforce. The goal will be realized by ensuring that our current and future employees are engaged and equipped with the competencies, vision and motivation for mission accomplishment.

A critical element of USDA's workforce and succession planning roadmap would be an aggressive use of the Federal Career Intern Program. In the past three years, USDA has been successful in employing the Federal Career Intern Program to fill vacancies of mission-critical positions that resulted in improving the department's bench strength and core competencies associated with leadership roles as this would be critical in improving the caliber of leadership in the future. USDA has increased its use of the Career Intern Program from 6% in 2007 to 11.4% in 2009, with the majority of these new hires possessing at least a Bachelor's Degree at the point of their entry on duty into the department. Moreover, as USDA continues to increase quality through diversity, the Career Intern Program has directly contributed to increasing the diversity in applicant pool, thus increasing the diversity in new hires. A good example of this can be found in the Farm Service Agency's effort to increase diversity among its Farm Loan Officers, a mission-critical position in FSA's Farm Loan Program. In 2005, FSA launched an initiative to increase diversity among Farm Loan Officers and capitalize on the Career Intern Program as its primary recruitment vehicle.

In the span of two years, FSA's Farm Loan Program realized a substantial increase of minority representation. Not only did they increase minority representation, the Farm Loan Program also experienced a reduction in the amount of time needed for new Farm Loan Officers to receive their certification credentials.

Employees are USDA's greatest resource, and as such, USDA must strive to recruit and retain the best, brightest, and most diverse workforce possible. However, the federal government is facing a retirement Tsunami, where 50% of its workforce is slated to retire within the next decade. If nothing is done, a vast array of knowledge and experience will be lost with those retirees. Furthermore, the federal government has traditionally had to compete with the private sector for talent, but lower rates of pay and

locality issues have disadvantaged the public sector in recruiting the talent needed to ensure retention of institutional knowledge and superior performance. The current economic conditions have worked in the favor of the public sector to some extent. But they will not last forever, and once again, the federal sector must compete with the private sector to ensure it has the right people, with the right skills, and the right jobs, at the right time.

Fortunately, USDA is well aware of the upcoming challenges its workforce is facing and we'll use the Federal Career Intern Program as a tool to entice new recruits into its ranks and retaining them. Combined with other hiring flexibilities, the Career Intern Program, as a key component of OPM's student pathways, is ideally suited to increase the talent and diversity of USDA's workforce. Flexible schedules, alternative workplace opportunities, and significant training and development opportunities, exist for new and current employees at all levels of the department. USDA is the people's department, and successfully branding and marketing its mission and all of its programs, especially through a coordinated recruitment program highlighted by the student pathways, will stir the entries of current and future employees, and will have a profound impact on USDA's ability to recruit and retain topnotch talent.

Picking students and newly graduated applicants interested in USDA is an excellent way to recruit talent and develop brand loyalty. As such, the department is committed to hiring 500 interns through student programs and other opportunities. USDA will use all hiring authorities available to achieve this, as well as use external contractor for many positions. It will develop its own internal programs, including training programs for interns. Some of the interns will be paid by USDA and some will be paid by external contractors, fellowships as such. Such opportunity will ensure a cadre of talented individuals, from which to select new employees, as well as allow USDA to test new recruits to ensure that they are a good fit with the department. USDA will take full advantage of new administrative management strategies, particularly in developing an administrative management development program. The training program will be a two-year program designed to recruit exceptional talent into administrative jobs across USDA. Targeted individuals will include certified public accountants, computer scientists, business majors. It will include extensive use of hiring authorities, formal education, skill assessment, individualized development planning, leadership shadowing, self-study, on-the-job training, rotational assignments, mentoring, and a capstone simulation/assessment seminar.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers recently conducted a survey and found that a greater number of new graduates find public service, not only a noble profession, but also personally fulfilling and rewarding. Asked if they would consider a career opportunity in government, a first choice, the majority, responded in a negative. A follow-up to this question indicated that given more information on careers in the government and more exposure to the mission of specific federal agencies, the majority of the respondents had a more positive response to a career in the federal government as a first choice. Given the recruitment atmosphere among new graduates, USDA, like most federal agencies, will need to focus on communicating their mission and telling its story to attract a generation that is receptive to federal service. This is essential if the student pathways initiative is to be successful in attracting, recruiting, and retaining top talent among recent graduates.

An aggressive recruitment initiative, as part of its workforce and succession plan, is only one step. USDA must strategize, plan, sell, and implement its recruitment programs with vigor, enthusiasm, creativity, and consistency. It must monitor and evaluate these programs to ensure that they are achieving their goals and objectives, and it must tie those goals and objectives with the mission-centered objectives of USDA. It must have leader commitment and employee commitment to recruiting and sponsoring new employees through effective on-boarding initiatives, and it must include concerns and

priorities of all mission areas and clear program goals. It must give priority to programs and improve employee satisfaction. It must embrace new tools and ensure employee satisfaction. It must form its policies in an environment of inclusion and tolerance of all points of view. It must have multi-organizational environment and commitment. Finally, it must ensure that it has resources available and it creatively utilizes them to consistently implement its programs.

Moderated Q & A:

Thank you very much. We are going to move to the question and the answer section of this. So I have a question for each of the panelist that I would like you to answer. It doesn't matter; it doesn't have to go in order, so whoever wants to speak up first is fine. But I would like each of you to identify the top two to three barriers to hiring students and recent college graduates under the competitive hiring process. What are the top two to three barriers that you see when using the competitive hiring process for students and recent college graduates?

I will take a shot at that Angie. I would say for the top two -- I would say it's the way that we express our job openings, through these laborious, long-written job vacancy announcements. They are barriers. A crisp announcement that identifies the one or two important elements for hiring and emphasis on a resume is probably all we need. They become barriers, folks can't even -- our recent grads can't even understand them. They are important barriers. They are easy fixes though, that's the good news I think about that one. But I think that a barrier.

The second barrier is the application process itself. Where does it go and how long does it take to make its way through the system? The analysis of qualifications, even the assembly of them, the organizing of the resumes, the process that we take to identify somebody who might be minimally qualified, those I think are -- that's an important problem that I think has to be resolved. How do we look at a resume and very quickly identify the capabilities that are necessary? And maybe for our recent grads, it's not a resume in the way that we understand a resume, with somebody who has experience in the workforce, maybe it looks very different, especially if you look at the characteristics that I would like to look at, that we abandon all of these technical requirements and we have something that looks slightly different and is an expression of way they tell us about their talents.

Perhaps I think the third barrier for us is, in the assessment process, but I think the other barrier for us is in the way in which we bring our students, our recent graduates, on board. It's how we treat them in the workforce. And I believe that that's an extension of the hiring process. In DOD, we found that we lose many of our -- the greatest area of loss is within the first five years, in a certain age population among our recent graduates. I think we have to pay attention to that and consider that as an extension of the hiring process. It's probably because we need to pay attention to how we on-board, how we bring our students in, how we capture their talent, how we make them feel welcome, how we make them feel honored in perspective for what they can bring. So that would be the three things that I would punch off as barriers for us.

Thank you.

I think I would agree with all of those points, and simply add, with respect to the application process, simply put, I think is a foreign language, that we are asking folks to respond to. Just think about all of the acronyms that some agencies use in describing the position to folks who have no clue what a department means with respect to those acronyms, and it's a foreign language, I mean the application process itself and the language that we use. In addition to that, I think that we create barriers by virtue of the

online application process itself. That it is not one that is easily navigated, and I quite frankly believe that it can be frustrating to candidates as they attempt to apply for positions. And at some agencies, including OPM, it may be a little easier, but there remain agencies out there that make the process that much more difficult. I think it is simply a turnoff for students. It's a turnoff for folks in the private sector, who have never, ever experienced applying for a federal job. Beyond that, I think that the delays that are inherent in the application process, with respect to the necessary areas, such as completing security checks and completing that application process, that we then would require of the applicant to perhaps go through an investigation process, those are an intimidating, I think, factors for most folks who have not ever had a position in the federal workforce. And I don't think that we make it easy on them. I will end by agreeing with Ms. Fitzgerald, with respect to the on-boarding process. One of the efforts that we have ongoing at the Department of Education right now is to completely revamp the on-boarding process for new employees. When I say new employees, I mean each category of employee, from student to senior executive, and from folks who are transferring from one agency into the department, to folks who have never been in the federal government before. And really tailoring that on-boarding experience in such a way that we are reaching out to that hire, as soon as we have made the decision to hire, and beginning to walk them through the process.

I think we have a communication problem with the college community. When you look at the announcements, and we have made a lot of progress streamlining the announcements, but when you see words like delegated examining or all qualified applicants. Well, why does it say that? Of course I am qualified or I wouldn't be applying. ICTAP, CTAP, all sources, reinstatement eligibility. We in HR, even to a certain extent managers, we become accustomed to the vocabulary that we use. To this day, when my HR ops staff, they will go down the path of the confusing terminologies, we try to remind them, can you speak English? Consider who you are recruiting here. Someone coming off of a college campus, they are going to assume they are qualified. They are not going to necessarily even understand what you mean by area of consideration. So we have to do a better job of speaking English and reaching these folks as they come out of college.

The other thing, and we are working this across government, and I know OPM is doing significant work with USAJOBS, the different systems that are out there running across government. Whether it's Avue or Monster or Taleo, there is a number of different systems, and so applicants just want to work for the government, will go into the USAJOBS portal and next thing you know they land in Avue Digital Services or Monster environment to do their environment, and the feel and the texture and the look, it's very different. It's confusing. So I think one solution, and I think we are headed in this direction, it's just going to be slow, but it's ongoing, is to have kind of the one-stop shopping. I have never been one to advocate a single solution for everything, and that's not what I am saying, but when it comes to new folks coming out of college, wanting to apply for a government job, we need to think like one employer and think about how our systems can support these new men and women coming off of our college campuses, and have them apply one time.

I think when you think in terms of that old saying, first impressions are lasting impressions, agencies have to keep in mind, when we bring students on board through the STEP Program or the Student Career Experience Program, any other programs, where we give students opportunities to engage our organizations, engage our stuff, for brief acclamation to our mission and how we do business. Those individuals are the best advertisement we can have.

On the other hand, they can be the worst advertisement. And I will give you an example with some of our STEP Program candidates and our Student Career Experience Program. If we bring these talented people in and they are there for the summer and all we have them doing is filing and stapling materials together, putting packets together, and when

they go back to school that fall semester, with their colleagues, either in a fraternity, the sororities, or in the cafeteria or the student lounge, and it's like, so what did you do? And somebody from DuPont talks about working at one of the facilities and collaborating on some projects and seeing how chemists are doing this, and, oh, they talk to some folks from the pharmaceutical industry and they are learning about how the pharmaceutical industry go about marketing various products and working on project teams and cross-functional teams. So hey, Tom, what did you do over at the federal government? Well, I just spent most of my time stapling. Well, that is something I think we underestimate how those experiences tell a bad story for the government, and it's something that I think when it comes to acquiring and attracting top talent, that is an impediment for us. It's an area where we need to improve in terms of our image. The government, there are certain agencies, has excellent reputation, such as the CDC and NASA and NOAA, on a scientific side, for being a federal agency that young people really have a desire to become a part of. But the rest of us, we have got to do something about branding and some of those things. Anytime we have an opportunity to share our mission, share our goals, and what we do as an organization, with potential employers and those students that are part of those programs, those are the folks who will either be future employees or they will refer us indirectly some talented people. So we need to keep that in mind.

Thank you. I am going to switch this up a little bit and just ask each of you an individual question. Mary Lee, and I just want to make sure, if I didn't get this right, that's fine, you can correct me here, but can you expound on how you would use the competitive hiring process among peer groups, if I heard you say that correctly?

Yes. I think the announcement that what I would envision is a process where you might - - see, I would like to start with the result. What is it that we want to do and what is it that we need from our recent college graduates? So if we start with the premise that we are looking for a diverse workforce that richly reflects the diversity of America, from its race, color, creed, all the way to cultures, their abilities, disabilities, culture, and so on, that's where we begin to target our recruitment effort. So we go to certain colleges and universities, certain campuses. Perhaps we go to all of them. But there is a public announcement on that university about what it is that we need. So we become an employer who is on the college campus. So sometimes it's limited to a regional area, sometimes it's a specific university that offers something special and unique about what it has to offer; it's the best. We go to the best. We go where the talent is being created and formed and shaped. And then we use an appropriate assessment to figure out what the best talent is among that group. So it's not about attracting everybody, college students, experienced persons in the same group. It's limiting the focus. It's saying that this group brings those foundational characteristics that we need in our workforce. It's not the exclusive source of hiring, it is a source of hiring. We use it to the extent that we need to balance our workforce. So I am in favor. I am not sure I have today the solution I would offer that we get our recent graduates on this problem, to try and figure out, what is a fair way to reach so that everyone has an opportunity to apply, but maybe it's not a nation-wide recruitment effort for every single job we have. Creating a million resumes for a single job is not the answer either. So we have to be targeted and selected, but yet somehow ensure that we are fair and open in our assessment. I think that's where the merit principles fall to me and also on honoring Veterans' Preference. When we get our group, when we select our target audience on our college campuses, then how do we apply the merit principles at that point, and how do we honor Veterans' Preference.

That's why, I think, all of us keep going back to assessments. That's the rule. It's not 500 different appointing authorities. The result is, we should all be held accountable for being able to prove that we were fair in assessing our candidates and hiring the best. Then I think it's just really that simple. You target your recruitment effort, you honor Veterans' Preference, you do a fair selection process, and you hire the best. You don't pick up hiring authority. We put a code in that says that we have hired a student. I also

think the targeted recruitment, I think we have to appreciate the job market as well. I am not sure, and Rod, I think you made this point too, about the -- we ought to be able to say things like, your entry into federal government is good for a couple of years. I think we ought to acknowledge that maybe immediacy -- we can't offer a job immediately upon graduation, that there may be some time when your card is still valid to enter as a student, and appreciate that coming from college into the workforce requires maybe six months of work. Many of our students can't do both, they can't stay in school and look for a job. So the immediacy that we have today, and the way we frame, the way we work, I think we need some sort of a certificate that says, your credential as a student is valid for a couple of years and then come into the workforce.

Thank you. Mr. Markham, how does the competitive hiring process disadvantage recent college graduates?

So you gave me the tough question. Well, I think it's as simple as this, they don't understand the process. They don't understand how to navigate the process. The process is important and we all know that, and it's there for a reason. But I think because of the other items that I mentioned, in terms of how we communicate and how we market, I think it places, if I understand your question correctly, it places them at a disadvantage, because they have not gone through this process before. It's not like applying for a job at Wal-Mart or Headquarters or Procter & Gamble, some of the business students and some of the robust internships those companies have, it's just a bit different, the process we set up is cumbersome. Even with the streamline measures that we have taken, we are still not getting the message across and getting the applicant pool that we need, using the traditional competitive process. That's why the targeted, and I really like the way Mary Lee described this, if you focus on the end result and what it is you are looking for, what you need in the organization, if it's diversity, focus on the results, and use the existing flexibilities that you have. Exactly, put a code in, it doesn't matter what authority that is, you are going to honor your Veterans' Preference, you are going to follow a very structured merit system process, and you are going to go out there and you are going to hire the very best for your organization, and then you are done.

Okay. Thank you. Mr. Buggs, When you -- in your statement that you had read, you had talked about several different accepted hiring programs that we have, and you had mentioned that you thought that the competitive hiring has barriers to it. What is it about the accepted hiring procedures, what is it that it has less barriers than competitive hiring?

Well, think about the conversation we have been having, and really targeting particular audiences. If you look at the Excepted Service Appointing Authorities, we are talking Schedule A, B, C. Each one of those schedules provides for hiring of a particular type of individual. That type could be a handicapped person. It can be someone who is pursuing a graduate degree, and wanting to have experience in an organization that will help them advance their experience toward the degree. And of course, Schedule B, which permits us to hire students; as STEP, SCEP, and FCIP. So when I look at Excepted Service Appointing Authorities, I have something that has already to a large degree given us the ability to really target our recruitment for a particular type of individual.

I would like to expand on that. I would like to imagine the day when we didn't have an excepted and competitive service. I would like to imagine a day where we just had, coming into the federal government, with a federal appointment. Because even in our excepted service, we compete for positions, we assess candidates for positions. There is no free pass in the excepted service, there is a competition. So I think we need to acknowledge it. It's just that there is a sense of moving with alacrity in that, because there are exceptions that we have granted along the way. Listen, we all need those. When you can do targeted recruitment and you apply your fair assessment, we also

honor our Veterans' Preference in our excepted service, and we hire the best.

This isn't the province of one service. I think we have matured beyond an excepted and competitive service, because each of our positions today do require an analysis of whether we are bringing in the right talent, and that assessment right there to me is a competitive process. That's what makes it competitive. I am not selecting everybody who just comes up, I am looking at an array of talent, applying good judgment and reason to who might be the best. So I think we need to imagine the day where it's a little bit more simple.

I also think the trick here is, how in that future world we ensure that merit principles are being observed.

Absolutely!

Part of the issue, part of the problem I think here is that, somewhere in our history we went astray, in terms of being fair, making certain that everyone had the opportunity to compete. That's one of the challenges that I think we have today, how do we get beyond that. And if we are going to go to that place that says, there is no competitive, there is no excepted service, but rather anyone can apply for any position, and we have an assessment process to pick the best, and we need to be sure that we are all on the same page with respect to principles.

Now, Mr. Sanders, you had mentioned about targeted recruiting, why can't you do targeted recruiting under competitive hiring?

I will not say that you cannot do targeted recruiting. Unfortunately, most federal agencies are totally dependent upon USAJOBS for announcing and posting positions, and they go no further than that point. Obviously with targeted recruiting, it can work very well with competitive hiring. We simply need to ensure that if there are universities, student organizations, professional associations, that we know would be a good source for our talent pool, we simply ensure that these organizations and associations are aware of our announcements. When we make that announcement on USAJOBS, make sure that we have the appropriate contacts with the student organizations or the professional associations, and forward them copies of those announcements, as soon as they are made public. That is an excellent way that we can target and ensure that those folks know, we are in your constituency as a part of our talent pool. We believe that they bring talent to the table. And I think that that's probably the most effective way to target recruitment in conjunction with competitive hiring.

Mary Lee, can I ask -- go ahead.

I was just going to make a follow-on point here. The structure of the way we think about applying for the government is, we have to know the code first. We have to know the job. We have to be able to know what the title is to the job. I can't easily navigate and say, I think I might like to enter the financial management world. Up come, if I don't -- budget analyst, accountant, I have to be able to name these things in precise ways that our rules and regs can read. So I favor a process where you come in and it is about a competency. Here are the things that we need. I talked about this vision of outlook and what do we need. Imagine a day where you just look for lifetime skills and foundational careers that are good across all, and I will teach you, I will help you, I will refine your thinking, and you can select among many as we are training you for where you might want to finally select. Many of our intern programs are based on that, where we give them the appropriate experiences and then they hone their talents in areas where they have strong interest. But we opened the door to that, we created those opportunities. So I think we have to step back and figure out how we are speaking to our group. We also have to be a little bit more contemporary in the way we advertise. I think about Amazon. When I go to order a book, it says, people who bought that book are also interested in

reading this. People who selected a career in this field have also been interested in this. Again, we have to learn how to speak to the group that's coming up. I believe, Rod, you made the point that we have 60 year old systems in place that our students don't -- our recent graduations don't look. So that would be just something else I would offer for your consideration.

Thank you. Now, one of the things that I think you had touched on in your testimonial whenever you had spoken Mary Lee is, given that competition is the rule, why can't grads compete and succeed given their unique abilities? Why does there need to be an exception?

I am not suggesting that we don't have a competition. I think the competition is in the assessment. It's in looking at who among the group who applied is the best? If I put out there that I am looking to hire 2,000 interns across the federal government, who will work in a variety of career opportunities, I put that announcement out, I could even broadcast it to the nation. The competition comes and how I am going to select, that's where the real merit principles are, that's where you are looking at fair assessment, ensuring that there is no bias in the hiring and selection process. So I favor some sort of competition, for sure. I don't know that the competition has to be among the entire nation. I think we have to target where we go, and if we are interested in bringing in the recent graduates, that's where we have to go. I suggest that blending that open competition with other sources eclipses the kind of talent and qualifications and competencies that we are looking for when we target our recruitment efforts to our college campuses. You can't do both. You can't say, I am interested in bringing in new talent and we define it as a recent graduate, and then open the aperture and we have everybody in it. And look at the qualification centers that we have today, which place emphasis on experience, and upon a precision of job description. Look at those job descriptions; a student looks at them, a recent graduate looks at them and says, I am sorry, I just don't understand it. I don't think I am it. So that's where I think the competition is. I would like to place the emphasis on competing for the job assessment.

Angie, there is another point I think that we would be remiss not to bring up, if we are going to be candid in this. Many of our hiring managers are simply intimidated by young, talented, well-educated folks that coming in with new skills, well-versed with computers, and savvy to network with social networking. And I think that that is an issue, that makes it a challenge, and perhaps with the student hiring initiatives, it may be the best way to bring in a larger number of these talented folks. And it's just something that we need to help with our hiring managers, to work with our hiring managers, to begin to appreciate those core competency and values, which is really a new value system, a new generation comes with. So I think that's important to just put on the table.

I am struggling a little here, because I continue to hear this question with respect to excepted service and competitive service and should there be more competition. My experience over 30 years is that, there is indeed competition for talent, as we are hiring in the excepted service. Indeed, I came into the federal government competing under the old PACE program; Professional & Administrative Careers Examination; I competed after having served as an administrative coop. The process under the excepted service for SCEP, STEP, FCIP, in my view, has evolved for the better. We don't have an examination like the PACE, which was biased, but there is indeed competition. People are competing with each other; veterans, the disabled, recent college graduates, and folks who are coming from private sector, and we are looking at that talent and making a decision in terms of who is the best among them. So the question I am having for myself and perhaps for you in OPM is, are we talking about an issue of more rigor akin to what we apply under the competitive service? If so, I think that might be a wrong-headed approach. I think I agree with Mary Lee and Rod, everybody on this panel, we have been doing it. So what is it that we are trying to accomplish is my question?

Since I get to ask the questions and not answer them, I think really to try to redirect this, what we are really trying to get at here is to address the competitive hiring process and is it an effective avenue for bringing recent college graduates into the federal workforce? And if so, why is that? And if not, then what are the barriers to the competitive hiring process? What I have heard from most of the panel is that, the competitive -- that we are using competitive measures, regardless of what authorities we are using, but that we also believe that there is a need to improve the competitive hiring process. So is that the answer?

Yes, for me, that I have used the competitive process to target college graduates and others. I have also used the excepted service. The excepted service, both processes, where authorities permit flexibilities to hiring managers, I would think we want to retain that, that we would not want to put ourselves in a posture that we are saying, do it this way and no other way. And that's the concern I think that I have.

One of the things that's -- I mean maybe the question is, why do we use the excepted service authority? And there are those managers and unfortunately some HR folks out there that think that it is the exception service. There is no exception, we apply rigor, rules apply, Veterans' Preference, and we have highly structured programs. The excepted service allows us to think more like a program or focus on a mission regarding how we hire. For example, our Deputy U.S. Marshals, we are not out there saying, we need a bunch of 1811s. We are looking at the Deputy U.S. Marshal program, we are doing the targeted recruiting, we are pulling in veterans, minorities, underrepresented groups, and building a diverse group of Deputy U.S. Marshals, and that authority that we have allows us, I think, it's more flexible, our hiring managers tell us that it's more flexible, but it still honors our vets and our numbers support that when you look at the breakdown in terms of RNO and the number of vets that we hire. So I think the question is, why are we using this authority to begin with, and maybe we have to go back and look at the history books and see what was wrong with the competitive service that made us take this turn and look for flexibility? Maybe that's the question we need to research.

And I think, to the point of, from the hiring manager's perspective, the amount of time it takes to get a new employee on board, when you look at going through the excepted service, you can really reduce the amount of time, cut it in more than half.

For example, typically, it may take 90-120 days to get somebody on board through the competitive service, while you can actually, through excepted service, have someone on board in four weeks. I mean, for many hiring managers, that's the issue, that's the incentive for moving towards many of the student hiring programs. So we certainly need to do all we can to reduce the amount of time it takes to move candidates through the competitive process. I think that would bring some balance into the situation. But the amount of time it takes to bring somebody on board is really making the student hiring initiatives more attractive than competitive process.

Okay. Thank you. This concludes the moderated question and answer part of this, and we are opening it up to public comment or to questions from the audience. Again, the questions, please don't direct them to me as OPM, they need to be directed to the panel.

First question from the audience.

Hi! I am Rohan, I am an intern in the House of Representatives. We have touched on the competitive hiring process, and it's great that you are addressing that. Attraction and retention are two of the biggest issues here. But you can bring in the best and the brightest from all across the world in a country to work for you, at the federal government, and that's what my intern friends and what I see. The two big issues are, A) stapling papers, and we go home and our friends are like at NIH and they are like, oh, I did all this in the lab, and we don't say that. The second issue, which wasn't touched

on, I would like for any four of you to touch on is this. Everyone has mentioned that one of the key competencies of my generation is the optimism, so we come in with wide eyes and we are ready to make change, and I agree with that. We are, because -- I guess that's just how we are. But I speak for my intern friends here when I say that there is an immediate disillusionment once you enter the federal government. Young kids come in and they run into apathy, red tape, and a quagmire of slow moving work, that often is the federal government. So how would you address this problem? How do you stop the new kids on the block from becoming just like the rest of the herd?

Let me tell you what I am doing in my organization. We are not going to send you out to recruit for us, by the way. I think you make some very key points, and I will tell you how we are addressing this in my organization and some of it's based on my personal experience. But I hire about 8-12 interns in HR a year and they come from all over. We have some from D.C. Government and then we have some from various universities across the country. I make it very clear to my hiring managers that they -- the minute they walk in the door, we are not texting, we are not on Facebook, there is a substantive work plan in place. We are going to have the dialog. You are not just an intern, you have got to own a project. That was based on my experience starting with OPM after the furloughs notices were revoked and we got into -- I think I worked in office systems innovation and simplification, where they do the HR demo projects. Very interesting place, working with a lot of smart people, and some very good managers there gave me ownership in projects. Yeah, we are going to staple some papers and we are going to make some copies. The word has changed, we all do. But you can't let that be the focus. You have got to find a mentor, a senior mentor. You have got to go and search for those projects. I have got an intern now, he is a sophomore, found out that he had had an Access database programming class, we were getting ready to spend \$60,000 on a database project and this kid did it in two weeks. So you find out -- you make sure your manager knows what your skill sets are. If you see something in the organization that you can do, go to that manager, we should tell our students, go to that manager, sell yourself and make it your project, and take ownership. Sometimes you just have to leave if it's not working out. But we have got to do a better job of saying to our managers, these kids, we want to retain them, and the way you do that is not just to pay them, but to give them substantive work, real work. I told this intern, I said, when you leave this office in three months, you are going to have a better resume. If you don't, I haven't done my job. I tell my managers the same thing, let them leave with the resume that's focused on substantive projects, so we can hire them back when they are finished with school.

One of the things we are doing at USDA with our on-boarding program is to ensure that there are components that will facilitate the development of networks among the new hires. I think that by sharing your positive and/or negative experiences with your colleagues, from either your university or just a recent graduate as yourself, that is a good outlet for sharing frustrations and doing that. One of the things that I think is important is that, a new graduate or a new hire, not only do you share with your supervisors and colleagues your interest and any particular specific skills you may have, you need to make sure also that you volunteer for what we refer to as cross-functional work teams, where you are working with other folks in other arenas within your organization, that will give you the exposure to see that perhaps, maybe the organization or the unit that you are a part of right now may not be very progressive and being holistic in its thinking and problem solving, but exposure in other business units across functions would certainly give you an opportunity to demonstrate your abilities and also give you the opportunity to identify challenging opportunities, where you might be able to excel in an area of your expertise.

I think you have asked really the quintessential questions for us. As I said earlier, in the Department of Defense, we are worried about the retention of the talent that we bring in, because of many -- there are many things that you suggest in your response that we

do. We somehow -- disillusion, we create an expectation that this job is not for you, because we have a hierarchy and everybody has to go through somebody, and we look at you and we say, well, you can't really come to that meeting, because you don't bring the knowledge and expertise. Our whole system starts coming in on our young folks who come in, because we don't think that they are in the right positions or can bring us the right experience.

So much of what you suggest I think is being -- I think, and to the credit of this administration as well, where we are really beginning to focus on what's employee engagement, I think that's what you are talking about. This is where we examine as our managers and supervisors, our workplace practices, what are our behaviors, and I think it starts even thinking about who goes into supervision. Supervision and creating the right workplaces and setting a vision for the workplace and understanding how to take talent like that and bring it into the workplace and use it is not for the faint of heart. This is not just for everybody who thinks supervision is about acquiring a few more dollars, it is about having the right skills to take this new kind of knowledge and embed it into the organization.

So we have a long way to go here. We are not going to solve that one overnight, but I do believe that paying attention to that and actually holding us accountable for making those kinds of changes and employee engagement in our workplace are essential. To your point though of, how do you extrapolate your energy and get us all moving, is a question, because I see it in my own workplace. I have an office of maybe 12 people. I bring in one young face and there we all are. It's a pretty awesome tasking to say to a bunch of us, well, I am not sure, I like the way you did that, or how about this idea? You get two or three in the office and the energy really changes, because then there is this cohesion that exists. There is a sense that I can make a difference, and almost as a collective entity, which is why I favor cohorts. I favor taking our intern groups and our recent graduates as cohorts might, this is the class of something, and again, across the federal entity. I believe you do need to work as a group. You need to be able to network and leverage what it is you know, and how informed our workplace is. I think we ought to take a page from IT as well.

IT was quite good at bringing in a culture that said, it's reverse mentoring, isn't it? We ask our young folks who are coming in, how to work our BlackBerrys, how to do Excel. Do you do that? I mean, it's just the way they work. They taught us how to do it. We couldn't get enough training in our offices and we couldn't get it there quickly enough. but if you brought in young people you got it right-away. That's the kind of mentality that we ought to have. We ought to look at you and say, you have something to offer. You bring optimism, I have a tough problem. I need your optimism. I need you to clear the bureaucracy for me. Ask me the tough questions. But there are behavioral things we have to change it and I think you are on the right and you want to hold this accountable for that. We ought to make a diligent effort with the refashioning and reforming the way we approach our work, employee engagement is huge.

Thank you! I need to try to refocus this just a little bit back on some of the original questions, because the things that we really need to address as part of this public hearing or the things that are identified on our posters there to the left. So I am going to interject here and ask a question of Mr. Markham. You had mentioned that you thought that we need to examine why we moved away from the competitive service. Could you give me some example as to why you think we moved away from the competitive service?

I think we talked about those a great length here. I think the process is cumbersome. It takes longer. From management's perspective and from HR's perspective it's not as flexible. The excepted service has enabled us to establish I think more creative career programs and hold up new hires accountable for longer periods of time through a

probationary period which I think is fair as long as there is the minute that intern walks in the door there is a well-documented learning plan and that speaks that this gentleman's concern as well. The minute you walk in you know what's expected. So I don't think the competitive service allowed us or allows us to be as creative with these type of internship programs. We need to start thinking about more of a community concept, and I really like what Mary Lee keeps coming back to the cohort comment and concept in terms of how we think about career groups or even larger classes that we hire under these existing flexible authorities. I think that gets us a better at not only you're bringing in new talent off the college campuses, but you have them in a two year, a third year program with OPM approval that's highly structured, focused on the technical skills of the job, they didn't have to have those to get into the service, competitive service says, specialized experience, check this box, this many years. These other authorities give the folks a break, get them in the door, put them in a structured training program, hold them accountable, extend the probationary period if need be, extend the program to three years, and then assess them. Then if it works convert them to a competitive position. But it only works if you have structured programs in place. Merit systems, veterans preference, it's got to be fair and transparent. I am not talking about the ones, and the twos out there where managers are going out and hiring a single individual under the FCIP, I am talking about large programs like our Deputy Marshal Program and our Paralegal Assistant Program and some of the legal programs in our environmental groups. That's the advantage, and I think that's where the competitive service hasn't done as well.

If we looked at something where everybody enters through. You can call it an excepted service, but through a period of process which says, you don't have your tenure yet. You don't have your competitive service wings yet if you will to speak in today's language. You earn that by proving results that you are productive employee, that you demonstrate the capabilities that are needed to do work in the Federal government at large. You say you come in through a process. You see, the excepted service I think started because the PACE exam and these other competitive exams were inappropriate for certain jobs. They couldn't test us, for example, teachers, who came to work for the Federal government, that examination was inappropriate. It's not possible to examine. That foundational principle I think has eroded. There is competition. There is a sense of trying to select the best. That is what defines competition. We bring our folks in, we look at their work on the job, that's how other folks do it, look at their work, see their results, and if they prove to be able to demonstrate the competencies that are needed to do the work, they then are in their stripes to come into a tenured position, much like you do in your colleges and your universities. You become part of the competitive service, and maybe that's a five year drill, I don't know. But I am not too much in favor, Angie, of excepted and competitive service. I think it's about something more foundational. I just think those principles have gone away. I am not sure that the ease is there in the excepted service anymore. So they've kludged in a way that makes the process of entering the Federal government be it in excepted and competitive service still based upon principles of merit. There has to be a fair examination. There has to be a process of reaching to a market that doesn't suggest that we are hiring our friends that we are giving a fair competition. But that doesn't mean that it has to be nationwide. It's a fair competition, and if you look at it from the perspective of what I need, I think that can perhaps at least set a vector for how you compete. So, I don't know that we need to take a page from the excepted service so much, because I think it's become blurred between the differences between the excepted and competitive service of blurring.

So, if I am hearing you correctly, so what you're thinking is that could we then take the competitive service and improve it with some of the things that you are suggesting?

A single group. It's employment in the Federal government. If I went to IBM, would they say to me, are you applying for the excepted service or the competitive service? You're getting hired for IBM. If we need to test you, you're on a probationary period. Then if

you are permanent, we hire you, if you've done a good job, we hire you permanently. We move you around, we do different things. We don't start saying, well, the jobs of finance require this and the jobs in this require this. We do that maybe as a part of our selection process or assessment process, but we don't start winning them at the point of entry and saying these jobs are for -- I just think it's the Federal government, I think it's one. I would like us to think about that. I know it's really hard for us to imagine that this rulebook would become a bit thinner by thinking about a single service.

And I think the foundation or the validated competence is an assessment. So if we can get that right and if we could just build that, everybody is out there doing their own thing, someone is out there making a lot of money. It's not me, but if we could get that piece nailed down government-wide, I think it would really enable us to do more than just think about the two tops of systems competitive and excepted.

There is a question here from.

And I have one right here.

And one here.

Yeah, we.

They are getting in the back first.

Good morning! My name is Octavia Moram (ph) actually a summer intern with Air Force A1PS and I actually wanted to know, why isn't there more programs implemented within colleges and universities across the country to prepare students desiring to work for the Federal government in these different services that you keep talking about? As example, I actually attended HBCU, which is Historically Black College University, and I have -- during the whole time of me actually going through the process, I am trying to actually get my internship, I do not have any help or actually know about it through my school.

I can try and have support of that. And I think what you are pointing too is a basic flaw with each of us here and our agencies in terms of making certain that we market ourselves on college campuses and universities so that as students are coming through sophomore juniors and seniors, they have a clear understanding of what is being offered by the Federal government. What does justice do? What does education do? What does treasury do, so on and so on. And how does that match up with my career plans? That would include agencies having a better relationship as it were with program directors on college campuses. So the head of the school of this business administration as an example or political science, etcetera, so that the agencies that are looking for talent that has that kind of background, would actually have the brand. And as I think someone up here mentioned earlier on their college campus so that students like yourself would have a better and clear picture in terms of what we offer in the Federal service. We just don't do a very good job of it, we can do much better.

Typically, the students gravitate or is really acclimated to a particular profession through their major. For example, the pharmaceutical industry will certainly be marketing their career opportunities to biology majors, for example, chemistry majors. For the Federal government obviously, probably, the most appropriate conduit for us would be the department that oversees public administration, many of the public administration programs, however, typically concentrate more of their studies and research in area of city and county government and even in those programs, you will find limited study in area of the Federal system. So I would say that that's probably, if you were in the area of public administration, you are more apt to have exposure to the Federal system in terms of careers.

Part of it too I think is how does she at her HBCU understand all these Federal agencies.

How does she know? What was your major in school? What was your area of interest?

Mass communications.

Mass communications, okay. Probably every Federal agency needs one of those, right? And every career field needs mass, somebody in mass communications. Perhaps internships in the Federal government take a little different turn. Maybe every college and university, we reach our students and say something like the Federal government is offering internships for our students and there is a central way of managing all interns. Based upon your needs and desires, this central body farms you out to justice, DOD, well let's – and even break it down; Army, Air Force, Navy, the defense agencies, education. This group sends you to an agency where the job requirement is prescribed so we know what results, no stapling allowed. Shame on us, no stapling, that should be the guiding principle, give meaningful work, fire the supervisor, can't do that. That will change it, I am serious, can't allow that in the workplace, shame on us. So if -- and the experience of the intern became what she is getting at, the familiarity with our work, our business, and the internships are not one year in length. We say your internship with the Federal government is three summers and you go through three different agencies. So it's the deal that's made for a longer period of time, not just looked at in small segments. We are a big corporation. So perhaps we help in that way by offering a centralized way of offering internships and we don't leave it agency by agency by agency or maybe it's aggregated by the agency. But we take a different approach and we try and build her capacity and help her, we navigate it a bit in partnership with her as oppose to her having to navigate every single agency to figure out how we say mass communications. I don't think we have a series called Mass Communications, do we?

Probably public.

But she doesn't know that.

She doesn't know that.

So she has to know the code.

Yeah, there you go.

She has to say public affairs, but maybe I think mass communications is something else. You see, she doesn't know the code, she doesn't all of our Federal agencies perhaps, she knows the IRS, you know the IRS? So they have the big advantage, don't they? And I would submit you know the Department of Defense, correct? There you go; we know what our war-fighters do. But there are so many wonderful agencies out there whose missions are concealed, they are not so obvious. We have pharmacies in DOD. We do research in DOD. So there are things perhaps we have to rethink it. That very question I think it's compelling one that you offer and it's an exciting time for us and we have the will to do it, perhaps we have a need to look and answer that question differently. We can't answer that question using today's practices I don't believe.

I think there is a question upfront here.

Thank you! So I'll try to honor Ms. Bailey's (ph) request to talk a little bit about the competitive versus excepted services appointments. I appreciate and it was very clear I think from all of the comments that you all made this morning about the robust competition that is occurring for the jobs that roughly half of the Federal jobs that are now brought in through the excepted service. But I think getting back to the comments about and I think it was Mr. Markham that talked about how his HR people tell him that it's much faster to hire people through the excepted service. If the competition is indeed robust, and if all of the same kinds of assessments and veterans preference are

occurring on the excepted service side that are obviously required under the competitive service, why then is there this gap? Why is it that you can hire someone so much faster if the same research and background checks and all those kinds of things are happening on both sides, then why is there that gap for you all?

That is a very good question and let me explain where I am coming from on this. We were using these authorities as I said to build these programs and just this is a very diverse organization. We have 40 different compiling issues, have everyone from the FBI, ATF, DEA to our criminal and our civil division. So we are very diverse in terms of our occupations. So when I am talking about speed, it's not so much the speed or how quick, but it's really the quality of the pool that you are getting. So we have these very structured programs designed around what does the mission require, what is the result, what diversity are we looking for, where are we recruiting, how targeted do we need to be. So we are building these classes, so you are bringing in not just an individual but you may be bringing in the Deputy – the U.S. Marshals may -- not may; they do some strategic planning and determine what they are going to need in 2012-2013. So they are bringing in classes of people, not just individuals. So you are running a lot of people through this rigorous process, you are bringing in a lot of veterans mostly college graduates but it's open and it's fair. So you are putting them on a track, they have degrees, but they are also acquiring some very mission-critical skills that they need to do their job before they can be brought to a competitive position. So that's where I am coming from. So it's much easier from a staffing person's standpoint or even a hiring manager to treat them like the classes and the cohorts and the cluster groups. Almost similar to have a PMI program used to run when they had the cluster groups and folks we gather with mentors. That's the kind of mentality that we are talking about. And it's not just speed, it's the quality of the pool and the education and the potential that they have to succeed, almost they get in that job. And if it doesn't work out, the ability for the agency or the Manager to just say, you know what, it's just not working. Having that flexibility to make that call but only make that call if there was a contract from day one in terms of assessing skills, ongoing feedback not once a year, but whenever it's required and giving people an opportunity for course correction and giving them that feedback. You've got to have all that in play, not just in merit base system, but what happens when they walk in the door, what kind of feedback are they getting. So I think they all play off each other. I hope I answered your question.

Hi! And I am going to try to stay on point as well. I heard you talk a little bit earlier about how the qualification standard in the competitive process, places emphasis on experience, rather than competencies which maybe developed into experience. And that the current competitive process emphasizes experience perhaps to a greater detriment to new student, graduates, recent graduates and how you could envision a competitive process making it change or whether we need a different process for people with less experience and a way to gain experience.

That was good. I'll touch on that for a second.

When we look at the competitive process, specifically qualification standards, I want to bring up the point you made. For example, one of the requirements for a good auditing account may be analytical skills. That's a critical piece. We may have someone who may not be a certified public accountant, but has a substantial experience in financial management, but in that role it requires a substantial amount of analytics, and that candidate obviously has demonstrated there. Now, in a private sector, you may be looking specifically for that competency of analytical skills, and therefore, you know that you can take that financial management person and put them in an environment and they can acquire the other skills essential to performing as an auditing account, but the most important thing that they bring to the table is that particular component of analytical skills. Unfortunately, only with the qualification standards, they are looking for specific experience in a specific field. That is a limitation, if you will, when we are talking

about the qualification standards. That is not a barrier that they have to deal with in the private sector. Until we move our qualification standards to an environment where it is competency-based, rather than experience, we will continue to deal with that problem, and obviously that's something that OPM will have to address government-wide.

I would like to add also a bit of flavor to the question that came in before about, what is the difference really between the competitive and excepted service, so why can't we kind of move through the competitive service. There are some rules in the competitive service that don't apply to the excepted service. For example, and we have gotten -- you are coming out -- you just did and released some of these, but in the competitive service, we are very prescriptive about the kinds of things we can do. We have to have the knowledge skills and abilities, or there is a rule of three, use quality ranking factors. There is a prescription that comes out about how we are supposed to do things. That's either written in law or OPM regulation, that you don't find on the excepted service side. You find an agency-driven process. The agency has delegated the authority to do these kinds of things, assessments, and other things. The same rule set doesn't apply. It's some of these rules that make this competitive hiring process problematic. Again, OPM is addressing those, both by its own -- examining its own regulations, as well as offering changes to the law. So that knots it up. You have only -- we need certain permissions from OPM to do things first, that you don't in the accepted service. So it's these rules that apply in the competitive service that you may face, either on entry, or through the process of assessment, or in granting a waiver, that rest in the province perhaps of the agency head in an accepted service environment. It moves quicker because of -- there are fewer rules, and even if there are rules, the authority for approval is different. I would suggest that that's part of the problem too, it's not just on opening jobs up and announcing and so on, it goes deeper than that, far more prescriptive.

If I could just clarify one point in responding to the question, with respect to specialized or generalized experience, recognizing X-118, and that's what we live by today, we are talking gradations. So at the entry level, GS-5, GS-7, GS-9, there is less in the way of specialized experience required for those positions than you would find at the higher grades. So I wanted to be clear on that point, the X-118 does attempt to do that, so that we are looking at groups. For instance, recent college graduates or folks graduating with a Master's or PhD that could in fact qualify for positions that are based on education.

Mr. Markham or Mr. Sanders, do you want to add anything to what Ms. Fitzgerald said as well? Do you want to expand on that at all?

No, I think I agree with everything she is saying there. I wouldn't --

Okay. There is a question up front here.

Hi! John Palguta with the Partnership for Public Service. I just want to get a quick question to the last hearing objective. This has been a great panel and thank you all very much. But it's the question -- you have established, I think, that we need change, but the question is, also by whom? My specific question, Congress, it was stated that Congress has a role to play here. If you are talking to one of the appropriate committees and they are open to drafting legislation to change the law governing federal, HR, what is your advice? What should Congress do? What sort of legislative action would help here?

I would say the more flexibility the better. I am not sure John what that looks like at this stage, but I do believe that -- and someone said it here, that we have under the competitive service, prescriptive rules that don't necessarily apply under the excepted service. If there were some way to merge these two services, and someone said that as well, I do think that is an approach that makes sense. I am not sure -- and really when you look at the interest that the various committees on the Hill may have, that we can

really get there, and those interests, rightly so, would include, as we have been talking, Veterans' Preference, hiring the disabled, etcetera. It seems to me today that we do have at least the elements, the basic components, to improve on hiring in the federal government. It's just, can we take from the best, which in some respects is the excepted service, and improve the competitive service.

I would probably say to Congress maybe four things, as it thinks about hiring reform. I would say that, one, they ought to require the following of every federal agency, every federal hiring practice; build a diverse workforce, and describe it in its glory, that it reflects the character and richness of this nation, all groups, all thoughts. I would say honor Veterans' Preference. I would say, three, ensure that the selection and assessments are based upon the merit principles. I would not get rid of a single one of those merit principles. I would say, hire the best. There are four things there. It didn't say excepted service, competitive service. It didn't say that we couldn't have a special pathway for our students with a two-year validation to come back in. It didn't say any of that. All those thoughts can be applied with those guiding principles. Now, that may seem simplistic, but it's an underlying set of guiding principles and thinking that says, do I need to prescribe how this is done, or do I need to look for this result? And maybe finally I would add, show us the results. Prove to us that you have done that, and find some metrics that we report publicly and openly, so that we can be held accountable and that our processes and open and transparent, John. I would go back to fundamentally revisiting what it is we are after here. The rulebook wouldn't be more rules, it wouldn't speak the way it speaks today. Here are your guiding principles, show me your results. It's probably what I would do.

I would strongly recommend that Congress take whatever necessary action to just absolutely, I don't know if you could overhaul, it may require just throwing it out, the position classification system. That system really inhibits, if not totally disable, what we use the qualification standards to allow us to really identify competencies, rather than experience, to really tap into real talent and bring them on board at various levels. There is a lot of salary grade compression because of the classification standards, and it's driving how we actually recruit for certain positions and what levels that we bring people on. It is an issue. It has to be dealt with. I think it will, with all the efforts we are doing right now, with all of the hiring reform, without real transformation of the classification system, two or three years from now, three or four years from now, we will back at the same place, because we will eventually run up to that brick wall.

Are there any other questions?

But I want three things to add today.

There you go!

John, I would say this is kind of the elevator ride with the President, except we have got a Congressman in the elevator now. I would say the current reform is from the outside, the nongovernmental employee, seems to be applicant centric, and that's important, but I think we have to keep moving and look beyond that. What I mean is, things like the classification system and have Congress in this budget environment, if we can wave the magic wand, fully fund a sophisticated competency based assessment type qualifications standard process. So I say the applicant perspective is important, but we have to transform the way we hire people, quite simply put, just transformation, and throw the classification standards out, I second that. Secondly, it's estimated we are spending considerably \$50 billion a year on HR, IT across government. No one really knows, because people have clever ways of buying their HR, IT technology off-the-shelf. We have got to get a handle on that. More importantly, technology should be an enabler to HR organizations and managers, not the drivers. We all who work in HR, I think we know what that means. We have got to get a handle on the systems piece, for cost

containment and for results to support our specials out there, trying to do the work, and our managers trying to hire good people. I would say third, find out what's working. What's working? Whether it's excepted or competitive or whatever special authorities some agencies have and others don't. Expand on those flexibilities, fully fund them, and what's fundamental or what's underlying is Veterans' Preference, merit system principles, never move away from those principles. They stay the course. And those are the three things that I would highlight.

Angie, if I could just add, at the risk of sounding like the dissenting voice on this panel with respect to position classification, I do agree that it is problematic and something that we should drive to correct. But do keep in mind that if we don't have, at least, at a minimum, good position management, then one of the very basic tenets of human capital or HR management is going to fall. And what I mean by that is ensuring that we are paying the people doing essentially the same work, essentially the same pay.

Yeah, I agree.

So from a position management and position classification perspective, that helps us get there in the federal government. Now, can it be done better? Absolutely! Thank you. If there are no more questions, we are actually at the end of this first panel and ready to break for lunch. So I want to thank the panel. I truly appreciate you taking your time out of your day to give us your thoughts. Thank you.

Thank you.

**PUBLIC HEARING ON PATHWAYS TO FEDERAL SERVICE FOR STUDENTS AND
RECENT GRADUATES**

OPM CAMPBELL AUDITORIUM

JUNE 25, 2010

1:00 P.M.

PANEL 2: UNIONS AND VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

I guess I should have introduced myself actually, in case any of you are new. My name is Angela Bailey, I am the Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, here at OPM, and I will be the moderator today for Panel #2. Our Panel 2 is, we have invited the stakeholders, the unions, and our Veterans Service Organizations. To my left, first I have Mr. William Dougan, President, National Federation of Federal Employees, Ms. Barbara Atkin, Deputy General Counsel, National Treasury Employees Union, Mr. Andres Grajales, Assistant General Counsel, American Federation of Government Employees, Mr. Robert Madden, Assistant Director, National Economic Commission, the American Legion National Headquarters, and Mr. Brian Hawthorne, Legislative Director, Student Veterans of America.

Just as a reminder to the panel, each of you have ten minutes and we will begin first with Mr. Dougan, and then after you conclude your statements, then we will have a question and answer period from both myself as the moderator and then we will open it up to the public. Alright, Mr. Dougan.

William Dougan, President, National Federation of Federal Employees:

Thank you! First off, I would like to thank OPM for inviting me to speak today. My name is Bill Dougan, I am the National President of the National Federation of Federal Employees, also known as NFFE. NFFE is a national union representing approximately 110,000 blue and white collar federal workers across the United States and abroad. NFFE is affiliated with Machinists Union and we are part of the AFL-CIO, and we are the oldest independent union dedicated to representing federal employees in the civil service. We were established in 1917 and are in our 94th year of existence and we are very proud of our history.

NFFE locals are spread throughout the United States and the world, from Florida to Alaska, from Puerto Rico, South Korea, and pretty much everywhere in between. And we represent federal workers in over 30 federal departments and agencies, with our biggest presence being in the Department of Defense, the US Forest Service, the Department of Veterans Affairs, GSA, and the Passport Service.

I began my career in the federal government in 1976 as a temporary employee with the National Park Service, and in 1977, I was hired by the US Forest Service of Firefighter and Tree Planner on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest in Washington, where I spent a couple of years.

I then spent several years as a Forestry Technician and as a Forester on the Siuslaw and Rogue River National Forest in Oregon, and spent the last 16 years of my 30-year career on the Tongass National Forest in Sitka, Alaska. I retired from federal government in

2007 to accept a full-time position with NFFE, and before becoming its President, I was the National Secretary-Treasurer and was also NFFE's Forest Service Council President. As one of the principal unions representing federal workers, we are very concerned about the hiring practices of the federal government. As anyone who has spent time in the federal government can tell you, the federal hiring process can be frustrating. It takes a very long time to fill vacancies and the process itself is foreign to many of those who apply or would like to, but give up because the procedure is too difficult.

As a result, we lose many of the best potential applicants, workers that would be the future of the federal government. This ultimately hurts agency productivity and the value federal agencies provide to the American people. In our opinion, the federal hiring process is [audio error 3:43] to reform. The federal government is going to experience a tidal wave of retirement in the coming years. I know we have been saying that the sky is falling for a while with regard to retirement, but we can't let that be a reason to ignore the problem. Eventually, the wave of retirement will hit us and we will need to be prepared. Baby boomers are fast reaching the end of their careers, and the federal government will be hit very hard compared to the workforce and other sectors of the economy.

OPM has projected that nearly 600,000 federal employees could retire by 2018. The federal government needs to be prepared to expeditiously replace the workers that it is going to lose. We simply cannot allow for it to take six months or more to fill critical vacancies. The federal government can't function that way, and federal hiring reform needs to happen, and happen now. In this vein, we are very pleased to see that President Obama and OPM Director John Berry are moving in the right direction with hiring reform. President Obama signed an executive memo just a few weeks ago, outlining his instructions to agencies for reforming hiring processes and practices. I think it's a little too early to shape an informed opinion on how successful their hiring reform initiative will be, but we definitely think that they are off to a good start, and we are pleased with the outline of their plan.

But it will take follow-through by the agencies for this effort to be a success. One thing I can tell you is that NFFE stands ready to work with the administration every step of the way, to help them get federal hiring reform done right. It is clear to us that the administration has an appreciation for the work federal employees perform. The administration knows that the federal government cannot function effectively without a knowledgeable and motivated workforce. Our government needs to be able to find the right people with the correct skill sets and place them in reasonable periods of time.

Without this ability, the federal government will have difficulty properly staffing federal agencies. The American people deserve a federal hiring system that works for their government and works for them. Today, we are here specifically to talk about whether the normal competitive hiring methods are an effective way to bring recent graduates into the federal government. I have to answer this question with trepidation, because it's a difficult question to answer. The truth is, it is difficult for many recent graduates or expected graduates to compete for government jobs through the competitive hiring system we have. College students or recent graduates often do not have the experience necessary to compete for jobs in the federal government. They generally are not familiar with the federal hiring process, and recent graduates are often not willing to go jobless long enough to find out if they actually got a federal job, for which they have applied. So I would have to answer, no, the current system is not great for hiring recent graduates.

At the same time, we have serious problems with the alternatives to the normal competitive hiring system. The Federal Career Internship Program, or FCIP, for example, has been greatly abused by many federal agencies. The direct hiring authority granted by FCIP allows managers to get around the current competitive process, and non-competitively place preselected candidates quickly and with little oversight. This program

is being used to bypass competitive selection and Veterans' Preferences far too often.

Many of the federal workers recruited through this program are not even students or graduates. In our opinion, something needs to be done to greatly scale back and clean up the use of the FCIP. If agencies refuse to do that, if their purpose in using FCIP continues to be as a loophole, to allow them to not use competitive hiring procedures, then the program should be abolished. The Student Career Experience Program or SCEP is another excepted service appointment which can be used to non-competitively convert selected eligible students to the competitive service upon a student's satisfactory completion of an academic program and work experience. The greater financial investment and commitments required by agencies participating in this program tends to limit the widespread hiring of students under this appointment authority. Compared with FCIP, we greatly prefer the way SCEP has been administered. In our experience, we have seen this program successfully used to fill vacancies that are difficult to fill because of location and/or skill set required to perform them.

Although we can't say that this program has not been abused in some locations, our locals have not told us that it is being abused. In our experience, SCEP is a better example of how a federal hiring program designed to recruit and place recent graduates should be administered non-competitively if we are going to use that kind of a process.

Ultimately, we need a hiring system that really works. We can no longer accept scenarios where agencies give up standard hiring procedures and simply go around the established hiring system. In doing so, we absolutely should not settle on solutions that undermine the Merit System Principles of free and open competition for federal jobs or that weaken Veterans' Preference. Being able to recruit smart, young talent into the federal government is extremely important. We need to make sure that we are replenishing federal agencies with new blood, that can absorb the institutional knowledge that federal workers near retirement have to share. But we have to be sure that we do not chip away at the foundation of principles that make the federal civil service what it is. Thank you.

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

Thank you very much! Ms. Atkin.

Barbara Atkin, Deputy General Counsel, National Treasury Employees Union:

Good afternoon! I am Barbara Atkin. I am Deputy General Counsel of the National Treasury Employees Union. NTEU represents approximately 150,000 federal employees and about 31 different federal agencies. I am pleased to be here today on behalf of NTEU to discuss federal hiring processes, and in particular, the use of special hiring authorities to bring new employees, including recent college graduates, into the federal workforce. It is essential that in acting hiring reforms, OPM does not fall into the trap of repeating the mistakes of the past.

Since the time of President Theodore Roosevelt, the Federal Civil Services operated under a merit-based hiring system, that has resulted in one of the most talented, nonpartisan, diverse, and corruption free workforces in the world. NTEU believes that improvements to hiring processes can and must be made within the parameters of well established merit principles that have made our civil service so successful. Like others, NTEU has been frustrated with the slow pace of hiring and we commend the administration for taking action to streamline recruitment and selection processes. Achieving the goal of hiring reform needs to be done strategically and with full acceptance of competitive hiring and Merit Systems Principles, as well as Veterans' Preference. In his May 11 memorandum, the President directed agencies to implement numerous changes to federal hiring processes. Among other things, that memorandum directed OPM to conduct a 90 day review of the Federal Career Intern Program, which I

call FCIP, and I have heard referred to as FCIP.

NTEU supports this long overdue evaluation of a program gone far awry and we believe that an objective review will result in a recommendation to end the program. Reforms to the competitive hiring process will accomplish little if agencies are permitted to continue to avoid competitive hiring by misusing excepted service hiring authority; most prominently, the FCIP hiring authority. The FCIP was originally build as a limited use, special hiring authority for exceptional men and women, who would participate in formally structured two year training and development internships. It is no such thing. Instead, it has become the hiring method of choice for many agencies.

Earlier this morning, we heard CHCOs for agriculture and education proclaim that they used the FCIP aggressively. They can use it for almost any position with no limit on the number of so-called interns they may hire, and no requirement that competitive recruitment and selection procedures be followed. Typically, no additional training is provided and interns are indistinguishable from their competitive service counterparts. Indeed, sometimes the same positions at the same grades are filled through both the FCIP and the competitive service.

Since 2003, US Customs and Border Protection has used the FCIP as its exclusive method for hiring all incoming CBP officers, otherwise known as Customs Inspectors. IRS began using the FCIP in 2006, to hire revenue agents and revenue officers. Although it still hires some competitively to do precisely the same work, in the same manner, and with the same training. Government wide, about 400 employees were hired under the FCIP in its first year, in FY 2009, there were staggering 26,709 FCIP hires. Of these only 10.8% were preference eligible veterans, far below a 25% representation of veterans in the total workforce. Thus, statistics do not support the claims we heard earlier today that Veterans' Preference is honored in excepted service hiring. A 2005 Merit Systems Protection Board report found that agencies using FCIP hiring, "relied on limited tools to recruit applicants to the program, used weak pre-hire assessment tools, and failed to use the internship as a trial period to correct weak assessment tools. Others did not provide training and development activities to career interns as required." The report also highlighted that there is no requirement that vacancies be publicly announced, resulting in preference eligible candidates not learning about and applying for the positions. I believe that the FCIP hiring authority has been used by some precisely because it allows Veterans' Preference to be circumvented without detection.

Just a few months ago the EPA Inspector General found that one of its regional offices engaged in prohibited personnel practices when using the FCIP hiring authority. The IG's report included an email from the hiring official stating that they needed to hire into the FCIP because they did not, "want to risk losing the candidates we want to hire, who may get blocked by veterans via USAJOBS." The FCIP is not an internship program under any commonly accepted definition and should be ended. It is not a student program, contrary to assertions we heard earlier today. NTEU has mounted a multi-pronged legal attack on the FCIP in district court and before the MSPB, the Merit Systems Protection Board. The MSPB case involved targeted recruiting, designed, it is alleged, specifically to avoid a disabled veteran. Before OPM is ordered to cease using the FCIP, it should reach that conclusion through the evaluation of the program mandated by the President.

In terms of real internships, NTEU believes that the Current Federal Intern Programs, the Student Career Experience Program, and the Presidential Management Fellows Program, should be the building blocks for attracting students to the government. We have no problems making exceptions to the normal hiring process to draw these talented individuals to public service under these limited programs. They should be narrow in scope and confined to targeting real students and recent graduates, with special fields of expertise that are in demand in the government.

Outside of these limited internships, NTEU supports competitive hiring in the civil service for all. We see no reason why the existing competitive service hiring procedures should not remain the primary hiring method for recent college graduates, with the improvements that have been outlined in the President's recent memorandum. It bears emphasis that the competitive hiring is the norm by statute. NTEU strongly opposes any attempt by OPM to create broad new excepted service internships for recent college graduates seeking entry level positions in the federal government. Nothing I have heard here today comes remotely close to suggesting that such a circumvention of the competitive hiring process is either necessary or warranted by conditions of good administration, which is the statutory standard. NTEU therefore cautions OPM not to venture down that road as it studies the hiring of recent college graduates. Thank you again for this opportunity to present NTEU's views and I would be happy to answer any questions later in the program.

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

Thank you. Next is Mr. Grajales.

Andres Grajales, Assistant General Council, American Federal of Government Employees:

Hi! I am Andres Grajales. I am an Assistant General Counsel with the American Federation of Government Employees. And before I even start, I wanted to address something that Barbara had said regarding the EPA Inspector General's report. I think the most startling or interesting thing about that report is that the region that conducted the hiring, that was subject to the investigation by OIG, denied committing any prohibited personnel practice, and I think that, that underscores the fact that there is great confusion and abuse surrounding the Federal Career Intern Program.

On behalf of AFGE, I would like to thank OPM for inviting AFGE to participate in this panel. As I am sure many of you are aware, AFGE is the largest labor organization representing federal employees. Because I have often heard that brevity is the soul of wit and I have only got ten minutes anyway, I will try to keep my remarks brief, and hopefully I will not be beating a dead horse for this audience.

AFGE recommends, and we have one primary recommendation, we recommend that the Federal Career Intern Program, the FCIP, be discontinued, for three primary reasons, and that any similar excepted service program not be adopted. One there is -- and I think this is also repeating somewhat, there is no need for the FCIP to exist as an excepted service hiring program outside of the competitive service. By its nature, the excepted service is contemplated as an exception to the normal rule of competitive hiring. The purpose behind the FCIP is to attract exceptional men and women to the federal workforce, and this is undoubtedly a worthy goal. However, there is no valid reason that this goal cannot be met through the competitive process.

For example, to the extent that the level of outreach to potential applicants presents a barrier to hiring of recent graduates, there is nothing unique about the FCIP that makes it more effective than the competitive process at reaching well qualified applicants. In fact, relieving an agency of public posting requirements does not increase awareness of a particular job opening, it actually restricts awareness by reducing the opening's public exposure. As well, if you do look at the USAJOBS website, many agencies already post FCIP positions there and fill, as Barbara said, identical positions through both the FCIP and competitive hiring. This is significant because it shows how simple compliance with the competitive process would be. And it further erodes any need for the FCIP to continue as an excepted service hiring authority.

If agencies can already post these job openings on USAJOBS and they can already fill

these jobs through competitive hiring, where is the need for the excepted service authority? In a nutshell, there is nothing preventing agencies from using the same recruitment tools used for FCIP positions, such as job fairs, for competitive service positions. Moreover, the contention that competitive service hiring has become too unwieldy to be effective, assuming this is true, is not a legitimate argument in favor of perpetuating the FCIP or a similar program. It is an argument in favor of reforming the competitive process by, for example, the elimination of KSAs, which we believe is a useful step in reforming the process, and this is exactly why we are here today.

The next reason that AFGE opposes the FCIP is because of its overuse. What began as a limited program has nearly swallowed the competitive service. Regardless of whether it was needed, on its face the purpose of the FCIP was never to replace competitive hiring. The FCIP was only intended as another step toward recruiting high quality federal employees. Yet, as you heard agencies such as CVP, Social Security Administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, are using the FCIP as their major hiring authority for specific positions. Such overuse is inconsistent with the premise behind excepted service hiring, that is that, the exceptions be necessary. And behind the purpose of competitive service hiring, that hiring be based on fair and open competition.

Finally, AFGE opposes the FCIP because of its lack of effective oversight and vast potential for abuse. The FCIP allows minor agency components to control which positions will be placed in the FCIP. As mentioned previously, it does not require public posting and it has no meaningful criteria for agencies to use when placing positions in the excepted service. Not only this, FCIP appointees on the whole lack the same due process rights as other employees. The two year FCIP term is essentially a probationary period with no guarantee of employment upon its completion. With no one looking over an agency's shoulder, these factors combine to form an open door to favoritism. And it is for all these reasons that AFGE opposes the FCIP and believes it should be discontinued. Thank you.

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

Thank you. Next up Mr. Madden.

Robert Madden, Assistant Director of Economics, The American Legion:

Thank you very much. Good afternoon! My name is Robert Madden, I am the Assistant Director of Economics with The American Legion. First, I would like to thank Dr. Berry and the leadership and OPM for bringing together the stakeholders to discuss this topic. The American Legion is here today to comment on whether competitive hiring is an effective avenue for bringing recent graduates into the federal workforce. The primary concern of The American Legion is that veterans receive preference and federal hiring and that the Office of Personnel Management remove any barriers that might prevent or impede veterans from receiving the preference and pass over protection that's currently inherent in the competitive hiring system.

Given that as [audio error 23:52] addresses the issues of possible hiring reform, we are concerned that veterans competing for all existing positions in all future positions be provided the quality and type of preference and pass over protection that is currently a cornerstone of competitive hiring. For years, some agencies have sought to reform their hiring process to add additional noncompetitive hiring programs to the primary federal hiring method of competition and to use non-competitive hiring program, such as the Federal Career Intern Program or FCIP, in order to ease what they see as a burden of competitive hiring.

The American Legion is here today to insist that any hiring reform that is undertaken retain strong and vigorous Veterans' Preference rules and strong and vigorous pass over protection rules. We believe that Veterans' Preference, a cornerstone of competitive

hiring, must be maintained.

History has unfortunately shown that adopting an array of noncompetitive hiring programs, from which agencies and managers may choose a method that best suits their immediate needs, is dangerous and can result in the failure to properly protect Veterans' Preference and pass over rights. In essence, some of these programs have resulted in eligible veterans who are ready and able to serve the public, being deprived of their rights.

The existing practice of flaunting new ways to manipulate the competitive hiring process and to avoid Veterans' Preference must be addressed. But any reform that is implemented must not only preserve Veterans' Preference and pass over protection, but should indeed strengthen them. The American Legion is not opposed to reforming the federal hiring process, so long as veterans [audio error 25:34] centerpiece of any future system. The antiquated ways of doing business has caused veterans many months of waiting before getting word, that they were or were not selected for a certain position. President Obama has announced two separate hiring initiatives; the first of these initiatives, the Executive Order on the Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government, signed November of 2009. This government initiative enhances the recruitment of and promotes employment opportunities for veterans within the executive branch of the federal government. It also seeks to align the skills and career aspirations of veterans with the staffing needs of federal agencies.

OPM has issued a government-wide strategic plan that will focus on creating infrastructure and programs for the successful recruitment and employment of veterans within agencies. The Departments of Defense, Labor, Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security, as well as other agencies, are partnering with OPM on a development of the strategic plan and its implementation.

The second of these initiatives that the Presidential Memorandum signed in May 2010, entitled Improving the Federal Recruitment and Hiring Process. The old way of doing business when hiring individuals out the window, and OPM has taken steps to streamline the process. No longer do veterans or any individuals have to fill off knowledge, skills, and abilities, KSAs, but can submit just a simple resume and a cover letter.

In addition, hiring managers are no longer required to choose hires from among the top three applicants on the list, and the two not selected want to apply for a different agency. Even in the same department, they must start the lengthy process from the beginning. Now, after one agency and a department hires from that list, another agency in the same department also can hire from the same list. Saving candidates from having to go through the whole process again. OPM has noted that the average time from initial screening to hire took the federal government approximately 130 days. The goal will now to be to get that number down to 80 days or less. The American wholeheartedly supports these efforts to speed up the process and we are ready to support further hiring initiatives, that ensure that veterans receive the maximum opportunity to continue their service to this nation by working for the federal government.

It also make sense for the government to take aggressive steps to keep transitioning and military service personnel within the federal government. Federal agencies will benefit from the skill sets of veterans and transitioning service members. Approximately 25% of federal employees are veterans. OPM reported in 2008 that DOD had employed over 257,000 veterans, while the VA employed 73,000. The American Legion wants to see more federal agencies reach these significant numbers of veterans employees.

Finally, the American Legion encourages Congress to oversee agency to ensure veterans are being interviewed and hired. I would like to briefly talk about the FCIP program. The FCIP program is the service appointed authority that allows federal agencies to hire

without public notice. The idea of the FCIP program is to solicit those exceptional individuals out of college in order to recruit and retain them into public service. What we have found is that the number of individuals who are entering the federal workforce through the FCIP Program is growing by leaps and bounds. At the inception of the FCIP program in 2000, there were 400 individuals who entered through this noncompetitive hiring process. As of 2009, over 26,000 individuals were hired through it. In 2008, over 22,500 individuals were appointed under FCIP and now accounts for 50% of new hires in professional and administrative positions, GS-5, GS-7, and GS-9 grade levels. Federal agencies are inclined to ignore the privacy of the competitive examination process, which includes the application of Veterans' Preference and federal hiring. With the multiple certificates that federal agencies have at their disposal, this process leads to the hiring professional to view each one of these as a same and choose one over the other, thereby not following Veterans' Preference. An individual can only be hired or appointed in the competitive service if he or she has passed examination or is exempted from the examination. A departure from using competitive examining as the main entry way into federal service can lead to violation of Veterans' Preference laws. The American Legion wants to ensure that safeguards are within this noncompetitive hiring process, like those in competitive hiring processes. With no ways, whether or not veterans are being passed over and The American Legion has no way to know if the federal workforce is properly implementing Veterans' Preference. FCIP is a noncompetitive process, therefore Veterans' Preference is not eligible.

With agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security giving direct hiring authority, and other programs, such as the FCIP program, The American Legion believes that these noncompetitive hiring process are usurping Veterans' Preference and therefore allowing federal agencies to bypass hiring qualified veterans. We must remind you that this benefit for veterans is earned and not a privilege. Using other means to manipulate the system to avoid hiring veterans is a grave mistake and needs to be addressed. Thank you very much.

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

Thank you. Mr. Hawthorne.

Brian Hawthorne, Legislative Director, Student Veterans of America:

Thank you. My name is Brian Hawthorne, and I am the Legislative Director of Student Veterans of America. I am an army veteran. I am also a very recent college graduate, within the last month, and I want to talk to you a little bit about, from the younger perspective, how we see both Veterans' Preference and FCIP. Student Veterans of America is a coalition of more than 250 veterans organizations on college campuses around the country. We represent a few thousands veterans who are all going through, at some point in their life, the education process and higher education. Veterans already face a barrier in coming home and transitioning only into college, not to mention entering the workforce. Unfortunately, the recognition of our qualities of being disciplined, experienced, having a strong work ethic, and desire to succeed, and extensive leadership experience, is not being given the preference in even getting into college. Once we are in college, we are put on the same level playing field as everyone else, regardless of our experience and our age. Many career centers are not aware of what the federal programs are that recruit veterans, not to mention place them into positions. Our graduates are being hired by Deloitte and Google and Microsoft, but not the federal government, and that's really unfortunate. Fundamentally, like most government programs for veterans, this comes down to outreach. There are many career centers and veterans don't know about their Veterans' Preference. They don't know even what OPM is outside of our District of Colombia, and unfortunately that means that they do not apply for the programs that they are given a preference.

So how is it that our veterans are being hired in record numbers by private employers who don't offer Veterans' Preference and not the federal government, which does? College career centers in general need to be more aware of federal programs to hire just people, not to mention veterans. The hiring practices in career pathways such as FCIP are targeted and not broad based. So many universities do not know that they exist, not to mention being able to offer them to their customers, which are their students. This is particularly true for veterans, because as I said, we are given the same list of recent college graduate position as everyone else. Unfortunately, we cannot afford to take those positions. A 21-year-old may take a \$30,000 job and cut their teeth on Capitol Hill. We cannot afford to do that. The average college veteran graduate is around 28 or 29, has a family, and already has debt before they enter college. So when they leave and they are offered the same amount of opportunity as the recent 21-year-old, they are not able to take those positions, which is one of the barriers to even taking a position in the federal government.

We are very interested in working with OPM and some of our chapters as to how we can reform how OPM reaches out to career centers to target veterans, to ensure that they are able to use their Veterans' Preference. The veteran needs to know and the career center needs to know how this works, how this processes work.

This morning I went on the Feds Hire Vets website and went to the Things You Should Know as a veteran seeking a career in federal government. I want to read you the five things on that page. The first is about the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act, which makes it a willful violation of Veterans' Preference and prohibited personnel practice. Most veterans don't know they have a practice or they have a protection, how can they file a claim saying that they were discriminated against. The next is on USERRA, that if any employer discriminates against them or losing their job or their position while they are deployed, they can seek a grievance. That doesn't apply to the majority of veterans. If you are a disabled veteran and believe that an AFC discriminated against you in the employment process, you may file a grievance.

Then examinations for custodians, guards, elevator operators, and messengers are also eligible for veterans. Then at the very bottom a ten point preference eligible.

Those are the five things that I need to know to seek a job in the federal government. I think that we need to do some better outreach. For critical career fields, it's very disappointing that military experience is not counted as federal work experience. If we have proven ourselves on the streets of Baghdad or in the mountains outside Kandahar, I am confident we can be taught acquisitions and product lifestyles. Yet, we are not given the preference we need and so the pool of applicants is shrinking within the veteran pool, because military personnel are no longer doing these jobs. They are being contracted out. So if the military is moving away from these fields and the federal government is expanding these fields, then we have a double-sided funnel, where the veterans are losing in both directions.

Upon graduation, as I said, many of our veterans need to find immediate employment. With the new GI Bill, we are able to live on the government's dime, which we fundamentally appreciate, but unfortunately that ends the day we graduate. There is no information as to when we should start the federal employment process, what our security clearance is good for, if anything, and we can't afford to wait six months unemployed upon graduation to find out if we even were rejected from a job. Those time frames need to be cut significantly, so they are not seen as barriers for even applying at all.

OPM and the federal government in general needs to emphasize and then reemphasize to both veterans and hiring managers that disabled veterans, particularly those with diagnoses and ratings for post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, acute

stress, military sexual trauma, and etcetera, are still extremely employable and productive employees. The mantra and news attention on veterans has been that we are broken, unemployable, homeless, substance abusers, and come from broken families. That does not equal veterans' hiring. That equals, as Barbara said, creating a burden of hiring a disabled veteran. OPM can be a leader in, not only hiring veterans, but also in instituting a nationwide effort to talk about the positives of hiring veterans, which as I said before, strong work ethics, detail oriented, discipline, desire to not only succeed and be part of a team, but lead that team from often young and inexperience ages. Many veterans fear applying for federal positions, because of the dreaded mental health questions that will make them ineligible, when most of us are required to seek mental health counseling upon return from deployment and therefore will be rejected outright for answering yes, have you ever sought mental health counseling?

It must be made clear upfront on every website that treatment of a mental health condition is not an automatic denial. This is, once again, an opportunity for the federal government to lead the way in encouraging other employers that veterans are not only not broken and not unemployable, but extremely employable and dedicated employees. As we have said in other hearings, the Transition Assistance Program needs to be fundamentally overhauled. This must include participation from OPM, so that service member can effectively never leave the federal workforce. These programs need to be mandatory across all services, as they currently are not.

To address FCIP specifically, not only does it go around federal preference, but, again, most of us don't even know it exists, and if we are not being -- if we are not eligible for getting into this process and we are not able to compete, how are we supposed to compete with a noncompetitive process that we don't know exists. Fundamentally, veterans are still being denied their right of their federal preference.

We are not represented in the FCIP schools that are being targeted. Absolutely, if you want to hire Harvard and Yale graduates and bring them to federal government, that's outstanding, but their proportion of veteran populations is extremely low and we need to target, not only the public and less expensive private institutions, but ones that offer outstanding veteran services, which I believe most schools do not. Most career centers don't offer any training on KSAs, and as I said, we totally agree that we hope that those will be eliminated. But in seeing that a job requires a KSA is an instant turnoff to a veteran, who not only doesn't understand that, but doesn't have a way to find the resources to learn how to fill it out. We really appreciate OPM bringing us on and I will be glad to answer any question that you may have. Thank you.

Moderated Q and A:

Thank you. Brian, I would like to start with you and have you put on your hat as a recent college graduate that you are and get your opinion with regard to whether the normal competitive hiring process is an effective avenue for bringing recent college graduates into the federal workforce. If so, why is that the case? And then after Brian has addressed this, if any of the other panelists would like to address it, I would appreciate that.

Absolutely! A recent college graduate and even not being a veteran, recent college graduates are at a fundamental disadvantage in this economy, and I think we all know that. That if jobs are being eliminated, people with more experience are seeking jobs which they are overqualified for, which fundamentally puts us out of the running. If I can't get a job as a Bachelor degree holding person, because all the people who are applying and getting interviews are Master's degree holding people and/or lawyers, which on Capitol Hill, we have attorneys interning, fundamentally we have a problem in hiring recent college graduates. We cannot afford to take lower and lower paying

positions, because the positions that we thought we would be eligible for, we will call it a \$30,000 range, that position is being taken by someone who cannot afford to live on that, but will take anything, and they already have 15 years of experience. So when competing in a competitive hiring process, like competing for a GS-7 position, there is likely someone significantly more educated than I and with more experience than I, who is going to get at least an interview for that position, and that is particularly discriminatory to veterans, which many veterans have no outside work experience, outside of the military. So as a veteran if my only employer is the United States Army and I have eight years on there, and I only have one block, then my recent college graduate, who has nothing in that block except for an internship, is going to be a significant disadvantage, compared to someone who has worked in and out of government for the last ten years, with even the same amount of education as I have.

So the competitive hiring process whittles the pool down in this type of economy, because there are more qualified people applying for lower positions, just to get their foot in the door, and FCIP is a good way around that, but unfortunately really eliminates then the ability for a veteran to get into that system.

Thank you. Would anyone else like to address the question?

I would like to if I may. I think we can look at this question from a slightly different angle, because I listened very closely this morning to a very interesting panel, identifying the barriers that they saw to the introduction of recent college graduates and their assimilation into the federal workforce; locating them in the first place, bringing them on board, keeping them happy, and it struck me that almost all of the factors that they identified, and which they placed a great deal of weight, had nothing to do with competitive hiring versus excepted service hiring. Now, we all have agreed at the outset that the competitive hiring process needs to be streamlined. So I am going to assume that you are effective in carrying out those hiring reforms that the President has mandated, which would include the resume based application, getting rid of the KSAs.

So they discussed the need to avoid lingo. I am all in favor of that. I think English is a useful language and can be used to communicate with the recent college graduates. I am all in favor of clearer position descriptions, less gobbledygook in their drafting, actually saying what the people do, who work in those positions. And they discussed meaningful work that the recent college graduates need to get once they get on the payroll. Who can disagree with that? It does take focus by supervisors to make sure that the recent hirers are paid attention and given projects that make a difference.

Another one is the need for cohorts and mentors, a sort of a critical mass of bright young things in the workforce. I mean, we are all in favor of that too. And the basic consideration of aptitude and competencies. I mean, this all can be done in competitive hiring. So what I am trying to say is that the barriers that these experts this morning identified in bringing recent college graduates into the workforce can be circumvented when these individuals are hired through the competitive process, they don't require hiring through the excepted service.

I just like to I guess echo that. I think that I agree that the competitive service in and of itself as an authority is not the barrier to entry into the federal workforce, I think, to the extent that there are barriers that are preventing the hiring of recent graduates. There are tools that can be used within the context of the competitive service to eliminate those barriers. I mean, I think that something that Brian said, the barriers that veterans who are graduating face is that they are competing in this market against people with vastly higher educational degrees or something like that. I don't know that necessarily is going to be eliminated by switching to an excepted service authority. I think that you have to look for a solution somewhere else, and I think that's Veterans' Preference. I think that you have a Veterans' Recruitment Authority, you have other tools that are

going to address that particular barrier. I don't think that as a whole the barriers that we are identifying are necessary components of competitive hiring.

I want to make a comment on that. Brian and I were talking earlier back in the room, with today social media and Facebook and Twitter and everything else, Brian had posted something on his Facebook page that said, if you are a veteran, you have problems getting hired; and I am stealing this from Brian, I apologize, but send me a message. And I think one of the quotes was, over a thousand application, I am a native Arabic speaking, six years in the army, and finally just got hired on after a thousand applications. Do college grads have a hard time? Yes, I think everyone has a hard time it sounds like. So there are barriers and I concur with everybody else in the panel that with Veteran's Preference properly implemented, then there shouldn't be a problem. That's one of the ways that one of the rights and privileges that they are given for making the service to their country, this is the way to serve them. Thank you.

Barbara, what is it about SCEP and PMF that could be used to establish an excepted service authority for grads, recent college graduates? And in that regard, what would an adequate rationale for -- what would an adequate rationale be for that?

Well, first of all, we support continuing those programs, which we think they are actually quite good, and expanding them slightly, but along the same basic design principles that they have. There is a Bill pending in Congress, I am sorry I forget the Bill number, of Representative Connolly, that we support as well, that would expand. And what we like is that they are very targeted, they are narrow focus, they actually, in our view, actually qualify as genuine internships, rather than sort of mass hiring of employees who are given no specific training or attention once they get into the workforce. Did you have a second part to that question that I have forgotten?

No, I think that you have answered. Thank you. Andy, do you agree with Barbara that there is a rational basis for SCEP and PMF?

I think I agree that if you have limited targeted programs, that's an entirely different kettle of fish than an open-ended program. And I think that what makes those programs -- and I think for myself, I returned to Veterans' Recruitment Authority, that that's limited, it's tightly focused. You have a mandatory requirement that the applicant or the potential appointee be a recent graduate, have certain limitations on the amount of education -- not a recent graduate, have to be recently discharged from the service, and has certain amounts of education. And I think you have limited numerical numbers on the amount of hires that you can do with that. That makes a rational sense to me if you want to reach a particular group of people who you believe are slipping through the net of competitive hiring. I don't know -- also, I am yet to really hear, I have heard anecdotal stories of what the barriers are, but I don't know that you have real numbers showing, identifying what the barriers are or anything really demonstrating, this is the barrier, because until you have that, how you solve that becomes sort of a shot in dark.

William, the CHCOs identified the public notice requirement, that is putting job announcements on USAJOBS as being one of the barriers for recent college graduates. What's your reaction to that?

They identified the fact that they are posting on USA as a barrier for college graduates?

Right, because when an announcement goes out, to kind of paraphrase for them, I think what they were saying is that, when an announcement is put up, then everyone is competing for that, regardless of their education and their experience, and therefore it kind of limits -- it addresses some of the issues that I think Brian just brought up about, you are trying to then compete with everyone.

So the suggestion was, is that, they have targeted public notice on perhaps a particular

university or in a particular region.

Yeah. I mean, I think there is good experience and examples out there, where federal agencies have established relationships with a university or a set of universities or colleges that offer academic programs that are compatible with the skill sets that those particular agencies need. Again, with me, I am familiar with the Forest Service, and they have -- they do a lot of outreach and job fairs at universities that they have established relationships with for skill sets, such as like engineers, where there is a categorical shortage in terms of applicants when they outreach those kinds of jobs and advertise those kinds of job. So I mean, in terms of reaching out to graduates or students that are about ready to graduate, it's just make sense to me that agencies would take advantage of going out to those particular institutions, where the category of the job is that they are trying to fill, where those programs are offered.

And there is probably not a need -- I mean, it's not like we have to do special outreach for every job and every agency. A lot of the jobs, we have very good pools of applicants, but where these agencies need to focus their attention on recruiting and outreach is in those skill sets and jobs where they are having a hard time attracting a good diverse group of quality applicants.

Could I leap in and supplement that? I heard an interesting point this morning with one CHCO suggesting a combination of the required general public posting on USAJOBS. coupled with mailing of announcements to the particular schools that might have the program; a forestry program or a mining program, where you would expect the special expertise, you are trying to bring it to their attention. There is no reason why you can't do both, which seems to me to be an excellent idea.

Now, I think underlying the desire to do only the targeted recruiting is perhaps a desire to avoid an embarrassment of riches; you don't want to read that many resumes, the number of resumes that you are going to get. I understand the practical problems, but I mean the goal of the federal government is to hire the best people you can hire. So I don't see that artificially narrowing your net, so that you don't have to read all those resumes is really going to accomplish the overarching goal of the federal government. It seems to me also that it does -- it's sort of an implicit negative suggestion here about college graduates, is they seem to be the best college graduates who can compete with anybody. I don't know that they need the special hand-holding that is the underlying assumption here, that we have to have a special program just to get the recent college graduates, you need to coddle them along. I don't see why they can't compete with all the other individuals trying to get federal jobs, and we will hire the best and the brightest if we make the jobs appealing enough.

I think one of the barriers that the CHCOs brought up with regard to the recent college graduates is, and it's also what Brian has mentioned, has to do with the fact that our qualification standards and things are written around experience, versus just the education. So how would you address that?

Is there a reason why the qualification standards couldn't be rewritten?

I just get to ask the questions. That's a good question.

I think there is no reason why I think they can't be rewritten I mean, if that's -- and again, I think it goes back to the earlier point that everyone is making, to the extent we are identifying problems, these are all problems, not necessarily generated by the competitive service as such. And that there are problems that we can address within the context of the competitive service. So if you rewrite those things to acknowledge life experience as a factor in determining who is qualified, you are developing a solution and you are also reaching the arguable -- I mean, arguably how we get to these limited

hiring programs is to do exactly what we are talking about doing with the competitive service. So again, I don't see how you have a need for the excepted service program when you have a ready-made solution or potential solutions that you can use by reforming competitive hiring.

I would like to address that as well. I think one of the things that we probably need to look at is changing this idea of experience equals ability to do the job. That may or may not be true. What I would suggest is, we need to do a better job of putting down in writing what exactly the expectations are in terms of outcomes or outputs or products that this position is expected to do, and let the applicant tell you how they meet or don't meet the ability to do that, whether it's through their education, whether it's through their government service, whether it's through their military service, whether it's through other life experiences. Because really the bottom line when you come down to any job is, it really doesn't matter if I have got ten years of doing that job, or this is my first day on the job, if I can do it, I can do it. And leave it to the applicant to demonstrate to the selecting official whether they have got the ability -- whether they have articulated the ability that you believe they can do the work.

I think that that's really important also for the veteran population that, as I said before, we are kind of -- we have like a pre-college career and then a post-college career, and so if our average veteran graduate from college is 27, then if they just receive their Bachelor's degree, then they have zero years of experience. And it's the opposite; in fact, they actually have a lot of experience and they happened to have also gone to college. I think fundamentally that's a paradigm shift in the way we hire, in that, yes, I have done work that did not require a Bachelor's degree, does that mean I am not experienced? And so we have this issue now where we have the people who are our age, that we graduated from high school with, are gaining experience post-college and we are not, because we have -- because we just graduated, but we feel and our expenses reflect the fact that we should be hired for the same type of positions. So especially for our enlisted and our recent enlisted who left the military, who are non-commission officers, many of us manage million dollar budgets and we are responsible for the lives and safety of people. That's never going to be given -- that's never going to be clear on our resume unless it's clearly enunciated, but more importantly, none of that required a Bachelor's degree.

So education is the box checker, which I think we all agree, a Bachelor's degree is effectively the way that you at least are allowed to submit your resume, and that's about all. Then moving beyond that, we have to be able to see past what people have done since college that we consider experience. I mean, maybe experience isn't required for a GS-4 position, maybe we want someone we can train, that we want their experience to be our experience and no one else's, and fundamentally that may be different than how we hire now.

Thank you. Well, it's kind of a good segue into this. Robert, what do you think about allowing for a two year developmental period for recent college graduates rather than the general one year probationary period that we currently have under the competitive service?

I think this kind of goes back to the FCIP program that we were discussing before. There's a two year interim program, and then as we mentioned earlier, once that happens, they go into either a permanent position or as we discussed earlier, they are not taken to a position, there is no reason why. The one statement that as a representative of The American Legion I can make is, by using this as a primary means and method of hiring individuals into a noncompetitive process, just takes away from eligible veterans who are -- we have all discussed, we obviously know they have many skills that are not being used, it's way too [audio error 59:11]. There has got to be another means of bringing college graduates and allowing them to stay without going

around this process.

To comment on the two year development period?

Absolutely!

NTEU has very strong feelings about the two year development period, because it is in practice, in the federal government, this two year development period under the FCIP is nothing but a two year probationary period, with no specific developmental training, developmental guidance going on, and it's a sort of end run around the statutory protections for employees who might be subject to removal or disciplinary action. If there were in fact some special training, some special development happening during this two year period, we might have a different view. But employees are, I mean your average CBP officer, for example, who is hired under the FCIP, exactly the way all the predecessors had for all the years before the introduction of the FCIP, is subject to removal at the end of this so-called two year development period, without any explanation, simply because the agency says that it's choosing not to convert him to the competitive service, and has absolutely no due process, no recourse at that point. No review by a third party of the reasons why the agency might decide that it has somehow failed in the development period. When he is given no special training, nothing different from what any other CBP officer had ever been given, when hired through the competitive service.

Okay.

I would also like to speak to that. I agree 100% with Barbara. I mean, my take on this is, really the whole purpose of having a probationary period is to provide some period of time where the employee can demonstrate whether he or she has the skills and ability to do the work that you have hired them to do. And the second piece of that is that, we provide inadequate time period for management for this person's supervisor to be able to objectively and fairly evaluate their performance of their duties. So in my mind, I mean it's probably a fairly rare exception that it would take that -- a manager would need two years to fairly and objectively evaluate the performance of an employee. It would have to be -- I can't imagine the position. The only thing I can think of would be, possibly where, if that position required me to be gone from the workplace for an extended period of time, for long-term training. Such as possibly like a law enforcement officer, where maybe they have to go off for six months to be trained outside the workplace, then maybe you could make an argument for that.

But when you have folks working side by side, doing the same work, and you are telling me that the employee that got hired into the competitive process only needs -- it's only going to take me a year to evaluate their performance, and this other person, because they were hired under a noncompetitive process, some sort of an intern program, it's going to -- to do that same work it's going to take me two years, I don't buy it.

Is there -- this is for any panel member. Is there any kind of excepted service internship program for recent college graduates that you would support? And if so, what would that program look like?

I think we have already answer that, that we would support the Student Career Experience Program and the Presidential Management Fellows Program, or small expansion, but following the same parameters.

And also, I think this is a good opportunity to highlight the VA Work-Study Program, which allows the VA to employ veterans on their college campuses, and they are working in a supervised office and they are effectively doing the government's work to helping veterans on their campuses. But unfortunately, even after four years of that, they get no

federal work experience credit for when they are hiring for a federal position. But they are being paid by the federal government through the Department of Veterans Affairs. And I actually would like to take it a step back and say, not even postgraduate, let's get these guys while they are still in school. Why are we not expanding our workforce to current college students? If we are looking for experienced personnel, let's go as deep as we can into the college experience and have them working. I mean, Capitol Hill is run by college kids, right? Most of the interns there are working without a Bachelor's degree and they are employed upon graduation. That's an outstanding model, albeit a little aggressive. But employing our college students, especially those who are nontraditional students, like our veterans who are a little older, extremely competent during their college years, need employment, because we are paying for our college without our parents' support, which is how the traditional education model works, is they expect people to not have to work during school, because their parents are supporting them. But if the federal government can offer low level job opportunities that are paid for current college students, then they have federal experience and we are objectively evaluating them, unlike in this program for two years. We can objectively evaluate them more routinely and then retain them upon graduation in a more qualified position, or not. But giving them that experience, that is obviously so coveted, that federal work experience is really what becomes most challenging for us to seek federal service.

Yes sir.

I will go out on a limb a little bit. I mean, I think to answer your question, I don't think I could fairly say what we might or might not support in a program without actually seeing the parameters of the program itself. But certainly something that is more likely to garner support is, if you have a program where you are trying to reach recent college graduates, that you in fact limit that program to recent college graduates as opposed to a program like the FCIP, which is either targeted, depending on what you read or how you look at it, at recent graduates or very specialized positions. I think the nature of the positions matters in determining whether the program is necessary or whether it's going to be supportive. If you have that type of limitation, it's more likely to get support, than if you have what the FCIP does, which is, it can be used to apply to anyone, because it has given complete reign to the agencies to figure out what position, with no guidance, take a position, put it within the program, and there is nothing in the program itself that says, well, in fact, you actually have to be a recent graduate. So I mean, I wouldn't commit to it, but certainly if there is going to be a program that is going to garner support for recent college graduates, it has to actually target recent college graduates.

I think I would be supportive and my union would be supportive of a program, either SCEP or something very close to that, with the understanding that, again, these programs need to be set up and have a very specific purpose and objective. And from my perspective, I think the objective needs to be, we use these noncompetitive programs, such as SCEP, to basically fill critical jobs, where either we have a shortage in terms of qualified applicants. Again, such as the example I used, where engineers in the forest service, and I am sure there are other job series or types of positions across the rest of the federal government.

And also another possibility that you might want to think about is, where we have a difficulty in attracting qualified candidates to work. For example, there is a lot of folks that are just not comfortable, don't want to throw their name in the hat to go out and work in Eastern Montana, very rural communities, or up in Alaska, where I spent 16 years of my career; it's a place that you either love or you hate, and we had a heck of a time hanging on to employees up there. A lot of folks that come up there, they kind of had this vision of what it was like, and the weather and the remoteness defeated them and send them packing.

So you can use these kinds of programs potentially to deal with those sorts of situations

as well, but again, I think just as everybody else has said, I think it needs to be a very limited and very focused and targeted use of these things. If you don't have good oversight of these programs, if you leave it up to the individual agencies, like you do with the FCIP program, we are going to be right back with SCEP or son of SCEP or whatever we are going to have, will be right -- that will be right exactly with our program, where we are today with FCIP.

One thing I do want to clarify is that, just for the audience even, is that, Veterans' Preference does apply to the excepted service. So I know that some of you have raised some concerns with that. Do you think the agencies are just not applying it correctly or that it needs publicized better, or what do you think is the reason that the excepted services generally has this reputation of Veterans' Preference not being applied, when in fact it absolutely does apply?

What we have known and what we have talked about before, The American Legion is, what exactly are those safeguards there, and to kind of go back to what we were talking about before on the FCIP program, just to discuss briefly is, I was looking at the regulation, as Andy was talking before, I couldn't find anything about it needing to be a two year or a three year post recent graduate. And what I want to make sure on programs that do come through and identify specific groups is that, I know we talk about Veterans' Preference being applied to it, but we get quite a bit of anecdotal evidence from people in the field, we have about 2.5 million members saying, hey, listen, we didn't get any information. This veteran was denied. We know that this person was qualified, we think that the hiring manager -- that they are avoiding hiring veterans. So what we get is a lot of anecdotal evidence about people saying, there's people out there that just -- they want to use the FCIP programs so that they can completely avoid hiring a veteran, and they will go out of their way to avoid it. I am not saying that's all complete truth, but that's what we hear.

I think I agree with that. I think that I don't want to come off as saying, this is a huge problem across every federal agency and the federal government, because I can't believe that that's the case, or I think that you do have certain agencies or certain agency components, where the temptation that they have is to use it as a tool to avoid Veterans' Preference. And that kind of, when we were talking about, I think it was something that Brian said about, when you use the FCIP to focus on particular universities or colleges as opposed to others, and to limit the posting or the awareness of the job opening, I think that is a way in which agencies are avoiding compliance with Veterans' Preference. So to go back also to, what would we support in a program? I don't think we would support any program that avoids public posting requirements that are in the competitive service statute. I don't see any reason or I don't understand the argument for how limiting the posting of a job is in any way going to expand the knowledge of the job to the target audience. As Barbara said, I cannot understand why anyone would dispute that public posting on USAJOBS in conjunction with targeted solicitations is not a better solution.

I think Barbara used the statistic that veterans are underrepresented in FCIP already, and that having a program like that, which targets the best and the brightest, when we think of the best and the brightest, we are generally not thinking of recent graduating student veterans. So I mean, just fundamentally, not only are veterans not aware of the program, and Veterans' Preference only applies if vets apply. So if there are no veterans then Veterans' Preference is irrelevant. So if we are targeting places that are not traditional locations for veterans to either go to school or fields that they are typically coming from, then Veterans' Preference is really just the law in the book that has no relevance. So we need to make sure that if any program actually caters to the veteran population, to allow them to use their Veterans' Preference. If there is a target, if it's 25%, then 25% of the applicants should be veterans. So we need to make that happen.

Now granted, we are a dwindling population, so that may become more challenging, and so, again, I think you said before, outreach. I mean, how many college career centers know about FCIP? How many know that Veterans' Preference applies to FCIP? Very few. So I think fundamentally, OPM needs to work with career center staff, and we can certainly do this here in D.C., and other places around the country, to have little incubator programs. What do career center staff need to know about OPM processes, and what does OPM need to know about how career centers work? So if I am a junior, what are juniors asking for about when they graduate? What are they looking for? When do I need to start filling out an FCIP program or whatever it may be? So I think OPM has a lot to learn from college career centers if they want to hire recent college graduates. I think it should also be -- it's a great opportunity for agencies to reach out to their veterans, as Brian was talking about, I recently was contacted by one of our past National Commanders. He told me he was in the Pittsburgh area at a veterans' job there, and he went to, it was the regional office for the VA out there. And he went up to them and said, what jobs do you have available? They said, we don't have any jobs available. We are not here to solicit for jobs, we are here to talk about a VR&E program, which is a Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program, but it just goes -- this is a perfect opportunity to reach to the veteran community, which, a lot of these individuals who are recent college graduates and say, here, here is the GS-7 position that you can apply for. But instead of that, there was a brochure about another program. So just one way that you can reach out is to actually have positions available when you would go to hiring or job fairs for recent college student veterans.

I think there's two areas, particularly with FCIP, where we have problems with Veterans' Preference. Even though the Executive Order that established the FCIP program talks about, yes, Veterans' Preference applies. The problem is, as has been talked about already is, one area is the posting of the jobs; there is no requirement for public posting under FCIP. So I can pick and choose who I want to notify that I have got a job to fill. The second area is the application of the preference; once I have got applicants to fill this job, basically the law leaves it up to the agency to either use a numeric rating and ranking system or a preference, non-preference, or to develop procedures on their own that grant as much preference as is required under the law. But the problem is that this noncompetitive hiring authority, there is no oversight on the part of OPM. So it's like the agency self-pleases.

Well, there's no assurance that whatever procedure -- if they choose to develop their own procedure, that in fact that's meeting the intent of the law in terms of being objective and making sure that veterans are actually being given the preference that they are entitled to.

I think the phrase that's popped up in some of the case law is that it is a positive factor. Now, that's far too vague to be monitored and enforced.

Okay. I actually have finished my questions and I am going to open it up to the public now in case they have any questions.

Just as a reminder, if you do have a question, please wait for the microphone, because this is being recorded on a webcast, and for the record we need it into the microphone.

Are there any questions? You are not going to let them get off that easy, are you? Okay. Well, if there are no questions, then that concludes Panel #2. Thank you very much. We appreciate your time.

**PUBLIC HEARING ON PATHWAYS TO FEDERAL SERVICE FOR STUDENTS AND
RECENT GRADUATES**

OPM CAMPBELL AUDITORIUM

JUNE 25, 2010

3:15 P.M.

PANEL 3: GOOD GOVERNMENT GROUPS AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

Angela Bailey, I am the Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, and I welcome you here for our third and final panel today. I am not going to go over all of the specifics, because I think you guys -- if you have stuck around the whole day, you are pretty familiar with where the restrooms, the cafeteria, and security procedures are. So we are just going to jump straight into the actual third panel. First, I would like to introduce John Palguta, Vice President, the Partnership for Public Service. Gumecindo Salas, Vice President for Government Affairs, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. And I apologize. He is worked with me most of the afternoon to say it right and I probably still have not done a very good job. Laurel McFarland, Executive Director, National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration. And Marilyn Mackes, Executive Director, National Association of Colleges and Employers. As you know, each member of the panel has ten minutes to present, and we'll begin with Mr. Palguta.

John Palguta, Vice President, The Partnership for Public Service:

Thank you very much, Angie. And welcome everybody who has come late or sat here the whole time. If you cannot hear me, if you are in the back, just raise your hand. We will wait while you come sit up front. As Angie said, I am Vice President for Policy with the Partnership for Public Service. I have been with the Partnership for over eight years, and before the Partnership I had a 34 year career in the federal government. I mention that only, not to just illustrate how old I am, but to give you a sense of where I am coming from. My career in government was in HR, so I am an old HR guy. I used to work in this building for OPM, in the Civil Service Commission. But my last job and where I spent over half of my federal career was in a little agency called the Merit Systems Protection Board. And I mention that, not just because, again, I am an old HR guy, but you don't work in an agency like MSPB unless you really believe in the Merit Systems principles, which I do, and which the Partnership does.

The Partnership is focused on basically inspiring and transforming. We are very focused on attracting talent to government, and then making sure once we get great people in the government, that we have the kind of environment conditions that makes good use of them. So we are about inspiring and transforming. I want to, first of all, commend Angie and the Office of Personnel Management for this, not just this forum, certainly this forum, but also for the initiative that's been taken under Director Berry, focusing on hiring reform. I believe, the Partnership for Public Service very much believes, it really is vital to the country, it's vital to the government, because at the end of the day, getting the right people in the right jobs, in the right ways, is about effective government. That's the bottom line. And the need right now is fairly substantial. In last fiscal year, fiscal year 2009, there were over 142,000 new hires into full-time permanent, nonseasonal jobs, so I am not counting the census takers and so on. And our projections are that over the next four years we are looking at well over half a million new hires into government,

largely replacement hiring. People do leave, they don't stay in government forever; I left. And we have added some new jobs and we have insourced some jobs. So there are substantial talent needs in government. And the focus of this conversation however is on whether or not we have the kinds of systems in place to make use of and to attract right talent from our college campuses. So for my part of this, I want to just answer four questions.

I am going to answer the first question that Angie posed to all of us, which is, is the normal competitive hiring process for bringing in recent grads working? I will answer that in just a second. I also want to talk about, for those of you who were here for the first two panels, there is a lot of conversation about the Federal Career Intern Program. I am not here to defend the program, but I thought I would provide a perspective on why it is so popular. And I think that's important to understand, so that if we are going to change how we do things, we don't want to throw the baby out with the bathwater. And then I am going to just briefly touch upon two other things in my, now, eight minutes; the Untapped Potential of Student Internships, and just an idea that we have been supporting about basically a Civilian ROTC. Okay. Let me answer the first question. Is the normal competitive hiring process effective? I have to tell you, remember, my lens on the world is, from having been in HR, in government, for 34 years and now eight years plus at the partnership focused on it, it's important to understand that the federal government does not have a single approach to hiring that can be accurately described as normal and competitive. So I can't answer the direct question, I am going to answer a variant of the question. The federal hiring system has changed a lot over the years for a variety of reasons, mostly for good reasons. There is a myriad of ways that agencies can hire. It's highly decentralized. It's a highly delegated system. Agencies basically have a variety of hiring authorities available to them and they figure out a variety of ways that they hire. There is not a normal competitive process. So the reversion of that question is, does the current approach to federal hiring, is it effective in the context of recent college graduates? And as you might have heard from the first two panels, and I think you might hear from at least some of the rest of this panel, the answer is no, it's not. And there was no one -- I didn't hear anybody saying, the government has got it just right, don't change anything. We have got to change the hiring process. I am not going to talk -- because there is no disagreement, I am not going to spend time talking about what's wrong, that it's too long, too confusing, too ineffective, too inefficient also.

I do want to clear up one thing that's crucial to think about how we move forward. A lot of conversation around excepted service, competitive service. Things that only an HR person might care about, is the fact that, those are -- the distinction between those two is not, I have to say, is not the fact that excepted service jobs are excepted from requirements of competition, somehow excepted from Merit Principles. They are not. The vast majority of excepted service positions, and there is a wide variety of authorities, are covered by the Merit System Principles. You have to have competition. You have to base hiring and selection on relative abilities, knowledge and skills, etcetera. And you cannot hire people for non-meritorious reasons. If somebody is, they are violating the Merit Principles, and I believe in the Merit Principles. And the other thing, now let me talk about why the Federal Career Intern Program. Just in case you are interested, the real reason we have excepted and competitive, competitive service, back in the old days, you had a test. There were 113 occupations where you actually took an SAT type test. Somebody mentioned it earlier, the Professional and Administrative Career Exam was called something before that. That's the one I came in under. You sat down, you took this paper and pencil test. We didn't have computers and Internet. And you got a high enough score, you were in the running. If not, you were not, and your Veterans' Preference added on, on top of that. There were some jobs that were not amenable to that kind of testing; chaplains in the military service, lawyers, and so on. So we said, okay, they are accepted from those procedural requirements. You still have to hire based on who is the best for the job, but we will have different -- we will allow you to have different procedural requirements. That's the difference between excepted and

competitive. Excepted Service jobs are covered by the Merit System Principles, and they are covered by Veterans' Preference. Federal Career Intern Program, I have got the Presidential Executive Order, it's three things relevant. It's for the recruitment selection of exceptional employees. It wasn't really about students, exceptional employees. Merit-based procedures shall be developed, and the application of Veterans' Preference shall be assured. It's not an intern program. Those folks who were saying, oh, it's not being used as an intern program, you are right. It's a hiring authority. It was a hiring authority put into place to make it easier to hire exceptional employees, and it was an excepted service thing, because they said, we are going to develop other procedures. We are not going to necessarily give a test or something, you develop new procedures, but they have to be based on the Merit System Principles. Okay. Why did it become popular? As a federal manager, I had the pleasure of serving as a career member of the Senior Executive Service. as head of the Office of Policy and Evaluation at MSPB. So as a manager and an HR guy, I would have wagered money, I wish I did, at the beginning of the FCIP, when it was first announced, I was here in this room listening to Janice Lachance and the Executive Director talk about this new exciting authority. And I would have predicted that it was going to be heavily used, and I would have been right. It would be heavily used here for three reasons, I believe. This is why it's popular. So if we change it, we just have to think about, what agencies are looking for it. Four things; one, Merit Principles have to apply, Veterans' Preference has to apply. Number three, there is no public notice requirement. I will get back to that. It's something that can be quite useful, so it allows targeted recruiting. Agencies find that quite handy.

Now, remember, this is not just for interns, so it doesn't mean, well, it's just for going on to college campuses. I have seen agencies use the Federal Career Intern Program to go to Veterans' Discharge Centers and hire newly discharged veterans through this authority. So it can be used in a variety of ways. But it allows you to target your audience.

The other thing I want to say about the FCIP is that, of course it can be abused. We hear allegations about hiring managers promoting people through the internal merit promotion process, abusing that process. We hear about violations of other hiring authorities, including the competitive service hiring authorities. And I have no patience for managers who choose to hire on non-meritorious reasons. I think we need to find those folks. I think we need to hold them accountable. But the other thing that managers do find -- most managers, I believe, and I wish we had more hard data, but I believe if we had that hard data, we would find most managers are using it very conscientiously to try to find really good folks for the jobs.

And the other thing they like about the FCIP is that, it is a two-year period of additional assessment and you have to be proactive. In fact, at the end of two years as a manager, you don't say, this employee is somebody the government should keep. That appointment expires and the person is gone. The vast majority of FCIP hires get converted. But you cannot simply as a manager sit on your hands, do nothing, and have an employee who is not a good match for the job continue. So that two year further assessment period agencies find valuable. So why has it grown so much? Agencies find that it works. It's as simple as that. You heard the CHCO Panel talk about -- the Chief Human Capital Officers in the first panel talk about some of the reasons why they use it. Now, let me say, I mentioned I am a big believer in Merit Principles, I am also a big believer in Veterans' Preference. I am proud of the fact that one out of every four government employee is a veteran.

Now, if you look at all the workers in the civilian labor force, the non-federal workforce out there, 8.3% are vets. One out of every four in the federal government are veterans. Some years, one out of every three new hires has been a veteran. Even under the Federal Career Intern Program, the veterans are not as highly represented, because if agencies do target their recruiting, if they do go to college campuses, veterans on those

college campuses get Veterans' Preference, but not other veterans. But still 15% of the hires under the FCIP are veterans, again, compare to 8.3% civilian labor force. I think it's appropriate that we have high representation of veterans in the federal workforce. That was the intent of Veterans' Preference.

Okay. So that's kind of the thing on the FCIP. You can ask questions if you want, I would be happy to go further. I think if it goes away, we need to think of a way to allow somehow an expanded assessment period and some targeted recruiting. I mentioned I wanted to say just a couple of other things about student internships, because this is a forum on recent college grads. I think we have, and I heard a lot of favorable comments about the old co-op programs, the Student Career Experience Program. In government, I think we need to think about ways when we are talking about recent college grads, to make better use of our internship programs. We need to think and federal managers need to think about interns as part of the talent pool for future permanent jobs. When they are an intern, you get to assess them, you get to woo them, you have to give them meaningful work. You can hire some of the very best through conversion. We need to do a better job. About one out of every four, who are Student Career Experience Program folks that has a conversion authority, about one out of every four get converted based on some NACE data. In the private sector it's about one out of every two.

There is also, I talked about this idea of a Civilian ROTC as long as, again, we are focused on recent college grads. I think one of the issues for students, and I have one daughter still in grad school and one who is a recent grad, student debt can be crushing. Now, one way to address that is by providing scholarships for folks in mission critical occupations. We need cyber security people. Why not provide scholarships to somebody who is in a high powered cyber security program at a college or university, and that scholarship comes with the commitment of public service. I think that's another way for us to tap into recent college graduates in a good way and also to address some of their issues, which is, can I afford to be a federal employee? There is an Act, H.R. 3510, the Roosevelt Scholars Act, which would do just that, and it's something that the Partnership has supported. I am going to stop there, because my ten minutes are up. But I would love to talk more about this, and we can talk about targeted recruiting too, because I think from an HR perspective, there are some real reasons why it's not a bad thing in all circumstances at all.

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

Thank you. Mr. Salas.

Gumecindo Salas, Vice President for Government Affairs, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities:

Well, I wanted to start by just, on behalf of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, which I am representing today, we really want to express our appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this important public meeting today. To address the hire reform initiative that's underway and the also personnel management. Today I want to specifically focus in on the issue of whether competitive hiring is an effective avenue for bringing recent graduates into the federal workforce, and whether or not this really will lend itself to bringing even greater diversity into the workforce.

Let me first acknowledge your foresight and your courage of bringing to the table, discussion of an important issue, frankly, the hire process or federal government today and for the future. We all recognize that one of the most important things -- the most important and difficult things to change in society and in most institutions are rules and regulations that are intertwined into tradition. Certainly, employee hiring and promotion procedures and processes in any institution system and setting can be classified as an example of how a rule or law may survive only because of tradition, that's why this

competitive issue has become such a red herring. Indeed, we know that Congress wrestles with this idea and issue everyday, as it changes and modifies the laws that at one point in time were essential and important for the life and function of society. Yet, we all know that change over time diminishes the importance and even the fairness of law to all sectors of society. We know that all societies are not static, they are dynamic and evolving into new forms and structures.

Indeed, hiring our employees for the federal government is an example of how rules and regulations for government employment were thoughtfully developed and implemented, given the sociological demographics of the nation. But over time the demographic profile of our nation has changed and today it's evolving in a greater speed than ever.

For example, today over 30% of the nation citizens are persons of color or racial minorities and by 2050, over 50% of nations' population are going to be persons of color.

I should mention that really the role of Office of Personnel Management is to look at these changing demographics of the nation and maybe not so much as to force change within the federal agencies, but certainly to serve as guidepost and provide information, so that federal agencies do not lose themselves from the dynamic way in which the nation is changing, right?

The employment profile in federal government today does not reflect this change occurring in this nation. Data from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, in a recent report to the President, shows that persons of color are underrepresented in the permanent federal workforce. The following percentage best illustrates this profile. White Americans or European Extraction Americans, 66.5%, African-Americans, 18%, Hispanic, 8%, Pacific Islanders, 5.6%, and Native Americans, 2%. And even though these numbers and these percentages may not seem so dramatic today, if we remember that the country will change dramatically within the next 30-50 years. In fact, the kindergarten and first grade classes this year were over 50% minority. So we could begin -- we always look at demographic changes by looking at the bubble at that level, and we are going to see how it will increase, so that within one generation we will have over half the population will be Hispanic or minority; Black, Asian-American, Hispanic. Unless we begin -- if we look at how the federal workforce is structured and where the members come from the federal workforce, we can well imagine we are going to be in for real problems. So let me explain a little bit more about how that could occur and how we must guard against it and how the ideas that we will discuss today in the changing process for bringing employees into the workforce are important.

Through tradition and experience, the federal government has relied almost exclusively on a competitive process for hiring and promotion. Yet, while this is a good employment process to follow and use, it has certain limitations as it is utilized; tradition to identify, to attract, and hire individuals from certain geographic areas of the country, most familiar to those in the system or those familiar to the operational structure.

Let me explain. Attempts to better diversify these demographic inequalities, call for an examination of recruitment and hiring procedures, to ensure that these racial minority, hiring and employment inequalities, will not persist for the near and distant future. Let us focus a minute on the current processes for federal employment or government hiring that relies exclusively on the competitive process. And this is not to say that what I am proposing is a departure from the competition or a competitive process, but only an enhancement and look again for different perspectives. Over time we recognized that test scores measure experience and not potential. Therefore, to place all or most of the higher criteria on test scores or on academic achievement will not determine if the opportunity to learn and test was fair to minority populations.

Information on federal work opportunities in many cases is related to word of mouth and

relationships. As a consequence, many federal employees have learned of federal employment opportunities from friends or relatives that work at federal government related jobs. Minorities, Hispanics, as an example, do not have a history where a member of the family or friends have worked for the federal government or for state government. And you will see what I am talking about, that unless you begin to diversify your workforce at a time in which minorities will become the largest population, we will not be able to fill the large numbers of job positions that will become vacant because of the retirement process, natural, or because of the decline in the number of non-minority graduates from colleges and universities. As a consequence, fewer minorities or Hispanics learn of federal jobs.

Internships have been used by both corporate, the private sector, and federal workplaces, for interns, not only have the opportunity to learn how a corporation or a state or a federal workplace functions, and so will be better able to compete for a job based on the familiarity to the workplace.

Also, supervisors for interns can become familiar with interns, and may indeed encourage employment under their tutelage, or may even recommend to another similar workplace, based on the relationship of one supervisor, one office, to a supervisor in another federal agency. Furthermore, many interns, just at the state and federal government, are non paid. And so it depends on the economic condition of the intern and their families.

Minority populations and colleges said to come from modest or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore, a non-paid internship are beyond the economic reach of minority students. In addition, minority populations, which have minority students -- which have attended colleges and universities for the larger population attend, many others have attended a Minority-Serving Institutions, and in fact, over half of all the Hispanic students attend Minority-Serving Institutions. Whether the federal hiring process has fairly reached out to these Minority-Serving Institutions is the question that must be answered to determine either recruitment process may be fair. It may be responsible for the low numbers of minority populations in the federal workforce.

In our past discussions with one agency, the state department discovered that there were very few minorities in all areas, particularly in Foreign Service. Further investigation determined that the recruiters for the state department tended to concentrate their research or their searches into certain areas of the country, which incidentally happened to be the Eastern Coast of the United States. The areas at which minority students, Hispanic, students, do not attend. So as a consequence, as most diligently as he could for the seniority, to recruit students, they happened to be recruiting in the wrong parts of the country. Alright.

Therefore, HACU is recommending several things happen to offset a concentration of recruitment in the wrong areas of the country and in the wrong institutions or for Hispanics students, for Hispanic graduates, if in fact the Office of Personnel Management wants to be involved diligently and try to change the workforce profile of the country. The competitive process must be limited as a primary process for hiring and later promotion within the federal workforce, and that's not -- obviously, we always understand that you must have at least a bachelor's degree, we are not saying you should throw academic credentials out the window, but you have to use other criteria as well.

We must replace it with a new or modified system that looks at other factors beyond test scores and most importantly, past experience or knowledge of the federal work environment, which tend to rely almost totally on the competitive process. The outreach model must be examined carefully to ensure that minorities of institutions are identified as prime locations for recruitment of minority, potential federal employees. The

internship process or program in the corporate and federal employment areas tends to prepare students for employment positions, should be used by the federal government as a private source for recruitment and hiring of Hispanic and another minority person, even to replace a competitive process for Hispanic interns. And what we are basically saying is that the Hispanic Internship Program that we currently have for -- almost all of the interns at federal government come through the Hispanic Federal Internship Program, that must be looked at. It's a prime source of outreach and recruitment.

I should say that when we talk about competitive, all students who are included into the Hispanic Federal Internship Program, the identification of these students or recruitment of them, the minimum competitive [audio error 28:41] GPA should be 3 point, otherwise they are not included in the program. The average is the 3.3. So the competitive process, as far as academic preparation and credentials, would not suffer if this process was used.

Secondly, every federal agency should set aside or target agency funds to support internship program for Hispanic and other minority college and university graduates. To ensure that economic factors do not impede the Hispanics from serving as an intern to develop agency work skills and familiarity with the federal workplace. And what we are really saying is that, unless the federal government and federal agencies set aside money so that the students do not have to encumber themselves with any kind of long-term debt, beyond what they assume going through the university system, college university system, they would be able to accept internships that were -- provide internship opportunity to see what federal employment is really all about.

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

Mr. Salas, we are kind of hitting up on that --

Gumecindo Salas, Vice President for Government Affairs, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities:

Okay, I have just one last point.

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

Okay.

Gumecindo Salas, Vice President for Government Affairs, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities:

I want to conclude by thanking Director Berry and his staff.

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

You can use that point.

Gumecindo Salas, Vice President for Government Affairs, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities:

It's important public meeting and for the opportunity for [audio error 30:04] to express our suggestions and recommendations for helping OPM diversify the Federal workforce and with Federal Government Human Resources with the central information, right? As President Obama has repeatedly stated, the importance of being in the Federal workforce reflects that diversify of the nation [audio error 30:22] ready to assist you and your boss, Mr. Berry and President Obama and arduous but possible [audio error 30:29] vacant diversity in the workplace in real reality. Thank you very much!

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

Thank you! Appreciate it. Laurel.

Laurel McFarland, Executive Director, National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration:

Thank you, Angie and OPM! I serve as the Executive Director of NASPAA, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration. The organization of 275 graduate schools of public administration, policy and affairs. For 40 years we have been there a creditor and a force for promoting quality in professional public service education.

In recent years, NASPAA has come to believe that our concern for quality education cannot end at the doorway of the graduate school. It must also include attention to the pathways to public service, and our effort to remove barriers that prevent our publicly spirited students from achieving professional careers in public service, including Federal service. So we think competitive hiring is not competitive for students.

NASPAA's recent experience with our graduate students and Federal hiring has led us unequivocally to declare that normal, competitive hiring is not an effective avenue for bringing recent college graduates and graduate students in particular into the Federal workforce. The current system of Federal hiring is anything but competitive for graduate students seeking to enter Federal service. It is confusing, it's fragmented, and not aimed at young people who lack the inside information and work experience. Here is why competitive hiring is not an effective avenue for bringing recent college grads into the workforce.

One, the future of the Federal Government depends not just on filling positions, but hiring the best possible people for these positions. To ensure this, there must be mechanisms for recognizing those of exceptional academic and leadership promise, and attracting them to government. If we do not have challenging, competitive, dedicated programs for attracting them and recruiting them, we will lose them from Federal service, probably forever. We have developed these mechanisms for choosing the most talented, when it comes to awarding Federal grants for cancer research and so on. Within a fair and democratic framework, we should still allow for the selection of excellence. Innovation and creativity in government depend on it.

Second, we're not just looking to select Federal workers from pools of applicants, rather we are seeking to recruit highly capable individuals, including students, who might not otherwise consider working for the Federal Government. Again, it's not just about having one pathway for filling positions, but it's about having as many pathways as it takes to find the best people for the positions. If you want to find promise, ability, and leadership potential, not just experience or years in, you need to reach deeply into the student talent pool.

Third, many undergrads and grads lack work experience. This is come up earlier this afternoon. Particularly the professional work experience that documents the skills and abilities required in the current competitive system. If you want to skip the next generation of Federal workers and leaders, keep doing what you are doing and hire only those with significant work experience. A separate pathway that provides opportunities for trying on, for try-on work experience for students without obligations on either side would benefit both potential workers and their government employer.

Fourth, under the current competitive process USAJOBS, etcetera, students appear to be disproportionately unsuccessful as applicants, based on the very limited data that's

available out there. The idea that students might be taking jobs from incumbent workers, veterans, or other categories of applicants is pretty laughable. Worse students failure as applicants is damaging the perception among young people that Federal employment is a meritocracy. Having a mechanism tailored to students, but that is selective and competitive among students, will ensure that they can be seen to have a fair shot at Federal jobs. A clear pathway with visible and positive results will enhance democracy.

Fifth, grad students in particular have cutting edge skills. Grad students have the freshest, most vital skills, straight from the frontier of research and scholarship. That infusion of skills and energy is essential to the continual regeneration of the civil service.

Sixth, students are on a very particular calendar with large numbers graduating at the same time, looking for work at the same time, and available to start at the same time. Because of this very predictable calendar, it is more efficient and effective to have a separate, tailored pathway for dealing with this large, predictable, annual cycle of potential applicants. And it comes around every year.

Seventh, the assumptions about where potential applicants get their information, they do not apply to students. Students get their information from different places and in different ways than full-time workers do. They don't necessarily have inside tracks on jobs. They rely a lot on professors, on social networking, on other forms of communication to form their opinions and make decisions. In contrast to more mature or experienced workers who know and choose to go directly to USAJOBS for Federal jobs, most students now have less attachment to particular sectors or job categories. A separate pathway that extends recruitment all the way to where students live, involves universities and faculty and social networking, and that takes a vault approach to matching students to multiple Federal jobs from single uploads of skills and interests profiles. We think that would work better for the majority of students. The justification for Federal Reform. If you don't have a separate pathway for students, you will miss the best of this generation. If it's hard to apply, or students see that their peers are unsuccessful as applicants, they'll go elsewhere. You'll lose the best of this generation and it will be hard to get them back later. So in short, we need a separate pathway in order to build excitement and respect for public service in the next generation. Tap the latest skills and knowledge, attract those driven to serve the public and change the world and build a cadre of highly skilled, dedicated public servants at a young age. They can be ongoing examples for their peers and fellow citizens. We are trying to recruit the very best, aren't we?

Finally, Needed Policy Changes. We recommend that we construct clear pathways for students into Federal service. You begin that by building on SCEP to establish clear, well-marketed opportunities for career-oriented term-time and summer internships for students that encourage exploration of Federal service. B. Replace the Federal Career Internship Program with a selective two-year developmental program targeted just at graduating students and recent graduates, drawn from both undergraduate and graduate ranks. Give students a chance to try on Federal employment with the possibility of conversion at the end if it is a good fit. C. Thoroughly overhaul the Flagship student recruitment program that NASPAA helped to start more than 30 years ago. The Presidential Management Fellowship Program, the PMF. Restore it to be the jewel in the crown of graduate students' recruiting. Prestigious, competitive, fiendishly hard to get into. Turn to good government partners like us and others to help market to students, then open up the application process at the university stage to encourage as many qualified applicants as possible, and establish appropriate assessment tools that can identify the next generation of leadership and management talent for the civil service. Consider tracks, management, science and technical, IT, for communicating clearly the different advanced skill needs of the government to graduating students. And above all, restore the in-person interview process that was once the hallmark at the PMF. Require

applicants to actually think, argue, and write their way into a world-class Federal career development opportunity. Make the goal to attract the very best graduate students, many of whom would not consider Federal service otherwise. By making it so challenging and so compelling they can't say no to applying. Why should Singapore have a better student recruitment vehicle than we do? Finally, create a system.

All three of those student-oriented programs are important. Internship opportunities while in school, recruitment of recent graduates into a two-year developmental program, and a top-notch highly selected PMF for capturing some of these best of the generation of graduate students into Federal service. And make these things fit together in clear pathways and opportunities for students. Create a public-private partnership among OPM, universities across the country, good government folks and associations to foster an attractive, compelling student recruitment process. Develop and market programs for encouraging veterans to use the GI Bill to get graduate degrees that are good preparation for future professional and leadership positions in civilian Federal service. Veterans preference is not at odds with encouraging student hiring. Collect better data, not just about hires, but also about the effectiveness of recruitment efforts, the experience of students, and other external applicants, vets etcetera in the application and hiring process. And about the attempts to better match the skills of graduating students with the skill needs of the agencies seeking to hire them. Right now, we are all operating in a data vacuum and it is hurting all of us who are committed to improving Federal hiring of students. Better data will yield better accountability.

For 40 years, NASPAA has been an advocate of students entering Federal service. Long after this hearing, we will be at NASPAA continuing to offer our assistance, encourage create our students to take up careers and government and work to support the programs that make it happen. But ultimately, this is not just about Federal jobs and the need to hire more students. Federal Hiring Reform is about ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the Federal Government in coming decades, and our ability to tackle the really tough, wicked public problems we face and with limited resources. We at NASPAA believe it is not an understatement to save the future of our government, and our country depends on these future generations who take up the challenge of public service in the years ahead. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today, Angie.

Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, OPM:

Thank you very much! Marilyn!

Marilyn Mackes, Executive Director, National Association of Colleges and Employers:

Thank you! Good afternoon everyone, and thank you for the opportunity before you today. I am Marilyn Mackes. I am the Executive Director for the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Established in 1956, NACE is the leading source of information on the employment of the college educated. NACE is the professional association that connects more than 5,200 college career services professionals at nearly 2,000 colleges and universities nationwide, and more than 3,000 human resource staffing professionals focused on college relations and recruiting. First and foremost, is driving to achieve its mission to facilitate the employment of the college educated. NACE provides members with an ethical framework and standards to help them work together effectively and to achieve their goals and transitioning college students into the workforce.

NACE college members represent a range of institutions of higher learning or the lion's share of this group represent public and private for your college and universities. More than 300 public and private two-year colleges are also in membership of the association. NACE employer members come from virtually every industry classification including

manufacturing, finance, professional services, high-tech, education, healthcare, non-profits and government agencies. NACE employer members represent local, national and global enterprises. And these organizations range in size from offices of handful employees to organizations with employee counts exceeding 100,000.

In addition to ethical guidelines and standards NACE provides its members with an extensive array of services. NACE forecast transient in a job market, tracks legal issues in employment. Job search and hiring practices provides college and employer professionals with benchmarks within work. Provides best practice information and conducts research related to new college graduate employment and the employment process. Our research on the college hiring market makes us acutely aware of the importance of the Federal Government to the college hiring market. Each year we conduct a hiring forecast asking employers to provide their estimates in terms of college hiring. Over the past three years, while the private sector has seen the demand for new college graduates wax and wane with the economy, only the Federal Government has shown a steady increase in its demand for new college graduate talent. As a consequence it is in a direct interested NACE and its mission and for the college graduates served by this mission to see that the Federal Government becomes the most effective and efficient recruiter of college graduates that it can be.

And today on behalf of NACE, I am asking you to consider updating and refining Federal Government hiring methods to more closely reflect effective processes of college recruiting that take place in the private sector. So obviously my position here is a little bit different than we have heard so far. Let's first suggest college of student expectations of employment. Over the past several years, NACE has conducted fairly extensive surveys of students regarding their plans after graduation, their approach to the job market, and most especially their preferences in a job or an employer, garnering more than 30,000 responses in a way. These studies suggest that the Federal Government ought to be viewed as it preferred and perhaps the preferred employer of new college grads. This generation of students displays a high-level optimism and a very sound sense of ethics. These students seek and employer that will cater to both their spirit of community and one for which they will not feel and need to compromise their moral principles. In addition when asked about what attributes of the job they hold most important, job security, the opportunity of professional development, and the quality of the benefits package top the list, the very attributes that characterize Federal employment opportunity.

Overall our studies show strong match between what the Federal Government offers and what this generation seeks in an employer. Despite this, relatively few students responding to our surveys report considering the government as potential employer, in fact, approximately 7% of respondents are planning on government as a career out of college. In comparison 38% say they expect to work in the private expert for for-profit firms where the promise of higher monetary rewards is appealing and address as some of their desire for security. Of more significance however is that 21% report plants to work for non-profit organizations outside of the Federal Government, where the compensation benefits and the promise of job stability and professional development are nowhere near what could be experienced as a Federal employee. The dissonance between student attitudes and student plans indicates that the Federal governments approach to fulfilling its need for college talent is ineffective in achieving your results desired and expected. NACE research in benchmark and college recruiting operation suggests a number of areas where Federal hiring practices put the government behind its private sector counterparts, and I am going to mention two of the most important.

The first is in the arena of internship procurement and hiring programs, you've heard this more than once today. I would like to note that NACE because we have worked so closely with services and organizations that have internship programs, we very carefully defined internships as work or service experiences related to the students major or clear

goals. The internship plan generally about students working in professional settings under the supervision and monitoring of practicing professionals. In recent years internships have grown significantly as integral parts of the college recruiting system for organizations outside of the Federal Government. Nearly 80% of the private sector members taking part in NACE's internship surveys report that the primary purpose of their internship program is to feed their full-time hiring program. These organizations use their internship program to identify and build relationships with college students before those students enter the full-time hiring arena. In many cases, the students leave his or her internship with the job offer in hand. In fact, the number of eligible interns who were converted to full-time employees has grown from just under 35% in 2005 to 53% in 2010. Growth that occurred even during the depths of a labor recession. In contrast, Federal Government agencies are the only group responding to the NACE survey. They report that recruiting for full-time employees is not the primary purpose of their internship program, instead they report the primary purpose of their programs is to provide interns with work experience. I should note here that we did here earlier from Brian Hathorn around this particular subject, now I couldn't agree more with his comments. I would like to note that the Federal Government has instituted on [audio error 48:50] basis, this internship program that does near in some respects of private sector approach now of course is the very heated topic of the Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP). For the purpose of attracting "exceptional men and women to the Federal workforce" and we've had quite a bit of conversation around that today. Again, I don't need to necessarily repeat everything that's been said, but I would simply note that as with private sector interns, the individuals that come in to this program are not guaranteed a full-time position but the program allows an agency to target individuals with particular skills and abilities to fill with critical occupation for the agency and then evaluate the candidate as a good fit for the department going forward. And it obviously has been very successful, and I think it speaks to the general satisfaction that the agencies have had with the results of this form of recruitment. We also know that they are those who see that, that there are some issues around how it is managed. And I would agree with John earlier that one of the things we probably need to do is look at what is working about it and build on that as we go forward.

So let me just say that for all employers, whether in the private or public sector, at its most basic level, the internship as a recruiting device makes sense. It allows the employer not only to evaluate the intern as a possible full-time employee, but also to influence a desired candidate on the value of working for the organization on a full-time basis. Federal agencies could benefit from a critical lesson learned from the private sector regarding the impacted internships on their workforce planning. Internships offer many of our private sector members the opportunity to identify and recruit top talent at an earlier stage in the process, before they graduate, and to minimize the time, effort, and expense of finding the talent they most covet. A second significant difference between federal and private sector hiring relates to the time involved in the hiring process. I am sure you have heard a lot about cycle time. The time from which an interview -- when we interview the candidate, to when an offer of employment is extended. And our Recruiting Benchmarks Survey shows that cycle time is fairly consistent across private sector industries. While the federal government takes more than twice as long as the next slowest industry to complete this process.

The amount of time it takes the federal government to review, rate, and then select its preferred candidate, puts the government at a competitive disadvantage with the private sector. So that typically top candidates have many organizations vying for them, and the federal government slowness to act means that it loses out in many cases.

Effectiveness and efficiency are obvious and valuable goals in any operation, but do they preclude an open and fair process? Will the federal government in moving away from its traditional recruitment system forgo an open, fair, and inclusive process? As noted earlier, chief among NACE's role as a professional association is to provide its members

with ethical guidelines, and these guidelines, the full text of which appear in an appendix to these comments that I am sharing today, and I would encourage anyone who is going to read this to please look at those principles. These are designed to ensure that the college recruitment system is inclusive, and as open and fair as possible to all parties involved in the process; the employer, the university, and most especially, the student.

NACE's employer member organizations, not only are able to work within these guidelines to recruit the best talent available, but can also reap the benefits through these guidelines in building a diverse, inclusive workforce. And we are convinced that the federal government too can balance a fair, open, inclusive process with the need to attract the best and the brightest.

So in summary, with the understanding that as with all good recruitment and hiring programs, the federal government's needs should be built upon a foundation. [audio error [audio error 52:42], NACE would like to offer the following recommendations for your consideration. And while we are not as engaged in some of the other groups that you have heard from today in promoting public policy and recommendations, I think you are going to see some of the same common themes here that you have heard elsewhere. First of all, leverage technology to help streamline and not complicate recruiting and hiring processes.

For example, many organizations use candidate assessment and tracking systems to manage their efforts. Such systems can also help eliminate bias from the process and ensure compliance with ethical and legal standards. Technology tools combined with improved processes can significantly reduce the cycle time for hiring.

Recognize the realities of the college employment arena and refine and update hiring processes to provide federal agencies with the ability to compete effectively for college talent. And I think we heard Laurel McFarland mention a variety of ways that this could be accomplished. Consider piloting new and different processes through individual agencies to identify effective models that may work for agencies with similar human resource needs. Build on the Federal Career Intern Program, if not continue it, at least build on the strengths of it and add a minimum, try to develop an intern track type of program with the federal government, that enables agencies to offer interns full-time employment at the conclusion of a successful internship. And finally, empower agencies to build recruitment and hiring plans and processes that work for them. Given the diversity of their tasks and goals, what works well for one agency may not work well for another, and by recognizing both commonalities and differences among the agencies and aligning processes accordingly the federal government has an opportunity to take advantage of overlap, while giving agencies the flexibility that they need.

A number of years ago, a work by Osborne and Gaebler, titled *'Reinventing Government'*, stirred the imagination of Washington's thought leaders. The idea was to find avenues to make government more responsive, more customer-oriented, and more innovative in the approaches it took to accomplishing its tasks. The argument for hiring new college grads flows neatly into the ends of reinventing government. New college grads bring with them a spirit of innovation, optimism, and openness to new ideas, and the ability to quickly learn new skills. It's our hope that the federal government develops an effective process for recruiting the best of these new graduates. Thank you very much for the opportunity to share perspectives from NACE, the National Association of Colleges and Employers, and I will be happy to answer any of your questions.

Moderated Q and A.

Thank you. What's going to follow now is, I just have a few questions for the panel and

then we will open it up to the public. So this is a question for anyone on the panel. Are you aware of any specific procedures in competitive hiring that are insurmountable barriers to hiring recent graduates so that an exception is necessary?

Well, Angie, since I don't think that competitive hiring is restricted to the competitive service, I think that as long as we have a variety of approaches available, approaches under what we call competitive service hiring and approaches that are competitive under excepted service hiring, I think we can manage. We talk about, and I know OPM even has on its website a hiring toolkit. Well, you don't want a toolkit where every time you open it up, the only thing in there is a hammer. I think you actually need to have -- there are a variety of things we are trying to accomplish in government. We are trying to recruit great talent from our colleges and universities. We are trying to ensure that in the words of the Merit System Principles, we have a workforce representative of all segments of society. So we want diversity. We have found a number of things we want to do and at the end of the day we want to make sure that all of those things end up with people in the jobs are really good at doing those jobs. So it's not a direct answer, but I think we need to continue, in my view, to have in our hiring toolkit, competitive hiring procedures that are currently along the lines of what are currently being used under what we call excepted service hiring.

Okay. Does anyone else want to add to that?

Yeah. I would say it's -- the competitive process is an interesting way in which we want to look at, at who it is we are bringing in. And there is nothing wrong with a competitive process to bring in the best and the brightest, but we always have to look at, what are the conditions and the process, and what you define as competitive. Because indeed competitive in one area may be looking at certain attributes that are not available to all population, simply because of the place at which they receive an education or the opportunities that they have. So I think we need to look at, what it is that we are defining as a criteria for hiring a promotion. And it may well be that those may necessarily be those that are the bona fide criteria for a particular position. Unless we begin looking at that and we continue to use a competitive criteria that is excluding minorities from this process, we will end up, 20 years from now, with the federal workforce that continues to be unable to relate to the total population, which is [audio error 58:39] and totally White, but it's minority, and the employers or the workers of the government will be continued to be White employees, servicing a majority of population when it's not minority -- which is minority. And I think we need to begin defining, what do we mean by the best and the brightest and what do we mean by the criteria that defines our competitive?

Yeah. I guess I would respond too and say, are there insurmountable barriers; I think it was the word you used.

You can just lower it to barriers. Are there barriers?

Because I think the experience most grad students and students have with the competitive hiring system is the USAJOBS portal. And when I think about the barriers that students face when they go through that particular portal, the time delays involved, the lack of information for people who aren't familiar with federal applications. The fact that they may get a computer response, but they may never hear back again when they apply as to what their status is. The closing dates that are sometimes just days after the job is posted. The questions they are asked -- the jobs are posted -- the timetables and so forth, are not timed to students' calendars. So that they are not yet graduated at the time the job is posted and they would have to take it out.

So, are those things insurmountable? No, but they are certainly when you stack them up, represent very significant barriers to students applying through the traditional sort of

USAJobs portal.

I think very simply I would say, I heard earlier today that any number of us, regardless of where we are coming from realized that the system exists right now, really has some need for reform and improvement. You've identified a variety of things I think that R&D barriers for college students, using the system, the open competitive system. I would say that, we really need to look at what exists now and identify what we really can acknowledge is working well for us and not feel like we have to protect what exists, as it stands. And I think I've heard a little bit of that today, and what I'd prefer to hear is more what are we really trying to achieve with this, and what's going to get us there, and what does it take to take the system that's in place now and improve it, to the point that you were making.

I think we need to look at, how you create a system that's inclusive, and inclusive of all population groups and inclusive of how you search out and bring people into the system and never would we ever say, we'd all want to have the best and the brightest, but the system in place is not doing a good job of reaching out, identifying the best of brains from all population groups and continues to operate in a system where all these certain groups are sought out included in the competitive process and ultimately end up being the work for the Federal Government workforce. We are not improving the diversity of the workforce, if we continue on business as usual and there is something wrong with the system. That brings in only one type of population and excludes another population, and unless we get it at their criteria or the process that is been used for outreach and brought into the system, will continue to have a system that includes and excludes.

John, I'd like you to address whether or not you think the normal competitive hiring process is an effective avenue for bringing recent college graduates into the Federal workforce, number one. Number two, I'd like you to address, I believe you mentioned that you do not think that the job should be posted on USAJOBS, can you tell us why?

Oh, yes. First the last statement is not accurate in the sense that I think sometimes, absolutely many times, we should be posting on USAJOBS. But to answer your first questions, the normal competitive process, there is a terminology issue. But I think what most people think of when they hear normal competitive processes, post a job on USAJOBS, anybody in the world who thinks they are qualified gets to apply and that should be the process. The answer if that's the notion, the answer is that is not a -- that's the hammer in the toolkit, sometimes I want that hammer, but if that's my only tool, the system does not work. I cannot build a house that I need for the government. So let me just address very quickly than the second part, Angie, when should and should not a job be posted to anybody in the world? There is -- I was in this auditorium 32 years ago, when we talked about the Civil Services Reform Act in 78; it had been around long time.

I was not here.

And I know a couple of folks who wrote that language, a couple of them are little shaky but they are still around, the fair and open competition thing has been problematic for people. What does fair and open competition mean? If you want to try to be a purist, and the people who wrote it were not thinking this, but if you want to say, hey, fair and open competition that means any job that's going to be filled through competition, so it's not career ladder. So that's the only time you don't have competition, if it's career ladder. There is one other instance when we don't look for merit and all that, those are political appointees. But the fair and open competition, if your notion is, okay, for every job to be filled that's to be filled by competition has to be available to anybody, then what we have to do is throw out the internal merit promotion plans. We should not be able to restrict, I think that would be a bad idea, but if you want to be a purist, we should not restrict some positions in government only to government employees. That's

not fair and open competition in the pure sense, and then we should not have other special hiring authorities, like authorities that -- for veterans hiring, we restrict to just the veterans. That's not fair and open competition. We have hiring authorities restricted people with disabilities. You start dissecting and it's like oh, no, no, wait a minute. There are exceptions to this. There are times when for the purposes of achieving diversity, providing opportunity just to veterans, making sure that we are hiring a well-balanced workforce, we want to vary how we are doing hiring. So I talk to -- and some of it quite frankly is also simply a question of practical considerations. I talked to an HR Director for sub-component of Cabinet Department agency, not too long ago. She was telling me, they had a -- I think half-a-dozen jobs in one of their career -- major career lines, that they posted, 30,000 applications were received. And that is not like -- you know a totally weird, uncommon thing. We are seeing now places where agencies are getting more. Now a 100 resumes will be about like that. A 1000 -- I don't know, may be like that, think about 30,000 and you just think about if you were trying to still use the rule 3. You'd have to figure out, okay, out of those 30,000, who were the three who were the best for my job? Not practical. Our assessment tools aren't that good. So sometimes you want to say, look, I want to target. If you've done a good job of managing your current employees and you've been developing them, there are times you want to say, look, I know I have got great talent right here in my agency. I am going to restrict competition to people only in this agency. That's permissible under the rules, the regulation says, your requirement is to expand your area of consideration large enough so that you have a good range or talent to choose from, doesn't say the world. So, we have never had this notion that every job should be posted to anybody who has access to the computer. And 32 years ago, we didn't have computers, we didn't have the Internet, you went to the first floor in -- if you were in DC you went to the first floor of this building to the Job Information Center, and you talk to a person who gave you a paper application. The world has changed. We've got to change the way we think about how we try to identify great people and achieve diversity and give fair consideration to our veterans. So there are times when if we are looking and we are saying, wow, we've got these entry level, professional administrative jobs, and we are not bringing in hardly any new college grads, something is wrong. I want the ability to say, you know, I've got some cyber-security jobs, and I know there is 12 institutions that have a top notch program where they are cranking out new graduates in cyber-security. I want to recruit on those 12 campuses, anybody on that campus. Now the way it works for veterans, if you are a veteran on that campus, and mostly if you are using a career intern program approach, you would be using category ranking, and you know the stuff, backwards and forwards, Angie, the veteran goes to the top. So you've got veterans' consideration but you are targeting your talent pool and I probably don't. If I am going out that way, I don't have cyber-security people in my own workforce, so that's why I am not restricting the workforce or I am not restricting to government employees. But I am restricting it to where I know there is good talent, and my requirement is to in the name of fair and open competition, make sure, I'm reaching out wide enough that I have got well qualified folks and I can pick the best person among those giving first shot to veterans and also being mindful of diversity. So may be I want to go to some of the Hispanic serving institutions, if I am looking to increase my Hispanic representation, knowing that they have got some really good people on those campuses. I want that ability. If what you think about when somebody says, the normal competitive process, post it, anybody in the world gets to apply, sometimes that would work.

You've got some jobs where there is not a very deep talent pool, you want anybody in the world to apply, we can give direct higher authority to agencies to go out and find people. So those are times when, yes, post, and yeah, anybody who thinks they are qualified let them apply, I want to consider them. There are other times which I want to target my search and in the name of good HR, good management, meeting public policy goals that's when it better enabled me to do that than the normal competitive process if the definition is post and anybody who sees it, who thinks they're qualified, gets to apply and I've got 30,000 plus people to sort through.

Thank you! Well, Laurel, one of the things that John had mentioned is about this data, and you also mentioned it. Although, you said that I will be at limited data, you did reference some data. Could you tell us the sources that shows that students are disproportionately screened out via the competitive process?

Yeah, a few months ago we were wandering around in the data literally trying to find what was out there, and you get it from – you have to kind of piece it together from very limited sources. The MSPB does their new hire surveys that are surveys of -- they are not based on Federal records, they are based on surveys of new hires. And one of the things that they can talk about is what was your last status before you came here. So the ones who were last in school and then look at what their experience was. So that's a little spotty evidence. There is also a guy named Greg Lewis who is Professor at Georgia State who has the 1% Federal labor force sample and he is able to look at the experience of people who were students who have come into that. We have surveys of our own students that we have done, where we've asked them about their experience. Now the problem with that is that that tells you about public policy, public administration, public management students. It doesn't tell you about student's experience across the Board. So we can tell you that our own students are disproportionately unsuccessful in the competitive service. We also -- both MSPB data and our data point the same direction that there has been a drastic shift in graduate students coming into the Federal Government. A shift from competitive coming into the government to accept it. And the FCRP the PMF, those sorts of things that, what, MSPB data, and I think some partnership data too. I am not sure what your source is, but something like more than half of the graduate students now are coming in through excepted hiring rather than through competitive hiring.

Now, and this could be for anyone to answer, but do you think that that's because the competitive -- could it be that our competitive quals, the way we do our qualification standards that that's driving it. Should they be revised to give so that we – to give grads parity within the competitive hiring, or do you think it is the reason that they have an exception or that an exception is therefore required, because of the way our quals standards are written?

It's all the -- well, it's not all of the above. It can't be. Yes, the issue is we have multiple things that need to be fixed. It's not one thing. Quas standards are one thing that need to be fixed. Right now, and we heard that from our first panel, I think very eloquently, a desire to move to more competency base as opposed to years of experience for example. And frankly if you've got 30,000 applications and you're trying to sort through them and you don't have a test like a Cognitive Ability Test, a P-Type Test, so you are doing what we call in the HR business, the Training and Experience Point Method. Well, I will give everybody so many points for being a college grad and being an honors society and there are so many points for experience. Well, you are doing on a scale of 0 to 100 and you've got a whole bunch of folks in that 90 and 100. The thing that distinguishes our folks who have the experience, because your new college grads get maximum points for the education, 0 points for experience. Somebody who've managed to graduate 20-30 years ago and then has lots of experience doing same thing for 30 years they get the nod. Not a good way to do it. We heard from our previous panel, the young veteran talk about, my military experience hasn't been taken into account. Well, if we change the way we look at qualifications, we'd be looking at what skills and what competencies were developed while he was in the military. Decision-making skills, leadership skills, analytical abilities; those are competencies that were being built during his time in service. For examining based on, well, how many years of experience did you have being an HR specialist? I wasn't an HR specialist, but I have a lot of great other skills that would make me be a good HR specialist at an entry level. But if the quas standards says, well, when you are determining who is the best person in your competitive process, it's going to be the person who spent a ton of years just doing processing in an HR system, not necessarily your best HR person. So, yeah, we've got to fix that. That's

part of the issue. It's not the only thing. But yeah, -- and I also liked very much the comment from our earlier, one of the first panel. Get rid of this excepted/competitive service stuff. We need a good competitive hiring process that focuses on getting the best people into the job, people best able to do the job and gives due regard to veterans preference and diversity. That's the end goal. We get so hung up on what's the right procedure and we lose track of the end result. What are we trying to accomplish? And is our current procedure impeding us? And I think the answer is, our current procedures in many cases are impeding us rather than aiding us to get to that end result of well-qualified people with due consideration for veterans and diversity. So, yes, we have to change that. We have to change some other stuff too.

Okay, did you have something?

Can I respond to that one?

Sure!

I just want to make the comment that -- first of all, I am glad you said it. I was going to say it and refer back to Brian Hawthorne and his comment. But, I would also like to add that one of the things that struck me about the presidential memo that has led to this conversation taking place is that when you read through the items that are sort of listed in there around improvements that are expected to be made, it's astounding to me in many ways. How much it reflects? What really are best practices in terms of recruitment, best practices in terms of outcomes and what we should be looking for. And one of the things that this question reminds me of is that as you are talking about college students and they're coming into apply to the Federal Government for whatever it might be, they're also looking at opportunities in the private sector. And they're very familiar with what the processes are like out there and they're looking at the qualifications that are being expected when they are applying out there, and they're knowing that competencies and the kinds of things that can make a difference, relative to whether or not they could be successful on the job, where there is a correlation between their capabilities and the work that needs to be done as opposed to how much experience they have against that, especially as an entry level. They are taking that into consideration. So I really think that as we are looking at those qualification factors, you really need to look beyond just the vacuum quite candidly of the Federal system. You have to look at the broader picture because that's where you are drawing the candidates from.

I would respond also about, is it the qualification standards. I guess, I am going to sound like an academic here and say, part of the problem here is that we don't know, because the focus I think a lot of the Federal Government's efforts has been on when they have studied it, when they have collected data, when they have done research. It has been a focus on hiring and on selection, and that's kind of an MSPB bias also, looking at selection and hiring. Where one very important and appropriate focus here for the Federal Government is recruitment and applications. If you are trying to figure out whether certain groups like students are disproportionately unsuccessful, you have to look at applicants, not just hirers. And so having -- doing some careful studies of the experience of applicants in different kinds of groups, be they from diverse backgrounds, be they students, be they veterans where you design it to look at what's their experience in the application process and a focus on recruitment. Are we successful as a Federal Government in attracting people as applicants? Then you can track and see them what they look like when they've actually applied for jobs, and you can answer the question and you can begin to get at are we unsuccessful disproportionately, so what can we do about? If you only focus on hirers and data, you will never know the answers to those questions.

I kind of just add, it's implicit, but I want to make it explicit. We talk about things like

the qualification standards and all that, that's tied in to the whole process of how we assess candidates. And I think there is a lot of room for work. I mean, I think there maybe sometimes we want 100,000 applications, but we want then, we have to have the ability to efficiently sort through those 100,000. And right now, you don't do through training and experience point ratings and it's not a very good tool anyway in terms of predicting who is going to be most successful, we've got to look at other assessment tools. So even if we change the cost standards, we still have to look at, well, how are we going to make the match? Now, we are going to focus on competency, say, and less on experience, but then we soon have to figure out, okay, I will get a lot of applications which is a good thing, how do I sort through, how do I assess? And I think the state of our assessment tools, our assessment processes is not nearly where it should be and I think -- and I know this is something you believe anyway, Angie. But I think that's got to be something we focus on a lot because I am a shopper, my wife goes crazy. I can't buy anything unless I take a look at what else is available, same thing when I hire. I want to see as much talent as I can. But then you'll also have to factor that with, okay, but you've got to have a way to sort through. When I am buying stuff, I can sort through on the Internet, look at -- do comparisons and look at whose best prices or what have you, and that helps me. We need tools to sort through the applicant so that we end up again with that good match to the job and we're not there.

But competency is based on experience whether it's academic or whether it's work experience.

Absolutely, life experience.

That's right. So that's why you have to -- outreach is important that you reach to the different communities, number one, and secondly, you have to be sure that you don't exclude people because they don't have the competency, because they didn't have the experience. That all to office have been to [audio error 1:22:18] minority population where they don't have the -- they have not had the experience so they don't develop the competency. Our role and our idea is, you provide an internship so that you develop experience, because out of experience comes competency. But you are not going to have it as a front-end because obviously the more middle-class and other middle-class they are, the more experiences you've had that are acceptable in terms of government functions and government work. And that's the problem with minority people, they have not been given the experience, and therefore they don't have the competency, that is something that they can develop once they get the experience. And I think that outreach is critical and I think we need a better assessment tool to assess competency because competency is more -- why people are more -- a middle-class have more competency because they've had certain kinds of experiences that are acceptable by the larger population and indeed by the government. That does not conclude the fact that minorities cannot pick up those competencies. So we've got to be careful with competency because that's how we've got some of the dilemma we are in now where the government is more-and-more wide, and if the population is large there is more-and-more minority.

Thank you very much! I am going to -- I have finished my questions, and I'd like to open it up to the public. Are there any questions from the public?

Oh come on! Make it hard for us!

I wanted to put it earlier but you were --

Thank you!

Okay, are we sure there is no questions?

You can also offer comments if it doesn't have for you to question, you can say, John is absolutely right!

John, I am running this thing. Okay, anything else, already. So thank you!

Oop! One up here.

This is not fair, you are just going to thank your boss, okay.

Oh boy! So formal! Okay. Hi! I am Andrew Lowenthal, Project Manager with the Partnership of Public Service. John is not my boss, so actually this is not very –

You don't have formal supporting relationship.

Just a quick anecdote actually, I am a former Federal employee of the State Department. I have been through a number of student programs, STEP, SCEP, PMF, you name it. But I am actually not going to talk about that. I just want to mention a quick story. This spring I was at the University of Maryland at a career formation session for graduating seniors at their business school, and they all had IT degrees and they were giving out awards, their top kind of 10% of their graduates. I was on a panel with Microsoft. So Microsoft had the first 20 minutes and I had the second. Microsoft gave a great presentation and then told them exactly how they might apply for a job with kind of a start day in the very near future with a very competitive salary. I gave a presentation about IT opportunities in the Federal Government. It was approached by number of students at the end to say they've actually found my presentation to be more compelling about the opportunities available to them in government IT, then in, actually working at Microsoft or at Google, which surprised me. But they said, so now what do I do about that? And I kind of said, yeah, this is actually what keeps me up at night, I mean, this is my full-time job. I think about where do I now send you besides USAJOBS to pursue a career with Federal Government in IT. I really didn't have a good answer for them because they weren't graduate students and so they weren't eligible for PMF. And they were graduating, and so they were no longer eligible for SCEP. And FCIP is really -- it's a hiring authority but if they weren't people coming to their campus, they didn't necessarily -- they couldn't do anything of their own volition to get mashed up with an IT position. So really the best thing I can come up with was why don't you target the agencies that you want dig for emails, look through Federal directories and just start cold-calling and see, try and convince someone to hire you. Now, that might work for the most savvy of applicants. But we should be selling them on careers and not get away around, which would not be up to them to go to extraordinary measures to find the opportunity and stuff, to gain employment. So I was really -- frankly, I was embarrassed that I didn't have a better answer for them on how they might apply for employment in the IT world.

If I may just -- could I just comment?

Just the public comment.

Can I just comment to your comment? I was at a recent employer round-table and we had a student panel at this employer round-table in New York City and there were probably 100 people in the room. It was a mix of [audio error 87:26] people and other employers. The hottest topic was really, how employers are using social media to recruit college grads? Which is -- it's more than just the networking through the traditional methods of networking, it is now there are major recruitment strategies being done by private sector employers out there to reach candidates through social media to a point that Laurel made hear about -- I don't know if she used the words, go where the students are, but in a sense, you are going to their space to reach those candidates. And if in fact, we are serious about strengthening government employment with the talents of college grads, that's what people are going to have to do.

I just want to -- I need to make kind of like a little public service announcement here. This right now what I need you to do is ask questions, we actually can't just take comments.

So my question for the panel or anyone here is any agency the government using a social network including LinkedIn at all?

I do not know; I hope so. One of the things we find also at the partnership, which is on the good news. We beat up on government a bit about, boy, look how [audio error 01:28:48] is. But there is also as Max Stier, President and CEO likes to say, you can usually find somebody doing it right somewhere in government, just not enough people everywhere. I hope so, is the answer, and I also know just responding to the public comment that there are agencies that have used a Federal Career Intern Program to do college recruiting, these are the 12 campuses we are going on. If you are on the campus, you are interested, we want to talk to, here's when we are going to be there. I have seen Federal agencies who then gather the applications before they leave campus. They sort through, they apply veterans' preference, they look at the best people, they contact those people before they leave campus, saying we want to talk further. And it's possible within a week to have a job offer, a Federal job offer through a competitive process that apply veterans' preference, but that's because they were looking at and they were connected with the teams at the other campuses. They were doing their instant screening and they were finding the best people going through competitive process. And I think that's the kind of thing. We fill jobs -- 142,000 jobs filled in 2009, only 26,000 through FCIP. So we used -- we filled another hundred and whatever the map is, hundred and some thousand jobs to other means. We need to have a variety of means, but we need to be thinking about using social media, we need to think about using creative approaches so that we can be nimble and agile and focused on getting really the best folks. I know there is a lot of conversation around social media. There is a lot of interest in the agencies. I hope there are some folks doing some really great stuff that will profile at some point. I just can't tell you which ones yet.

We have one more question here.

Okay.

You can develop a big fees for [audio error 01:30:53].

Big Facebook!

Yeah, excellent! My name is Brooke Brohnet with the Partnership for Public Service as well. I think, my question is around, we've talked a lot about the FCIP program today, but not a lot about SCEP and referring to the panel before, they talked a lot about the SCEP program being a great tool and to keep that tool. Yet partnership research is showing that there is a very low conversion rate about 6% for the SCEP program. And so I am just curious if we talk a little bit about what the problems are there, what needs to be done, if this is the solution?

It's a great question, Brooke, and you have a corrected math. It's 6% of all interns, STEP and SCEP. If we look just at SCEP, which has a conversion authority, it's 26%, which is about half the experience, and that's a high point. We track it for a number of years, and the agencies are starting to get it. But for those of you who have been around, the SCEP program was what used to be called the Co-op Program; you come, you work in summers or part-time during school. If you build enough hours, the agency has the option, not the obligation; they have the option to convert you directly. You compete it in essence by demonstrating on the job during the period of the internship and the 680 hours at least that you are well-matched to that job or not. What has to happen I think

in part, and Laurel can talk better about this, I am sure, is that we have to change the mind-set because my perspective is that Federal management mind-set, we've got to change the managerial mindset. For a lot of folks internships are given [audio error 92:34] job. And it's not let's develop a talent pool, let's bring in some folks, try to track some of the best to our internships. Let's evaluate them, and let's think about them as part of our applicant pool. Let's have a goal, let's have a goal that we should be able to attract enough really great interns that at least half of them are folks that we want to convert and we are going to be successful because we are going to give them great experience, we are going to be successful of bringing them in. But – [audio error 93:01] profile, John, otherwise we get unsupported.

Yes.

Because I don't know what the partnership looks, like if you don't have at least 30% minority, I don't want the personal management office to look at it because that would be unfair.

The internship programs, the way they are being used, in many cases they are using them for diversity, and you know HACU places many interns.

What you were saying all was sounded like, I mean like, let's talk about diversity of profile, I don't know anything about it.

To me diversity is subsumed, that's got to be part of the equation. As a Federal Manager you are obligated to consider all the public policy objectives, are we being fair to veterans, or are we achieving diversity?

I like your words.

Yes, thank you! So that's a given, that's a given.

Yeah. I'd like to speak specifically to SCEP. I think the challenge for SCEP is to use SCEP strategically. I think the big failure, I mean, the reason why you see the relatively low conversion rates and so on is that they are not tied to a strategy for recruiting, I mean as Marilyn was saying earlier about the private sector; they are not being used as a strategic tool to attract those people to future Federal employment. I think agencies should have to be accountable for showing that their SCEPs are linked to competencies or to goals that will bring students back to Federal service and not just make work or whatever. I think they need to be career-oriented and strategically thought through. And I think then you'll see the conversion rates go up and you'll see students be happier with the experience too. I'd like to see it be modular where students have term time and summer internships that feed quite naturally after graduation into two-year developmental fellowships and internships into careers in Federal service.

Are there any more questions from the public? Okay, thank you very much! You've done a wonderful job. Appreciate it!

Thank you, Angie!

[Applause]