

**BUILDING AND MAINTAINING AN
EFFECTIVE HUMAN RESOURCE WORKFORCE
IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT,
THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
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WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 2012

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT
MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE,
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:31 p.m., in Room SD-342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Daniel K. Akaka, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senator Akaka.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR AKAKA

Senator AKAKA. This hearing will come to order.

Aloha and thank you all for being here today at the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia. We meet to examine how we can build and maintain an effective Federal human resources (HR) workforce.

As we all know, we have always felt the workforce is very key and we need to do everything we can to keep the quality up and efficiency as well. We all know, the Federal Government is currently facing some of the most complex challenges in our Nation's history and doing so within serious budget constraints. As we celebrate Public Service Recognition Week, I want to take a moment to acknowledge and honor the dedicated public servants who are critical to meeting those challenges. Public servants provide so many vital services to our Nation. With the Federal workforce being asked to do more with less, making sure we have a top-notch workforce is more important than ever.

So many talented, hard-working people want to dedicate their lives to serving their country and communities; but we need human resources professionals to make sure we are hiring, developing, and retaining the right people, with the right skills, for the right jobs.

Federal agencies, and stakeholders, such as the Partnership for Public Service, have recognized that HR professionals currently are not fully equipped to fulfill modern Federal human resource missions. While these individuals still need to be able to perform traditional HR functions, such as hiring and benefit administration,

(1)

they also need to be responsive and educated strategic partners with managers to help agencies meet their objectives.

People are the Federal Government's most important asset, and we simply are not investing enough training, resources, and focus on the HR professionals who manage that critical asset. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Chief Human Capital Officers Council (CHCOs), and individual agencies have been working together, along with private sector partners, to take on this challenge.

So, I am so pleased to have all of our witnesses here today to tell us about these efforts and the challenges that they still face as they work together to professionalize the Federal HR workforce.

Again, I want to share my appreciation with you, as our witnesses today, for all you have done. You really have done a great job, Mr. Berry and Mr. Sepulveda and Anita Blair. I thank you all, again, for being here.

I welcome our first panel of witnesses to the Subcommittee. John Berry, Director of the Office of Personnel Management; John Sepulveda, Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and Anita Blair, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Chief Human Capital Officer for the Department of Treasury.

As you know, it is the custom of this Subcommittee to swear in all witnesses. So please rise and raise your right hands.

Do you swear that the testimony that you are about to give the Subcommittee is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you, God.

Mr. BERRY. I do.

Mr. SEPULVEDA. I do.

Ms. BLAIR. I do.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much.

Let the record show that our witnesses answered in the affirmative.

Before we start, I want you to know that your full written statements will be part of the record and I usually tell witnesses to please limit your oral remarks to 5 minutes but for this particular panel you have more than that. So, please feel free to tell us all you can.

Mr. Berry, will you please proceed with your statement.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. JOHN BERRY,¹ DIRECTOR OF THE
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Chairman, thank you so much and thank you for your dedication and your passionate support for all men and women who work for our Federal Government. Your leadership, your commitment has been unmatched in the history of this government. And, as the government's chief people person, I just want to say thank you on behalf of all of them for your commitment and passion that you expressed. Thank you, sir.

I also want to thank and recognize, the Chief Human Capital Officers Council, Mr. Chairman, which you created, you and Senator Voinovich, has become, thanks to the incredible leadership of all

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Berry appears in the appendix on page 38.

the CHCOs on that counsel, I think one of the most productive councils in the entire government.

They have been a rock and roll group and have produced solid results, whether it be simplifying and streamlining the speed and time in which we can hire people, hiring our veterans. Today, we launched a major new initiative, Mr. Chairman, to hire students and issued, will be issuing tomorrow the final regulations for the President's Student Pathways Program; and none of these programs could have happened without the incredible and passionate leadership of our CHCO Council and two of our best and brightest CHCOs.

In fact, John was elected by his peers as CHCO of the year last year. So, I am honored to be here with John Sepulveda and Anita Blair, who are just two great colleagues on the CHCO Council.

Senator AKAKA. Congratulations, John.

Mr. BERRY. I am pleased to have the opportunity to talk to you about how we can better professionalize the human resources career field in the Federal Government.

A strong HR community meets a core strategic mission for the Federal Government. When HR professionals get the training and the skills to do their jobs well, we will see unmistakably better results.

For example, we have increased focus on training HR professionals under the Veterans Employment Initiative, that the President issued an Executive Order (EO) on, with advanced e-learning modules and quarterly roundtables where we bring each of the veterans employment program office managers together. We have been able to hone HR professionals knowledge of veterans appointment authorities, disability hiring, and reasonable accommodation approaches, and best practices between the agencies through that forum.

That has translated into a direct result, Mr. Chairman, that you and American taxpayers can be proud of. The effort to contribute has significantly increased our veterans' hiring over the past 2 years. It is 4.3 percentage points higher than it was 2 years ago thanks to this effort and we have now reached 28.3 percent of our new hires in 2011. That represents a 20-year high, Mr. Chairman, of veterans' hiring in our Federal Government.

Disabled vets have also benefited under this program. We have moved from 7 to 9 percent of disabled hires, a 2 percent increase over that same 2-year period. And, it is proof positive that training is an investment that can produce better results.

In 2001 the Government Accountability Office (GAO) identified the Federal Government's management of HR as, quote, the critical missing link in reforming and modernizing the Federal Government's management practices.

Over the last several years, working with the CHCO Council and other agencies, we have aggressively launched initiatives to enhance the skills of our HR professionals across the government. The Administration has also made closing Federal skill gaps one of only 14 cross agency priority goals for the entire government, and I am the accountable official in producing that result.

My team partnered with a CHCO Council in addressing this skill gap in HR and we have been regularly briefing GAO on our efforts.

And, Mr. Chairman, I look forward. I hope, if we complete this project, that we will remove HR as a high risk area from the GAO high risk list within the next 12 months. So, that is our goal and our target.

The recently created HR University Web site, created again through our leadership of the CHCO Council, provides an excellent foundation for training with a combination of classroom, online, and web-based courses across the government.

Our growing catalog includes government training, vendor training and we recently offered for the first time college-level courses on HR management so that people could earn college credits while taking these training and development programs.

The HR University (HRU) also represents an important savings, Mr. Chairman, for our Federal Government and our taxpayers. Through sharing these resources and economies of scale on the HR University Web site, the figure of savings that we have had by having agencies take advantage of these free training programs is now approaching \$14 million.

OPM is also building a new approach to mentoring. Not only are we having mentoring for our employees and helping new employees who are coming in to be supported by mentors in this field and in our profession but we are also mentoring smaller agencies with larger agencies, creating, if you will, HR mentorship clusters.

And, I think this is going to be a very important one because a lot of smaller agencies, especially in declining budgets, Mr. Chairman, as you know, have to tighten their belts, they can benefit from larger agencies that have the resources to develop the training and skills and best practices, and we think that is going to be great.

We are also partnering with colleges and universities now to create new opportunities for HR professionals to pursue advanced professional training towards both Bachelor and Master level degrees and we will be launching partnerships with several of the colleges in the greater D.C. area where you know we have a lot of Federal employees.

Our goal is to do it first here in the D.C. area but then take it out nationwide and have our Federal Executive Boards (FEBs) do the exact same kind of partnerships in metropolitan areas all around the Nation.

These agreements will enable our HR professionals to take courses on the campuses of these institutions as well as take advantage of web-based training that will equip them for advanced service in Federal human resources.

Finally, our Federal Executive Boards which, as you know, Mr. Chairman, I know we have a great one in Honolulu. There are 28 of them around the country. All of our major metropolitan areas have them. They are not only essential for emergency training but they are also wonderful places for us to get best practices in human resource management out to the field.

People forget, the taxpayers forget, sir, 85 percent of our Federal Government employees are outside of the Washington, D.C. area; and how we can reach those employees is through our Federal Executive Boards and they are doing a phenomenal job.

The taxpayers should know that this is a shoestring operation that operates, if you will, with minimal support from OPM through our budget but then also agencies in each of those regions pony up a little bit of money to staff, to provide the staff with this but it is the best buy in the Federal Government.

Last, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, it is Public Service Recognition Week, and we decided rather than to do the traditional lunch celebration for our employees, rather than do that this year, we took advantage of launching something that was developed at our Labor-Management Partnership Council at OPM, and we opened on Monday of this week a new center for innovative learning and professional growth at the Office of Personnel Management.

We want to be a leader in training and developing our people. As you said so well, sir, they are our most important resource, they are our most important asset. We have got to develop them.

My goal is that I want every employee at the Office of Personnel Management to have a career development plan that they had developed in concert with their supervisor and trained professionals so that they can be all that they can be; and it is not just the building, it is not just the location, it is not just a curriculum.

I look at it as a launch pad for these people to be able to go as far as they want to go in their career. And you know what, if, at the end of the day, John Sepulveda or Anita hire them away from us, that is for the good of the government.

So, the fact that they got their degree at OPM will just help spread the wealth. And so, we are celebrating our employees by giving them that career opportunity tool in advancement.

And, I have my Chief Learning Officer here with me today, Joseph Kennedy. He is an outstanding career senior executive. But he has been leading this effort with our union partners, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 32 and 2450.

It was a phenomenal launch and one that I know is just going to get better and better, and we are hoping it can become a template, sir, that we can translate across the government.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your generosity and the time. I will look forward to answering any questions and look forward to discussing with my colleagues here at the table.

Senator AKAKA. Well, thank you very much. I see that as an interesting and new model, that we can use and begin to disseminate throughout the country.

Mr. BERRY. Yes, sir.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much for your statement.

Mr. John Sepulveda, please proceed with your statement.

TESTIMONY OF HON. JOHN U. SEPULVEDA,¹ ASSISTANT SECRETARY, HUMAN RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. SEPULVEDA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me begin by echoing some of the remarks made by Director Berry in thanking you for your years of leadership in building a

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Sepulveda appears in the appendix on page 42.

more effective and efficient Federal Government, for helping us to create the CHCO Council which, as Director Berry has indicated, is truly a great tool to address human capital challenges.

I have the benefit of perspective. I was a Deputy Director of OPM in the Clinton Administration before we had something called a CHCO Council; and I can tell you that this Council, under the strong leadership of Director Berry, is tackling some really tough issues, hiring reform, veterans employment, so many other things.

And, the fact that we have a counsel and there is great respect among the colleagues and the fact that we know that we should not try to solve these problems on our own, we should share resources, best practices, and we should support one another is making all the difference in the world. And, we are moving the needle and I am really very proud of the efforts of our Chairman, Director Berry, in keeping our eye on the ball.

And I also want to thank you, sir, for your years of leadership on behalf of veterans and that is obviously something that is particularly important to us at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Chairman thank you for the opportunity to testify today on our efforts to build and maintain an effective human resources workforce at the Department of Veterans Affairs. I serve as Secretary Eric K. Shinseki's Chief Human Capital Officer at an agency of over 317,000 employees at over 1,400 facilities that stand ready to serve the Nation's 22 million Veterans, their families and survivors through the delivery of authorized benefits and services.

To deliver high quality services to veterans, the VA needs a highly skilled and competent workforce. The foundation for this workforce is a cadre of over 4,000 human resources professionals at VA.

For all Federal HR professionals, there is an urgency to address the changing human capital needs of government. Human resource professionals must help agency leaders to hire more quickly; deliver superior employee and leadership training; promote productive labor-management relations; and assist the departments to improve services to the American people.

To deliver effective benefits and health care to a growing population of veterans with changing needs, President Obama charged Secretary Shinseki with the job of transforming VA into a 21st Century organization. VA developed 16 major department-wide transformational initiatives, including one called Human Capital Investment Plan.

The success of all of these initiatives requires a well-led, well-staffed and well-trained workforce which is where HR comes in.

As the Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration, I support VA's transformation by overseeing the strategic human capital investments. These investments have resulted in new training courses and online delivery systems as well as a new infrastructure to address the mission-critical skill gaps and other workforce challenges faced by the department.

This infrastructure consists of the following five strategic components. First, we executed a corporate approach to employ leadership training and development through the creation of VA's HR Academy, and VA's Learning University.

The HR Academy, which offers online courses as well as in-person courses, and might say it preceded the HR University, offers a wide range of courses specifically designed for VA's HR professionals while the learning university's is a corporate university providing thousands of skill-building modules and training opportunities across the department.

Second, we created something called MyCareer@VA which is an online career path tool for all employees including HR professionals. Using a competency assessment model, this tool identifies individual skill gaps, the necessary training to fill them, and also assists employees to map and manage their careers, all of which helps VA improve recruitment, retention, and performance.

This is a really critical capacity because to the extent that we have our individual employees able to know what is it that they are missing to be able to do their jobs better and to progress in their careers, to the extent that we have that capacity we can connect them to the appropriate training or rotational assignments.

So, we keep these great employees, we build their skills, and we also help them to get the department to perform at a higher level.

Third, we establish a centralized online training platform called the Talent Management System that delivers world-class educational programs to VA employees throughout the country.

Fourth, specialized training is provided to HR professionals and hiring managers to increase the hiring of veterans within VA through new and innovative recruitment, retention, and reintegration strategies developed under a new program that we developed called VA for Vets, which is also predicated on helping veterans, and especially those coming back from Afghanistan and Iraq, to translate their skills and their experience into the civilian world, into civilian-speak, so they can be competitive looking for jobs in the Federal Government and in the private sector.

Finally, we continually evaluate these programs for effectiveness in order to determine a return on investment. VA has also worked very closely in partnership with the Office of Personnel Management, the Chief Human Capital Officers Council and other Federal agencies to successfully address a variety of governmentwide HR challenges like hiring reform, veterans employment, among others.

Developing the capacity of HR professionals must be a priority for Federal agencies even in these challenging times. We will not achieve a leaner, smarter, and more efficient government without trained and engaged HR professionals at the table.

VA's strategic human capital investment plan is intended to help employees to better serve our veterans. We will continue to invest in the training, the systems, and the infrastructure that builds and strengthens the core of our department, our people.

Thank you again, sir, for the opportunity to share VA's experience for building and maintaining an effective human resources workforce. And, I look forward to your questions. Thank you very much, sir.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Sepulveda.

Ms. Blair, will you please proceed with your statement.

TESTIMONY OF ANITA BLAIR,¹ DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICER, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY

Ms. BLAIR. Mr. Chairman, I also would like to echo the thanks by giving you a big mahalo for all of your leadership over the years and everything you have accomplished.

My personal thanks as a government employee and on behalf of everybody that we all serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the role of the Department of the Treasury in building and maintaining an effective human resource workforce in the Federal Government.

My written testimony contains many additional background details. In the interest of time today, I will focus here on three topics. First, the Treasury Department's efforts to develop and train its HR professionals; second, our joint efforts with other governmental and nongovernmental agencies; and third, the most significant challenges facing our department in developing and training HR professionals.

Although this hearing concerns the human resource workforce, our strategy at Treasury has been to develop our human resources, equal employment opportunity, and training specialist together because each area impacts the other two. Thus, I often refer to our human capital workforce which for us includes all three.

On efforts to develop and train Treasury's human resource professionals, the Treasury Department's journey over the last few years to develop and train its professionals has consisted of a number of progressive steps.

Step one was recognizing the need to transform the human capital occupation. In its 2007 to 2012 human capital strategic plan, the Treasury Department recognized the need to transform HR practitioners into strategic partners with business owners, to identify and develop HR practitioner competencies, and to facilitate career development for HR practitioners.

One of our strategic plan goals specifically requires us to promote the transformation of Treasury's human resource, training, and equal employment staffs, our human capital community, into a cadre of human professionals who serve as valued business advisors on people and organizations, and promote and organizational culture of fairness and respect.

Step two was listening to the voice of the customer. Our first step, after recognizing the need, was to survey our customers, the mission, operational, and business leadership across Treasury.

Detailed interviews of Treasury leaders disclosed an urgent need to build proficiency, not only in our technical HR competencies but in general competencies such as business acumen and strategic planning.

Step three, developing a role-based competency model and career map framework. We built a role-based competency model that builds on the technical specialist role and incorporates the newer expectation of a strategic business partner.

We defined and developed three roles. First, the technical specialist role. Technical specialists apply intensive knowledge of spe-

¹The prepared statement of Ms. Blair appears in the appendix on page 47.

cific technical areas to address and resolve immediate needs of business.

The advisor role. As tactical consultants, advisors develop innovative human capital solutions to address customer issues and achieve specific business goals with an eye on those of tomorrow.

The strategic partner role is the culmination. Strategic business partners identify broad human capital issues ahead of business leaders. They are high-level consultants who develop strategies to address long-term business needs.

We validated our model by surveying all of our human capital practitioners and supervisors. The survey confirmed that general as well as technical competencies are critical and most are needed at the entry level. Key general competencies to be developed included strategic thinking, change management, and business acumen.

Step four, assessing the competencies of the HR workforce. After researching assessment tools, we planned and launched the Treasury competency assessment process for human capital.

About 95 percent of our total human capital workforce completed the assessment. Each employee's self-assessment was compared and weighted with the supervisor's assessment of that employee. The assessment process revealed significant gaps in technical and general competencies agencywide.

Step five, closing those gaps. To begin to close these gaps at the individual and office level, all Treasury human capital employees, with input and approval from their supervisors, were required to develop an online, competency-based individual development plan. These plans are regularly reviewed and updated.

Because competency gaps were found departmentwide, we decided to attack them on a departmentwide basis. A planning team comprising 55 representatives from across the Treasury Department identified the high priority gaps and recommended methods to close them.

We formed four teams, three to deal with technical competencies for HR, the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), and training and another to address the general competency gaps.

As an example, the HR Technical Competency Team identified 5 of the 10 high priority technical competencies: staffing, classification, employee relations, labor relations, and performance management. Over the ensuing 6 months, they worked to develop learning objectives for each specialty area. For each specialty, they built a career roadmap describing the requirements to become a technical expert and recommending ways to gain that knowledge at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of proficiency.

The EEO Technical Competency Team and the Training Technical Team followed a similar process to develop knowledge frameworks and career maps for their technical areas.

The General Competency Team added Customer Service and Metrics Use and Development to the previously identified key competencies of business acumen, strategic thinking and change management.

The competency teams working together then developed a number of solutions to close these gaps. The initial set of Human Cap-

ital transformation projects includes initiatives in the areas of training, experience, and resources.

Under training, we have Quarterly Focus Days. Employee Development Focus Days were inspired by "Stand Down Days," which are often used in the military and other Federal agencies to raise awareness on key topics of interest.

Focus Days will provide employees approved time for continued learning and development, will develop key competencies within the workforce, and will unify the human capital community by focusing on common goals.

Another training initiative, orientation for our new human capital professionals. New members of our human capital community, no matter when they come on board, will have an immediate introduction to the community through a multimedia program.

Community leaders will provide information about Treasury's expectations for its human capital professionals and available career paths.

In the area of experience, two initiatives include flash mentoring. Flash mentoring enables small groups to engage with multiple mentors in a single setting. A small group discussion format allows participants to hear from their peers as well as their mentor.

Flash mentoring is low-cost and relatively easy to administer, making it an ideal program to reach community members outside the Washington, D.C., area.

Another initiative under experience is Temporary Job Swaps. Two or more employees in different organizations within or outside of their current bureau may "swap" jobs on a short term basis to acquire new skills and knowledge. These mini-rotations on an intra-agency basis will promote cross-fertilization of best practices through the sharing of knowledge between organizations, as well as cross-training and development for individuals. "Job Swaps" are also a low cost initiative with potential for improving employee engagement.

In the area of resources, we offer new career guides. Career guides are catalogs of development opportunities for individuals in human capital specialties. For each technical skill area, as well as each general competency, volunteer teams of experts are compiling a career guide that breaks down the relevant competencies and describes various methods of acquiring the skill or knowledge. These guides will be posted on the Treasury Web site and periodically updated.

Finally, in the area of resources, we are engaging in a program for Human Capital Strategic Partner Certification. We are designing a model for certification that will encourage employees not only to maintain their basic competencies but also to develop additional competencies and acquire the relevant experience necessary to advance in their careers.

Step 6 has become designing and building a Treasury Human Capital Community. As noted earlier, in 2007, our Human Capital Strategic Plan established the goal to "Develop Human Capital Practitioners as Strategic Business Partners."

Five years on, now in 2012, we observed that rapid changes in business and technology demand new roles and career paths for human capital professionals.

For example, we see the need for not only strategic HR business partners, but also HR information technology specialists, performance management specialists, multisector workforce planners, and experts in workforce analytics.

Accordingly, instead of focusing primarily on creating a specialty for human capital strategic business partners, we now envision creating a community framework whose senior leaders will continuously scan the horizon and prepare the human capital workforce to respond rapidly to changing business needs.

We are modeling the structure and roles of our new human capital professional community on examples such as the Federal acquisition community and well-established professional communities such as law, medicine, engineering, and teaching.

Taking a lesson from the acquisition community, I established the Treasury Human Capital Community Executive Steering Committee (ESC). The ESC members are accomplished Treasury executives who understand how to forge an adaptable and agile workforce by leveraging basic capabilities to meet emerging requirements.

The ESC provides high level oversight and direction to Human Capital community development projects including those I just described. All projects will be monitored, measured, and evaluated.

The ESC will have final approval of all deliverables. In this way, the ESC will help set high, uniform, and consistent standards of quality to which our human capital professionals must aspire.

Step 7, looking to the future. Our future plans include reassessing the levels of critical competencies in the human capital workforce next year and renewing individual development plans to reflect achievement of previous personal development objectives and establishment of new objectives.

Treasury's Human Capital Strategic Plan will be updated for the period 2013–2018. We expect to expand our vision to include building other professional communities, especially mission-critical occupations and management-related occupations such as finance and information technology (IT) that typically serve agencywide customers.

We look forward to collaborating in this endeavor with other Federal agencies under the OPM and CHCO Council Federal-wide, high risk initiative. Communications will continue to play a key role in all our efforts to maintain momentum and communicate expectations. We hope to expand our Web site, including access to social media.

We are already starting to build capability in workforce analytics, and we plan to use more sophisticated forms of analysis to aid in developing both the human capital community and other occupational communities.

Our joint efforts with other governmental and non-governmental agencies: We have been, and will continue, working closely with the CHCO Council and OPM to support HR University.

The role-based portion of our model was incorporated into HRU's career map. We will also continue to push for a governmentwide competency model, which would include the necessary business competencies we believe are the key to effecting change.

We are taking the lead for HRU on its interagency certification team to find a governmentwide solution to professionalizing its human capital occupation.

Treasury's draft certification process is currently being examined for its potential to be adapted as a governmentwide solution. Treasury is a strong supporter and participant in the Partnership for Public Service's Emerging Leaders Program.

We have had two dozen graduates from all across all our bureaus. This is exactly the type of program critical to developing the strategic partners we need.

Significant challenges we faced. One thing that has not been a challenge is persuading our HR practitioners that they should embrace the responsibilities of acting as human capital professionals.

Our HR, EEO, and Training specialists are eager to learn, grow, and create a community to improve the quality of their work and service. Notwithstanding their enthusiasm, some cultural and environmental impediments persist.

For example, as a result of past reductions and demographic effects, there is a generational gap that could create the risk of a knowledge gap unless we can transfer knowledge and skills from the more experienced workers to the more junior workers.

Delivering programs to increase training, education, and experience can be a challenge. The typical challenges associated with any large change effort apply in this case.

Most of our efforts so far have been high return with low financial investment, and that is our preferred way of doing business. We are reaching the point, however, where some reliable level of investment, particularly in IT and training, as well as flexibility to provide people for rotational assignments, will be necessary to be able to maintain progress and anchor positive changes in the culture of the organization.

Mr. Chairman, as you noted in your opening remarks, people are the most important and most valuable asset of any organization and for people to perform well they must be led and managed well.

We expect managers in any area to be good with people, but the experts in the science and art of leading and managing people should be the human capital professionals. We at the Treasury Department, are doing our best to transform "HR" into a community of professionals who are experts in their field, committed to continuous learning and improvement, ethically bound, selflessly dedicated to the interests of those whom they serve, and loyal to the law and rules they administer.

Sir, we very much appreciate the opportunity to tell our story today and look forward to your questions.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Ms. Blair.

I have a question for both you, Mr. Sepulveda, and also Ms. Blair. You both testified about the skill gaps, the skill gaps you found among your agency's HR specialists and my question to you is: What do you consider to be the root causes for these gaps at your agency and at the Federal agencies more generally as well? Mr. Sepulveda.

Mr. SEPULVEDA. Mr. Chairman, I think that, first and foremost, what we did at VA is we conducted some fairly rigorous assess-

ments to identify specific competencies that HR professionals will need to be able to accomplish their jobs.

So, we identified 20 specific competencies, and then we looked at our 4,000 plus HR professionals to see how they matched up, and we found that because of the years of absence of training and developmental assignments in those specific areas we had quite a number of our HR professionals who were missing some of those core competencies.

So, one of the things that we did fairly early on is to create this HR Academy which combines online training, because there is no way we are going to be able to train everyone scattered across the VA footprint around the country face to face.

So, we developed some fairly rigorous courses. We partnered with OPM to make sure that whatever content we were developing also met their standard requirements, and then we proceeded to also identify, working very closely with these professionals, to identify what are the trends in HR that we need to be developing skills in so that we are better positioned to assume that strategic consulting role.

So, it was an assessment. It was surveying our colleagues, working with OPM, also looking around to what other departments were doing. And, the fact of the matter is that we made some significant progress in filling those gaps. We have a lot more to do. But I am really proud of the progress we have made.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Ms. Blair.

Ms. BLAIR. Mr. Chairman, I would agree with John Sepulveda's assessment of the causes of the gaps and I would add one more which is that in our human resources community very often we find that there is a demographic discontinuity, that not all of the junior workers have had the opportunity to have more senior mentors who have been able to show them the ropes; and that is one of the reasons that has compelled us to focus on creating a human capital community.

In this way even if you are a more junior person or even if in your time working in human resources you did not get the benefit of people advising you, by expanding our scope to comprise all of our 1,700 HR, human capital professionals at Treasury everybody will have the opportunity to get a mentor and to get people who will take an interest in their development.

Mr. SEPULVEDA. Mr. Chairman, I want to add to my remarks by adding another area of consideration, and that is the fact that we are asking HR professionals to do much more than ever before.

We are asking them to lead change. We are asking them to also do the basic HR functions. We are asking them to be strategic consultants. We are asking them to help get managers prepared to engage in productive labor-management relations. We are asking them to do veterans employment efforts. We are asking them to increase efforts in the diversity and inclusion area.

So, I mean, the list goes on and on and on; and it seems like while you are beginning to address the skill gaps that represent the core competencies, you are also adding some additional responsibilities as we try to make the HR workforce be able to support the transformation that government needs to go through in the times.

So, that is another consideration, sir.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Mr. Berry.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to add, to return if I could for a moment to the GAO high-risk area and how we are approaching that; and if I could, I would also like to recognize and thank the Executive Director of our CHCO Council.

I mention my colleagues but we would be adrift without the stable and steady leadership and the incredible professionalism of Kathryn Medina on my team who is behind me here. She does a phenomenal job. She is our Executive Director of the Council.

And Kathryn, working with the Defense Department (DOD) in our CHCO working group and the GAO, they did a rigorous analysis of data across the government and identified five high-priority governmentwide occupations that are critical skill gap areas that we must close immediately.

And they are IT, HR, acquisition, financial auditors and economists. In addition, we created one broad area, the STEM area, science, technology, engineering, and math as a functional area that we need to specifically pursue.

And we are now working through the CHCO Council to develop the most effective strategies to close the gaps in these occupations with the goal of closing 50 percent of the skill gaps by the end of 2013. And, we will regularly refresh to make sure that is a constantly refreshed list as well as constantly met challenge list to go forward.

So, that is how we will get occupations removed from the high-risk list by showing that we are identifying them in a rigorous manner and then pursuing an effective filling of those skill gap areas by developing the training programs that are necessary.

Senator AKAKA. Yes. Mr. Berry, I was interested in your opening statement about what OPM has been doing in their programs, and I was pleased to hear that you are developing partnership agreements with some local colleges and universities.

I would like to hear more about these agreements and what specifically OPM hopes to accomplish by partnering with these institutions of higher learning. And again, going back to your statement, besides partnering, I know you look forward to sharing resources as well and other things but partnering is one of them.

So, will you please tell us more about your agreements.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

It has been my opinion that much of the training that we pursue in the government, we often do not have the energy and the focus on it because we have not made that training accredited.

Oftentimes people will take a training course and they will either get a certificate or they will get a nice thank you at the end, and hopefully they will develop skills that will help them to do their job better.

In my experience, I have always found that the quality of the attention of the person is directly related to their self-interest. And to the extent that we can build accreditation into our programming and into our training, we are going to get people paying a lot more attention and taking the program a lot more seriously and showing up and doing it and taking whether there is a web-based component, whether there is a classroom component, they will put the en-

ergy, the time, and the effort into it because they know at the end of the day not only do they get better skills, they also get accredited college course credit that goes toward a degree which can help them advance both in their job as well as in their career, quite frankly, and have something that is transferable and portable with them.

In other words, that degree goes with them wherever they go whereas the certificate they received at a training course might not.

So, I have been pushing since I got here, working with our training professionals whether it be at the Federal Executive Institute, all the training we are doing through the CHCO Council and others, let us make sure wherever possible we increase the accreditation linkage.

Well, the government cannot accredit courses. That has to come through university partnership, and so, in the D.C. area we are working with Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC), Prince George's Community College (PGCC), University of the District of Columbia (UDC) and the University of Maryland (UMD) and George Mason University (GMU).

That is just our starting group. We are looking also beyond that. The first courses that have been accredited on HR University have been at Catholic University.

So, what we are looking at is taking our courses, partnering with universities to look at them and say either here is what you need to add to get accreditation or why do you not marry this program with this program that we have already developed and together that will help deepen and broaden the human resource professional training that needs to be done for your workforce.

So, we are working very hard on this area, and I think next year is going to start to be the year that we will start to see significant fruit. And I hope we will prove that this can be done. There are hundreds of colleges in metropolitan areas where Federal employees are. We can take advantage of that same model.

In our area especially, I know some of our lower grade employees are having a hard time, as you well know, sir, with the cost of living and that the Federal wage rates are tough to keep up with the cost of living, especially for our lower wage earners.

And so, I thought it was critical we work with community colleges as well, to increase both affordability and access. They are closer to where a number of our employees live. They offer courses much more readily in the evening hours and on weekends, and so, our employees can marry their work life with their educational advancement and still do it in an affordable manner such that we can help them advance in their career.

So, I am very excited by the program. I think it is one that, if we do it right, we will be able to develop this in such a way that it could go all across the country, and I will look forward to teaching courses with you in Honolulu someday. [Laughter.]

Senator AKAKA. Yes. Well, thank you so much for that. I should tell you that I had a rare experience of speaking with 10 university presidents across the country, and I took the advantage of talking to them about the need for the universities and colleges to pay a

little more attention towards the Federal Government in preparing its workers or people to work in the Federal Government.

And, I am hoping we can again expand that and begin to have definite programs. But I think the universities, as you are doing now, can really make a difference; but as you said for a person to receive a credit, something they can add to their resume, you are really correct in that. Thank you for that response.

Mr. Sepulveda, as a veteran and senior member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I was interested about the VA for Vets Program which trains HR professionals in hiring managers to increase veterans' employment within the VA.

I would like to hear more about this program. I am curious to hear what kind of feedback you received from veterans on that.

Mr. SEPULVEDA. Thank you very much for that question, Mr. Chairman.

Actually, we are really very proud of VA for Vets. It is really an integrated platform. It includes an online program that allows for the translation of military experience and skills into civilian-speak, to English.

It also has built into it an assessment tool so that an individual veteran can begin to identify what kinds of occupations they might be interested in based on their interest and skills and their aptitudes.

So, the data from that assessment, the data that comes from the military skills translation, results in a resume that is acceptable to every single Federal agency. We work with OPM to make sure that the resume that gets produced can be used to apply via USA Jobs.

We also then connect that to coaches so that we have our veterans go through that process online; but at a certain point, they want to talk to an individual, a human being who can answer questions about how to go about applying for a job in the Federal Government. So, we have coaches working with these individuals to get them ready.

And then, we have an office that we set up under the direction of the Secretary, the Veterans Employment Services Office, where I have a team of people who are largely veterans themselves, and their jobs are to be advocates for veterans to be hired within VA, utilizing the veterans preferences that allow for direct hiring.

And so, we combine all of those elements together and as a result we have used that program successfully within VA. It has only really been in operation for less than 6 months. We have already helped in the hiring either directly at VA or other Federal agencies or the private sector of over 1,000 veterans.

We did a major hiring event with the cooperation of the Director of OPM and several other Federal agencies and we hired upwards of 600 veterans at that event alone.

And, veterans have sent their comments to us telling us that they really wish they had this tool, some time ago.

The good thing is, again using the CHCO Council, this is where the CHCO Council really truly is a working body and working with Mr. Joseph Kennedy, who represents the Director on veterans employment issues, we are looking to migrate this technology to other Federal agencies.

The taxpayers should not have to pay more than once for this technology. So, while it is of great benefit to VA, it can be equally a good benefit to other Federal agencies that are committed to hiring more veterans. So, we are very proud of that initiative and you are going to be hearing more about that in the months to come, sir.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much for your response.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Chairman, if I could just add.

Senator AKAKA. Sure.

Mr. BERRY. A good example of this where the VA has been phenomenal at developing a cutting edge technology and then sharing it with other agencies, they have done that with Blue Button.

They invented it, and we have now adopted it for the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB). We could not have done that without the VA leadership; and once again John, the Secretary, and Scott Gould, the Deputy, they have stepped up and on the VA for Vets program, I think have developed an amazingly powerful IT tool that shame on us if we cannot spread it across the government and so we are working hard at doing that and I cannot thank them enough because it is how the government should work.

I wish the taxpayers could see, rather than the infighting that we often see in Washington, this is an example of people working together, getting the most use out of every tax dollar, and producing a solid result. It is a phenomenal example of leadership.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you for that additional comment on that. I really appreciate what you have been doing.

Ms. Blair, I was interested to learn that your agency developed a process to assess the competencies and skill gaps for each individual in your HR workforce. You then implemented a plan to close each of the individual's skill gaps.

I would like to know how individual employees have responded to this process and whether you believe working with employees on an individual basis has been worth the time and effort that you have given already.

Ms. BLAIR. Well, thank you for your question, sir. Before I answer, may I just add to both Secretary Sepulveda and Director Berry's comments that the other agencies of the government I think are genuinely grateful for the generosity and resources and all-around help from the Veterans' Affairs Department. They have been so generous and I would like to recognize that and acknowledge that we do cooperate a lot.

With regard to your question, it is never a waste of time to spend time or effort trying to help someone be their best. So, even if our employees in the HR area were not very enthusiastic, it would still be worthwhile to do.

But, as I mentioned, they have embraced this program very warmly. We have had within a very short time after we started the individual development plan process, we had at least 65 percent of our HR specialists on an individual development plan which they had designed in conjunction with their supervisor to attack their specific needs; and in a very short time after that, we got 95 percent.

So, it has been broadly embraced and I can only point to the amazing number of essential volunteer hours that people have devoted to our assessment, competency building and community

building activities as evidence that this whole idea has been a very popular one with our workforce and I believe that it is already showing results.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

I just want to step back, Mr. Sepulveda. Under your leadership, VA has developed HR Academy prior to the development of HR University and has been a leader in developing and training HR professionals.

How do you evaluate your training programs to ensure that they are effective and what results have you seen from that investment in terms of performance or morale and even budget savings?

Mr. SEPULVEDA. Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman.

First and foremost, I want to make clear for the record that while the HR Academy was developed at VA to serve the specific needs of the HR professionals, we have been working very closely with OPM and the CHCO Council in contributing some of our courses to the HR University.

We think the HR University is a fantastic resource for our HR professionals as well as HR professionals across government, and we are really excited about HR University. We are going to leverage it and we are going to continue to contribute whatever way we can to that endeavor because that truly is a manifestation of all of these departments working so closely together.

With regard to evaluating our training and development, we really have gone at it several ways. First and foremost, particularly with the courses that are in person, classroom-based courses, we do pre-tests.

So we actually test the individuals before they take the course to see what their level of proficiency is. Then, we test them at the end to see how they improved; and on average, we found across all the different training we do which is including project and program management, IT, HR, finance, and budget analysts' training and other training we found an improvement of over 17 percent.

Then, what we do is we follow it up and we survey the supervisors to see whether they have seen any improvement on the basis of this course on the part of their employees, and we had a statistically significant sample of supervisors. Sixty-seven percent of them said that they did see, they did agree or strongly agreed that there was an overall job performance improvement on the basis of the training.

Then, what we also did is we proceeded to look at what is the outcome, what are the organizational performance outcomes as a result of this training.

So, we looked at specifically the training we did with our 5,400 finance and budget analysts that we trained; and we determined—and this was the opinion of the chief financial officer (CFO)—that because of that training they were able to limit three material weaknesses in the financial area at the VA and also reduce significant deficiencies from 16 to 2.

So organizationally in the finance area the training that we are doing is having an impact in improving management of financial systems.

We did the same thing with IT. We took a look at what was the result of the project and program management training we deliv-

ered to the IT professionals there. We found that they improved their ability to deliver on their IT milestones up to close to 90 percent.

Then, we looked at, well, can we also identify are we saving any money, are we avoiding any costs. And so, we brought in Deloitte to do an independent analysis and they looked at a number of areas where our training was impactful and they look specifically at one with regard to employee turnover, regrettable turnover, in other words, looking at those offices that had a high percentage of employees who has taken our courses, our training, versus those offices or facilities or medical centers where you had a lower percentage of employees taking our courses.

And, they determined that in those offices where there was a higher percentage of our employees taking our courses, turnover was much lower. Morale is much higher. And, when you calculated the costs associated with regrettable turnover, in the first year of the program which was 2010—that was a short year because obviously we just started the program—we had a cost avoidance of \$80 million. In the second year, 2011, over \$200 million.

So, that is significant and that is just simply in that one area, the area of employee turnover. So, we continue to evaluate, but at the end, we know that we need to identify in monetary terms a return on investment and we are continually looking for how this investment makes a difference and the factors that we are determining that it does.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Berry.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Chairman, if I could add, looking at how we assess the success of some of these programs, one of the things that OPM tries to do to help all of the agencies is that we have developed in partnership with Booz Allen Hamilton something called a Federal Competency Assessment Tool and we are looking to do this on a biannual basis.

But what it does is it looks at 33 competencies that the CHCO Council has identified in the HR profession and we assess and survey both employees as to how they feel the training went in terms of a self-assessment but then also go back to their supervisor and get that assessment as well. And then, in comparing the two assessments, we identify gaps.

So, if the employee, for example, thinks, wow, they are just, the best thing since sliced bread and they are doing a great job but their supervisor does not agree, that is a gap.

And so, trying to see what is going on there, what we are looking at, as to how to improve that training so that we end up with them both being closer together, that is when we find we are closer to reality.

A good example of some of the gaps we have found in general incompetencies, two of the areas that were the largest were project management and organizational awareness. And so, those were areas, for example, that we learned that we could do a better job by targeting in.

So, we are trying to refine these assessments and surveys and then we can share with each of the agencies both agency-specific data as well as governmentwide data and so they can see how they stand and stack up with their colleagues as well.

So, I think as this goes on, we are going to be using this tool with the HR University courses, and I think it will help us to, again assess, refine, improve, sort of create a cycle where we get better and better.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you so much for that.

Mr. Sepulveda, you testified that there is a commitment from the top of the agency to transform the VA for the 21st Century and that part of the effort includes transforming human capital management.

With so many important management initiatives being driven by top Federal leaders, how do you ensure that your HR workforce across the country is fully equipped to support these initiatives?

Mr. SEPULVEDA. Mr. Chairman, there are a number of things that we are doing to ensure that our HR colleagues across the VA are fully participating in the transformation of the department so, first and foremost, obviously the training they need so that they can fill gaps but also in the process we are also communicating what are the priorities of the Administration, of the Secretary, of the Deputy Secretary.

In addition, we are also involving these HR professionals in carrying out priorities that have been set by OPM, hiring reform being an example of that. We have extensively trained our HR professionals to make sure that they understand how best to carry out HR reform.

Veterans employment, I mentioned earlier, is another area where in many cases we have HR professionals who are not familiar with veterans preference and how those can be used to directly hire qualified veterans.

We are also developing right now a strategic plan to formalize those relationships across the VA, creating a clearinghouse within VA just for the HR professionals so that the information we get from OPM and other sources we can ensure gets down to those HR professionals out there in the field much faster and easier to understand.

The other thing we are going to be developing in the next few months is an HR policy and priorities council where I am going to be bringing in my colleagues from around VA so we can talk together and plan together.

We already have an integrated HR board but we are looking to expand that. So, we are looking at a variety of ways to make sure that the rest of the HR team is fully engaged.

But I would like to end by saying I am really very honored and fortunate to be working for Secretary Shinseki, who, as you know, sir, is a true leader in moving forward in an institution like VA and the Deputy Secretary Scott Gould is truly an expert in investing in human capital. I mean he literally wrote a book on the subject.

These are two gentlemen who have been absolutely supportive, very clear about the need to invest in our employees. There is no way you can transform the department to better serve our veterans if you do not invest in your employees.

So, I am very proud to be working under the direction of these gentlemen and I have gotten all the support that I could possibly need and want as a result of their leadership.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much for that and mentioning General Shinseki, the Secretary who has done so much for our country as a Chief of the Army as well and so his experience with that and helping them transition into the civilian life is really helping what we are trying to do.

It is great to have leaders like you in bringing that about, especially when you talk about 317,000 Federal workers, that is a lot to deal with. But we just have to do it and I am so glad you are doing what you are doing. So thank you.

Ms. Blair, I understand—and again I appreciate your leadership as well in these areas—that you have developed a certification program for HR professionals at Treasury which you will be rolling out soon.

Please tell us more about how that certification would work and how it differs from existing private-sector certification programs, and if it could be used as another kind of model for a government-wide program as well?

Ms. BLAIR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the chance to brag about our certification program.

We did look at some of the private sector models and we felt for a variety of reasons that it would be more productive to take account of the unique aspects of the Federal Government environment and our rules and regulations and focus on what we might be able to do within the Federal Government to allow people to make the best advantage of the conditions under which they operate, typically very large organizations with very specialized rules and people with oftentimes longevity in their career because it makes sense if you are enjoying your service to keep on serving.

So, we did examine some outside examples and we also consulted among our own senior people. We consulted with people whom we knew from the outside. We contacted friends across the government, other CHCO agencies, to be able to design something that we thought would serve as an incentive for our most talented people to want to not only hone the competencies that they now have but also stretch themselves in order to become certified and have the ability to advance in their career.

Our certification process combines not only specific training and experience but it also allows people to demonstrate that they have gained the requisite training and experience through different means.

Training might be in a formal educational situation. It might be what we might call on-the-job training. Experience could be through having had a job or it might be through having participated in a working group.

We intend to ask each of our candidates for certification to basically come up and be interviewed by a panel of senior practitioners in that area as something that we envisioned as kind of a doctoral dissertation defense type of process.

We will also be looking for our certificate people to have demonstrated that they understand the importance of being a part of the community, and so, we will be looking for people who have not only focused upon their own personal advancement and growth but also contributed to the advancement and growth of all human capital professionals within Treasury.

This is a beginning program. We are combining it obviously with our model of career advancement and our career guides which basically serve as a roadmap for our human capital professionals to be able to advance in their careers.

But we are excited about it because it is a fresh look at a problem that has been circling around this area for a long time: How do we design something that will fairly reflect people's experience and knowledge? And we think we have built something that is broad enough but yet has enough high quality built into it that people who obtain certification will have the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much for your response.

Director Berry, I believe that the effective mentoring programs, and here again you have so many good ideas and programs that have been coming forth and mentoring is one of them. I believe the effective mentoring programs are an important goal for building the next generation of Federal workers, especially since so many Federal workers will soon be eligible to retire. You testified that OPM has helped agencies as well develop HR mentorship clusters.

Do you have examples of how these mentoring clusters are working for smaller agencies?

Mr. BERRY. Well, Mr. Chairman, I will tell you as somebody who would not have a career today without mentors in my life, I remember being a young 25-year-old wet behind the ears legislative assistant to Mr. Hoyer who sat right behind you and you and he were willing to mentor and teach the ropes to myself back in the late 1980s over in the House of Representatives.

And I look at it as a special responsibility when you have been given a gift to have had such wonderful mentors in your life that you need to turn around and do the exact same.

You were very kind, sir, when I took this job to allow one of your staff, Thomas Richards, to come and join my team at OPM and I took very seriously my responsibility to be a mentor to him. And, let me tell you, he is going to be a future leader of our government. He is a phenomenal individual and I am very grateful for your donation to the Executive Branch. [Laughter.]

But there have been, you have heard, I think, a number of examples today of how larger agencies with a little deeper pockets than some of the smaller ones have stepped up to the plate. The VA for Vets and this IT platform being a prime example that we are now, being able to share with smaller agencies.

But we could not have rolled out the veterans program, for example, the veterans hiring initiative, we could not have rolled out the hiring, the time to hire model as fast as we did and to achieve the results that we did to move to a resume-based model without larger agencies adopting smaller agencies and helping them. Here is a tool you can use or this is one we have developed or an assessment tool based on resumes that allowed smaller agencies to pick up that technology and hit the ground running. They would not have been able to do that by themselves.

And so, we saw firsthand right at the beginning the difference that could make. And so, we have decided, we have so many small agencies—there are over 64 of them—whereas there are only 24 of the larger type agencies, that we can pair those up and create

those mentorship communities, if you will, in an organizational sense so that everybody has a big brother or a big sister and will have someone looking out for them, helping to show them the ropes, helping them to not make the same mistakes.

I think it can be very powerful but I also do not want to forget—that is an organizational sense. But my dream would be where every Federal leader and every Federal supervisor would become a mentor for someone, whether it be a new entry in the government or whether it be their successor, and I think we have a special responsibility.

I know one of the efforts you are helping to launch is a phased retirement that will allow us to encourage our experienced employees to move more slowly into retirement and in exchange for that benefit to make sure that they also have that knowledge transfer to the next generation by agreeing to either develop their successor or to mentor a newbie. It is invaluable.

One of the reasons we lose students and interns when we bring them on is we have not paired them with a mentor, and so they run into a culture that they are unfamiliar with.

All of us can remember sitting at a table in the lunchroom, in our younger years where we had that alone period. You were the new kid or at a new school, and, that translates at any age group.

We need to make sure, as people are joining, whatever age they are joining a new organization, especially some as large as you mentioned, the VA can be very intimidating, can be very impersonal.

And, if they have a mentor, somebody they can go to and say how have you handled this or how have you handled this situation, it could be the difference between us losing that person or keeping them into a career and growing them into a career.

So, I am working with the Senior Executive Association (SEA) and others to really try to help, on a voluntary basis to have all of our senior executives and to have all of our managers step up and be mentors because it can be one of our most effective approaches in terms of knowledge transfer, sir, and let me end by just thanking you again by being one for me. I appreciate it very much.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much. I am so glad that we are able to do that.

I can go on but I am going to ask the last question to this panel. Let me start with Mr. Sepulveda and Ms. Blair. Your agency's human capital officers are leaders in your efforts to analyze and improve your HR workforces.

How has OPM supported these efforts and do you have recommendations for how OPM could provide more effective support? And I would like to have Mr. Berry make any further comments after that. [Laughter.]

Senator AKAKA. Ms. Blair.

Ms. BLAIR. Well, I am happy to go first because I have been so impressed by the support and organization framework that OPM has provided through the CHCO Council and through other activities.

Our staff works closely with their staff. It is not only at the CHCO level. And, I would call out not only Mr. Berry but Kathryn Medina, our Executive Director of the CHCO Council, as well for

being such leaders in enabling us to get together and do the things that we need to do.

Honestly, I cannot think of anything else that I would be asking and I am sorry I cannot because I could probably get it right now. [Laughter.]

But truly they have done a wonderful job and I think, I could not ask for more in terms of their support for any kind of innovation or initiatives that we want to take up. They make it possible for us to reach out across government and they are incredibly generous with time and resources for us.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you so much for that. Mr. Sepulveda.

Mr. SEPULVEDA. Mr. Chairman, I am in the same spot as Anita, Ms. Blair, because I have to tell you I have had a great working relationship with OPM.

I have a soft spot in my heart because I worked there many years ago. A number of the people who I worked with at that time are still there, and so there are personal relationships, and John and I worked together in the Clinton Administration. His Chief of Staff, Liz Montoya, is an old friend.

So, there are relationships. Kathryn Medina. I think relationships help a lot especially when you have to work through some bumpy issues. You do it out of respect. You work through them out of respect.

But you have some extraordinary people at OPM, absolutely dedicated professionals. Angie Bailey. I mean, I could go on and on. But the fact of the matter is you have got Joe Kennedy, you have great people who lean forward and I always respect people who lean forward, who do not wait for the call that you may make to them. They will call you.

So, when we were working through hiring reform, that is a major area, challenging our agencies, the ability to hire people quickly, high-quality people quickly because even in this job market high quality people are not going to remain out there for 6 months, 8 months, a year.

And, our government needs to have the best and the brightest as quickly as possible. So, hiring reform is something that Director Berry took on as a challenge. People have talked about hiring reform for many years but he took it on.

He brought the CHCO Council together and he leveraged his best people to work with each of the agencies, including VA, to problem solve, to figure out how to use best practices and how to customize to the individual agencies; and they were always constantly available to answer any policy questions.

And as a result, we were able to move the needle. And, the partnership that we have VA with OPM, I think, is a testament to the dedication of these individuals.

Senator AKAKA. Well, let me sincerely point out that I am so glad to hear those responses because I wanted Director Berry to hear it. [Laughter.]

And so now, Director Berry, any further comments that he may have on this.

Mr. BERRY. Well, first, thank you. That is extremely kind; and I will tell you, Mr. Chairman, it has been a real privilege to work

at the Office of Personnel Management. We have phenomenal employees.

I think in many ways they were held back and they were not allowed to reach their full potential, and I think our culture when I got there, I think if you had asked and maybe if I was not in the room, OPM was widely referred to as No PM. We have tried to change that to Go PM.

I have made clear to my folks that sometimes no is the right answer; but if you are going to tell someone no, if they object and they are trying to achieve is legal and appropriate, then we need to give them at least two alternatives for how they can achieve the same objective if they cannot go the way that they wanted to go.

And, that is now, I think, really sinking in, and I think it is our people, when you unleash them and allow them to develop those creative ways within law and regulation to get to a good objective, a good end, then everybody wins.

The agencies win. The taxpayer wins, and our employees are allowed to go home at the end of the day knowing that they have solved problems.

And so, it has been an honor to work with them, sir. It has been a great rolling ride and it sounds like I have got a good Director and Deputy here to turn it over to if I move on.

So, thank you, sir, for the opportunity to be with you and we will look forward to continuing to work with you on so many challenges in the months ahead.

Senator AKAKA. Well, again, let me say Mahalo nui loa. Thank you very much for your responses, for especially the work that you have been doing in this effort to really help our public servants to be the best and most qualified, and it seems as though we are coming from Hawaii, we are in the same canoe and on the same course.

So, thank you so much for your valuable testimony and your responses as well and for your efforts and support in recognizing the public servants working in your agencies and governmentwide as well.

And so, I want to wish you well in your work and there is so much more to do. We know that, but I think we are heading on the right course in the same canoe, using or getting each other to help in bringing that about so that we are doing it together rather than separately and even sharing resources as we do that.

So, again, Mahalo. Thank you very much.

Mr. BERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SEPULVEDA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. BLAIR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator AKAKA. I wish you well.

I would like to ask our second panel of witnesses to come forward. In our second panel with afternoon, we have Mr. John Palguta, Vice President for Policy at the Partnership for Public Service and also Ms. Sara Thompson, Dean, Metropolitan School of Professional Studies at the Catholic University of America.

As you know, it is the custom of this Subcommittee to swear in all of our witnesses. I would ask you to please stand and raise your right hand.

Do you swear that the testimony you are about to give the Subcommittee is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you, God?

Mr. PALGUTA. I do.

Ms. THOMPSON. I do.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

Let the record show that our witnesses answered in the affirmative.

So, Mr. Palguta, will you please proceed with your statement.

**TESTIMONY OF JOHN PALGUTA,¹ VICE PRESIDENT FOR
POLICY, PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE**

Mr. PALGUTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, as with the previous panel, I have to start with thanking you for your leadership and your support of the Federal workforce, including your sponsorship of the resolution this week in support of Public Service Recognition Week with which, as you know, the Partnership for Public Service is very involved. Thank you, sir.

I am the Vice President for Policy at the Partnership for Public Service. I have been at the Partnership for 10 years. Prior to that, however, I had a career of over 30 years in the Federal Government as a Federal HR professional, and so in part, I feel this is a hearing about my people.

I chose the HR profession knowing that good HR management and good HR professionals can make a tremendous difference in ensuring that we have an effective Federal government workforce and an effective government. In fact, I felt so strongly about it 35 years ago that I married a Federal HR professional, my wife, and she is still my wife although recently retired from government.

The topic, Mr. Chairman, of this hearing is particularly timely and critical. For over two decades now, we have a growing body of evidence that there are just simply too many HR staff members in government who are not yet at the level they need to be to fully help their agencies target, obtain, develop, and retain the talent they need to execute their missions.

Some of that evidence is in my written testimony. I am not going to belabor the point. You heard from the previous panelists about some of the skills gaps they are working to close.

I do want to hasten to add, however, that we also have some great HR professionals in government. You saw three of them at this table earlier, and they have staff under them who are doing a tremendous job.

This is not an indictment of the Federal HR workforce but rather an acknowledgment that while we have some highly competent and qualified people we need to elevate the rest of the workforce to that same level.

I have four points I want to make. That was one. The second point is that part of the issue here is not that we have not brought in great people to the HR workforce, but the HR environment in government itself has become more complex and more demanding.

When I was in government 20 years ago it was actually much easier being a good HR professional. We had centralized examining

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Palguta appears in the appendix on page 57.

and recruitment. We did not have to worry about HR technology because we did not have it. We did not have the Internet. We did not have personal computers. Yes, I go back that far.

But we now have increased the HR flexibilities in government which is a good thing. With flexibilities and additional alternatives, we need people who are skilled at helping their agency leaders decide among those flexibilities and alternatives.

We have changing workforce demographics. The increased pace of change in government and in the government workforce has made the job of a Federal HR worker more complex. Unfortunately, the HR workforce has not had the opportunity to keep up with the changing environment. We need to change that.

The third point I would like to make is that in large part the HR workforce has been very akin to the shoemaker's children. They were the people out there who were helping other segments of the Federal workforce maintain and improve their workers, particularly if you look at the acquisition and information technology communities.

For many years now they have really focused on improving and maintaining the skill level in those communities; and in some ways, the HR workforce languished a bit. You heard from the previous panel that the situation is changing, but that is where we are starting from.

The fourth point then is that there is some good news. The HR community is starting to catch up and I was pleased to hear some of the good work being done stated publically.

HR University, the changing and more proactive role of the Office of Personnel Management and the work of the Chief Human Capital Officer Council have been very valuable.

As you may know, the Partnership for Public Service itself has, as a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization devoted to improving the effectiveness of government, focused on the Federal HR workforce as part of our efforts to help reform government.

In particular, I have the privilege within the Partnership of helping to lead the Federal Human Capital Collaborative. It is a cross agency community of Federal HR leaders that join together with the participation of the Partnership in an effort to identify and collectively work on issues and problems.

I am pleased that, for example, the Department of Treasury and the Department of Veterans Affairs, who are represented here, are members of our Collaborative. Kathryn Medina, who John Berry accurately pointed out as one of the leaders on the Council as the Executive Director, attends our Collaborative meetings.

One particular aspect of the Collaborative, which Anita Blair from Treasury mentioned, is our Emerging HR Leaders program. When we asked the Chief Human Capital Officer community what we could do to help, they told us they needed help elevating their own workers.

Our Emerging HR Leaders program started a little over 2 years ago. It is a year-long, facilitated, peer exchange program. Agencies nominate their HR professionals, their rising stars if you will, and for one year they meet monthly. They share information and we bring in subject matter experts on topics of their choosing. They

have action learning projects that they work on as a cross-agency community of professionals.

One of those projects, for example, resulted in the development of what was called the Strategic HR Advisors Results Project (SHARP), where they themselves identified, as emerging leaders the competencies needed to be true strategic advisors as well as a developmental plan for how to acquire those skills. That project is now on HR University.

This is good news, and shows that there is progress being made. I think, we have in my written testimony a number of recommendations. I would just like to highlight four of them.

First, I think it is going to be quite important that the Federal Government continue to maintain its focus on improving the HR workforce. This is not a one-off problem that we can fix and simply move on.

When you are talking about developing a cadre of professionals you need to look at continual learning and progress. That investment, as you also heard from the previous panel, can have a significant return in terms of cost savings and in terms of more effective government, but we have to continue to make that investment in people.

The second recommendation to highlight is that improving the quality and competency of the workforce should be approached and, I think, is being approached as a shared responsibility.

It is not just the HR community. We need government leaders. We need Members of Congress such as yourself, Mr. Chairman, who understand the need to develop a great workforce, and in particular, to develop a great HR workforce. We also have to have accountability for results. We need to track what is happening to make sure we are making progress.

I would like to highlight two other recommendations. One is that Federal agencies need to be encouraged to reward or recognize their HR professionals. Many do but we need to make that the norm, particularly HR professionals who make the effort to take some control over their own career and to expand their knowledge and skills.

This should include incentives and support for those who demonstrate or seek mobility in their career. My wife for example, she worked for 10 different Federal agencies. She was my touchstone when I wanted to know what was really going on out there in the HR environment. She could tell me because she had that breadth of experience.

I think we need to encourage that sort of mobility and sharing. I know you, Mr. Chairman, have focused on the senior executive workforce. We have talked with you about the value of mobility in becoming a senior executive. Making mobility a prerequisite for senior leadership could be a valuable thing to do.

Finally, we have been talking about supporting the current HR workers, which is obviously highly important. However, the HR workforce is aging. It is actually older than the average age in government.

Last year alone one out of every 10 HR workers left the Federal Government, mostly through retirement, while others left the profession.

The last recommendation I would like to highlight is that we need to focus on the pipeline of talent. We need to make sure that we are bringing in talented and motivated workers who have a desire and an affinity, for working on the people issues of government.

I suggest that Congress consider establishing a Federalwide HR intern program built on the model of the Presidential Management Fellows Program. The program would be focused on identifying people who are highly skilled in terms of their raw talent and who have an interest in the HR profession, and put them in a program that is going to foster and develop that talent.

But I am going to end there, Mr. Chairman. Again thank you so much for not only everything you have done but for focusing on this community that I love. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much for your statement. I want you to know that your full statements will be included in the record.

Ms. Thompson, will you please begin with your testimony.

TESTIMONY OF SARA THOMPSON,¹ PH.D., DEAN, METROPOLITAN SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES, THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Ms. THOMPSON. Certainly. Good afternoon. I am Dr. Sara Thompson, Dean of the Metropolitan School of Professional Studies and Associate Provost for New Program Initiatives at the Catholic University of America.

I would like to thank you, Chairman Akaka, for the opportunity to discuss this important topic. The three areas that I will address are, one, the need for professional development in Federal HR; two, Catholic University's academic programs for Federal HR professionals which provide an example of meeting this need; and the success of these programs thus far.

First, regarding professional development, the mission of the Catholic University of America's Metropolitan School is to offer educational opportunities to adult learners in the greater Washington, DC., region and beyond, to be the bridge between employers and employees in helping to prepare the workforce.

We view our service to the Federal workforce as vital to our mission of outreach. In this role, the school continuously researches areas in which professional development needs to exist. We found that Federal HR, in particular, has significant needs for several reasons, many of which have been discussed today, including the transition in the field from transactional focus to that of strategic consultant. In addition, all HR professionals, current and future, will need to meet the standards of competencies developed by the Chief Human Capital Officers in the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

So, how can the Federal Government address these needs? Employee training and development through programs such as those offered by Catholic University of America offers one effective approach. We put forth a comprehensive Federal HR professional development ladder so that no matter where the Federal HR profes-

¹The prepared statement of Ms. Thompson appears in the appendix on page 64.

sionals are in their careers, our programs can help prepare them for the next level.

For entry-level grades, GS-5 through-9, we offer the HR-related certificate and the Bachelors Degree both of which to build competencies at the CHCO awareness to intermediate level. For mid-and upper-GS levels, we offer a Master of Arts in Human Resource Management with a specialized track in Federal HR which incorporates the CHCO competencies at the advanced expert level. We believe that this is the only HR Master's Degree in the country with a specialization in Federal HR and the only to integrate CHCO competencies. It is a 36-credit degree program offered in the evenings and online. Most students complete their degrees on a part-time basis in 1½ to 2 years.

The courses are taught by experienced individuals who either are or have been senior-level Federal HR professionals. As the only DC-based university with a partnership with the Society for Human Resource Management, we also prepare students in these programs for professional certifications, including the highly regarded credential of Professional in Human Resources (PHR), and Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR).

We have developed partnerships with several Federal agencies, including HR University, to offer our masters program in Federal HR, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to offer a Masters program on site at their central office, and NASA for the Certification Exam Preparation Course.

Finally, the success of these programs are of course the learning outcomes are measured by the university. But equally important is the application of the course material in the Federal workplaces and the hiring and promotion of our graduates. Employing agencies confirm that we have succeeded in a moving their graduates from a compliance driven framework to a more strategic thinking about how their projects and tasks relate to the organization's mission.

In addition, students have offered very positive feedback. One spoke of being promoted twice since beginning her studies.

Another said, quote, the courses I have taken have definitely helped to jumpstart my career in the Federal Government. Within the first semester, I landed a job with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), working as a management analyst in the office of the Executive Director. While working full time and going to school at night can be challenging, I was excited to learn that projects at work directly correlated to the assignments from my classes. I was tasked to write the Office of Executive Director (OED) submission for FERC's human capital plan. The fact that I was taking an HR class entitled strategic human capital management in the Federal sector at the time was extremely beneficial to me, unquote.

So, in summary, these programs serve to build a pipeline of highly qualified workers from within the agencies and to attract those from outside to a career of public service.

Thank you again for this opportunity.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much for your testimony.

Mr. Palguta, in a recent report the partnership found that Federal HR offices generally have done a good job developing succes-

sion plans for the agencywide workforces but they have failed to develop succession plans for their own HR offices.

What effect has this had on agency HR offices and what can be done to ensure that a new generation of HR professionals will be prepared to lead?

Mr. PALGUTA. That is an excellent question, Mr. Chairman. It goes back to my metaphor of the HR community being like the shoemaker's children, taking care of others while their own children are barefoot.

I think the impact of not having done, until now, better succession planning is that we have many excellent HR people who are leaving government. They have served their career and have done tremendous work, and now they are leaving. The pipeline of talent behind them that we would expect to move up to replace them is very thin. We still have great people throughout, but not enough.

So, I think what you heard from the previous panel and what we are discussing here is that the HR community is playing catch-up. They have to accelerate their efforts not only to prepare the existing workers to fill in behind the leaders who will be leaving government, but they also have to start filling that pipeline with new talent. Hence, my earlier comment about an HR intern program.

I had the opportunity to talk one on one with many of the Chief Human Capital Officers in government. They recognize this, and that is the good news. They know this is an issue and they are working hard to remedy it but it is going to take sustained effort over several years to refill that talent pipeline with the type of talent we need for the future.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

Ms. Thompson, I was really happy to learn that Catholic University provides graduate-level courses in Federal Government HR issues such as Federal pay and benefits, performance management, and labor relations.

Will you please explain how you developed your curriculum and in particular what input the Office of Personnel Management and the Chief Human Capital Officers Council provided you?

Ms. THOMPSON. Certainly, it was quite a process that started about 8 years ago, and we actually began working with OPM with Steve Benowitz just as he was about to retire, and he was of great assistance to us in helping to develop the program.

We worked with the Workforce Development Subcommittee of the CHCO Council and had several focus groups with Federal agencies across the board asking what they really needed, what did they want from their workforce.

We also had focus groups and lots of discussions with Federal HR specialists and those that wanted to become HR specialists. So, we really worked with the entire circle of people who were involved in this and the stakeholders.

They gave significant input about what they appreciated. It is two schools of thought as one person said, that you can have HR management skills in a general sense and apply them. The other school of thought is the public and private sectors are fundamentally different and they need different programs.

What we tried to do with this program is blend the best of both worlds so that we have a broad HR foundation but very focused on some of the courses in the track in Federal HR.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

Ms. Thompson, as witnesses on the first panel testified, the skills and abilities necessary to succeed as Federal human resource professionals are constantly changing and are becoming more demanding.

What does your institution do to stay current with HR practices both in the Federal Government and also in the private sector?

Ms. THOMPSON. Well, we are very involved with the agencies, with the students, with the leadership first of all. Always kind of keeping our ear to the ground about what is current and what the changing needs are. We are also involved with the Society for Human Resource Management, which I described, which provides a very highly regarded credential PHR and SPHR and that program is evolving as well.

So, we feel as though by being involved in both the Federal sector and the private sector that we really have a sense of what is going on in the HR world.

Senator AKAKA. Yes.

Mr. Palguta, in your testimony you talked about the Partnership's recent report that looked at lessons learned from the budget cuts in the 1990s. At that time, some cost cutting strategies included reducing the size of the Federal workforce and decreasing administrative costs. Ms. Blair testified about the generational gaps this workforce strategy created and the challenges we continue to face because of that.

Will you please discuss how you believe these cuts impacted the Federal HR workforce?

Mr. PALGUTA. Certainly, Mr. Chairman. I think the original intent was good. The reductions in administrative costs, was at a time when we had a budget surplus in the country so it was not so much about cost savings, it was about making government work better and cost less.

The notion was not to diminish the work of the HR community but rather to improve efficiency, improve the use of technology, and simplify some of our regulations and laws.

Unfortunately what occurred was we disproportionately reduced the number of HR staff in government by over 20 percent, one of the largest cuts in all of these support occupations. There were similar cuts, of course, in acquisition and in information technology.

The unintended result was that we did not achieve all of the efficiencies that we had hoped for in streamlining the process, implementing the technologies or reducing the complexity of some of these laws and regulations.

Instead, what we found was that we had fewer people to do an increasingly complex job, and we did not hire. We did not refill the pipeline. Most of the reductions came through attrition.

So, as some of our most experienced HR professionals and leaders left the government through buyouts and through retirements, we were not bringing in new individuals. Were promoting employ-

ees already in the agencies and they were finding themselves overwhelmed.

We saw the same thing in the acquisition community. We discovered that the greater reliance upon contracting support became problematic because we did not have people to administer the contracts and to ensure the taxpayers interest in making sure that public money was well-spent.

I think that realization came later for the HR community. As it turned out we were simply being overwhelmed. As the number of applications for Federal jobs started to increase, there were fewer people to process them.

Agency managers started looking for help on how to manage in a downsized environment, a situation we are facing today as a matter of fact as we are looking at ways to save money by reducing costs. Managers are asking for help on managing their workforce more cost effectively, and we do not have enough HR individuals with the right skill set to provide that strategic help on the variety of strategies that are going to work best in this environment.

We realize that now and are trying to rebuild that capacity. But frankly, part of the problem right now and the reason we are playing catch-up in part goes back to how we downsized the HR workforce in the 90s.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

Ms. Thompson, it is my understanding that many of the students in your Federal HR program are current Federal workers.

Ms. THOMPSON. Uh-huh.

Senator AKAKA. What can be done to make more young people interested in pursuing this course of study early on or prior to joining the Federal workforce?

Ms. THOMPSON. Well, alluding to the issue of internships, we found to be extremely attractive to people entering the field. They really get to explore what the field is about. They get a taste of what the work is about.

When we couple that with an evening program such as our Masters in Federal HR, they see the relevance. They bring it back to the workplace. We found that to be an excellent launch to a Federal career.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Palguta, our first panel of witnesses talked about how OPM and the agencies are working together to improve the HR workforce. What opportunities do you see for increased collaboration among agencies?

Mr. PALGUTA. Well, I think there is tremendous opportunity, Mr. Chairman. The good news here is that we are starting to see agencies take advantage of those opportunities for collaboration.

For example, using the platform of HR University, agencies have developed training programs or partnerships with institutions such as the Catholic University. If they find that they have some excess capacity in an internal training program, they are opening that up to employees in other agencies, sometimes at no cost. It is an exchange.

Focusing together on the best ways to build the competencies and sharing information about things that are working is another opportunity for collaboration.

One other opportunity which has not been discussed is the issue of mobility. Mobility does not mean you have to permanently leave your agency to go to another agency. We can have a talent exchange within agencies.

For example, I give you my rising HR star, you give me yours, and they learn about differences in how we do things, and they can bring some of their agencies or subcomponent's best practices that we have not thought of, and in the meantime, my person is learning about that agency's efficiencies and ways to operate that we might not have thought about.

So, I think there are many opportunities for agencies to collaborate together, and I am also encouraged by the fact that we are seeing them collaborate with organizations outside of government such as the Catholic University of America.

We have a wonderful relationship with the Office of Personnel Management and a number of other agencies. I know John Sepulveda and Anita very well, and I think those relationships are a very healthy thing to promote.

None of us can afford to do it alone. We need to get in the canoe together, as you would say.

Senator AKAKA. Well, thank you.

Do you have any further comments, Ms. Thompson?

Ms. THOMPSON. Just a final comment that we are just so encouraged also and just thrilled to be a part of organizations such as HR University, the VA, and NASA, and we will support any further efforts.

Senator AKAKA. Yes, and I mentioned that I had that rare opportunity of speaking to 10 university presidents and trying to get them interested in thinking about what they can do to help—this is prior to graduation of students—to get them to begin to work in the area of the Federal Government with the hope that they will somehow do that, and I think that is an area that we need to explore.

I do not know whether you have any ideas about that kind of possibility.

Ms. THOMPSON. Well, we are happy to explore it with you. I think again the partnerships that do exist such as HR University that allows us to work in tandem with Federal agencies and to kind of get the word out that we have these programs that are highly attractive that, as our student said, they can be promoted twice within the 2-year period that they are in their studies. We just appreciate that opportunity.

Senator AKAKA. Even to the point of maybe creating internships—

Ms. THOMPSON. Yes.

Senator AKAKA [continuing]. Where they can also explore different possibilities and see whether it can help them make some decisions as to what they need to do.

I want to thank both of you for your responses. It has been valuable and will be valuable to us as we continue to work together to try to upgrade our workforce.

It is more difficult. It is more complex. However, we need programs to deal with that and we can do it together and share some

of these successes and failures as well. But the main effort would be to upgrade our workforce. We really need that.

And, I want to thank you for your part in bringing that about and from your background and history of working with the Federal Government, many things that can be explored and worked on and improved in our workforce.

So, thank you for your leadership in this area and we are very grateful for that.

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you.

Mr. PALGUTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your leadership, sir.

Ms. THOMPSON. I agree. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

So, I want to thank all of you and encourage all of us to continue working together with our Subcommittee to build a stronger professional HR workforce.

Modern HR professionals must work with agency leadership to make sure that government is equipped to take on the pressing challenges our country faces.

We will keep the hearing record open for one week for Members to submit any additional statements or even questions to our witnesses.

Again, I want to thank you for your time and your contribution to us here today.

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

Mr. PALGUTA. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:45 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 9, 2012
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STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN DANIEL K. AKAKA

Building and Maintaining an Effective Human Resource Workforce in the Federal Government

Hearing

**Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management,
the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia,
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs**

Aloha and thank you all for being here today as the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia meets to examine how we can build and maintain an effective Federal human resources (HR) workforce.

As we all know, the Federal government is currently facing some of the most complex challenges in our nation's history, and doing so within serious budget constraints. As we celebrate Public Service Recognition Week, I want to take a moment to acknowledge and honor the dedicated public servants who are critical to meeting those challenges. Public servants provide so many vital services to our nation. With the Federal workforce being asked to do more with less, making sure we have a top-notch workforce is more important than ever.

So many talented, hard-working people want to dedicate their lives to serving their country and communities. But we need human resources professionals to make sure we are hiring, developing, and retaining the right people, with the right skills, for the right jobs.

Federal agencies, and stakeholders such as the Partnership for Public Service, have recognized that HR professionals currently are not fully equipped to fulfill modern Federal human resource missions. While these individuals still need to be able to perform traditional HR functions, such as hiring and benefit administration, they also need to be responsive and educated strategic partners with managers to help agencies meet their objectives.

People are the Federal government's most important asset, and we simply are not investing enough training, resources, and focus on the HR professionals who manage that critical asset. The Office of Personnel Management, the Chief Human Capital Officers Council, and individual agencies have been working together, along with private sector partners, to take on this challenge.

I am pleased to have all of our witnesses here today to tell us about these efforts and the challenges they still face as they work together to professionalize the Federal HR workforce. I thank you all, again, for being here today.

-END-

(37)



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

STATEMENT OF

JOHN BERRY

DIRECTOR

U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE
FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

on

"Building and Maintaining an Effective Human Resource Workforce in the Federal
Workforce"

May 9, 2012

Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Johnson and members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to appear before you this afternoon to discuss the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) efforts to professionalize the human resources (HR) career field in the Federal government. OPM's core mission is to recruit, retain, and honor a world-class workforce to serve the American people. At the forefront of these efforts are human resources professionals, and when these individuals are given the tools they need, they can partner with Federal managers for positive results.

A perfect example of these positive results can be found in the increased Federal hiring of our nation's veterans. Since the signing of Executive Order (EO) 13518 in November of 2009, the Veterans Employment Initiative (the 'Initiative') has produced an increase in the percentage of veteran and disabled veteran new hires in the Federal government. In FY 2009, 24.0 percent of new hires were veterans. This percentage increased significantly in FY 2011 to 28.3 percent. The number of newly hired disabled veterans also grew from 7 percent to 9 percent during the same period.

In 2001, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) identified the Federal government's management of human resources as "the critical missing link in reforming and modernizing the Federal government's management practices." Over the last several years, OPM, the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, the Department of Treasury, and other agencies have aggressively launched

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**Statement of Honorable John Berry
Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management**

May 9, 2012

initiatives to enhance the skills of human resources professionals across government. The Administration has made closing Federal skills gaps one of only 14 cross-agency priority goals, and I am accountable for achieving results. My team has partnered with the CHCO Council to identify the top government-wide mission critical occupations. Based on rigorous analysis of agency mission and workforce data, we have identified human resources as one of these five occupations. With this designation, the CHCO Council and OPM will partner to identify skills gaps in the human resources workforce and build on the many initiatives that we have underway to fill critical gaps in human resources skills training. And, with better skills, our HR community can then help close the other high-risk skill gaps across the government. GAO has acknowledged improvements made by OPM and agencies to address human capital issues, and we are now turning our attention to the one remaining area GAO identified as high risk - our ability to demonstrate a government-wide approach to closing skill gaps.

OPM Core Function/Value

OPM, through its Employee Services operation, works with agencies throughout the Federal government to develop and train human resources professionals. OPM has developed and created online and classroom training modules, classes, and workshops with other agencies in order to ensure Federal agencies have access to the customized human resources solutions they need. The larger training modules can be broken down into shorter modules by topic, allowing for flexibility in the training each human resources professional chooses to follow. Additionally, OPM has provided targeted agency support, mobile assistance teams, communication and training, including bite-size awareness training, seminars, do-it-yourself training materials, and frequently asked questions. This highly valued resource is available to other Federal agencies at no additional cost.

The quality of our training is now being informed by a star rating system we have put in place for training programs listed at HR University. Additionally, OPM administers the Federal Competency Assessment Tool-HR to assess the HR workforce's proficiency level in an array of HR-related competencies. The results of the assessment help inform our developmental strategies, programs, and/or resources for HR professionals. Also, we routinely conduct evaluations of our training to determine whether participants received the information and skills they need. Finally, we conduct needs assessments through the CHCOs, HR Directors and other key officials to inform what training we develop and how best to deliver it.

HR University

Part of the recent effort to work with human resources professionals has been the creation of the HR University (HRU) website, which provides an excellent foundation for human resources professionals to get training to help them do their jobs even better. I was happy to launch this endeavor with the full support of the CHCO Council, and I was particularly grateful for the specific assistance and tools we received in standing up the HRU website from the Department of Defense, the Department of Treasury and NASA. The courses offered through HRU are a combination of classroom, online, and web-based courses and are offered across the government.

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Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management**

May 9, 2012

HRU's course catalog, which is approved by OPM, continues to grow, and we recently added college-level courses on human resources management.

HRU presents a savings to the Federal government. These savings are realized through the sharing of resources and economies of scale by reducing duplicative courses across the government, identifying the best human resources training, and by sharing these resources through HRU. Today, the cost savings figure is approaching \$13 million. This is a real-time calculator, visible on HRU's home page, that represents the number of agencies benefitting from the course multiplied by the initial course development cost. Cost savings are only calculated for the courses that were developed by Federal agencies and are now offered for free through HRU. The cost saving figure increases each time someone completes a free course from an agency that has not previously benefitted from it. Second, HRU features course ratings that allow users to rate the quality of the content and share that feedback with the public so that we strive for and maintain the highest level of quality in our training curriculum.

Mentoring

OPM is building on our successful human resources mentoring program by partnering with agencies to develop "HR Mentorship Clusters." These clusters will join large agencies with small agencies that share common mission and workforce characteristics. These mentorship clusters will enable human resources professionals from large agencies to mentor small agency human resources professionals who often do not have the resources needed to obtain outside support. These clusters will serve as a "big brother/big sister" type of mechanism to help human resources professionals develop lifelong partnerships with their colleagues and provide mentorship, coaching, and best practices. Another important tool we are developing is a government-wide mentoring "hub," which will afford Federal agencies a one-stop shop for their mentoring needs. The "hub" will be a resource to all Federal agencies, regardless of whether they have their own mentoring programs. It will provide tools, techniques, tips, and technical assistance relating to mentoring. The mentoring "hub" will promote a knowledge-sharing culture government-wide, ensuring that information is shared and retained within each agency and across the Federal government.

Partnership with Colleges and Universities

We recognize the value of working with others outside the Federal government, and to that end, OPM is partnering with colleges and universities to create opportunities for human resources professionals to pursue advanced professional training leading to bachelor and masters-level degrees. OPM is currently developing partnership agreements with the Northern Virginia Community College, Prince George's Community College, the University of the District of Columbia (including its community college program), the University of Maryland, and George Mason University.

Role of Federal Executive Boards in Training

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Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management**

May 9, 2012

The Federal Executive Boards (FEBs) also have an important role in training. They enhance communication, coordination and collaboration among Federal agencies in 28 locations across the country. As interagency organizations, FEBs do not receive direct appropriations; they rely on voluntary support from Federal agencies. They operate on a shoe-string budget with minimal funds for staffing and operations. The FEBs respond to member agency needs by providing coordinated, quality programs and activities, training being one focus area. By leveraging a large number of agency participants, FEBs are able to offer training sessions at either low or no cost. They reduce costs even more by local delivery, negating the need for travel and lodging. In 2011, FEBs provided training opportunities to 33,499 Federal employees at an estimated cost avoidance of more than \$8.7 million.

OPM's Own HR Workforce

It is especially important that OPM's own human resources workforce is highly skilled and able to support our external and internal strategic and agency priority goals. Through a unique collaboration with our local unions, OPM will open our new Center for Innovative Learning and Professional Growth (the 'Center') to further enhance our training offerings to our workforce. The Center, designed and built by employees for employees, serves the entire OPM workforce with a comprehensive array of career development and learning services, including classroom and online training, career counseling, and mentoring. OPM's human resources workforce will be a focus customer for this Center. In July, OPM plans to launch comprehensive training on basic and immediate human resources skills for the human resources employees in the agency and will open these sessions to other agencies as space becomes available. Training courses will cover the range of human capital management issues, and focus on specific skills human resources professionals need to support agency performance.

Future Challenges

Challenges for the future include staying at the forefront of human resources professional needs during a time of fiscal austerity. While we have made many great strides in addressing human resources professionals' needs, it is of the utmost importance that we stay focused and continue to offer the top notch training and support that Federal agencies have come to expect and that they deserve.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the important work that OPM is doing to address the complex educational needs of the Federal human resources workforce. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

**STATEMENT OF
JOHN U. SEPÚLVEDA
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND
ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF
GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND
D.C.**

MAY 9, 2012

Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Johnson, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on our efforts to build and maintain an effective human resources workforce at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). I am proud to serve as Secretary Eric K. Shinseki's Chief Human Capital Officer at VA, an agency of 317,000 employees that stands ready to serve the Nation's 22 million Veterans, their families and survivors through the delivery of authorized benefits and services.

Introduction:

To deliver high quality service to Veterans in the 21st Century, the VA requires a highly skilled and competent workforce. A core foundation for this VA workforce is a cadre of 4,000 plus human resources (HR) professionals. In this testimony, I will share some of the challenges HR professionals face and describe what VA is doing to help them to meet those challenges. I will then review VA's overarching strategy for investing in its human capital.

New Challenges Faced By The Federal HR community

For federal HR professionals, there is a heightened urgency to address the changing human capital needs of government. HR must help agency leaders to hire more quickly; enhance employee and leadership training and development; promote productive labor-management relations; and provide the organization with ways to transform service delivery to the American public.

HR professionals are often called upon by their agency leadership to ensure compliance with various legislative and Presidential directives. In recent years, this has

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included Presidential Directives regarding Hiring Reform, diversity and inclusion initiatives, Veterans' employment, Telework, and student and recent graduate internship programs.

Human Resource offices are also increasingly expected to advise leadership on how to best lead and manage amid an environment of great change. Key areas of change include: budget; technology; generational and demographic shifts; and increased retirements. Generally speaking, the public sector is under great pressure to meet higher expectations, while demands are increasing and resources are constrained. Considering the wide array of challenges, the HR workforce must be trained and given the appropriate resources to thrive in this dynamic environment.

VA's Approach

To deliver high quality service to a growing population of Veterans with changing needs, President Obama charged Secretary Shinseki to transform VA into a 21st Century organization. VA developed major initiatives spanning the activities of the entire department. The success of these initiatives requires a well-led, well-staffed, and well-trained workforce. One of the major initiatives is to transform human capital management through the development of the Human Capital Investment Plan.

Human Capital Investment Plan

As the Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration, I support VA's transformation by addressing its human capital needs. This required a VA leadership strategic commitment to invest in the training and development of our employees, including VA's HR community.

VA implemented a comprehensive Human Capital Investment Plan designed to advance employee training and development as well as enhance the work environment to enable high performance across the Department.

VA's strategic investments have provided training courses, created delivery systems and built an infrastructure to address the mission-critical skills gaps and other workforce challenges faced by the Department. Some important achievements include:

- Executing a corporate approach to employee and leadership training and development through the creation of an *HR Academy*, and the *VA Learning University (VALU)*;

The *HR Academy* offers a wide range of courses for HR professionals, using online webinars and in-class instruction on such topics as staffing, recruitment, labor management relations, and IT systems. In addition, the Academy provides an integrated suite of features such as information on emerging trends and developments in HR, industry-leading best practices, peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, and HR-specific career mapping resources.

VALU is representative of the integrated holistic strategy used by HRA and has become the centralized source for institutional approaches to training and development, providing hundreds of thousands of skills-building opportunities every year across VA. *VALU* is truly a “university without walls”, delivering high-quality, multi-modal training to VA employees at all levels and locations of the organization. *VALU*'s corporate approach includes smart planning, robust IT capability, personalized services for skills building and career development, and ongoing analysis.

- Using a competency-based training model based on skills and competencies needed for mission critical and other cross-cutting occupations;

VA conducted extensive agency-wide competency assessments to enable VA to target its training efforts to areas where it is most needed, such as financial and budget management, resulting in the development of numerous training initiatives to fill key competency gaps and creating benefits key business functions. The results of these various assessments led to the creation of *MyCareer@VA*.

- Creating *MyCareer@VA*, a game-changing career path online tool for employees, including HR professionals, to map and manage their careers which helps VA improve recruitment and retention;

MyCareer@VA is innovative, web-based systems with a people-centric approach to VA's investment in employees' professional growth, helping established employees seek advancement or search for horizontal opportunities or scaled-back responsibilities due to unplanned challenges in their personal lives. *MyCareer@VA* also serves as a key retention tool and a recruitment tool that helps potential job applicants to identify careers and career paths within VA.

- Establishing a *Talent Management System (TMS)* that delivers high quality educational programs via an award-winning online platform to VA employees nationwide;

The *Talent Management System (TMS)* combines a variety of on-site, remote, and online learning options that serve a diverse and geographically-dispersed audience. TMS also offers robust capabilities for employees and their supervisors to manage their training, course curricula, performance reporting, and career development plans.

- *VA for Vets* is focused on training HR professionals and hiring managers to increase Veteran employment within the VA through recruitment, retention and reintegration strategies.

VA for Vets was designed specifically to assist Veterans to translate their military skills and experience into a successful civilian career at VA and elsewhere in the Federal Government. *VA for Vets* is high-tech and high-touch. High-tech refers to the online platform for Veteran employment resources including resume builders, a military skills translator, virtual collaboration tools, self assessments, career matching reports. High-touch means Veterans who may need additional assistance can access a live coach who will support them through the entire process.

Leveraging Partnerships:

The VA leverages a wide array of collaborative work groups to ensure we capture numerous perspectives and best practices. Working groups involving VA Human Resources include: the Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF) Restructuring Taskforce; Strategic Human Capital High Risk Initiative; Veterans Employment Council; Hispanic Employment Council; and the Partnership for Public Service's Emerging HR Leaders program.

Leveraging partnerships with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and other federal agencies to help develop OPM's HR University as well as active engagement in working groups on Hiring Reform and Veterans Employment established under the Chief Human Capital Officers Council will continue to play a key role in developing VA's HR workforce. Partnerships with OPM have proven very beneficial for several reasons. First, VA benefits from hearing about the experiences of other federal

agencies who are wrestling with some of the same challenges as VA. Second, VA is able to provide information, including lessons learned and best practices in implementing human capital solutions. VA can leverage in-house expertise to support new initiatives and provide additional insights that can strengthen federal-wide solutions.

The Way Forward

Ultimately, I believe investment in HR must be a priority for the Federal Government even in the most challenging fiscal times. We will not achieve a leaner government, or more effective operations, without trained professionals at the helm. HR is a critical enabler in an organization's ability to recruit, train, and lead the federal workforce.

VA's efforts to build and maintain an effective human resources workforce have centered on human capital management that directly supports the strategic direction of the Department. The ultimate goal of our training and development strategy is to enable employees to better serve Veterans. We will continue to invest in the courses, the systems and the infrastructure that builds and strengthens the core of our organization – our people.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share VA's experience with building and maintaining an effective human resources workforce. I am prepared to answer your questions.

**Testimony of Anita Blair
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Chief Human Capital Officer
Department of the Treasury**

**Before the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal
Workforce, and the District of Columbia of the Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate**

May 9, 2012

Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Johnson, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the role of the Department of the Treasury in building and maintaining an effective human resource workforce in the Federal government. After setting the stage with some brief background about the Treasury Department and the Federal human resource (HR) occupation, my testimony today will address three topics: 1) the Treasury Department's efforts to develop and train its HR professionals; 2) joint efforts with other governmental and non-governmental agencies; and 3) the most significant challenges facing the Department in developing and training HR professionals.

Background Facts About the Department of the Treasury

- The mission of the Treasury Department is to maintain a strong economy and create economic and job opportunities by promoting conditions that enable economic growth and stability at home and abroad; to strengthen national security by combating threats and protecting the integrity of the financial system; and to manage the U.S. Government's finances and resources effectively.
- The work of the Treasury Department covers a broad range: manufacturing coins and currency; administering and enforcing the federal tax code and collecting taxes; managing the federal finances and paying bills of the United States; and developing and executing critical policies and strategies to strengthen domestic and international economies.
- The Treasury Department has an annual discretionary budget of approximately \$13 billion and roughly 100,000 employees. To service its HR needs, the Department has approximately 1,700 non-supervisory personnel, of whom about 79 percent are in HR (200-series), 11 percent in Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) (260-series), and 10 percent in Training (1700-series).¹ Treasury's HR practitioners include approximately 200 employees who work for Treasury's HR Line of Business in Parkersburg, West Virginia, which also provides comprehensive HR services to 16 other non-Treasury organizations.

¹ In our strategic planning process and development of a competency model, we determined that to be most effective with this initiative we needed to include not just those in the HR field, but those in the EEO and Training fields as well. The development of our workforce includes the entire Human Capital (HC) professional workforce. While about four-fifths of our HC workforce are HR professionals, all three professions impact each other. For example, in approaching efforts to improve diversity, we found far too often that HR and EEO professionals were unfamiliar with each other's processes and requirements. This truly impacts our diversity programs. Our goal was to identify the competencies required across the three major occupations and ensure that we were carrying out all our human capital programs in a cohesive manner in support of the Treasury Department.

Background on Recent History of the Federal Human Resources Occupation

In order to meet current and emerging mission and programmatic goals, federal agencies are attempting to transform themselves into organizations that are more results-oriented, collaborative and customer-focused. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has reported that federal agencies do not consistently have the modern, effective, economical, and efficient human capital programs, policies, and procedures needed to succeed in their transformation efforts. (Federal Workforce Challenges in the 21st Century, GAO-07-556T, March 6, 2007.) Further, workforce planning must address long term strategies for acquiring, developing, motivating, and retaining staff to achieve programmatic goals.

Chief among the people required to be well developed and motivated to achieve an agency's programmatic goals are its human capital employees. They are required to transform themselves from the enforcer of rules and independent agents to a consultant tool maker and strategic partner in leading and supporting the agency's business entities to achieve their programmatic goals. However, these employees will need the skills and abilities to:

- Recruit and develop employees with the skills necessary to achieve the agency's mission objectives;
- Provide timely and accurate human capital guidance and advice;
- Inventory and analyze critical skills gaps;
- Design effective training and development programs to address gaps in skills and competencies once identified in the workforce;
- Evaluate the impact of training and development activities;
- Strengthen efforts and use of available flexibilities to acquire, motivate, and retain talent;
- Use targets and measures to monitor the composition of hires and separations;
- Hire new employees within required timeframes; and
- Provide performance management tools to help leaders manage on a day-to-day basis.

This is not an exhaustive list of skills and abilities agencies must address; different agencies will have different needs. Moreover, agencies are finding themselves having to address human resources challenges during a period of likely sustained budget cuts. This will require agencies to plan their transformations more strategically, prioritize their needs, evaluate results, allocate their resources more carefully, and react to workforce challenges more expeditiously in order to achieve their missions economically, efficiently, and effectively.

Examining if and why employees may be lacking the necessary tools is critical to understanding the scope of the problem. The challenges must be put into the context of the significant changes HR has experienced within the last twenty years. A number of significant events brought us to

the point where Federal HR systems and the HR workforce have less resources to help support the HR mission. These include:

- Significant reductions were made in administrative personnel in the 1990s that did not always match our ability to become more efficient and creative in delivering services;
- In the 1990s, the Office of Personnel Management replaced the *Federal Personnel Manual System*, the official instruction manual to agencies on personnel management, with multiple reference sources including the Code of Federal Regulations and a variety of other handbooks, guides and policy issuances; as a result, HR practitioners no longer have a single-source reference but must master multiple systems of reference;
- The push toward automation to speed the hiring process often yielded a pool that included a higher volume of less-qualified applicants and was not quicker;
- The work became more complicated with the proliferation of alternative pay systems and special appointing authorities;
- The Government did not always successfully replace in-house technical training for Federal HR professionals with equivalent vendor-provided training; and
- The expectations of HR management grew as senior leadership increasingly recognized the importance of their most expensive (and valuable) resource investment – their workforce.

We must recognize that, even without these events, the Federal Merit Based system is inherently more complicated to administer, making a Federal HR practitioner's job more complicated than the same job in most private sector operations. Recruiting and retaining a competent HR professional is critical to ensuring that a workforce investment is effective.

HR professionals need to support management in identifying the skills required to get the work done and then translate that into language that can be used to recruit the best person for the job. They need the proper technical training to ensure that they can navigate the complicated mosaic of the Federal employment system. In addition to technical training, HR professionals need business, analytical, and consulting skills.

For more than a decade, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and agency HR leadership have expressed an urgency to move forward to address personnel challenges. We are pleased that the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council and OPM have worked together to develop the Human Resources University. This is an important step and Treasury has been a very active member in this effort. More needs to be done and Treasury hopes to continue to lead government efforts.

Efforts to Develop and Train Treasury's Human Resource (HR) Professionals

I will describe briefly the Treasury Department's efforts over the last few years to develop and train its Human Capital professionals. We followed a rigorous process to identify the requisite

competencies, assess our workforce to see where gaps exist, and implement a program for individual skill development tied to organizational needs.

Step 1: Recognizing the need to transform the Human Capital Occupation

In its 2007-2012 Human Capital Strategic Plan, the Treasury Department recognized the need to transform HR practitioners into strategic partners with business owners, to identify and develop HR practitioner competencies, and to facilitate the career development of HR practitioners. One strategic goal called for the Department to “Develop Human Capital Practitioners as Strategic Business Partners.” As further developed in the implementation plan, that goal requires us to –

Promote the transformation of Treasury’s human resource, training and equal employment staffs (human capital community) into a cadre of Human Capital professionals who serve as valued business advisors on people and organizations and an organizational culture of fairness and respect.

Human capital practitioners with the necessary skills and competencies must be “at the table” as an integral team member, working with senior leaders and line managers and supervisors to create innovative, state-of-the-art, effective human capital policies, programs, and tools to support strategic business needs.

Beyond the HR workforce situation that has evolved over the years, Treasury is also faced with the rapidly changing state of human capital management. Knowledge about the science and art of managing people continues to expand through research and experience. Research areas include employee performance, motivation and engagement, organizational design and development, and harnessing the power of data through analytics. Progress in these areas, plus the changing environment of technology, law, demographics, and other factors, are redefining the set of competencies needed for the human capital community.

Identifying the specific set of competencies most needed for human capital practitioners across the Department was our first step. With the use of workforce assessments, we then evaluated our workforce against those competencies and developed an approach to close key competency gaps. This is needed to ensure the Department has a sustainable and high-performing human capital workforce in order to support Treasury’s critical mission.

Step 2: Listening to the Voice of the Customer

Treasury’s first step was researching best practices and hearing the voice of the customer. We built our competency model based on a survey of our customers, the mission, operational, and business leadership across Treasury. What skills did Treasury Offices want from their human capital office? Detailed interviews of Treasury leaders revealed an urgency to build proficiency not only in our technical competencies but in competencies such as Business Acumen and Strategic Planning.

Step 3: Developing a Role-Based Competency Model and Career Map Framework

We built a role-based competency model that builds on the technical specialist role and incorporates the newer expectation of a Strategic Partner. We used customer feedback to deepen and enhance the general competencies expected of any HR practitioner. We identified three categories:

- **Business Competencies** (Business Acumen, Information Management, Project Management, and Strategic Thinking);
- **Analytical Competencies** (Decision Making, Metrics Use and Development, and Problem Solving); and
- **Consulting Competencies** (Change Management, Communication, Customer Service, Influencing/Negotiating, and Interpersonal Skills)

We developed three roles and defined them as:

- **Strategic Partner Role:** Strategic business partners identify broad Human Capital (HC) issues ahead of business leaders; partners are high-level consultants who develop strategies to address long-term business needs.
- **Advisor Role:** As tactical consultants, advisors develop innovative Human Capital solutions to address customer issues and achieve specific business goals (with an eye on those of tomorrow).
- **Technical Specialist Role:** Technical specialists apply intensive knowledge of specific technical areas to address and resolve immediate needs of business.

We then validated our model by deploying a competency validation survey to all Human Capital practitioners and supervisors and prepared a technical report. The purpose was to validate the level of importance and need of the competency at the time an individual enters the role in order to determine the Treasury Human Capital Competency model for selection and development. The survey showed that all the general competencies are critical and most are needed at the entry level. The competencies seen as key for role growth (and, therefore, career growth) were Strategic Thinking, Change Management, and Business Acumen.

Step 4: Assessing the Competencies of the HR Workforce

We then moved forward in 2011 to assess our workforce against the competency model. We researched assessment tools and planned and launched the Treasury Competency Assessment Process for Human Capital (TCAP-HC). We assessed all the competencies and determined gaps for each individual throughout the organization. These assessments were completed by both the employee and his or her supervisor. Of our total Human Capital workforce, 95 percent completed the assessment. This was followed by a requirement to develop an on-line competency-based individual development plan that was designed to close key gaps. The TCAP-HC process revealed significant gaps in technical and general competencies agency-wide. Individuals were then working toward individual goals based on the Treasury competency model, but as a Department we had to ask, how might we close the gaps across Treasury? We

also asked how we could help our workforce appreciate and understand the need for additional competencies and the changing nature of customer expectations.

Step 5: Closing the Competency Gaps

We formed a Department-wide planning team and met in September 2011 with fifty-five HC representatives from throughout the Department to identify the high-priority gaps and develop methods to close them. We then had a corporate view of our competency gaps and we had to decide what we were going to do with this view. We formed four teams – three to deal with the technical competencies (HR, EEO, and Training) and another to address the general competency gaps.

The HR Technical Competency Team identified five of the ten high priority technical competencies: staffing, classification, Employee Relations (ER), Labor Relations (LR), and performance management. The teams then worked over the next six months to develop learning objectives for each specialty area, building a career roadmap within each of these specialty areas to convey what is required to become a technical expert as well as ways to gain the necessary knowledge (training, knowledge transfer, etc.). The career roadmap also establishes recommended learning needs at each level (beginning, intermediate and advanced). This framework will assist individuals with their learning plans. The EEO Technical Competency Team and the Training Technical Team also developed these knowledge frameworks for their technical areas.

The General Competency Team identified five high priority competencies. These were identified as high priority because of the gap size that exists and because of the positive impact closing the gap could have on the occupation. They are: Business Acumen, Strategic Thinking, Customer Service, Metrics Use and Development, and Change Management.

This team then developed a number of solutions to close these gaps as well as technical competency gaps. The overarching theme of Treasury's various Human Capital transformation projects is to combine opportunities for training and experience with an array of easily accessible, multimedia resources to provide our Human Capital practitioners an environment where they are allowed and encouraged to excel. We deliberately create collaborative projects to bring together various elements of our Human Capital workforce – not only HR, EEO, and Training, but colleagues from different Bureaus and other Federal agencies. This gives our Human Capital practitioners a sense of community and engenders pride in their work. Our overarching purpose in building a Treasury Human Capital professional community is to learn the best ways to provide the same advantages for other professional communities. Therefore, we constantly seek innovative, low cost solutions that are readily adaptable for different situations.

The initial set of Human Capital transformation projects includes the following:

- A. **Quarterly Focus Days:** Treasury Employee Development Focus Days were inspired by "Stand Down Days," which are often used by the military (and some federal agencies) to raise awareness of key topics of interest. Focus Days will provide Human Capital employees approved time for continued learning and development, develop key competencies within the workforce, and unify the Human Capital community by focusing on common goals.

Focus Days will be conducted quarterly. Content for the first three quarters of the year will be developed and presented by rotating assignment amongst the bureaus. The last quarter will be self-guided and geared toward individual goals and development. Potential topics for 2012 Focus Days include:

- The Human Capital Competency Model: “What Is a Strategic Partner and How Can You Become One?”
 - Customer Service: “Knowing Your Customers and What You Can Do For Them.”
 - General Competencies: “Business Acumen: Understanding the Impact.”
 - Employee Self-Development: “Making the Most of Developmental Opportunities.”
- B. **Orientation for new Human Capital professionals:** New members of our Human Capital Community, no matter when they come on board, will have an immediate introduction to the community through a multimedia program. Community leaders will provide information about Treasury’s expectations for its Human Capital professionals and available career paths.
- C. **Flash Mentoring:** Flash mentoring enables small groups to engage with multiple mentors in a single setting. A small group discussion format allows participants to hear from their peers as well. Flash mentoring is low-cost and relatively easy to administer, making it an ideal program to reach community members outside the Washington, D.C., area.
- D. **Temporary Job Swaps:** Two or more employees in different organizations (within or outside of their current bureau) may “swap” jobs on a short term basis (a detail) to acquire new skills and knowledge. These mini-rotations on an intra-agency basis will promote cross-fertilization of best practices through the sharing of knowledge between organizations, as well as cross-training and development for individuals. “Job Swaps” are also low cost, with potential for improving employee engagement.
- E. **Career Guides:** Career guides are catalogs of development opportunities for individuals in Human Capital specialties. For each technical skill area, as well as each general competency, volunteer teams of experts are compiling a career guide that breaks down the relevant competencies and describes various methods of acquiring the skill/knowledge. These guides will be posted on the Treasury website and periodically updated.
- F. **Human Capital Strategic Partner Certification:** We are designing a model for certification that will encourage employees not only to maintain basic competencies but also to develop additional competencies and acquire the relevant experience necessary to advance in their careers.

Step 6: Designing and Building Treasury’s Human Capital Community

As noted earlier, in 2007, the Treasury Human Capital Strategic Plan established the goal to “Develop Human Capital Practitioners as Strategic Business Partners.” In pursuit of this goal, a Treasury-wide team assembled to: a) redefine Human Capital roles from the business perspective; b) achieve organizational proficiency in key technical, business, consulting, and analytical competencies; and c) build a cadre of strategic business partners.

Five years on, in 2012, we observe that rapid changes in business and technology demand new roles and career paths for Human Capital professionals. For example, we see the need for not only strategic HR business partners, but also HR information technology specialists, performance management specialists, multi-sector workforce planners, and experts in workforce analytics. Accordingly, instead of focusing primarily on creating a specialty for strategic business partners, we now envision creating a community framework whose senior leaders will continuously scan the horizon and prepare the Human Capital workforce to respond rapidly to changing business needs. We are modeling the structure and rules of our new Human Capital professional community on examples such as the federal acquisition community and well-established professional communities such as law, medicine, engineering, and teaching.

Taking a lesson from the federal acquisition community, I established the Treasury Human Capital Community Executive Steering Committee (HCC-ESC) to advise and assist in the transformation of Treasury's Human Capital workforce into a community of highly valued, customer-focused professionals. The HCC-ESC members are accomplished Treasury executives known for their commitment to innovation and continuous improvement. They understand how to forge an adaptable and agile workforce by leveraging basic capabilities to meet emerging requirements.

The HCC-ESC helps oversee and guide the strategic development of our Human Capital professional community by defining competencies and career paths for multiple specialties in HR, EEO and training. The HCC-ESC provides high level oversight and direction to Human Capital community development projects and will have final approval of all deliverables. In this way the HCC-ESC will help set high, uniform, and consistent standards of quality to which our Human Capital professionals must aspire. In time, as the community concept takes hold, the HCC-ESC will have a role in department-wide human capital community talent management and succession planning as well.

Earlier this year, the HCC-ESC approved the coordinated set of initiatives proposed by our transformation teams, as described above. Each project will be monitored, measured, and assessed for how well it supports the goal of transforming Treasury's Human Capital workforce into a community of highly valued, customer-focused professionals.

Step 7: Looking to the Future

Future plans include reassessing the levels of critical competencies in the Human Capital workforce in 2013 and renewing individual development plans ("MyPlans") to reflect achievement of previous personal development objectives and establishment of new objectives. Treasury's Human Capital Strategic Plan is will be updated for the period 2013-2018; we expect the "strategic partner" goal will be amended to call for building not only a Human Capital professional community but other occupational communities, especially mission-critical occupations and management-related occupations (such as finance and IT) that typically serve agency-wide customers. We look forward to collaborating with other federal agencies in this endeavor.

Communications will continue to play a key role in all our efforts, to maintain momentum and communicate expectations. We expect to use the most effective and efficient tools to deliver

continuing training to our Human Capital professionals. We hope to be able to expand our website, including access to social media, which will not only enable our members to reach out to one another, but also encourage them to aspire to the highest standards and, we hope, improve employee engagement.

We are already starting to build capability in workforce analytics, and we plan to use more sophisticated forms of analysis to aid in developing both the Human Capital community and other occupational communities.

Treasury's Assistant Secretary for Management has established policies to increase collaboration among the management elements of all components (Bureaus and Offices) and the headquarters oversight function. This includes assigning Treasury-wide performance elements for officials who manage finance, IT, procurement, HR, and EEO for those components. Thus we have the opportunity to include goals related to strategic HR community development in the performance plans of HR and EEO leaders across the department.

Joint Efforts with Other Governmental and Non-Governmental Agencies

We have been, and will continue, working with the CHCO Council and OPM to support HR University (HRU). The role-based portion of our model was incorporated into HRU's career map. We will also continue to push for a Government-wide competency model, which would include the necessary business competencies we believe are the key to effecting change.

We are also taking the lead for HRU on its interagency certification team to find a Government-wide solution to professionalizing the Human Capital occupation. Treasury's draft certification process is currently being examined for its potential to be adapted as a Government-wide solution.

Treasury is a strong supporter and participant in the Partnership for Public Service's Emerging Leaders Program. We have had two dozen graduates from across all our bureaus. This is exactly the type of program critical to developing the strategic partners we need.

Significant Challenges

One thing that has not been a challenge is persuading our HR practitioners that they should embrace the responsibilities of acting as Human Capital Professionals. As witnessed by the thousands of hours of volunteer effort to transform the Human Capital occupation, our HR, EEO, and Training specialists are eager to learn, grow, and create a community to improve the quality of their work and service.

Notwithstanding their enthusiasm, some cultural and environmental impediments persist. Our reviews have led us to conclude that some employees and managers may not understand the challenges inherent in Human Capital transformation. Some members of our Human Capital community members would benefit from further training and education on the competency model and how it relates to career progression and performance. As a result of past reductions and demographic effects, there is a generational gap that could create the risk of a knowledge gap unless we can transfer knowledge and skills from the more experienced workers to the more junior workers.

Delivering programs to increase training, education, and experience for our members can be challenging. The typical challenges associated with any large change effort apply in this case. We are pursuing a classic change management strategy of a robust communications effort, collaboration to achieve early wins, and projects designed to embed new habits of thinking and doing among our people.

Most of our efforts so far have been high return and low financial investment, and that is our preferred way of doing business. We are reaching the point, however, where some reliable level of investment, particularly in IT and training, as well as flexibility to provide people for rotational assignments, will be necessary to be able to maintain progress and anchor positive changes in the culture of the organization.

We will continue to find low-cost ways within Treasury to close competency gaps. Treasury manages the financial resources for the government, but we also think of the people carrying out Treasury's mission – and missions across the federal sector – as an equally precious asset. We believe Human Capital management provides critical support to all other mission functions: People do the most important work in any organization, and for people to perform well, they must be led and managed well. We expect managers in any area to be good with people, but the experts in the science and art of leading and managing people should be the human capital professionals. We need to invest in this human capital workforce so they can, in turn, invest in, manage, and support the broader Federal workforce.

We at the Treasury Department are doing our best to transform “HR” into a community of experts in their field, committed to continuous learning and improvement, ethically bound, selflessly dedicated to the interests of those whom they serve, and loyal to the law and rules they administer.

We appreciate the opportunity to tell the story of Treasury's Human Capital Community transformation, and look forward to answering your questions.



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

**Written Testimony of John Palguta
Vice President for Policy
Partnership for Public Service**

Prepared for

**The Senate Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
Subcommittee on the Oversight of Government
Management, the Federal Workforce and the District of
Columbia**

**Hearing Entitled
“Building and Maintaining an Effective Human Resource
Workforce in the Federal Workforce”**

May 9, 2012

Chairman Akaka, Senator Johnson, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am John Palguta, Vice President for Policy, of the Partnership for Public Service, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing the federal civil service and transforming the way government works. Prior to joining the Partnership over 10 years ago, I spent more than 30 years as a career federal employee and human resources (HR) professional. I also had the privilege to serve as a career member of the Senior Executive Service as the Director of Policy and Evaluation for the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board.

The Partnership has two principal areas of focus. First, we work to inspire new talent to join federal service. Second, we work with government leaders to help transform government so that highly qualified and motivated employees will enter, stay and succeed in meeting the challenges of our nation.

This hearing today focuses on a topic of vital importance to the effective and efficient operation of our government and one in which the Partnership has a strong and ongoing interest – the capability of federal HR professionals to adequately support, advise, and assist their respective organizations to meet the daunting workforce challenges that lie ahead. As budgetary pressures mount, along with calls for increased workforce efficiencies, an HR workforce capable of being a full and effective partner with agency management is essential.

In my testimony today, I will focus on four major areas relevant to the topic at hand.

1. **A Cause for Concern.** For nearly two decades, a growing body of evidence points to the increasing inability of too many HR staff members to support federal agencies in targeting, obtaining, developing and keeping the talent needed to execute their missions.
2. **Actions Taken and Lessons Learned.** The good news is that the problems afflicting the federal HR workforce have not gone unnoticed and policymakers have taken steps to address them.
3. **Current Challenges for the HR Workforce.** The competencies needed for the HR workforce do not exist in a vacuum – they are dictated by the environment in which the HR professional functions and today that environment is extremely demanding.
4. **Recommendations for Additional Action.** The health of the federal HR profession is improving but still fragile. Additional action is necessary to build on the good work being done and to chart some new improvement strategies.

A Cause for Concern

Problems afflicting the federal HR workforce are longstanding. Almost 20 years ago, when I was the Deputy Director, Policy and Evaluation for the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), we issued a 1993 report titled, *Federal Personnel Offices: Time for Change*,¹ which found that "over half of the managers and almost half of the personnel specialists surveyed cited lack of sufficient skill in the personnel staff... to

¹ *Federal Personnel Offices: Time for Change*. U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1993.

effectively support agency operations.” Seven years later, in 2000, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a three-part series of reports on the federal HR workforce which found that as the HR workforce was being reduced by over 20 percent, workload actually expanded and growing demands for HR to serve as a strategic business partner and change agent could not be met with existing talent.

In 2001, GAO identified human capital management as a government-wide high-risk area because federal agencies lacked a strategic approach to human capital management that integrated human capital efforts with their missions and program goals. Even today, the area remains high-risk because of a continuing need for a government-wide framework to advance human capital reform. Among other things, GAO said in a 2009 report titled *Human Capital: Sustained Attention to Strategic Human Capital Management Needed*² that executing the government-wide framework needed requires HR skill sets and talent most agencies do not have.

In an August 2010 report titled *Closing the Gap: Seven Obstacles to a First-Class Federal Workforce*,³ the Partnership, in collaboration with Grant Thornton, found that a mere 40 percent of federal Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs) believe their HR staffs possess the competencies needed to succeed in the future and to support agency missions to a great or very great extent. The report also found that efforts to build and maintain a high-quality federal workforce are being seriously hampered by a number of longstanding, systemic and often dysfunctional practices and policies.

To be clear, there are a number of highly competent and effective HR professionals in the federal workforce who serve as true strategic advisors and partners to agency managers and leaders. Unfortunately, there are also too many who do not possess that ability. The largest deficiencies in this latter category are HR staff who do not yet demonstrate the strategic thinking, critical thinking, and problem solving capabilities they need to be successful. For others, there may be an issue of technical competence and organizational awareness, i.e., the ability to see the bigger picture and to identify solutions to human capital problems that hinder the agency's ability to effectively and efficiently achieve its mission. Unfortunately, there has long been debate over the need for a certification program for the federal HR workforce to help determine whether needed competencies have been gained but no conclusions have been reached.

In December 2010, the Partnership, with support from GRA Inc., Kelly Anderson & Associates, and Lindholm & Associates, held a symposium with Director John Berry of the Office of Personnel Management and top leaders from across the federal government, private and nonprofit sectors and academia to find solutions. The clear consensus was that it will take the collective pressure, focus and commitment of key leaders to move the HR workforce from the unsatisfactory status quo to an agile, educated and strategic partner essential to meeting the demands of government.

The overall message was that agencies cannot improve the efficiency and productivity of their people – and certainly cannot effectively reshape their workforces – without strategic guidance from highly skilled individuals leading the HR function. The stage was

² *Human Capital: Sustained Attention to Strategic Human Capital Management Needed*. Government Accountability Office, April 22, 2009.

³ *Closing the Gap: Seven Obstacles to a First Class Federal Workforce*. Partnership for Public Service and Grant Thornton, August 18, 2010.

thus set for the federal HR community – with the active support and involvement of OPM – to engage with other leaders in government to take sustained corrective action in this critically important area.

Actions Taken and Lessons Learned

For much too long, the federal HR community has been like the proverbial shoemaker's children – helping other professions address their workforce needs while their own workforce languished. For example, the Chief Information Officers (CIO) Council and the Chief Acquisition Officers (CAO) Council have been significantly ahead of the federal HR Community in building strategies and taking initiatives to support the growth and development of their respective workforces.

In December 2010, then U.S. Chief Information Officer, Vivek Kundra, issued a *25 Point Implementation Plan to Reform Federal Information Technology Management*.⁴ The plan outlines a strategy for designing and developing a cadre of specialized IT acquisition professionals. It also calls for the launch of a “technology fellows” program to build a better pipeline of emerging talent for the federal IT workforce needs going forward. Doing its part, the Department of Defense manages the National Defense University Information Resources Management College, an institution that provides unparalleled education for federal leaders who will be responsible for employing information and information technology.

The federal acquisition community has taken similar steps to improve and professionalize its workforce. The Defense Acquisition University has provided training and certification programs for decades. The Federal Acquisition Institute and the Office of Federal Procurement Policy in OMB work together to improve efforts focused on the development of the acquisition workforce. New entrants to the acquisition workforce are also now expected to hold a four-year college degree or higher. The Department of Veterans Affairs has also developed an “acquisition academy” that includes opportunities such as an Acquisition Internship School, a Program Management Fellows Program, and a Contracting Professional School.

However, there are clear signs that the federal HR community – spurred by a growing sense of urgency and an understanding that there is a real opportunity for change – is making some headway in addressing their workforce needs. It is worth noting, for example, that in 2010 the CHCO Council adopted as one of their three overarching strategic goals the “development and implementation of Government-wide HR tools to improve the selection, assessment, and development of the federal HR profession.” In this context, in early 2011, OPM with support from the CHCO Council launched HR University (www.hru.gov), an online “one stop” human resources career development center. HRU is specifically aimed at professionalizing the federal HR career field with a focus on addressing competency and skill gaps within the federal HR community in a cost effective manner. OPM and the CHCO Council also created career maps for federal HR professionals. These career maps have been posted on HR University and provide specific career guidance to better enable individual HR professionals to take charge of their careers.

⁴ *25 Point Implementation Plan to Reform Federal Information Technology Management*. Vivek Kundra, U.S. Chief Information Officer, December 9, 2010.

There is also increased collaboration among federal agencies (with the active encouragement of OPM and supported by the HR University platform) which includes better sharing of scarce training resources at an overall cost savings to the government. More generally, there is a renewed focus on identifying competency gaps among the current HR workforce and developing strategies for closing those gaps.

The Partnership for Public Service has also made the development of the HR workforce a key priority. In early 2009, the Partnership formed a Federal Human Capital Collaborative to create an active community of federal managers and human resources professionals to identify cross-cutting challenges and to work collaboratively and systematically to solve them on behalf of the community and the nation. In just over two years, the Collaborative membership has grown to 30 federal departments and agencies and a number of initiatives have been undertaken on their behalf. Two specific outcomes of note are:

- A "Strategic HR Advisors Results Project" (SHARP) that developed not only a set of competencies needed by HR professionals who aspire to be true strategic advisors to management, but also an outline of an individual development plan that can assist HR professionals acquire those competencies.
- Development of an "Emerging HR Leaders" program for high-potential federal HR professionals. Participants meet monthly in a facilitated peer-exchange environment, discuss topics of interest with subject matter experts and engage in cross-agency action learning projects (e.g., the SHARP project mentioned above was developed as part of an action learning project).

Current Challenges for the HR Workforce

The skills and competencies required for federal HR professionals to succeed are significantly greater today than at any previous time in the evolution of the federal civil service system. Decentralization of HR authorities, HR information technology systems, increased HR flexibilities and alternatives, changing workforce demographics and the increased pace of change has made the job of the federal HR workforce a challenge under the best of circumstances. Add to that an environment in which the government is being asked to operate effectively with increasing workloads and declining resources and the people challenges in government can seem almost overwhelming.

Actions to improve the competence and capability of the federal HR workforce are being driven in part by an understanding that the cost to government and the public of a potential talent failure in any of the mission critical areas of government are unacceptable. A well-qualified and effective federal HR workforce is a vital part of the government's defense against such a failure.

Federal HR professionals, for example, must have a seat at the table when discussing how to attract and retain the best talent possible during a time of pay freezes, budget uncertainties and anti-public employee rhetoric. They must be able to lead or contribute to the conversation which may also include divergent views on how best to reshape the workforce and deal with performance issues at a time when increased productivity is essential. As another example, the recent report, *Making Smart Cuts: Lessons from the*

1990s Budget Front,⁵ authored by the Partnership and Booz Allen Hamilton, outlines eight strategies for dealing with budget cutbacks while still getting the mission accomplished. Federal HR staff must be able to help managers understand what combination of strategies may be most effective in different circumstances and how to establish the conditions for success.

The good news is that OPM and the CHCO community, as noted, have been developing a plan of action to address a number of overlapping issues and challenges concerning the federal HR workforce of the future. However, these good efforts could easily be derailed by the turnover among some of the most experienced members of the HR community who have been instrumental in those planning efforts. In FY 2011, for example, over 10 percent of the HR workforce left government (compared to a government-wide turnover rate of approximately seven percent for permanent employees) and this doesn't count the HR staff that left for other non-HR jobs in government. This can also be an opportunity, of course, if those who leave are replaced with quality hires and effective training and development programs and plans to help prepare them for the challenges ahead.

Under any scenario, however, federal HR professionals will be expected to "step up their game" and to help their respective departments and agencies not only cope in the difficult times ahead, but even improve. If this is to happen, federal agencies and leaders cannot return to a business as usual approach to acquiring and developing their HR workforce.

Recommendations for Additional Action

Below are several actions that government leaders and Congress can take to make a difference:

1. **The federal government needs to maintain its focus on improving the HR workforce and, if anything, it should increase the level of effort and resources devoted to these endeavors.** Such an investment can yield a significant return in terms of increased productivity and effectiveness for the government workforce as a whole.
2. **Improving the quality and competence of the federal HR workforce should be approached as a shared responsibility that involves leadership throughout the executive branch and Congress.** While OPM and the federal HR community have a major responsibility for improvement of the HR workforce, they need to be supported and encouraged in these efforts – and held accountability for results.
3. **Federal agencies should reward or recognized HR professionals who make the effort to expand their knowledge and skills.** This should include incentives and support for those who demonstrate or seek mobility in their career development (including the use of temporary development details to different HR functions or different lines of business) and for other self-development efforts.

⁵ *Making Smart Cuts: Lessons from the 1990s Budget Front*. Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton, September 27, 2011.

4. **Congress should also support efforts to expand the experience base of federal HR professionals – and other professional communities – by making mobility a mandatory requirement for entry into the Senior Executive Service.** This will help bring about a culture change that encourages HR professionals and others who aspire to senior leadership roles to seek mobility assignments and a broader experience base early in their careers.
5. **Congress could support executive branch efforts to build a better talent pipeline into the federal HR profession by establishing a government-wide federal HR intern program with the stated goal of attracting and developing the best talent available.** Such an intern program might build upon existing programs such as the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) program by targeting PMF finalists who have a particular interest in the HR field.
6. **OPM and Federal HR leaders also need to reach agreement on and implement a meaningful certification program for federal HR professionals.** While certification is not a guarantee that an HR staff member will be fully proficient and effective – it does increase the probability.
7. **OPM should be encouraged and supported in its effort to exercise a more proactive role in this area, one that includes encouraging greater cross-agency collaboration and sharing of resources.** As the federal government's central HR organization, OPM has a logical leadership role to play in advancing the HR profession but it needs to have a reasonable level of resources to devote to this end and it needs the full cooperation of the other executive branch departments and agencies.

Submitted to:

**Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government
Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District
of Columbia**

***“Building and Maintaining an Effective Human
Resource Workforce in the Federal Government”***

May 9, 2012

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Good afternoon. I am Dr. Sara Thompson, Dean of the Metropolitan School of Professional Studies and Associate Provost for New Program Initiatives at The Catholic University of America.

I would like to thank you -- Chairman Akaka, Senator Johnson, and committee members -- for the opportunity to discuss the important topic of building and maintaining an effective federal human resource workforce.

The three areas that I will address are: 1) the need for professional development in federal Human Resources, 2) Catholic University's academic programs for federal HR professionals, which provide an example meeting this need, and 3) the success of these programs thus far.

First, regarding professional development, the mission of Catholic University's Metropolitan School of Professional Studies is to offer educational opportunities to adult learners in the greater Washington DC region and beyond - - to be the bridge between employers and employees in helping to prepare the workforce. We offer programs that are academically rigorous, while being offered in evening and online formats for our students, many of whom work full-time in the federal government or who are aspiring to federal careers. We view our service to the largest employer in DC, the federal government, and the federal workforce as vital to our mission of outreach.

In this role, the School continuously researches areas in which significant knowledge and skills gaps and professional development needs exist. We found that federal HR, in particular, has significant needs. As with all areas of the federal government, the federal HR workforce faces a looming crisis caused by the large numbers of employees who are eligible for retirement, which in turn creates the need for proactive staffing and succession planning. Agencies will either grow their own or hire from outside. Furthermore, there is a significant transition in the field, moving from a primarily transactional focus involving, for example, payroll, staffing, compensation and benefits - - all functions that are vitally important - - to one that recognizes the importance of HR's role as strategic consultant. In addition, all HR professionals, current and future, will need to meet the standards of competencies developed in 2006 by the partnership between the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO's) and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

So, how can the federal government address these needs? Employee training and development -- through programs such as those offered by CUA's Metropolitan School of Professional Studies -- offers one effective approach. Metropolitan School has put forth a comprehensive federal HR professional development ladder for entry-, mid-, and senior-level personnel so that, no matter where federal HR professionals are in their careers, our programs can help prepare them for the next level.

For entry-level federal HR specialists in grades GS 5-9, we offer the Certificate in HR and the Bachelor of Arts in Management, both of which build competencies at the CHCO awareness-intermediate level. At the mid- and upper-GS levels, HR professionals can prepare for

promotion, and possibly Senior Executive Service, through obtaining a Master of Arts in HR Management with a specialized track in federal HR. This degree incorporates the CHCO competencies at the advanced-expert level. We believe that this is the only HR master's degree in the country with a specialization in federal HR and the only to integrate CHCO competencies. It is a 36-credit degree program, offered in the evenings and online in order to accommodate the work schedules of adult learners. Most students complete their degrees on a part-time basis in one and a half to two years.

Course offerings address general competency needs in leadership, communication, and team-building, as well as technical knowledge in federal staffing, compensation and benefits, strategic human capital management. The courses are taught by experienced individuals who either are, or have been, senior level federal HR professionals. As the only DC-based university with a partnership with the Society for Human Resource Management, we also prepare students in these programs for professional certifications including the highly-regarded credential of Professional in Human Resources (PHR) and Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR).

Catholic University offers these courses on-campus, on-site at employers' locations, and online. We have developed partnerships with several federal agencies including:

- HR University - - a collaboration between the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and the CHCO Council - - to offer our Master's program in federal HR,
- the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to offer our Master of Science in Management on-site at their central office, and
- NASA for the certification exam preparation course offered in association with the Society of Human Resource Management.

Our student population is about evenly split between federal workers who wish to take their careers to the next level versus those who want to enter the federal HR workforce. One faculty member said that for the federal workers, especially those who have risen through the ranks within the federal system, these programs can help expose them to a wider world of HR practice. We find that many are extremely well-versed in the technical aspects of their jobs, the laws, regulations and practices, but benefit tremendously from the course content and competency building to better understand and embrace a more strategic partnership with the leadership of their agencies.

Finally, the success of the programs are of course the learning outcomes measured by the university, but equally important is the application of the course material in federal workplaces, and the hiring and promotion of our graduates. Employing agencies confirm that we have succeeded in moving their graduates from a compliance-driven framework over to more strategic thinking about how their projects and tasks relate to the organization's mission.

In addition, students have offered the following feedback on the programs:

- This program has been both fruitful and invaluable to me as a young woman embarking on my career in Human Resources in the Federal Government. I feel I am thoroughly equipped, have received the necessary foundation, tools and resources to continue on in my journey in public service with the federal government in human resources.
- Since I have begun my studies I have been promoted twice, I have received the opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge learned to programs such as the Presidential Management Fellows Program (PMF) in the DC Assessment Center and the OPM mentoring program, in addition to my daily work assignments.
- The courses I have taken as part of the graduate program at CUA have definitely helped to jumpstart my career in the Federal Government. I started the program in the fall of 2009. Within the first semester of entering CUA's graduate program, I landed a job with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) working as a Management Analyst in the Office of the Executive Director (OED). While working full-time and going to school at night can be challenging, I was excited to learn that projects at work directly correlated to assignments in my classes. More specifically, I was tasked to write the OED submission for FERC's Human Capital Plan. The fact that I was taking an HR class entitled "Strategic Human Capital Management in the Federal Sector" at the time was extremely beneficial to me.

These student comments demonstrate the effectiveness such programs have in attracting and developing well-qualified federal HR employees. These programs serve to build a pipeline of highly qualified workers from within the agencies and attract those from the outside to a career of public service.

Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss this important issue.

Appendix A

Federal Human Resources Management Specialists *Professional Development Ladder*

	<i>Entry-level (e.g. GS 5,7,9)</i>	<i>Mid-level (e.g. GS 9,11,12)</i>	<i>Senior-level (e.g. GS 13,14,15)</i>
CHCO Council Competencies	Level 1-3 Awareness - Intermediate	Level 2-4 Basic - Advanced	Level 4-5 Advanced - Expert
The Catholic University of America (CUA)	Human Resources Certificate Bachelor of Arts in Management (B.A.Mgt.)	Bachelor of Arts in Management (B.A. Mgt.) Master of Arts in Human Resources Management (M.A.)	Master of Arts in Human Resources Management (M.A.)
International Public Management Association (IPMA)		Certified Specialist (CS) Certified Professional (CP)	Certified Specialist (CS) Certified Professional (CP)
Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)	Professional in Human Resources (PHR) Essentials of HRM	Professional in Human Resources (PHR) Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR)	Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR)

Note: CHCO Council Competencies are based on the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Memorandum for Chief Human Capital Officers dated April 28, 2006.

Appendix B

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Metropolitan School of Professional Studies



Master of Arts in Human Resource Management (M.A. in HRM)

The Catholic University of America offers a Master of Arts degree in Human Resource Management (M.A. in HRM) through Metropolitan School of Professional Studies, one of twelve academic schools within the university. Metropolitan's mission is to provide career-oriented, educational opportunities to working adults, with program offerings ranging from exam preparation courses to master's degrees.

The highly-regarded M.A. in HRM program is the flagship in Metropolitan's comprehensive collection of HR programs. In addition to the M.A. degree, Metropolitan's HR offerings include a Master of Science in Management with a "track" in human resource management, the bachelor's in business management/human resources, the professional certificate in human resource management, customized training in human resources, and PHR/SPHR certification and examination preparation.

Program Overview

Two versions of the M.A. in HRM program are offered to ensure relevance to students' particular interests and needs: the *HR Generalist* and *Federal HR*. Both versions of the program are designed for current and aspiring HR professionals who are seeking to pursue their academic goals while balancing personal and professional demands. The program schedules an extensive array of evening and online courses each semester to make it easy to complete the program on either a part-time or full-time basis.

The M.A. in HRM program focuses on the concepts, principles, and issues in human resource management as experienced by HR managers and practitioners. The emphasis is on providing an academic foundation that provides practicing HR professionals with the skills and knowledge both to perform their jobs more effectively and to understand better the organizational context within which they operate. Consistent with this orientation, M.A. in HRM courses are led by faculty-practitioners who are particularly skilled at teaching the theoretical concepts of HR with an emphasis on practical applications.

The program consists of a total of 12 courses, or 36 semester credits, and typically requires between 12 and 24 months to complete, depending on the student's course load. Students must earn at least a 'B' grade point average (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) -- both overall and on the final project completed as part of the capstone course, "Master's Capstone: Research, Synthesis, Applications."

Courses common to both versions of the M.A. in HRM program include:

- *Organization Theory and Behavior*
- *Labor-Management Relations*
- *HR Development and Training*
- *HR Info Systems & Communications*
- *Leadership and Organization*
- *Master's Capstone: Research, Synthesis, Applications*

Courses specific to the *HR Generalist* track include:

- *Management of Human Resources*
- *Compensation and Benefits*
- *Legal Environment in HR Management*
- *Conflict Resolution*
- *HR Budgeting & Metrics*
- *Strategic Planning for HR Managers*

Courses within the *Federal HR* track include:

- *Management of HR in the Federal Government*
- *Compensation & Benefits in the Federal Sector*
- *Legal Environment of HR in the Federal Sector*
- *Performance Management in the Federal Sector*
- *Strategies and Practices in Federal Staffing*
- *Strategic Human Capital Management in the Federal Sector*

Course Schedule

Metropolitan understands that -- with the demands of the job, family, and other commitments -- working professionals need an educational program that offers flexibility and convenience. As such, the M.A. in HRM program is available in both classroom-based and online formats to allow students to choose the option that best suits their personal situation and learning style.

Online

Starting in January 2013, the M.A. in HRM program will be available fully online. Student will focus on just one course at a time, with each course lasting approximately 8 weeks. Course will primarily be delivered asynchronously, offering students the ultimate in flexibility.

Classroom-Based

The following table provides a sample schedule for the classroom-based program. Participants usually take two courses per term, with each course meeting one evening per week, typically from either 6:10 – 8:40 p.m. or 6:35 – 9:05 p.m. The schedule is particularly tailored to students pursuing the program on a year-round, part-time basis, with significant breaks in late summer and late December. However, students may pursue the program more slowly if they prefer, or they may take a full-time load to complete the program in just a year.

Sample/Tentative Schedule: Master of Arts in HRM		
Term	Course/Evening 1	Course/Evening 2
Fall – Year 1	Management of Human Resources (in the Federal Government)	Labor-Management Relations
Spring – Year 1	Compensation & Benefits (in the Federal Sector)	Organizational Theory and Behavior
Summer – Year 1	Legal Environment in HRM (in the Federal Sector)	HR Development & Training
Fall – Year 2	Conflict Resolution <u>OR</u> Performance Management in the Federal Sector	HR Information Systems and Communications
Spring – Year 2	HR Budgeting & Metrics <u>OR</u> Strategies and Practices in Federal Staffing	Leadership and Organizations
Summer – Year 2	Strategic Planning for HR Managers <u>OR</u> Strategic Human Capital Management in the Federal Sector	Master's Capstone: Research, Synthesis, Application

Tuition and Fees

Tuition for the 2012-13 academic year is \$775 per credit. Each course awards 3 credits, with a total of 36 credits required by the program. Other fees associated with the program include a one-time new student fee of \$125, as well as modest "per semester" fees.

Advantages of CUA's Program

- Curriculum Relevant to All Types of Organizations: Managerial functions that apply to a wide variety of situations and institutions are covered, with emphasis on both the practical issues that HR professionals must address and the tools needed to fulfill job requirements.
- Exclusive Partnership with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM): As the only accredited university in D.C. partnering with SHRM to offer the exam preparation course for certification as a Professional in Human Resources (PHR) and Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR), CUA offers a program that builds on the core competencies of HR professionals and integrates current and best practices in the field of HR, as outlined by SHRM and the certification process. In addition, students have the opportunity to participate in CUA's student chapter of SHRM.

- **Flexible Schedule for Busy Working Adults:** The program is designed for students who, while already performing managerial functions in their regular work, are seeking an opportunity to gain new knowledge and skills in human resource management. The evening and online formats make it easy to fit this program into your busy schedule.
- **PHR and SPHR Exam Preparation Course:** Students who have enrolled in or completed their 27th credit in the program automatically qualify to attend the SHRM Learning System[®], the most highly-regarded program for PHR and SPHR exam preparation. Tuition charges for the course are waived; students pay only for the course materials, which are provided at a substantial discount.

Admission

Applicants must submit the following to be considered for admission:

- A completed CUA Graduate Application for Admission.
- Official transcripts from all colleges attended. A four-year baccalaureate degree from a regionally-accredited U.S. college, or its foreign equivalent, is required.
- Three letters of recommendation. Ideally, one should be academic (from a former faculty member) and one should be a professional recommendation (from a former or current supervisor).
- Statement of Purpose, approximately 500 words in length, stating the purpose for undertaking graduate studies, qualifications, personal and professional goals, and how participation in the program will help attain these goals.
- \$55 non-refundable application fee.
- Résumé.
- A pre-admission interview, if requested by the Admissions Committee.
- Additional credentials required for international applicants:
 - Official TOEFL or IELTS score report
 - Confirmation of Financial Support Form

Admission decisions are based on grade point average, undergraduate major, years and relevance of work experience, recommendations, writing ability, relevance/usefulness of program to meeting personal and professional objectives, and consultation with program staff or faculty.

For more information:

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Appendix C



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
Metropolitan School of Professional Studies

**Human Resource Management
 Program Mapping**

This chart lists the courses in Catholic University's Master of Arts in Human Resource Management program and how they parallel the learning objectives and competencies of the CHCO Council, and SHRM Learning System.

Master of Arts in Human Resource Management	CHCO Council Competencies	SHRM Learning System
<p>Management of Human Resources in the Federal Government (MBU 630)</p> <p>Surveys the strategies, policies, methods, realities, and ethical issues involved in human resource management in the Federal Government and relates these factors to the administration of all major HRM functions; looks beyond the traditional focus on HR transactions to provide a more contemporary strategic view of Federal Human Resources. Covers topics such as the Human Resource Line of Business (HRLOB), HR Outsourcing, and alignment with various mandates. The strategic and tactical impact of contemporary Human Resource Management practice is examined through class discussion, readings, case study, and practical exercises. The dual objectives of this course are (1) to provide a baseline understanding of Federal Human Resources and (2) to provide teamwork and business communication resources that will contribute to the student's long term success.</p>	<p>General: Attention to Detail Client Engagement/Change Management Creative Thinking Customer Service Integrity/Honesty Interpersonal Skills Legal, Government, and Jurisprudence Organizational Awareness Planning and Evaluating Stress Tolerance Teamwork Technical Competence Writing</p> <p>Technical: Overview of all technical competencies with a focus on Performance Management Recruitment/Placement Workforce Planning</p>	<p>Module One: Business Management & Strategy (partial)</p> <p>Module Two: Workforce Planning and Employment (partial)</p>

<p>Compensation and Benefits in the Federal Government (MBU 632)</p> <p>This course will focus on the compensation and benefits of the career Federal civil service, including career members of the Senior Executive Service, and will consider the following topical areas and associated issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Basic Components of Compensation and Benefits in the Federal Sector 2. The Legal Environment of Compensation and Benefits in the Federal Sector 3. The Foundation—Position Classification 4. Pay Schedules and Pay Adjustment Processes 5. Pay Administration Policies 6. Premium Pay, Allowances, and Differentials 7. Tools for Recruiting, Retaining, and Rewarding Federal Employees 8. The Rise (and Fall) of Performance-Based Alternative Pay Systems 9. Paid Time Off and Other Work-Life Benefits 10. Government-wide Benefits Programs. 	<p>General: Creative Thinking Decision Making Flexibility Legal, Government, and Jurisprudence Oral Communication Planning and Evaluating Reasoning Technical Competence Writing</p> <p>Technical: Classification Compensation Employee Benefits</p>	<p>Module Four: Compensation and Benefits</p>
<p>Legal Environment of Human Resources in the Federal Sector (MBU 633)</p> <p>Most Federal agencies manage their human resource (HR) programs using systems, laws and policies that are specific to the Federal government. The laws and regulations that comprise these Federal systems are designed and applied consistent with merit system principles and related public service values. Understanding those principles and values, their roots, and how they are operationalized in law and regulation is essential for the effective application of merit-based Federal HR management in achieving an agency's mission. In addition, for many areas of HR management, Federal agencies are also subject to the general employment laws that govern organizations throughout the United States. This course will focus on the Federal foundations, e.g., Title 5 law and related Code of Federal Regulations, which serve as</p>	<p>General: Attention to Detail Integrity/Honesty Legal, Government, and Jurisprudence Oral Communication Organizational Awareness Reading Reasoning Self-Management Teamwork Technical Competence Writing</p> <p>Technical: Employee Relations Legal, Government and Jurisprudence</p>	<p>Module One: Business Management & Strategy (partial)</p> <p>Module Two: Workforce Planning and Employment (partial)</p> <p>Module Six: Risk Management</p>

<p>both the power behind and constraints on Federal HR management systems. The course will consider the following topical areas and review issues associated with them: laws and regulations, the origin and evolution of the merit system, merit system principles, other public service values, prohibited personnel practices, and current issues and challenges in the HR legal and policy environment.</p>		
<p>Labor-Management Relations (MBU 543)</p> <p>Analyzes the economic and institutional aspects of collective bargaining and their impact. Addresses attitudes and policies of unions and management, negotiation and grievance procedures in both unionized and non-unionized organizations, ethical issues in labor-management relations, and public policies toward collective bargaining.</p>	<p>General: Client Engagement/Change Management Customer Service Flexibility Influencing/Negotiating Interpersonal Skills Legal, Government, and Jurisprudence Oral Communication Problem Solving Reading Reasoning Self-Management Stress Tolerance Teamwork</p> <p>Technical: Labor Relations</p>	<p>Module Five: Employee and Labor Relations</p>
<p>Organizational Theory and Behavior (MBU 510)</p> <p>Covers both the theoretical and empirical research on human behavior in business, public, and nonprofit institutions. Begins with the examination of internal structures such as hierarchy and authority and structural variations. Addresses the dynamic aspects of organization behavior, including such topics as leadership, motivation, supervision, communication, and control. The impact of cultural and ethical issues on organizational behavior is also covered. Goals for student learning include:</p>	<p>General: Client Engagement/Change Management Decision Making Influencing/Negotiating Interpersonal Skills Oral Communication Organizational Awareness Planning and Evaluating Reading Reasoning Self-Management Teamwork</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the basic concepts pertaining to Organizational Behavior • the practical implications of the theories that manage individuals and groups • our legal rights when dealing with others in the workplace • basic Motivational theories and practices in the workplace • group and team dynamics • leadership theory and practice • ethics and ethical practices in the workplace 	<p>Writing</p> <p><u>Technical:</u> Performance Management</p>	
<p>Performance Management in the Federal Sector (MBU 635)</p> <p>Performance Management in the Federal Sector provides an overview of the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures governing the appraisal/evaluation of performance – both individual and organizational – in today's federal government. The course will address each of these two levels of interest in turn, beginning with individual performance management, and examine the ways in which appraisals and evaluations of performance can or should influence decisions about individual compensation, organizational resources, and other human capital and institutional management issues. The course will seek to bring the concepts and considerations underlying these policies and procedures to life through focused examination of selected current topics/issues in federal performance management. Through a mixture of instructional lectures and participant driven discussions, class members will gain a fuller understanding of and appreciation for the practical challenges of creating and sustaining a performance culture in today's federal environment, and begin developing the skills required to contribute effectively to their current or future employers' efforts in this regard.</p>	<p><u>General:</u> Attention to Detail Client Engagement/Change Management Creative Thinking Customer Service Decision Making Flexibility Influencing/Negotiating Information Management Integrity/Honesty Interpersonal Skills Legal, Government, and Jurisprudence Oral Communication Organizational Awareness Planning and Evaluating Problem Solving Project Management Reading Reasoning Self-Management Planning and Evaluating Stress Tolerance Teamwork Technical Competence Workforce Planning Writing</p>	

<p>Leadership and Organization (MBU 663)</p> <p>Covers leadership theory and the process of leading. Relates the leadership function to organizational development. Addresses topics such as managers versus leaders; managing from a global perspective; ethical dilemmas in leadership; gender and leadership; leading through empowerment.</p>	<p><u>General:</u> Creative Thinking Decision Making Influencing/Negotiating Integrity/Honesty Organizational Awareness Planning and Evaluating Reasoning Self-Management Teamwork</p> <p><u>Technical:</u> Workforce Planning</p>	
<p>Human Resource Information System and Communications (MBU 627)</p> <p>The course provides an understanding of the role of Human Resource Information Systems and Communications in contemporary organizations through lecture, readings, case study, and practical exercises (both individual and group). Students will learn about the strategic and tactical challenges involved with an end-to-end implementation of HRIS. The primary objective of the course is to develop a working understanding of how contemporary information technology, when applied to human resource management, contributes to the strategic and operational goals of today's enterprises, both public and private.</p>	<p><u>General:</u> Information Management Planning and Evaluating Project Management Reasoning Planning and Evaluating Teamwork Technical Competence Writing</p> <p><u>Technical:</u> HR Information Systems</p>	
<p>Human Resource Development and Training (MBU 566)</p> <p>Explores theories and practices in training and development, addressing such topics as adult learning, instructional design, evaluation, coaching, job training, management development, organization development and change, and career development.</p>	<p><u>General:</u> Interpersonal Skills Oral Communication Planning and Evaluating Problem Solving Reading Reasoning Self-Management Stress Tolerance Teamwork</p> <p><u>Technical:</u> Technical Competence</p>	<p>Module Three: Human Resource Development</p>

	<p>Writing</p> <p>Technical: Employee Development</p>	
<p>Strategies and Practices in Federal Staffing (MBU 637)</p> <p>This course provides an understanding of the laws, regulations, and procedures used to fill federal job vacancies, and links these processes to the strategic management of human capital in federal agencies. It is divided into four distinct segments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the history and basic tenets of staffing law and policy; • staffing strategies and techniques used to fill federal positions; • how these programs are evaluated; and • the plans the federal government has to address newer generations of job applicants and changing needs of these individuals. <p>The focus of the course is on the role that staffing plays in meeting the strategic HR plans of the agency, while meeting public policy objectives as articulated in law and regulation. It prepares the student to be a strategic participant in recruiting talent for federal agencies and a human capital leader for the Federal government.</p>	<p>General: Creative Thinking Decision Making Interpersonal Skills Oral Communication Organizational Awareness Planning and Evaluating Problem Solving Project Management Reading Planning and Evaluation Teamwork Workforce Planning Writing</p>	<p>Module Two: Workforce Planning & Employment</p>
<p>Strategic Human Capital Management in the Federal Sector (MBU 638)</p> <p>This course provides an understanding of the strategic context in which HR programs must function in the federal government. The course will provide background on the evolution of human resources management practices leading to today's focus on human capital, describe the legal/regulatory framework underlying current SHCM programs and policies, and address trends in the nature, composition, and definition of the federal workforce. There will be a focus on roles and responsibilities of the various actors involved in human capital management, as well as an in-depth look at</p>	<p>General: Attention to Detail Client Engagement/Change Management Creative Thinking Customer Service Decision Making Flexibility Influencing/Negotiating Information Management Integrity/Honesty</p>	<p>Module One: Business Management & Strategy (partial)</p>

<p>workforce planning and analysis, the central methodology of SHCM. The course will also address key human capital strategies and talent management issues, along with the challenge of creating and sustaining a results/performance orientation in all aspects of HR program operations. The course will conclude with an assessment of barriers to pursuing genuine SHCM in the federal context, and offer guidance on ways to navigate these obstacles and succeed as a strategic HR practitioner.</p>	<p>Interpersonal Skills Legal, Government, and Jurisprudence Oral Communication Organizational Awareness Planning and Evaluating Problem Solving Project Management Reading Reasoning Self-Management Planning and Evaluating Stress Tolerance Teamwork Technical Competence Workforce Planning Writing</p>	
<p>Master's Capstone (MBU 673) Provides a synthesis of the concepts and principles addressed throughout the duration of the master's program. Students demonstrate an understanding of the material and its applications by completing a significant research paper or applied project.</p>	<p>Integration and application of all competencies</p>	
<p>Organizational Experience</p>		
<p>Across Curriculum</p>	<p>Decision-Making Interpersonal Skills Oral Communication Professional Ethics Problem-solving Writing</p>	

CHCO Council Competencies are based on the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Memorandum for Chief Human Capital Officers dated April 28, 2006.

Appendix D

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Metropolitan School of Professional Studies



Master of Science in Management (M.S.M.) Program

The Master of Science in Management (M.S.M.) degree program is offered by The Catholic University of America's Metropolitan School of Professional Studies to provide working adults with the skills, knowledge, and credentials necessary to progress in their management careers. The program focuses on the concepts, principles, and issues experienced by managers in all types of organizations -- commercial, governmental, educational, community, and nonprofit. The program combines a strong academic foundation with practical knowledge and skills in management, and -- as such -- is of potential relevance to anyone who maintains, or is assuming, managerial responsibilities.

For those who earn it, the degree should provide significant marketability. Within the D.C. metropolitan area, "management, business, and financial" occupations represent 22.5% of employment -- more than double the share for the U.S. economy as a whole. With an average of 2,357 annual openings anticipated each year between 2002 and 2012, "management, business, and financial" occupations are among those leading the way for job growth in D.C. In fact, many of the 25 fastest growing jobs in D.C. involve areas for which an M.S.M. would provide an excellent academic background.

The M.S.M. program consists of a total of 12 courses, or 36 semester credits, and requires between 12 and 24 months to complete, depending on the student's course load. Students must earn at least a 'B' grade point average (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) -- both overall and on the final project completed as part of the capstone course, "Master's Capstone: Research, Synthesis, Applications."

Core M.S.M. Courses:

Students complete eight core courses and four track courses to earn the M.S.M. degree. The core courses provide a broad foundation in the skills and knowledge necessary to be an effective manager. The M.S.M. core consists of the following courses:

- *Communicating Effectively as a Manager*
- *Managing People and Performance*
- *Managerial Decision-Making: Tools and Techniques*
- *Project Management*
- *Human Resource Management and Strategy*
- *Leadership Foundations*
- *Strategic Planning and Implementation*
- *Master's Capstone: Research, Synthesis, Applications*

M.S.M. Track Courses

In addition to the eight core courses, students complete four courses in a selected track. The program offers four "tracks" from which students may select to customize their educational experience. All of the tracks – listed below – are designed to provide students with skills and knowledge to help them succeed in their careers.

Federal Acquisition and Contract Management

In its report, "Where the Jobs Are: Mission Critical Opportunities for America," The Partnership for Public Service lists "contracting" among the top areas where government is hiring. Likewise, the Federal Acquisition Institute states on its Web site that, "... candidates for jobs in contracting are in high demand throughout the Federal Government." The track in Federal Acquisition and Contract Management is ideal for those students who are interested in capitalizing on the robust career opportunities for contracting professionals and who would enjoy the job security and benefits offered by employment in the U.S. federal government. These four courses are required in the track:

- Federal Contract Management and Administration
- Legal Aspects of Government Contracting
- Contract Pricing, Negotiations, and Source Selection
- Performance of Government Contracts

Human Resource Management

The Human Resource Management track within the M.S.M. program is designed to provide current and aspiring managers working in any department or organization with a deeper understanding of the role, tools, and techniques of the HR function in managing human capital. Students pursuing the Human Resource Management track may complete any four of the following courses:

- Legal Environment of Human Resource Management
- Human Resource Training and Development
- Compensation and Benefits
- Labor-Management Relations
- Leading Organizational Change
- Human Resource Information Systems and Communication
- Others, with advisor approval

Leadership

The Leadership track is unique in its focus on skills development. The focus of the Leadership courses is to provide students with a better conceptual understanding of leadership, to help them identify opportunities for their own development, and – ultimately – to facilitate the emergence of a better leader-manager. Students within the Leadership track complete the following:

- Ethical Leadership
- Leading Organizational Change
- Developing Leadership Competencies
- One additional course selected from:
 - Labor-Management Relations
 - Conflict Resolution
 - Advanced Managerial Communication
 - Human Resource Training and Development
 - Public Relations: Managing External Relations

Professional Communication

The Professional Communication track not only improves one's verbal and written communication skills, but also enhances skills and knowledge in interpersonal communication, organizational communication, and communication strategy. This track will help students see management and managerial communication through a whole new lens – and provide skills that will make them much more effective, knowledgeable, holistic, and strategic communicators. Students within the Professional Communication track complete the following:

- Public Relations: Managing External Relations
- Advanced Managerial Communication
- One course selected from:
 - Human Resource Development and Training
 - Conflict Resolution
- One additional course selected from:
 - Labor-Management Relations
 - Developing Leadership Competencies
 - Leading Organizational Change

Online-Only Option

MSPS understands what a working professional needs. We now offer our entire M.S.M. and M.A.-H.R.M. programs in a fully online format for the ultimate in flexibility and convenience.

Classroom-Based Program Schedule

The following table provides a sample schedule for the program. Participants will typically take two courses per term, with each course meeting one evening per week, typically from either 6:10 – 8:40 p.m. or 6:35 – 9:05 p.m. The schedule is particularly tailored to students pursuing the program on a year-round, part-time basis, with significant breaks in late summer and late December. However, students may pursue the program more slowly if they prefer, or they may take a full-time load to complete the program in just a year.

Sample/Tentative Schedule - Master of Science in Management (M.S.M.)		
Term	Course/Evening 1	Course/Evening 2
Fall – Year 1	Communicating Effectively as a Manager	Managing People and Performance
Spring – Year 1	Human Resource Management and Strategy	Managerial Decision-Making: Tools and Techniques
Summer – Year 1	Leadership Foundations	Project Management
Fall – Year 2	Strategic Planning and Implementation	Track Elective 1
Spring – Year 2	Track Elective 2	Track Elective 3
Summer – Year 2	Track Elective 4	Master's Capstone

Tuition and Fees

Tuition for the 2012-13 academic year is \$775 per credit. Each course awards 3 credits, with a total of 36 credits required by the program. Fees associated with the program include a one-time new student fee of \$125.

Student Services

The Catholic University of America is dedicated to serving the holistic needs of students, and, as such, students will find a full range of student services available at the university, including career services, health/gym facilities, student development seminars, academic skills assistance, a convenience store, banking facilities, a bookstore, dining facilities, etc. The campus is conveniently located at the Brookland-CUA stop on Metrorail's Red Line.

Admission

Applicants must submit the following to be considered for admission:

- A completed CUA Graduate Application for Admission.
- Official transcripts from all colleges attended. A baccalaureate degree from a regionally-accredited U.S. college, or its foreign equivalent, is required.
- Three letters of recommendation. Ideally, one should be academic (from a former faculty member) and one should be a professional recommendation.
- Statement of Purpose, approximately 500 words in length, stating purpose for undertaking graduate studies, qualifications, personal and professional goals, and how participation in the program will help attain these goals.
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- Résumé.
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- Additional credentials required for international applicants:
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Admission decisions are based on grade point average, undergraduate major, years and relevance of work experience, recommendations, writing ability, relevance/usefulness of the program to meeting personal and professional objectives, and consultation with program staff or faculty.

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