



DIVERSITY@WORK

A PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT & EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY,
A PROGRAM OFFICE WITHIN VA'S OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2

<<http://www.va.gov/dmeeo/ca/daw.htm>>

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008

DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT: CONFLICTING AGENDAS?

In November 2007, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sponsored the first "Federal Agencies Diversity Briefing" in Washington, D.C. At that briefing, Dr. Roosevelt Thomas, author of *Beyond Race and Gender and Building on the Promise of Diversity* pointed out that in his work as a diversity consultant, he has seen diversity efforts stall out because of conflicting agendas.

According to Dr. Thomas, some people think that the proper focus of diversity management is on addressing under-representation; others focus on understanding and valuing the diversity of the workforce they have; still others focus on developing their diverse workforce and

removing barriers to their success; and others focus on leveraging the diversity of their workforce—taking full advantage of what people have to offer—in order to meet the strategic goals and objectives of their organization.

Dr. Thomas pointed out that these points of view are not mutually exclusive or sequential in nature. It is possible—and desirable—to integrate these perspectives, with an emphasis on the last one: that is, leveraging diversity.

Linda Stokes, president and CEO of PRISM International (a diversity consulting firm), also recommends a comprehensive diversity process. [Continued on page 3]

CELEBRATE!

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday and Black History Month

VA proudly joins the Nation in celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 79th birthday anniversary on January 21, 2008, and Black History Month, observed in February.



Each year on the third Monday of January, the Federal Government honors the birth of Dr. King. 2008 marks the 22nd anniversary of the national holiday in Dr. King's honor and 40 years since his passing. The national theme for the observance is: "Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On...Not A Day Off."

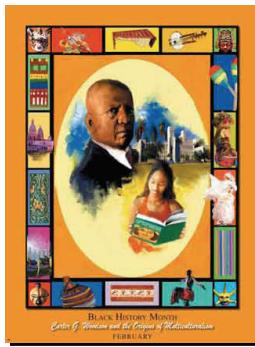
Also, the month of February is designated Black History Month. In 1915, educator and historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, which was later renamed the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. It was through this organization that Negro History Week was first celebrated in 1926 and, subsequently,

Black History Month was established in 1976.

This observance celebrates the accomplishments and contributions that African Americans have made. The 2008 Black History Month theme is "Carter G. Woodson and the Origins of Multiculturalism."

Overall, employment of African Americans at VA was 24.43 percent in fiscal year 2007 (FY07). African Americans in the leadership pipeline (GS 13–15) grew to 12.92 percent in FY07. Also in FY07, approximately 41 percent of African American employees were veterans.

For more information on VA's African American Program, contact Wanda Jones, National Program Manager, at <wanda.jones@va.gov>. ■



IN THIS ISSUE:

FIELD NOTES News You Can Use	2
WEB SITE SPOTLIGHT NMAAHC	2
17TH ANNUAL EEO AWARDS Congratulations to the Winners!	3
DM&EEO ONLINE Our Mission	4
DIVERSITY CALENDAR Upcoming Events	4

BOOKMARKS

- ▶ African American Federal Executives Association www.aafea.org
- ▶ African American Planning Commission, Inc. www.aapci.org
- ▶ Black Biomedical Research Movement www.bbrm.org
- ▶ Blacks in Government www.bignet.org
- ▶ First Freedom Center www.firstfreedom.org
- ▶ Institute for African American Studies www.uga.edu/~iaas
- ▶ Mentor www.mentoring.org
- ▶ BlackWomen'sAgenda.org www.blackwomensagenda.org
- ▶ World Religion Day www.worldreligionday.org

Contact information for other diversity-related organizations can be found on the DM&EEO Web site at: www.va.gov/dmeeo/org

FIELD NOTES

News You Can Use

Nontraditional Student Internships

DM&EEO will be hosting VA's 2008 National Summer Internship Briefing in February. Representatives from various organizations will attend to provide a brief overview of their internship programs and answer any questions. Brief descriptions of each internship program and administering organization can be found in the 2008 National Internship Program Guide. Look for this guide shortly on DM&EEO's Web site at <www.va.gov/dmeeo/spi/internships.htm>.

DM&EEO advocates the use of nontraditional student internship programs and has agreements with the American Indian Science and Engineering Society; Historically Black Colleges and Universities through the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education; Washington Internships for Native Students; the Washington Center; and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, where VA ranks consistently among the top Federal partners. The Department also participates in the Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students With Disabilities and the National Cemetery Administration is now working with Minority Access, Inc. These organizations are viewed as partners in VA's efforts to develop a high-performing, diverse workforce and the nontraditional internship program enables VA offices to address immediate staffing needs as well as workforce planning and diversity goals.

For more information on the upcoming 2008 National Summer Internship Briefing, contact Brenda Martin, National Internship Program Coordinator for DM&EEO, at <Brenda.Martin@va.gov>.

2008 LULAC Veterans Summit

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and VA, through the Community Prosperity Partnership (CPP), are collaborating on the 2008 LULAC Veterans Summit scheduled for January 24–26, 2008, at El Tropicano Hotel in San Antonio, Texas.

The Summit consists of two days of seminars that will focus on key issues facing both veterans and the community including civic engagement, veterans rights, cultural diversity, education opportunities, job placement, entrepreneur development, financial management, health care, immigration policy, community empowerment, leadership skills, and veterans services. In addition, job and health fairs will be sponsored by Federal, state, and local governments, along with the private sector and institutions of higher education. For more information on the 2008 LULAC Veterans Summit, visit LULAC's Web site at <www.lulac.org>. For more information about CPP, visit <www.va.gov/cpp>.■



WEB SITE SPOTLIGHT

National Museum of African American History and Culture <<http://nmaahc.si.edu>>

Content: Beginning with African American veterans of the Civil War, and the children of slaves who marched with them in Washington in 1915, African Americans have desired a space on the National Mall. The museum on the Web is the online experience of the new National Museum of African American History and Culture which was established on December 19, 2003, when President Bush signed into law legislation establishing the museum as part of the Smithsonian Institution. It is the first national museum to be devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American life. The museum, which is estimated to be complete by December 2015, will be located between Constitution Avenue, Madison Drive, and 14th and 15th Streets, NW, in Washington, DC. This Web site offers information on African American history and culture and provides visitors with a number of African American resources.

Must-See Feature: Understand the African American experience from the earliest days of America until the present by navigating through the NMAAHC Interactive Timeline (linked from the blue box at the bottom of the home page). Photographs, accounts of historical moments, biographical information on significant figures in African American history, and much more can be found in the timeline.

Accessibility: No accessibility information offered.

Contact Info:

NMAAHC
PO Box 37012
Washington, DC 20013-7012
(202) 633-7369
<NMAAHCinfo@si.edu>■

THE SECRETARY'S 17TH ANNUAL EEO AWARDS

Congratulations to the 2007 Awardees!

On Thursday, November 15, 2007, the Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Gordon H. Mansfield, hosted the Secretary's 17th Annual Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Awards Ceremony. These awards are the highest recognition given to Department employees who have excelled in promoting or have made significant contributions to VA's EEO Program. Awards were given in five categories and each recipient received a plaque and a cash award in the amount of \$2,500.

The winner in Category A, non-supervisory employees, is **Tammie R. Kierstead**, Equal Opportunity Assistant at the VA Medical Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. As the liaison to the EEO Advisory

Committee, Ms. Kierstead challenges committee members (and others) to stay finely-tuned to the needs and goals of the entire workforce. Her enthusiasm and creativity in support of the medical center's extensive EEO initiatives help EEO representatives think "outside the box."

The winner in Category B, supervisors and managers through GS-14 (or equivalent), is **Sandra Simmons**, EEO Manager at the VA Medical Center in Coatesville, Pennsylvania. Through her visionary leadership, Ms. Simmons helped to design the VISN Alternative Dispute Resolution (Mediation) Program.

The winner in Category C, managers and executives GS-15 and above, is **Sande Jones**, Veterans Service Center Manager at the VA

Regional Office in Waco, Texas. Ms. Jones has developed a unified team spirit in the Veterans Service Center, where her vision of fairness, respect, appreciation, and valuing of individual differences is thoroughly communicated and shared.



*Deputy Assistant Secretary for DM&EEO,
Susan McHugh (left), and the
Secretary's 17th Annual EEO Award Recipients*

The winner in Category D, EEO program representatives, is **Pamela McKinney**, EEO Program Manager for the VA Medical Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Ms. McKinney has been a great facilitator of dispute resolution and is a key ingredient in the successful alternate dispute resolution/mediation process currently in place at the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center.

The winner in Category E, employees promoting programs for disabled veterans and people with disabilities, is **Tristen V. Wendland**, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at the VA Regional Office in Denver, Colorado. Ms. Wendland recently accepted the responsibility of coordinating and managing the "Coming Home to Work" (CHTW) program. This initiative provides early outreach and job experience to severely wounded Iraqi/Afghanistan service members who are pending medical discharge from active duty.

For more information on the award recipients and for further description of their extensive accomplishments, visit the DM&EEO Web site: www.va.gov/dmeeo/ca/eeoawards.htm. ■

DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT: CONFLICTING AGENDAS?

Continued from Page 1

Such a process would include increasing representation, understanding diversity, managing diversity, and leveraging diversity.

According to Ms. Stokes, most organizations spend a large portion of their resources on increasing representation at specific levels and job categories. But if adequate time and resources are not devoted to the remaining components of the diversity process, she says, the organization and the workforce will be caught in a "spin cycle." Here's how she describes the impact of that cycle:

Without learning to understand how to work together, new recruits and existing employees will be less than fully productive. Without managing diversity (that is, looking at the organization's culture and systems), the barriers that are preventing success or the systems which help to attract and retain the workforce will not be identified, changed, or reinforced. And unless those components are addressed, the organization will not benefit from the diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences of its employees—that is, it will not leverage diversity.

Diversity@Work

is published by the national Office of DM&EEO, a program office within VA's Office of Human Resources & Administration. To subscribe or unsubscribe, e-mail <dmeeo@va.gov>

CONTACT US

Mail:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of DM&EEO (06)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Phone:

(202) 501-1970

Fax:

(202) 501-2145

E-mail the Editor:

<dmeeo@va.gov>

Visit our Web site,
<www.va.gov/dmeeo>
for additional staff
e-mail addresses.

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

Under Secretary for Health
Diversity Advisory Board
<www.va.gov/diversity>

VA's Office of Human
Resources & Administration
<www.va.gov/ofcadmin/
portal>

VA's Office of Resolution
Management
<www.va.gov/orrm>

VA's Office of Human
Resources Management
<www.va.gov/ohrm>

GOT NEWS?

We want to hear from you!
If you'd like to share your
story ideas, comments, or
suggestions,
please e-mail us at
<dmeeo@va.gov>
with the words
DIVERSITY@WORK in the
subject line.

DM&EEO ON THE INTERNET <www.va.gov/dmeeo>



The DM&EEO mission is to increase awareness and acceptance of diversity and to promote a flexible and inclusive work environment throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs. Our vision is of a work environment that fosters respect, fairness, and opportunity for all employees. Here's a sampling of online tools available that can help leverage diversity and build inclusion:

- ▶ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, Black History Month, and other special observance resources.
- ▶ Events, conferences, conventions, and programs.
- ▶ Links to professional and community organizations.
- ▶ Best practices for diversity management.

DM&EEO IN YOUR E-MAIL INBOX

Once a week, DM&EEO sends out *NewsLink*, an e-mail message with annotated links to current news items and other information related to leveraging diversity and building inclusion. For a FREE subscription to this weekly electronic news service, e-mail us at <dmeeo@va.gov> with the words SUBSCRIBE NEWS in the subject line. You can find a current copy of *NewsLink* on the DM&EEO Web site at this address: <www.va.gov/dmeeo/ca/newslink.htm>.

DM&EEO ON YOUR TV SCREEN (OR PC MONITOR)

Diversity News is a monthly video program produced by the VACO Broadcasting Center for DM&EEO. Each program runs for a month, immediately following *VA News*. A copy of each program will be placed on the DM&EEO Web site (when the files become available) at this address: <www.va.gov/dmeeo/ca/diversitynews.htm>.

FROM THE 2008 DIVERSITY CALENDAR

JANUARY

National Mentoring Month

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday
January 15 (observed January 21)

Religious Freedom Day
January 16

National Policy Alliance Biennial Summit
“Movers & Shakers: Making Meaningful
Policies”
January 17–18; Washington, DC
<www.bignet.org>

2008 League of United Latin American
Citizens Veterans Summit
January 24–26; San Antonio, Texas
<www.lulac.org>

Assistive Technology Industry
Association Annual Conference and
Leadership Forum on Accessibility
January 30–February 2; Orlando, FL
<www.ata.org>

FEBRUARY

Black History Month

CAREERS & the *disABLED Magazine*'s
Career Expo For People With
Disabilities
February 6; Los Angeles, CA
<www.eop.com>

National Association for Bilingual
Education Conference
February 6–9; Tampa, FL
<www.nabe.org>

Lunar New Year
(Year of the Rat)
February 7

2008 DeafNation Expo
February 23; Greensboro, NC
<www.deafnation.com>