



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 5, ISSUE 4

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

MAY/JUNE 2006

THE ROLE OF THE SEPM

Do you know what it takes to be a Special Emphasis Program Manager?

So you've taken on the role as a Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) for your VA facility. Now what? Well, managing a Special Emphasis Program (SEP) is more than just planning a party once a year for your program. In addition to planning special observances, the critical duties of a SEPM include workforce analysis, forming a Resource Allocation Plan, and implementation.

SEPs were initiated to address the employment-related needs of individuals not specifically included in other programs where a need for special emphasis or

employment concerns of such individuals has been demonstrated. VA SEPs ensure that women, minorities, and people with disabilities in the VA workforce receive employment and advancement opportunities on an equal basis. VA's SEPs include the Federally legislated or mandated Federal Women's Program, Hispanic Employment Program, and People with Disabilities Program. Other special emphasis activities include Asian American and Pacific Islander Employment, the Black Special Emphasis Program, and the Native American Program. [Continued on page 3.]

CELEBRATE!

National Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

VA proudly joins the Nation in celebrating National Asian Pacific American (APA) Heritage Month in May. This year's theme is "Celebrating Decades of Pride, Partnerships and Progress."

In 1979, a joint congressional resolution established Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week. The first 10 days of May were chosen to coincide with two important milestones in Asian/Pacific American history: the arrival in the United States of the first Japanese immigrants (May 7, 1843) and contributions of Chinese workers to the building of the transcontinental railroad, completed on May 10, 1869. In 1992, Congress expanded the 10-day observance to a month-long celebration.

Managers and supervisors are encouraged to plan observance activities this month and throughout the year. VA Central Office will be holding two events in the G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery Veterans Conference Center. The first of these will be held on Thursday, May 18, and will feature APA programs depicting cultural, musical, performance, and artistic work.



For more observance resources, visit <http://www.va.gov/dmeeo>. To learn more about VA's Asian American and Pacific Islander Program, contact David Walton at (202) 501-0215 or David.Walton@va.gov. ■

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BOOKMARKS

- ▶ **National Council on Aging**
www.ncoa.org
- ▶ **The Interfaith Alliance & the Interfaith Alliance Foundation**
www.interfaithalliance.org
- ▶ **Human Rights Campaign**
www.hrc.org
- ▶ **Alliance for Work-Life Progress**
www.awlp.org
- ▶ **Families and Work Institute**
www.familiesandwork.org
- ▶ **Diversity Best Practices**
www.diversitybestpractices.com
- ▶ **Diversity Leadership Forum**
www.diversityleadershipforum.org
- ▶ **Asian Women in Business**
www.awib.org
- ▶ **Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc.**
www.leap.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

Summer Intern Welcome

As part of DM&EEO's outreach efforts, a welcome program has been scheduled for this year's VA summer interns recruited under the 2006 National Internship Program. The welcome will take place on Monday, June 5, 2006, from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in the G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery Veterans Conference Center in VA Central Office.

The purpose of the event is to provide an orientation for all of VA's summer interns. The keynote speaker will be the Honorable R. Allen Pittman, Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration. The summer internship program is a 10-week work experience that provides college students valuable on-the-job training and helps them make educated career choices. The goal of the program is to provide interns with a greater understanding of Government operations, policy making, and the rich reward of public service.

This year's interns were recruited by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, the American University's Washington Internships for Native Students, the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, and the Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities.

If there are any questions regarding the event or VA's National Internship Program, please contact Brenda A. Martin, National Internship Program Coordinator, at (202) 501-2099 or at brenda.martin@va.gov.

Diversity News

Look for the May and June episodes of DM&EEO's monthly news program, *Diversity News*, on the VA Knowledge Network's Communications Channel 2. *Diversity News* is also available on the DM&EEO Web site at <http://www.va.gov/dmeeo/ca/diversitynews.htm>. The May broadcast focuses on the business case for diversity. The June episode is dedicated to affirmative action, equal employment opportunity, and diversity management—how they differ and why their differences matter. The programs also include updates to the 2006 diversity calendar. Also, if you'd like to share your story ideas, comments, or suggestions for *Diversity News*, please e-mail us at dmeeo@va.gov with the words DIVERSITY NEWS in the subject line.

Farewell!

Brent Bailey, DM&EEO's Staff Assistant, transferred to the Department of Defense as the Staff Director of EEO Policy and Compliance at the Defense Logistics Agency. Best wishes, Mr. Bailey!■

WEB SITE SPOTLIGHT

Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC)

<http://www.fapac.org>

Content: The Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) was founded in 1985. It is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing the civilian and military Asian Pacific American (APA) employees in the Federal and District of Columbia Governments.

FAPAC is organized exclusively for educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The primary purpose of FAPAC is to serve as an interagency association within the Federal and District of Columbia Governments, providing a focus for over 30 ethnically distinct groups originating from Asian and Pacific regions as recognized by the United States Bureau of the Census.

FAPAC is an organization that promotes equal opportunity and cultural diversity for APAs within the Federal and District of Columbia Governments. FAPAC encourages the participation and

advancement of APAs in the Government work force.

FAPAC will be a nationally recognized organization that serves as a conduit through which the interests, issues and representation of APAs in the Federal, State, County, City, and District of Columbia Governments are addressed. It will also promote partnerships with the public and private sectors in the community it serves.

Must-See Feature: "Favorite Links" from the home page offers links to the Web sites of APA organizations and other Federal Government links.

Contact Info: fapac@fapac.org
P.O. Box 23184
Washington, DC 20026-3184

Accessibility: No information offered.■



THE ROLE OF THE SEPM

(Continued from Page 1)

Your role as a SEPM will include the following duties and responsibilities:

- To identify and assist in eliminating discriminatory practices and procedures and other barriers to equal opportunity.
- To initiate and conduct programs and other activities to assure appropriate representation of women, minorities, and people with disabilities.
- To provide an effective channel of communication to management regarding women, minorities, and people with disabilities to express particular concerns and issues of the group.

VA's facility SEPMs provide program leadership and direction for the SEP in their organizational units, and support the National SEPM in implementing a viable SEP Department-wide. In their organizational units, facility SEPMs will:

- Evaluate and report the recruitment, selection, placement, promotion, training, counseling, and career development policies and practices.
- Develop and coordinate the development of SEP annual plans which are incorporated in the organizational units' annual plan of operations.
- Analyze and evaluate statistical reports of the workforce in areas such as awards, workforce

distribution, training, attrition, under representation, and under-utilization, to identify barriers to the recruitment, employment, and advancement of relevant program group, and recommend corrective action, if needed.

- Participate in developing and implementing affirmative employment program plans.
- Provide training resources for equal employment workshops, seminars, and meetings.
- Participate, as directed, on task forces and in study groups that examine issues relative to relevant program group's employment concerns.
- Serve as a local representative at national and state meetings concerned with relevant program group's issues.
- Serve as a communication link between employees and the national SEPM, keeping employees aware of SEP activities through memoranda, bulletins, newsletters, and other appropriate means.
- Perform other duties related to the SEP as identified by the DM&EEO National SEPM, and SEP committees, as appropriate. *For more information on the role of the SEPM, contact Wanda Jones, National EEO Manager, at wanda.jones@va.gov.* ■

SUCCESSFUL STUDENT RECRUITMENT

"Talent Link" Article Features DM&EEO Staff Member

Max Collier, a Management Analyst in DM&EEO, was featured in the March 2006 *Talent Link* electronic newsletter distributed by VA Careers (www.VAcareers.va.gov). In the article, "Six Secrets of Successful Student Recruitment," Mr. Collier describes six secrets of showing students and new graduates ways to a prosperous career in the Veterans Health Care System.

Students and new graduates aren't always sure where to go with their career, so it is very important to show them how a VA career can be a successful one. In the article, Mr. Collier suggests:

- *The devil is in the details.* "Three details students respond to are location, VA's successes, and our benefits package," Mr. Collier says. "Location gives them a choice of staying where they are or relocating to another region, VA's accomplishments in quality care and research let them know they are joining a winning team, and everyone recognizes the value of our benefits package."
- *The elevator pitch.* "You have to connect with students," Mr. Collier says. "Learn what their interests are, find out where they're coming from. But do it quickly, because you only have a minute or two."
- *Create a "big" interest.* "Sometimes I break the ice

by asking them how big they think VA is," says Mr. Collier. "They're surprised when I tell them VA has 235,000 employees and operates the largest healthcare system in the world. This impresses them and makes them more flexible with their preconceived notions."

- *When opportunity knocks.* "Students are always interested to hear that the baby boomers will all be retiring in the next ten years," Mr. Collier says. "This creates a lot of advancement opportunities in the coming years."
- *Our mission.* "We at the VA are very fortunate because our mission is serving veterans," Mr. Collier says. "It's easy selling that what we do is meaningful and rewarding."
- *Call me.* "Students are often skeptical and sometimes they miss something in the application process," Mr. Collier says. "A return phone call puts a sense of reassurance in the mind of a candidate, especially with those on the fence about joining VA."

Excerpts in this article are taken from the March 2006 edition of the Talent Link E-newsletter. For more information, e-mail Max Collier at max.collier@va.gov. ■

Diversity@Work

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

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

Department of
Veterans Affairs
www.va.gov

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

VA's Office of
Resolution Management
www.va.gov/orm

VA's Office of Human
Resources Management
and Labor Relations
www.va.gov/ohrm

DM&EEO ONLINE



The mission of DM&EEO is to provide leadership in creating and sustaining a diverse workplace free of discrimination at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Here's a sampling of online tools available on DM&EEO's Web site that can help you promote the employment of veterans, women, minorities, and people with disabilities:

- ▶ Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and other special observance resources.
- ▶ 2006 events, conferences, conventions, and programs.
- ▶ Links to professional and community organizations.

2006 DIVERSITY CALENDAR

MAY

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Older Americans Month

Mother's Day

May 14

National Image Inc. Annual Training Conference Symposium

May 14–21; Phoenix, AZ

www.nationalimageinc.org

National MultiCultural Institute Annual Spring Conference

May 18–21; Bethesda, MD

www.nmci.org

Armed Forces Day

May 20

Workforce Diversity Network Diversity 2006 Conference

May 22–24; Rochester, NY

www.workforcediversitynetwork.com

National Minority Supplier Development Council Minority Business Leadership Awards Dinner & Dance

May 23; New York, NY

www.nmsdcus.org/events/DD06_save.pdf

MANA Chapter Training Conference, Membership Annual Meeting, and Latina Leadership Forum

May 25–27; Chicago, IL

www.hermana.org/calfrm.htm

National Asian Entrepreneur of the Year Awards

May 27; Kona, HI

<http://asianenterprise.com>

Memorial Day (observed)

May 29

JUNE

Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility Symposium

June 5–6; Washington, DC

www.hacr.org

Annual Diversity Conferences

June 15–16; Chicago, IL

www.conference-board.org

Father's Day

June 18

National Business & Disability Council Summit

June 20; Herndon, VA

www.business-disability.com

Rehabilitation Engineering & Assistive Technology Society of North America Conference

June 22–26; Atlanta, GA

www.resna.org

Society for Human Resource Management Annual Conference & Exposition

June 25–28; Washington, DC

www.shrm.org

Women's Business Enterprise National Council National Conference and Business Fair

June 26–29; Miami, FL

<http://wbenc.org>

League of United Latin American Citizens National Convention & Exposition

June 26–July 1; Milwaukee, WI

www.lulac.org

For more events, visit www.va.gov/dmeeo and select the Calendar link.
