

**National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations
40th Public Meeting
May 18, 2016**

The National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations held its 40th meeting at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., on May 18, 2016. Co-chairing the meeting were Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Acting Director, Ms. Beth F. Cobert, and Mr. Andrew Mayock, Senior Advisor for Management, Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The following Council members also attended the meeting:

Council Member	Title
Mr. William R. Dougan	National President, National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE)
Mr. Michael B. Filler	Director, Public Services Division, International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Mr. David Holway	National President, National Association of Government Employees (NAGE)
Mr. Gregory Junemann	President, International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE)
Ms. Carol Waller Pope	Chairman, Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA)

The following individuals sat in for absent Council Members:

- Ms. Candace C. Archer, Ph.D., Labor Management Relations Specialist, American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), for Mr. J. David Cox, National President, AFGE;
- Mr. Jason Briefel, Senior Executives Association (SEA) Legislative Director, for President, SEA;
- Ms. Roberta “Bobbi” Jeanquart, Chief Human Capital Officer, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), for the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture;
- Ms. Renee Johnson, for National President, Federal Managers Association (FMA);
- Mr. T. Michael Kerr, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, Department of Labor (DOL), for Mr. Christopher P. Lu, Deputy Secretary of Labor;
- Ms. Marian Manlove, Acting Executive Director, Human Capital Policy and Programs, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), for Mr. Alejandro Nicholas Mayorkas, Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security;
- Ms. Kimberly D. Moseley, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Labor-Management Relations, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), for Mr. Sloan Gibson, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs;

- Mr. Richard Tarr, Associate General Counsel, Federal Education Association (FEA), for Mr. H.T. Nguyen, Executive Director, FEA;
- Mr. Kurt Vorndran, National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), for Mr. Anthony M. Reardon, National President, NTEU.
- Mr. Todd A. Weiler, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs), Department of Defense (DOD), for Mr. Robert O. Work, Deputy Secretary of Defense;

The Designated Federal Officer, Mr. Tim Curry, OPM Deputy Associate Director, Partnership and Labor Relations, was present, as were 38 members of the public and one media representative.

Agenda Item I: Welcome

At 10:03 a.m., Mr. Curry opened the meeting and made an administrative announcement. He stated that the National Council operates as an advisory committee under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, or FACA. Time had been set aside on the agenda for comments from members of the public, and others who are not members of the Council.

Mr. Curry also noted that before moving to the agenda, there was some Council business to address concerning the minutes of the previous meeting of January 2016, which had been shared in advance with members of the Council. He noted that all edits or corrections had been adopted, and recommended that the Council approve the minutes of the prior meeting. There was a motion and second from members of the Council that the minutes be approved. Council members then voted to adopt the minutes, with no objection. Mr. Curry then stated that the January 2016 meeting minutes had been approved. Mr. Curry then turned to the co-chairs for their opening remarks.

Ms. Cobert welcomed the group to the second meeting of 2016, noting that the meeting scheduled to occur in March had been canceled due to the unexpected closure of the Washington, D.C. metro rail system on the day of the meeting. Ms. Cobert then welcomed Ms. Renee Johnson, and congratulated Ms. Johnson on being elected as the new national president of the Federal Managers Association (FMA) in March. Ms. Cobert noted that Ms. Johnson replaces Ms. Patricia Niehaus who served out her two terms as FMA president. Ms. Johnson previously served as FMA Region 2 Director. Ms. Cobert invited Ms. Johnson to participate “early and often.” Next, Ms. Cobert acknowledged the recent celebration of Public Service Recognition Week, noting that each Council member had received an envelope containing a copy of President Obama’s Presidential Proclamation in recognition of that week. While the week had passed, Ms. Cobert said that she and Mr. Mayock thought it would be appropriate to acknowledge the great work of Federal employees in this meeting. She said they should thank those who serve the American people in the context of the Council members’ organizations. Ms. Cobert quoted from the President’s proclamation:

Civil servants demonstrate resolve and inspire optimism in sectors throughout our country. They are engineers and educators, military service members and social

workers, and their individual and collective contributions drive us forward on the path toward an ever brighter tomorrow.¹

Ms. Cobert noted that there will be an additional opportunity to recognize Federal employees. On May 24, the Washington Nationals will be playing the New York Mets. The Nationals have declared this game to be “Federal Workforce Day.” Ms. Cobert will be throwing out the first pitch.

Mr. Mayock noted that he would be at the Nationals game, with others, to cheer on Ms. Cobert. He said that he would like to acknowledge that the guiding force behind Public Service Recognition Week is comprised of the various good governance groups that partner to plan and sponsor events. Many of the people here are members of these groups. He also thanked Tim Curry for his critical role in the process of requesting the President’s proclamation.

Ms. Cobert then discussed a recent announcement from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), concerning planned repairs for the metro rail system in the Washington, D.C. area. OPM is in regular communication with WMATA and the Council of Governments (COG) in the National Capital Region. OPM will continue to coordinate with these groups, and with members of this Council, as OPM makes decisions regarding the appropriate operating status of the government while repairs are being made and available options, such as telework, to accommodate changes in the Metro service schedule. Ms. Cobert noted that WMATA had publicized a draft plan for the repairs but the final plan has not yet been released. OPM will make decisions in consultation with all of its partners, based on the safety of employees as well as the general public. OPM will provide clarity around options that are available, such as telework and different work schedules, and will continue to issue updates as they become available. The first date on the maintenance schedule is June 4. Ms. Cobert encouraged everyone to reach out to OPM with any concerns or suggestions. OPM will be actively reaching out to the Council members on a regular basis. She said she will appreciate receiving input on this as it unfolds. The maintenance plan will have a more targeted impact than a snowstorm would. It is also expected to take some time and there will need to be a learning process.

Ms. Cobert asked if there were any questions or comments, before moving on to the rest of the agenda. Mr. Mayock noted that the Administration is working with WMATA on this issue. He also said that he and Ms. Cobert would like to remind everyone that the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) is now open, and they want as high a response rate as possible. They have made progress in the past several years on employee engagement, in large part because of the partnership between labor and management to encourage employees to take the survey; and then working together to implement improvement actions. In particular, Mr. Mayock has been impressed with the developments at the Departments of Labor and Housing and Urban Development (HUD), each of which has shown tremendous improvements. Their progress has been in part because of this tool and also because of the folks they have at the table from labor.

¹ The President’s proclamation on Public Service Recognition Week, 2016, was distributed as a handout at the meeting. It is also available on-line: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/29/presidential-proclamation-public-service-recognition-week-2016>

OMB is taking the survey very seriously, internally, and Director Donovan has been issuing frequent reminders to the staff to take the survey.

Agenda Item II: Report of the Problem Resolution Subcommittee

Mr. Curry noted that the agenda had been reordered from a previous version. The Problem Resolution Subcommittee's Impact and Education Working Group will be the first presentation today. This working group was formed as a result of discussion by the Council in the January meeting. Today, the Council will hear from Mr. Chris Butler of IFPTE; Mr. Todd Dickey of Department of Interior and Cornell University; and Mr. Kurt Rumsfeld of the FLRA.

The presenters displayed a PowerPoint slide presentation titled, "Problem Resolution Subcommittee." Mr. Dickey began by introducing himself as a PhD candidate with Cornell University and an intern with the Department of Interior, where he is conducting his dissertation research. In addition, he is co-chairing the Impact Working Group. While displaying Slide 2, "Impact and Education Working Group – Work Group Background," Mr. Dickey noted that the Council did not have a March meeting. He provided an update on the work the group has done since the Council's January meeting. In advance of the scheduled March meeting, the group was planning to propose combining the Pre-Decisional Involvement (PDI) Incentives, the Space Management PDI, and the Metrics Working Groups, which had been independent working groups under the Problem Resolution Subcommittee; and merging them into the Impact and Education Working Group. Since the metro closure prevented them from having that conversation with the Council, the group sent Council members a questionnaire. Mr. Dickey thanked the Council members for completing that questionnaire in late March and early April.

Moving to Slide 3, "Impact and Education Working Group – Work Group Background Continued," Mr. Dickey explained that based upon the feedback received from the Council, and because there were so many projects to address, the Impact and Education Working Group split into two different working groups. There is still significant coordination between the two. Transitioning to Slide 4, "Education Working Group Projects," Mr. Dickey reminded the Council that the five projects shown on the slide are the projects that were included in the questionnaire as brainstorm ideas from the working group. Noting that the projects numbered four and five overlap with the Impact Working Group, he will speak about those a bit in his discussion of the Impact Working Group. Mr. Butler and Mr. Rumsfeld would be providing more information about the Education Working Group, later in the presentation.

Moving to Slide 5, Mr. Dickey informed the Council that 100% of the questionnaire responses agreed with the recommendation to merge work related to the Labor-Management Forum (LMF) Reporting Tool Analysis and 2015 Metrics Reports into this new working group. Mr. Dickey said that there is a lot of work associated with these initiatives, and they are looking for more contributors to assist with the analysis. Mr. Dickey expressed hope that the Council would discuss new and interesting ways to look at metrics, in addition to the methods that have been employed and presented to the Council in the past. These might include thinking about how agencies and their labor partners have changed their metrics reporting over the years since the Executive Order began, and also looking at differences between small and large agencies. Items 2 and 3 on slide 5 are new projects that the working group has brainstormed. The group is very

interested in looking at possible links between the FEVS and labor-management forums. The other project proposed examining examples of labor-management partnership that continued after the Clinton era executive order was rescinded. Moving to Slide 6, “Impact Working Group Projects cont.,” Mr. Dickey described two more projects the working group is looking at. These include understanding how examples of labor-management cooperation initiatives in the private sector can inform understanding of the Federal sector; and also sponsoring a PDI pilot, where participants in a LMF engage in PDI while utilizing the support of the National Council and its resources. Based upon the priorities Council members placed on these projects when completing the questionnaire, and upon the resources available, the working group is proposing to start first with the FEVS project, as well as the private/public sector comparison. They are looking forward to starting those projects, in addition to the LMF Reporting Tool and metrics projects. They are also going to be thinking about the other projects and more of a long term research plan. It will be an incremental approach to getting started. Many of the working group members are looking forward to evaluating the impact of this executive order, in an effort to inform the next administration about the results of this executive order.

Transitioning to Slide 7, “Project Planning,” Mr. Dickey noted again that the working group is still recruiting volunteers. He then turned to Mr. Butler and Mr. Rumsfeld for a discussion about the Education Working Group. With Slide 8, “Education Project Team 1,” displayed, Mr. Butler explained that Project Team 1 is concerned with direct outreach by Council members to labor-management forums. Their goal is to identify opportunities and draft guidance or talking points for Council members to provide direct outreach to LMFs and other appropriate venues to promote the work of the National Council on Federal Labor Management Relations. They have developed four tasks for this project, which are listed on the slide. Moving to Slide 9, “Education Project Team 1 cont.,” Mr. Butler explained that the group has met, brainstormed, and identified action items. The first is to define what direct outreach looks like, and the next is to define the purpose of direct outreach. Moving to Slide 9, “Education Project Team 1 cont.,” Mr. Butler noted that they have brainstormed in an effort to identify appropriate venues for direct outreach. These include labor-management forums, either by request or with targeted outreach, the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council. This is an untapped resource that would be useful to augment efforts to reach labor and management. Another approach would include Council members appearing at training seminars or conferences that are being put on by the FLRA, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), the FMA, unions, and agencies. Mr. Butler noted that the FMCS has a training conference scheduled for August that might provide a good opportunity. Also, the Federal Executive Boards (FEBs) outside of D.C. provide another option for spreading word about the work of the Council. A fourth approach includes the working group drafting talking points or guidance for Council members. This would enable the Council members to deliver the same message when they are meeting with LMFs, FEBs, or presenting at conferences. Fifth, the working group is seeking Council member feedback. He asked the Council members to identify what types of talking points they believe are important, and the working group will develop those.

Mr. Rumsfeld began speaking with Slide 11, “Education Project Team 2,” displayed. Mr. Rumsfeld noted that this is a separate project team that has met twice so far and has begun some very good work. He acknowledged the other members of the team. This project entails enhancing

education by virtual means. The team sees this task as one intended to market the Council's message and resources to unions and agencies at all levels. There are tremendous resources on the website, and there is a ton of information beneath the surface. But, before they develop a marketing strategy around these resources, they first want to ensure that a first-time visitor to the website finds it easy to use and well organized. He noted that the FLRA just went through a similar exercise with revamping its website, and encouraged everyone to visit it. They took the content that was there, and made it more easily accessible from the homepage. This project team is endeavoring to do something similar. Transitioning to Slide 12, "Education Project Team 2 cont.," Mr. Rumsfeld noted that the team is interested in reformatting the current Council website (www.lmrcouncil.gov), to increase ease of use and access to valuable existing resources for all stakeholders. Another result of their brainstorming is the development of a promotion package that would include links to specific places on the Council webpage, together with suggestions for how to distribute the information to all levels. For example, this could include a graphic icon to be placed on agency or union intranet sites that would link to the Council webpage. Their plate is full right now, but in the future the team may explore interactive social learning options. This would focus on providing interactive opportunities for people to share experiences and to learn via virtual means. The presenters then invited questions and discussion by the Council.

Mr. Filler expressed thanks to the working group for their work and for the presentation. He said he appreciates the fact that the Council weighed in, in advance, with regard to some of the work and the structure of the groups. He thanked Mr. Dickey for stepping in to participate in this work, expressing that an "outsider" will bring a fresh perspective. Mr. Filler noted that earlier this year, they had a report on progress that has been achieved. One of the things that stood out to him was metrics, especially in the area of labor-management relations. They have been challenged there. It is not for a lack of trying, but it is an area where many of the forums would benefit from useful guidance. Having a feeling that good work is being done is one thing, but being able to prove that has been challenging. Mr. Filler said this is something that needs to be part of the historical record under this executive order. He also said he believes the research will find that it was also something that was lacking under the Clinton executive order. This is an area where hopefully the Council can provide some useful guidance. With regard to the Impact Working Group, Mr. Filler said he hopes that the Council does not lose sight of the fact that one of the important aspects of this executive order was performance improvement, government-wide. He asked that the group remember to capture that in whatever they are analyzing—to see the correlation between the LMFs and how they are impacting organizational performance. He noted that it would be a great thing to do.

Mr. Holway asked for a report on the agency and secretary-level reports from last year. Mr. Curry and Mr. Dickey noted that all of the agency metrics reports for Fiscal Year 2015 have been received. Mr. Holway said that at some point the Council should look at those reports. Mr. Curry responded that the working groups have been looking at them, though they have not yet presented any findings to the Council. Mr. Dickey clarified that the Metrics Working Group has been folded into the Impact Working Group. Ms. Cobert then said she likes the point Mr. Filler made about linking this work to organizational performance. She thanked the working group for continuing their work even without the March meeting. Ms. Cobert asked all of the Council members to consider contributing resources and personnel to assist the working groups with

meeting their goals. Mr. Mayock said that he and Ms. Cobert would go back and push agencies to contribute resources to this work, and he asked that the union Council members do the same. It will be important and beneficial to add new voices. He also highlighted the importance of this group's work, in the context of the Clinton administration and the Obama administration. It will be important to think about transition that is coming and how this work will be viewed. How the Council accounts for its work and how it is passed on will be a very important aspect of this work.

Mr. Junemann responded to the section of the Education Working Group's presentation that addressed talking points for Council members. He asked what the group is looking for from Council members. Mr. Butler responded that the working group is looking for input from the Council on the talking points. They are also interesting in revamping the webpage. Currently, some important information is available only in meeting minutes posted on the page; they would like to make these items more readily accessible. Mr. Rumsfeld noted that, at this point, the working group is looking for consensus from the Council in terms of the direction the working group is headed. Ms. Cobert suggested that perhaps the next Council meeting could include discussion of at least a start for the talking points. It might take a while to fix the webpage but the talking points seem like something we might be able to pull together and put out there. She requested a draft of the talking points for the next Council meeting, noting that as Council members use the talking points and include their own perspectives, they may develop over time.

Agenda Item III: Social Security Administration and American Federation of Government Employees Labor-Management Success Story

Mr. Curry introduced the next agenda item by saying that today the Council has representatives from the Social Security Administration (SSA) and AFGE Local 1923. They are here to discuss their work together on a program called SkillsConnect. He introduced Ms. Rosita Acevedo and Julie Nemelka of Social Security, and Mr. Jack Riisman del of AFGE. Mr. Curry welcomed them and thanked them for sharing their story with the Council. This presentation was accompanied by PowerPoint slides titled, "SkillsConnect: A Model for Pre-Decisional Involvement."

Ms. Nemelka began by explaining that she is the lead for SSA on the SkillsConnect initiative, and Ms. Acevedo is the co-lead. Mr. Riisman del was the chief negotiator for AFGE, as well as the Executive Vice President of Local 1923. Ms. Nemelka displayed Slide 1, "Agenda," and outlined the structure of the presentation. Ms. Acevedo spoke to Slide 2, "SSA at a Glance," described SSA's mission, which is, "Deliver Social Security services that meet the changing needs of the public." She said that SSA's Acting Commissioner is Carolyn W. Colvin. Ms. Colvin leads over 63,000 employees, and the SSA headquarters is in Baltimore, Maryland. SSA has over 1,400 field and hearing offices throughout the United States. Transitioning to Slide 3, "Why SkillsConnect?" Ms. Acevedo explained that SSA employees wanted opportunities to showcase their skills, while management wanted to fill employee skill gaps. In addition, the business needed to leverage skills. The Chief of Staff for the Acting Commissioner heard about "GovConnect" from OPM,² and SSA adopted the GovProject model. This model facilitates their idea of talent sharing. Ms. Acevedo continued with Slide 4, "Overview & Benefits," and

² Information about OPM's GovConnect initiative is available through the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council website: <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/govconnect-expo-follow-identifying-volunteer-pilot-agencies>

explained that in SkillsConnect, employees are able to share their talents and skills on a virtual or part-time basis. “Part-time” means that they work in their current positions for at least 80 percent of their time, and participate in the SkillsConnect program for up to 20 percent of their time. SkillsConnect is grade-less and is not position based. Employees can use their knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences, whether these come from previous volunteer work, private sector work, education, or other experiences. The program enables management to utilize talent throughout the agency. This leads to cost savings and permits the agency to serve the public more expeditiously. Because the program is virtual, it entails no travel costs. As a result, there is no direct cost for this program. Ms. Acevedo then provided examples of how employees may become more engaged in their work by participating in this program.

Ms. Nemelka displayed Slide 5, “Timeline,” and discussed the timeline for implementation of this program. In May 2014, they received a directive to create a talent sharing program. It took seven months to do that. That time included not only developing their policies and procedures for the program, but also building an automated system that would house information. It also included developing a marketing strategy, a communications plan, an evaluation plan, and a training plan. In the period from May 2014 through January 2015, they also engaged in PDI. They piloted the program from January through July 2015. During that period, they continued meeting with AFGE in their labor-management forums to discuss the pilot and to receive the union’s feedback about what was going well and what they wanted to change. From August through December 2015, they conducted an extensive evaluation. They looked not only at the survey data received from participants (employees, supervisors, and project managers), but also at the feedback received in a general mailbox they set up for the project. During this process, they met again with the union. Formal negotiations with the union were completed in March, and they agreed to extend participation agency-wide in the summer of 2016. Right now they are re-evaluating the training and marketing for the program. In the spirit of continuous improvement, they are always listening to their labor partners and employees.

Moving to Slide 6, “Pre-Decisional Involvement (PDI),” Ms. Nemelka described monthly meetings with the labor-management forum (LMF) to receive the union’s ideas. SSA was the fourth agency to pilot this type of program, and that enabled them to learn lessons from the experiences of the other agencies; those agencies included the General Service Administration (GSA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the State Department. SSA shared information about EPA’s program with AFGE, and that facilitated their discussions. From the LMF, they formed a working group to discuss policies, procedures, and metrics. Mr. Riismandel then discussed his experiences in the PDI process. He was tasked with being the union’s lead for this program. When the union and management first discussed the idea, it was in the context of finding benefits not only for the employees, but also for the agency. Their discussions continued and they began to develop the pilot. The pilot was designed to include a small region, a large region, and a group at SSA headquarters. This provided a diverse population for the pilot. Results from the pilot seem to be very good; feedback was good. The PDI process in the LMF continued throughout the pilot.

Ms. Nemelka then spoke to Slide 7, “PDI Successes,” and noted that one reason they were able to achieve success was that they identified and focused on shared goals. Referencing the framework for the EPA’s program was very helpful to them, and it got the conversation started.

The LMF meetings were very useful and helped them to build and sustain relationships. This made the formal negotiation process go very smoothly. Mr. Riismandel concurred. He noted that by the time they got to the formal negotiations, the union was well informed and there were no surprises. That made it different from many other experiences in negotiations. The formal negotiations focused mostly on fine-tuning the program, based upon feedback the union had received from employees.

Ms. Acevedo and Mr. Riismandel then discussed Slide 8, "Pilot Survey Data." Ms. Acevedo began by explaining that there were three main roles in the program: employees who participate in the program, the supervisors of those participating employees, and the project managers for each project or task. SSA surveyed each role at the conclusion of each employee's involvement in a project or task. The vast majority reported a positive experience with SkillsConnect and would recommend SkillsConnect to others. In the spirit of continuous improvement, SSA recently re-recorded its Video-on-Demand (VoD) offerings to include a segment on managing in a virtual environment and a segment on how project managers can get started with SkillsConnect. Mr. Riismandel noted that while SSA primarily serves the public, nationwide; there many employees who are working behind the frontline, in the background, on assignments related to disability benefits, retirement benefits, and SSI. Many of these employees are highly skilled. Last year SSA hired 45 disability examiners in the office of disability operations. Every single one of them had a master's degree. This program enables employees to use their skills in a way that benefits the agency. The program enables a program manager to post information about a project that needs to be completed. Employees are able to post the skills that they have. And it leads to a very happy situation that is win/win. Employees are able to get a break from their normal routine, for up to 20 percent of their time. When they looked at the numbers, 74 percent of the workforce is in a bargaining unit, and 77 percent of the participants in SkillsConnect are in a bargaining unit.

Ms. Acevedo discussed Slide 9, "Feedback." She discussed the quotations on that slide from an employee, a project manager, and a supervisor. Ms. Acevedo then invited questions from the Council members.

Ms. Cobert said she appreciates how SSA took what existed in GovConnect and adapted it to work for them. She is very supportive of sharing ideas throughout government and making things better each time. Ms. Cobert then asked about the PDI process they used and whether they had a shared set of expectations for the PDI process. Mr. Riismandel said that they did not necessarily have a shared expectation for PDI before they got started. They received the initial directive and started working from there. Looking at the EPA model was helpful for them. They used a flip chart to facilitate their discussions, and concluded they should try a pilot program.

Mr. Dougan asked about the pilot survey data. The supervisors and managers seemed less likely to say they would recommend SkillsConnect to others than did employees or project managers. He asked if they could talk about why that is. Ms. Acevedo said that as they launched SkillsConnect, they knew it was a little different from other things they had done. SSA has an existing variety of developmental opportunities, such as details. This program complements those existing options, but it is different. In addition, the virtual aspect of it is different. She hopes that the revised training program will help to address these issues, and they expect to see

more positive results as they continue. Mr. Riisman del noted that in the normal operational environment, a manager is responsible for a set amount of production. Losing an employee for up to 20 percent of the time does not help the manager to meet those production requirements. As a result, there may be resistance from those managers until there is more understanding about how the program benefits the agency as a whole. Ms. Nemelka said they are keeping an eye on those numbers as they make changes and adjustments to the program, and expect to see those numbers rise.

Mr. Kerr asked the presenters to explain why they picked 80 percent as the minimum amount of time employees can spend on their regular duties. Ms. Nemelka said that if the employee spends more than 20 percent of the time on other duties, it raises a classification issue and could entitle the employee to higher pay if they are working at a higher grade level. Ms. Acevedo noted that many of the SSA employees have master's degrees, and those degrees may or may not be related to the position they currently occupy.

Ms. Archer commended the presenters for working so well together. She remarked that it is always great to have success stories, particularly when they involve AFGE. She asked if, since they used the EPA example, did EPA also have PDI as part of their process, or did SSA add that? Ms. Nemelka responded that she was aware that EPA engaged their union, but she was uncertain about the specific details of any PDI. Mr. Curry noted that the EPA group met with the Council last year, and had described their PDI process in relation to SkillsConnect. Ms. Archer said that this group seems to have experienced some spillover effects from the PDI, in terms of their relationship. She expressed hope that as they continue to share news of this successful program, they will highlight the role that PDI played. It would be nice to see agencies build upon a program that includes PDI and incorporating union and employee perspectives throughout the process. Ms. Nemelka responded that SSA had shared with the union the fact that another AFGE local union had been involved in and supported the EPA effort.

Mr. Mayock expressed kudos to the presenters and the substance of their efforts. This seems like an excellent example of labor-management cooperation driving government performance. He asked if they had anything they would do differently if they had it to do all over again; and were there any lessons learned that they could share from this experience. He also asked if there are any ways that they are using the PDI dynamic to expand this program throughout SSA. Mr. Riisman del explained that they had not agreed on everything during the PDI process but they worked through, using flip charts to facilitate their discussions at times. Now they are continuing to work through their labor-management forums on other issues, including issues related to budgets within SSA. While managers sometimes resist PDI, having examples such as this helps to break down that resistance by spreading the word about successful outcomes.

Mr. Junemann noted that his union, IFPTE, represents approximately 1,500 to 1,600 administrative law judges (ALJs) at SSA. They would be happy to engage on this, if the program were made available to them. He said he is happy that it is working with AFGE, and IFPTE is wide open to this program if given the opportunity. Mr. Riisman del said they are not trying to keep it exclusive to AFGE. He understands it was recently made available to employees represented by NTEU. They are willing to share their good results and if others want to come on board they are more than welcome. Mr. Junemann said he is sure he will receive cooperation

from AFGE, since solidarity means a lot to both unions. Ms. Archer noted that while these efforts often have a lot of support here, at the National Council, she hopes that their success will filter down to smaller projects at lower levels within SSA. Mr. Riismandel said that he thinks it will. He explained that for his bargaining team, he was the only union representative from headquarters. The other union representatives came from all over the country, even if initially their regions were not involved. Ms. Acevedo explained that by having this variety of representatives involved in the discussions, they were able to gain valuable insight throughout the process. Ms. Nemelka said that OPM recently asked SSA to become a mentor agency, and she invited any agency interested in benchmarking with them to contact the presenters. Ms. Cobert thanked them and expressed agreement with Ms. Archer's remarks about successful stories like this one inspiring others to adopt PDI practices for other projects and at other levels.

Agenda Item IV: Hiring Excellence

Mr. Curry introduced Kim Holden, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Hiring Policy at OPM, and said she is here today to discuss the Hiring Excellence Campaign. He stated that the Council first heard from Ms. Holden back in November 2015. Ms. Holden will provide the Council an update on the latest information involving the Hiring Excellence Campaign.

Ms. Holden thanked the Council for its support, noting that the Council is one of her team's key partners and stakeholders as they roll out this campaign throughout the country. She offered an update and a bit of a reminder on what the Hiring Excellence Campaign is all about. The campaign's theme is "Connecting with Top Talent." When Ms. Holden spoke with the Council in November, the theme had not been finalized. Ms. Holden referred to a handout that was available at the meeting, titled, "Hiring Excellence – Connecting with Top Talent," and noted that the top of the page shows this theme as well as their logo. She explained that the campaign focuses on equipping the hiring managers and human resource professionals with the information that they already have in their toolbox, and on reinforcing what they have and how they can use it. The focus is also on strengthening their support to each other, and to attract talent across government. Ms. Holden stated that her team is conducting in-person and virtual sessions, and they have been doing so since March of this year, across the nation. Some of the things these sessions focus on are collaboration between the hiring manager and human resources; information on different hiring authorities; as well as information on different assessment tools that are available. In the sessions, they convey information about recruitment strategies for qualified and diverse talent, based on data driven decisions. They help agencies to understand the data behind recruitment efforts. Ms. Holden noted that this is combined with the information the Council will hear later from Ms. Earley, about USAJobs. They are also helping to enhance the applicant experience through USAJobs. Ms. Earley has been doing user testing for applicants. An example of this occurred two weeks ago at a Veterans Affairs hospital in Tampa. To date, Ms. Holden's team has trained 473 participants. That number includes both human resource professionals and hiring managers. Ms. Holden then referred to a training session occurring now and others that are planned for the future. She referenced a handout that had been provided to Council members, which included dates and locations for training sessions. Ms. Holden listed the agencies that would be participating, which included: VA, USDA, SSA, OPM, the Small Business Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, GSA, EPA, DOL, the Department of Justice, the Department of Interior, DOD, the Department of Commerce, DHS,

and a contingent of small agencies and commissions that will be participating in the training as well. They are also collecting and analyzing the feedback from all of the participants. That is currently underway. At the next Council meeting she will be able to provide an update on how the sessions are going so far. Looking at the surveys, the feedback has been tremendous. The participants are very appreciative of having access to OPM's expertise. OPM has also taken VA on the road with them, and VA has been hosting "lunch and learn" sessions on the topic of Title 38. Ms. Holden then offered to answer any questions from the Council.

Ms. Cobert said they remain very excited about this at OPM. They think this is the right kind of partnership between hiring managers and human resource specialists, to get the kind of talent the government needs. There is a hiring excellence website if you want to look at all that is being offered. Mr. Mayock thanked Ms. Cobert, Ms. Holden and her team for this enormous effort. They have been discussing this within the Performance Management Council (PMC) and believe it has an enormous amount of promise. Whether that promise is met depends on how it is implemented on the ground. The group around this tables, and many other partners, need to lead the cause of success.

Agenda Item V: Updates on USAJobs

Mr. Curry then welcomed Michelle Earley, USAJobs Program Manager at OPM, to provide the Council an update on improvements being made to USAJobs.

Ms. Earley thanked the Council for inviting her and said she is excited to describe what the next generation of USAJobs is. The next generation consists of two components. One is for the job seeker and the other includes tools for agency use. She has been part of the Hiring Excellence campaign, and it has been wonderful to get people to think of USAJobs in a different way—as a strategic recruitment tool. When she was listening to the SSA presentation, it was great to hear the focus on skills instead of job titles or educational degrees; the focus is on the whole person. This is something they are trying to do when attracting talent and matching people to opportunities. Starting in September 2014, she partnered with OPM's Innovation Lab to gather extensive user feedback on USAJobs. This entailed 171 interviews with users across the spectrum and across the United States. The users included 12 year olds and people who are retired, veterans, Federal employees and non-Federal employees. They also conducted 12 focus groups, nationwide. Now the focus is on job opportunity announcements (JOAs). They have been bringing hiring managers and human resource professionals back into the discussion about how they use them, and how they can reimagine them. There is a need to create a unified experience.

Ms. Earley then displayed Slide 2, "USAJOBS: Improving Our Offering," in the PowerPoint presentation titled, "USAJOBS NEXT GENERATION: WHAT IS IT?" and discussed the Design Pillars referenced there. They want to create a unified hiring experience, throughout the government. They want to clearly guide applicants and use plain language in job announcements. Content is generated through the agencies so they need to work with agencies on that. USAJobs desires to become the most trusted source of information for job seekers. They want to provide personalized content to job seekers. Lastly, they want applicants to have the opportunity to showcase themselves. Transitioning to Slide 3, "Job Seeker/Applicant," Ms. Earley explained

that this slide shows the structure of the current site. She noted that USAJobs was, originally, an effort to automate a paper-based process. Ms. Earley explained that USAJobs is a Federal career site. It has a “resource center” section, which recently transitioned to being a “help center.” It also contains agency pages where agencies are filtering jobs from their agency, with basic information. There is a lot of room to make that better. The crux of what USAJobs has been is a job board. This is where job seekers can search for jobs and apply. There has been some limited ability to recruit, including through social media and through their spotlight feature. Ms. Earley then described the account/profile section of the website. In the past, USAJobs has primarily collected this data and then handed it off to the agencies. They could use that information to craft a better experience in USAJobs.

Ms. Earley transitioned to Slide 4, “Job Seeker/Applicant Experience.” Beginning her discussion with the “My Account” section of the slide, Ms. Earley said that they have been looking at the data they gather from the job seeker, in the profile and in the resume. There will be some dramatic changes in this area coming this summer. The changes are intended to help job seekers to understand qualification and eligibility, and to help them in the right direction on the site. In the “Find and Apply” section of the website, they want to do a better job of building connections to recruit talent. This involves casting a wide but focused net, and will include connecting to social media, affinity groups, colleges and universities. This will enable the site to attempt to match jobs to the seeker, based on data the site already has on the user; rather than starting with a blank slate. This can help to provide a unified user experience. In addition, they have adopted the U.S. Digital Service and 18F’s web design standards and published them so their vendor partners will have access to them, and may begin to apply them to their systems. All of this will help to make the experience less disjointed for the user. They are also focused on shifting from being a job board to becoming a true Federal career site. User feedback indicates this is what the users want, to help them understand the opportunities available in the Federal government and where they may be able to serve. There is also a desire to leverage the great resources that agencies have developed, and to deliver that content in a personalized fashion to job seekers. USAJobs has a lot of data. There is a question about how they can analyze that data and put it back out there in a way that will inform job seekers and drive their decisions.

Displaying Slide 5, “USAJOBS Near Term Priorities,” Ms. Earley said that through December 2016, they will be focusing on the basic needs for USAJobs. This will begin with the job seekers’ representation of themselves in their profile and their resume. They hope to be able to parse data related to the individual’s skills and competencies. USAJobs met with its vendor partners last fall, and they were excited about having USAJobs determine eligibility for applicants earlier in the process. Ms. Earley and her team will also be looking at how agencies use JOAs and seeking a better way to construct them and present them. USAJobs can work with agencies on their own plain language efforts. They are working to get to a place where the JOAs describe the “ideal candidate” the agency wants to fill a position. The search function brings these two pieces together. They are working to upgrade the search technology. They will leverage the user data she has discussed here, to inform the search results. Ultimately, they will implement matching algorithms. That may fall into calendar year 2017, but the groundwork has already begun.

Moving to Slide 6, “Agency Talent Portal (Pilot) Next Generation Vision,” Ms. Earley stated that in 2014, the USAJobs Steering Committee identified two tasks. The first was to develop a resume mining capability, and the second was data analytics. They moved forward quickly on those, building a data warehouse and building quick prototypes and testing those. This work is intended to promote two capabilities. The first is to recruit talent, and the second is to measure the effectiveness of those efforts. Slide 7, “Agency Talent Portal (Pilot),” is a visual representation of what this means. For example, in the “Find and Recruit Talent” display, it is possible to use maps to identify where the talent is, or to identify where the third party sourcing opportunities are, to further disseminate the job opportunity announcements. The resume mining function provides an opportunity to search the resumes that job seekers have elected to make searchable. Today, that is about 2 million resumes, and they have a campaign planned to increase that number. Ms. Earley also encourages agencies to post job opportunities using other outlets, and not to solely rely on USAJobs. Using a map can help an agency to identify where to spend recruitment dollars. After the job closes, they move on to measuring effectiveness. The JOA Analytics feature will show whether the applicant came to the posting directly through USAJobs, or through another outlet such as LinkedIn. For visitors who were logged into the site, analytics are also available in relation to demographics, education, and work experience. They have also added the question, “How did you hear about this job?” USAJobs also has access to survey data from applicants, which includes surveys completed 45 days and six months into process, as well as surveys completed by hiring managers and “abandoners” of the process. Her team has been finding ways to showcase that data for agencies’ use. Lastly, since USAJobs has a large volume of data, she wants to take some time, with statisticians and academia, to identify trends, such as emerging career fields in the Federal government. Ms. Earley said that she would like to work with the Council on user research and in other ways, and then invited questions from the Council.

Ms. Cobert thanked Ms. Earley for her presentation, and noted that Ms. Earley is very serious about usability testing, engaging in user testing, and engaging in a conversation with users. Ms. Cobert noted that this group is focused on building in more enhancements and when they complete the ones they have planned, they will begin with a new set. Ms. Cobert asked if other Council members had questions or comments; there were none.

Agenda Item VI: New Business

Mr. Curry noted that the next Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 20, 2016, from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon, at OPM. He said that Director Cobert would now make a few remarks. Ms. Cobert said there are a few things she would like to highlight. Council members may be aware that earlier today the Department of Labor released new rules on overtime pay. Now that those rules have been announced, OPM can move forward with its own regulations, for the corresponding rules for the Federal workforce. The typical pattern has been to mirror the Department of Labor’s rules, and now OPM may begin to work its way through that. Second, Ms. Cobert discussed the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. This is an existing program. OPM will be working with the Department of Education to ensure that, while this is not a new program, people who are eligible to receive benefits under this program are aware of it. The Department of Education administers this program. Employees may qualify for this program which forgives the remaining balance of any student loan under the William D. Ford Federal

Direct Loan Program after the employee has made 120 qualifying monthly payments under a qualifying repayment program while working full-time for a qualifying employer. Employment with the Federal government satisfies the requirement for qualifying employment. Not every loan does qualify—but there is information in the packets provided to the Council members today. OPM is working with the Department of Education and the White House Domestic Policy Council because making sure that people are aware of this is an important priority. Ms. Cobert said she would like to continue a dialogue with the Council on this topic.

Mr. Curry then asked if anyone on the Council wished to raise any new business. There was no new business.

Agenda Item VII: Acknowledgement/Receipt of Public Submissions

Mr. Curry stated that, as a FACA committee, the Council offers opportunities for members of the public to make brief statements to the Council. He asked if any member of the public wished to make any brief statement to the Council. There were no public comments.

Agenda Item VIII: Adjournment

Ms. Cobert thanked everyone, and particularly the working groups, for continuing their work even though the Council did not meet in March. She looks forward to more updates from them at the July meeting. Ms. Cobert said there will be more to come on the metro maintenance plan, and also expects to have an update on the National Background Investigations Bureau (NBIB) in July.

Mr. Mayock added his thanks to the presenters for the excellent presentations, and expressed thanks for the constructive engagement by the Council. He looks forward to the work they will be doing between now and the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:41 a.m.