

**USDA, ARS, Mid South Area
Workforce Diversity Committee (WDC) Meeting
Auburn, Alabama
July 27-28, 1998**

8:30 a.m. Monday, July 27, 1998

The following Members were in attendance:

Edgar G. King, Chairperson, Stoneville, MS
Betty Shepherd, Co-Chairperson, Auburn, AL
Archie Tucker, Member, Stoneville, MS
Patricia A. Brown, Member/ Secretary, Stoneville, MS
Rita Keeling, Member, Stoneville, MS
Carlos Alonso, Member, Oxford, MS
Brian L. Brazil, Member, Stoneville, MS
Gay G. McCain, Member, Mississippi State, MS
Herbert Pack, Member, Baton Rouge, LA
J. P. Jordan, Member, SRRC, New Orleans, LA
C. David Ambrogio, SRRC, New Orleans, LA
Anthony Edmund, EEO Manager, Mid South/ South Atlantic Areas

The following Members were not in attendance:

Stephen O. Duke, Member, Oxford, MS
Barbara J. Smith, Member, Poplarville, MS

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dr. Ed King.

Dr. Don Erbach, Research Leader, Soil Dynamics Research Unit, welcomed the Committee to Auburn and gave a brief overview of the research conducted at the Unit.

Dr. Phil Klesius, Research Leader, Fish Diseases and Parasites Research Unit, and Location Coordinator for the Auburn location also welcomed the Committee and gave an overview of the research being conducted at his Unit.

After the overview of the research programs by Drs. Erbach and Klesius, each Committee Member gave an update of the EEO/workforce diversity activities for his/her location.

David Ambrogio gave an update of the Mid South Area Hispanic Employment Program Committee.

Rita Keeling, Mid South Area Personnel Assistant, presented several transparencies. Included in her presentation were: a listing of all the vacancies in the Area by category; the number of employees in the Area by race and tenure; number of permanent employees; number of temporary employees; employment statistics by group, i.e., scientists (both permanent and temporary), support, and clerical; and the total number of employees in the Mid South Area by race and tenure. She also stated that we (the Mid South Area) have vacancies, and that we have opportunities to recruit from all sources including under-represented groups/ candidates.

Area Administrative Officer Archie Tucker introduced the newly hired Mid South/ South Atlantic Area EEO Manager, Anthony "Tony" Edmund. He was also advised that he would become a permanent Member of the WDC and the Committee would be looking to him for guidance and help in meeting the goals of the Committee regarding diversifying the workforce.

All members agreed Tony should become a permanent standing member of the WDC.

Tony discussed with the Committee his goal and perspective regarding his role as the Area EEO Manager, by increasing workforce diversity through the hiring of under-represented candidates.

Dr. J. Patrick Jordan discussed diversity through student programs by emphasizing Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). He distributed copies of each program to the Committee and stressed students could and should be hired through these programs.

Betty Shepherd introduced the day's guest speaker Dr. Willie D. Larkin. Dr. Larkin attended college at Tuskegee University. While at Tuskegee he received both a Bachelor of Science and Masters of Education degrees. His Ph.D. degree in Agricultural Education Extension was earned from Ohio State University in 1980, with additional course work taken at Auburn University. He worked as a college professor for three major universities (University of Georgia; Ohio State University; and Auburn University). As a human resource development professional, Dr. Larkin believes that workforce related issues will continue to dominate the world of training well into the 21st century and beyond. He currently devotes most of his professional energies to leadership and organizational effectiveness research and consulting. Dr. Larkin's speech focused on **how** to set specific, measurable, personal and organizational goals; and develop creative and innovative plans for utilizing people resources more effectively and efficiently. Dr. Larkin's shared his ideas on leadership, work values, ethics, productivity, and diversity with a great deal of power, feeling and conviction.

After Dr. Larkin's presentation, the Committee discussed ways in which diversification could be applied in the Area's hiring practices. The following was decided by the Committee:

Preparation:

- Valedictorian/ Salutatorium Program
- Science Fairs
- Teacher "Fellowship" - "Visiting Scholars"
- Publicize Research and the Organization
- Change the Culture of the Organization and Community
- Mentoring - Host Volunteer Projects

Recruitment:

- Certification Representation
- Diligence of Search for Applicants
- Return Certs
- Job Fair Organizations
- Advocacy
- Distribute Vacancy Listing
- Network/ Contacts
- Educate - Prepare
- Benefits
- Process
- "Be All You Can Be" Video

Educational:

- SCEP - Student Career Experience Program
- STEP - Student Temporary Employment Program
- Career Enhancement Program
- 1890 Scholarships
- HACU Internships
- Summer Interns
- Research Apprenticeships
- Mentoring

- Valadictorian/Salutatorium Program

8:30 a.m. Tuesday, July 28, 1998

The Committee Meeting continued with the introduction of the Keynote Speaker, Dr. Curtis D. White, President-Elect, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS), by Dr. Brian Brazil. Dr. White is the Associate Professor, Faculty of Agricultural Education, at Clemson University. He received his B. S. degree in Agricultural Education from Clemson University; M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Missouri. His research interests are innovative teaching methods, youth development and leadership skills.

There was an extensive question and answer session after Dr. White's discussion.

The highlight of the meeting was a tour of the George Washington Carver Museum and the College of Agricultural, Environmental and Natural Sciences Department, Tuskegee University. A brief overview was given of each department head by the following:

Agricultural Sciences Department

- Dr. P. K. Biswas

Foods and Nutritional Sciences Department

- Dr. R. Pace

Rural and Community Development

- Dr. N. Baharanyi

Environmental Sciences

- Dr. R. Ankumah

Plant Biotechnology

- Dr. Marceline Egnin

Animal Biotechnology

- Dr. Sam Nahashon