



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

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 DANIA TORRES WONG, DIRECTOR

January 17, 2006

Agenda: January 24, 2006

Board of Supervisors
 County of Santa Cruz
 701 Ocean Street
 Santa Cruz, CA 95060

REPORT BACK ON EEO ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

Dear Chairperson Stone and Members of the Board:

On October 18, 2005, staff presented your Board with an overview of the County's workforce composition over the previous ten year period, along with a set of recommended approaches for the County in general, and the Planning Department in particular, to remedy the underutilization of women and minorities where such underutilization exists. Your Board adopted those recommendations, and directed the EEO staff to return on January 24, 2006 with a status report on the implementation of those strategies, and to return with a second status update in May 2006.

As your Board knows, throughout the three-month period since our last report on EEO matters, the Personnel Department has been engaged in contract negotiations with several different bargaining units. This task has necessitated the temporary assignment of EEO staff members to the Employee Relations Unit. As a result, some of the recommendations have not yet been addressed. Since the October 18, 2006 report to your Board, EEO staff has focused on the following priorities:

- 1) Meeting with each administrative review department to help them develop a concrete, proactive plan to address their underutilization of women and minorities;
- 2) Working with the EEO Commission to plan the upcoming EEO Summit;
- 3) Training the County's supervisory employees on the prevention of sexual harassment to ensure the County's compliance with new State law training requirements by January 1, 2006, in accordance with Assembly Bill 1825 (between October and December the EEO Office trained approximately 400

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County employees in ten separate sessions on the prevention of sexual harassment); and,

- 4) Investigating and responding to EEO complaints and reasonable accommodation requests.

Below for your consideration, please find the requested implementation report reflecting progress made toward implementation of the recommendations between October 18, 2005 and January 17, 2006.

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNTYWIDE AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT STRATEGIES FOR INCREASED UTILIZATION OF WOMEN AND MINORITIES

A. Countywide Strategies

1. Request the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the State Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) to Provide Technical Assistance.
EEO has not yet implemented this recommendation, but will do so in time to report back in May 2006 on the advice received from these agencies.
2. Conduct an EEO Summit.
EEO staff and the EEO Commission are actively planning an EEO Summit. The Commission's an Ad Hoc EEO Summit planning subcommittee, comprised of Commission Vice-Chair Carol Turley and Commissioners Ricardo Alcaino and Ruben Chavez, has met several times with the Acting EEO Officer and the Employment Services Manager and will be presenting its proposal for a March 25, 2006 EEO Summit to the full EEO Commission at its quarterly meeting on January 18, 2006. The proposed Summit includes a keynote address by Dr. Manuel Pastor on demographic changes in Santa Cruz County, an overview of current County workforce diversity policies and practices, and five separate breakout groups designed to elicit the input of other County commissions and community groups on new ways to diversify the County's workforce.
3. Expand the Scope of the Administrative Review Program
The EEO division is in the process of implementing this recommendation. Staff has met with the head of each administrative review department to develop new innovative and aggressive approaches to the recruitment and retention of minorities and women, and each department head has provided the EEO Office with a draft plan to eliminate their underutilization of women and/or minorities. Staff is currently working with the departments to finalize these plans. The EEO division has informed each department head that he or she will be expected to report to your Board in May 2006 regarding progress made toward achieving a workforce that is reflective of the available labor pool.

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4. Artificial Barriers to Work Place Diversity

The following steps have been taken to implement this recommendation:

A. Review of Targeted Classifications.

Due to the Personnel Department workload priority of negotiations, several Personnel staff shifted from classification to negotiations, resulting in a severe classification backlog. Beginning in January 2006, the Personnel Department reconstituted its classification group, which is currently working to clear up the classification backlog and to classify Proposition 63 positions. The department will be in a position after March of this year to launch a systematic review of the County's classifications to ensure that the job specifications for each position are consistent with bona fide occupational needs and do not create artificial barriers to employment. We will report back on our findings in May 2006.

B. Review of Physical Lifting Requirements of Targeted Classifications.

The Public Works Department has informed our office that it is nearly finished with a review of lifting requirements and will be recommending revisions to the job specifications of several entry-level service and maintenance positions to reflect lower lifting levels. This change should make it easier for more women to meet the lifting requirements for these positions.

C. Review Hours of Employment of Targeted Classifications.

The General Services Department has conducted a survey of its current female employees to determine whether the 3:30 a.m. start time constitutes a barrier to women with childcare responsibilities. The Department found that the majority of the employees in these positions, including women, like the hours as they allow them to seek outside employment and/or to be at home when their children return from school. Therefore while no change will be made in this instance, the EEO division will continue to review hours of employment to ensure that they do not present an artificial barrier to employment.

5. Expand School to Work Strategies

The County has made great strides in implementing this recommendation. Since your October Board action, County departments have become increasingly attuned to the value of bringing students on board early on, to help them "grow their own" trained employees, as well as establishing linkages to educational institutions. For example, the Animal Services Authority now utilizes interns from the Regional Occupational Program's Veterinary Assistant class, the Planning Department is in the process of establishing a paid internship program for college work-study students (and County Counsel is exploring doing the same with law students) and General Services has successfully joined forces with CareerWorks and Women Ventures to significantly increase the female applicants for service and maintenance positions. The District Attorney is also exploring new approaches to law student recruitment, which will be the subject of a separate report back at a later date.

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6. Expand Outreach

Several departments have already expanded outreach since our last report to your Board. For example, each administrative review department has now appointed a department EEO point-person to meet with Personnel recruitment staff prior to each new recruitment, in order to collaborate on the development of a comprehensive outreach plan designed to reach the broadest possible applicant pool. In addition, administrative review department employees now regularly accompany Personnel to job fairs and career day events to promote positions in their departments.

We anticipate that the EEO Commission's upcoming EEO Summit will generate additional outreach ideas as well as help the County establish new connections to increase our access to diverse candidate pools.

7. Develop Retention Strategies

Staff is currently analyzing turnover statistics of both departments and occupational categories with significant underutilizations of minorities of women and will return to your Board in May 2006 with recommendations on how to reduce employee turnover in these areas.

B. Planning Department Strategies

The Planning Department is moving quickly toward implementing the recommendations that your Board adopted last October. The Planning Department has seen a three percent increase in minorities since our last report to your Board, and we expect the department will continue this trend as it implements the remaining recommendations. Since the October 18, 2005 report back to your Board, the Department has taken the following steps:

1. Training

The Planning Director has discussed the Department's needs with diversity training consultant Walt Thomas and is currently negotiating an arrangement for Mr. Thomas to provide assistance to the department in training the management team. This training will be designed to expand the department's employees' understanding of the value of cultural diversity.

2. Recruitment

Planning staff has pursued the following initiatives: 1) participated in job fairs at the Coconut Grove last October and at UCSC on Jan. 11, 2) broadened the list of organizations notified of job openings, 3) begun the process of establishing contacts with local and regional educational institutions, including meeting with the Dean of Architecture and Regional Planning at Cal Poly, to discuss student internship and field placement opportunities; 4) worked with the Latin American Studies Field Placement office at UCSC to identify discreet tasks for student interns and posted a

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field placement job description for that program; and, 5) worked more closely with Personnel on EEO on each recruitment to ensure a diverse candidate pool.

3. Retention

The Department has obtained a list of prior employees and contact information and is in the process of interviewing these former employees to determine the basis for their departure.

4. Promotional Only Examinations

This recommendation has been implemented. The Planning Department now submits a written memo to the Personnel Director explaining its reasons for requesting promotional-only recruitments, and the Personnel Director determines whether to approve the request.

5. Advertising

The Department now works very closely with Personnel on each individual recruitment to encourage a diverse candidate pool. Planning has increased both the staff and monetary resources it devotes to advertising, which has allowed it to now advertise department positions on several more websites and newspapers/publications than in the past. Department staff now accompany Personnel representatives to job and career fairs to promote Planning positions. In addition, based on consultation with the Planning Department, Personnel has greatly expanded the number of job bulletins that it mails out for Planning positions, now including far more junior colleges, minority professional organizations and both City and County Planning Departments than ever before.

6. Internship and Work Study Program

This recommendation has been implemented. The Department will soon be entering into a work-study contract with UCSC through which it will seek to attract paid student interns from diverse backgrounds into the department to provide them with exposure to and training in the planning field in the hope that they will return to the department as permanent employees upon completing their education. The Department has also been working with the Latin American Studies Field Placement office at UCSC and has posted a placement opportunity in an effort to attract a field study student.

7. Appointing Authority

This recommendation has been implemented. The Planning Director now personally interviews all final candidates for positions in the department, makes the ultimate hiring decisions and is responsible for ensuring that the most qualified candidates are hired based solely on merit yet incorporates the value and importance of cultural diversity in making merit based decisions. This is a model we would encourage for all departments on administrative review.

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8. Examination Process

Personnel reviews each Planning Department applicant flow report to determine whether testing processes cause any adverse impact on minorities. To date, no adverse impact has been identified.

In addition to the above actions, Planning recently made its entire website bilingual, and has designated ten key positions in the department as bilingual-only for future recruitments, and has revised the first time homebuyer assistance program it administers in order to make County employment more appealing to potential candidates.

II. DEPARTMENTS NEWLY ON ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Since the time of the last EEO report back to your Board, three additional departments - Animal Services Authority, Auditor-Controller and County Counsel -- have been placed on administrative review due to the underutilization of minorities. The addition of these departments to the roster of those on administrative review is unfortunate and unanticipated. However, each of these departments is among the County's smallest, where the addition or loss of even one or two employees can make a tremendous difference to the utilization statistics. All three of the new administrative review departments experienced an unusually high level of employee turnover in the past year, from which they will take some time to recover. Personnel is working closely to help each of these departments develop a proactive plan to increase their utilization of minorities, and will support and assist them as they move to restore greater diversity to their respective workforces.

Conclusion

Since this issue last came before your Board in October 2005, the departments on administrative review have taken a new look at the reasons for and possible solutions to their underrepresentation of women or minorities. Each administrative review department head, without exception, has significantly increased his or her personal involvement in and commitment to remedying this underutilization. This renewed level of awareness and dedication is already beginning to generate positive results in terms of diverse hiring statistics.

We thank you for this opportunity to revisit and revitalize the County's administrative review program and look forward to reporting back to your Board in May 2006 regarding the successes of the recommendations described herein.

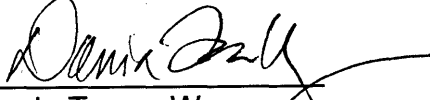
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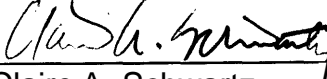
IT IS THEREFORE RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

Accept and file this report, and

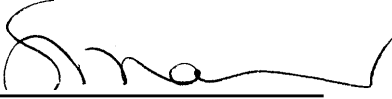
Direct the Personnel Department to report back to the Board in May 2006 on progress made toward the implementation of the recommendations.

Sincerely,


Dania Torres Wong
Personnel Director


Claire A. Schwartz
Acting EEO Officer

RECOMMENDED:


Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Officer

cc: Each Department Head
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Women's Commission
Commission on Disabilities
Latino Affairs Commission
Claire Schwartz, Acting EEO Officer