

October 3, 2011

Dear Colleague,

On August 18, 2011, President Obama issued an Executive Order, "Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce," directing Federal agencies to develop strategic plans to recruit and retain a more diverse workforce. It calls for the Office of Personnel Management, along with the Office of Management and Budget and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, to release a strategic government-wide framework to guide agencies to better diversify their workforce within 90 days of the Executive Order issuance.

In anticipation of this Executive Order, in March 2011, I approved the creation of the Office of Diversity Programs within the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity (ED) to analyze the diversity practices at DOE and to develop recommendations that would bring the Department to the forefront of efforts to build a more diverse and inclusive workforce. In July 2011, the Office of Diversity Programs concluded a comprehensive review of DOE's workforce diversity and inclusion policies and programs.

The findings from this analysis, which have been shared with DOE senior management, indicate that we can do more to create a culture that values diversity, which in turn will make the Department an employer of choice and enhance our mission effectiveness. I believe that we are at our best when we draw on the talents of all parts of our society, and our mission accomplishments are achieved when diverse perspectives are brought to bear to overcome our greatest challenges.

I ask each DOE senior leader, manager, and employee to join me in taking immediate and sustained action to better promote our Department as a positive model of equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion. In support of our efforts, I am directing Associate Deputy Secretary Mel Williams to lead this effort and to work with Bill Valdez, Acting Director of ED, and Mike Kane, the Department's Chief Human Capital Officer, to take the following immediate actions:

1. Dialog and Feedback. Organize a series of focus groups to engage in a dialog on the diversity climate at the Department and receive feedback. Both supervisory and non-supervisory (GS-12-15 and Senior Executive Service) DOE employees will be involved in these discussions to address the following: (1) workforce development; (2) training; (3) work-life balance; (4) mentorship; and (5) career advancement. Recommendations gathered from these focus groups will be discussed in a town hall meeting by December 2011.
2. Recruitment and Hiring. By October 2011, review our human capital policies and practices to (1) recommend appropriate changes to the Department's recruitment and hiring practices to be placed in effect by November 2011, and

(2) ensure that all SES and supervisory level employees have an opportunity to participate in outreach efforts aimed at recruiting minorities and/or women during FY 2012.

3. Retention, Development, and Promotions. (a) Take additional action to ensure that the efforts by program leaders to redefine work and to restructure the workforce towards a more efficient and effective organization do not result in the unintended consequence of adversely affecting diversity and inclusion. (b) Even in fiscally constrained periods, we must ensure that each individual has the opportunity for professional development and training towards enabling individuals to realize their full potential. By October 2011 and annually, review each program's practices, policies, and funding for professional development and training and support individual participation in training by affinity groups. (c) Review our policies and practices regarding promotions for employees by October 2011, to ensure that they do not result in the unintended consequence of adversely affecting diversity and inclusion.
4. Commitment and Understanding. Develop and promulgate by November 2011 an annual diversity events plan (internal observances and external outreach to communities and prospective hires) whereby senior leaders, managers, and employees may demonstrate their commitment to diversity via participation in diversity events, and receive the benefits of better understanding of our diverse workforce through personal involvement. So as to improve our understanding, (1) upgrade our Continual Learning Program to include interactive case study discussions/training on how diversity and inclusion contribute to mission effectiveness, and (2) ensure that all senior leaders participate in DOE diversity training programs at least once per fiscal year.
5. Performance and Accountability. Review and change as appropriate DOE performance appraisals and performance plans by October 2011, to ensure that all employees who have diversity responsibilities, and all senior leaders and managers are held accountable for performance results related to diversity, inclusion, and equal employment opportunity.

I call upon each of you to work together and with me in creating a culture within our Department that fosters and values diversity, inclusion, and equal employment opportunity.

Sincerely,

Steven Chu