

## Diversity Stand-Down promotes Secretary's call for respecting coworkers

**H**aving been questioned by supervisors time and again about the nature of personal trips overseas, a bright, young Asian scientist leaves his Federal job with a sense of sadness and loss.

This is but one of the stories that led to Energy Secretary Bill Richardson's mandatory Diversity Stand-Down earlier this month.

Eighty thousand DOE employees in person at the Forrestal Building and via satellite hook-up nationwide, took part in the April 5 event to discuss unease in some government sectors over "racial profiling," the latest buzz phrase for stereotyping.

To many employees, DOE is "something less than fertile ground" for diverse groups, said the Secretary. "Diversity, tolerance and inclusion. If we embrace them in word we have to pursue them in deed."

Last summer, Richardson appointed a task force in response to reports that Federal employees of diverse backgrounds were feeling their loyalty questioned in the face of

security issues at Los Alamos National Lab. A resulting atmosphere of distrust has been linked to a "brain drain" at DOE labs, as top-notch employees and recruits from diverse backgrounds have begun to look outside the Federal government for jobs. For his part, Richardson has taken a self-proclaimed aggressive stand against stereotyping of our employees that leads to discrimination.

In January, the task force returned a 19-point recommendation list. During the stand-down some of those suggestions were outlined, including the call for DOE's training office to strengthen its link with the Office of Civil Rights. Top managers were also urged to take action to promote the Federal merit system.

Employees at Western and across the DOE complex will soon be asked to supply feedback—in the form of a survey—on the stand-down and suggestions for making the workplace tolerant, friendly and just for all workers. 

### The right thing to do

**B**e Comfortable. Be Kind. Give Thanks. Give Credit. Appreciate our co-workers and look for what we share.

Such are words to live by through each hour of our lives and particularly those we spend at work.

This month's Diversity Stand-Down served as a reminder of this basic tenet—treat your fellow worker with respect.

Western has always held a high standard for diversity within our workplace, and the majority of you have already participated in training aimed at enhancing understanding, respect and unity. Western has met Secretary Richardson's goals of in-depth training for staff and making this message a strong part of personnel management classes.

As Western's administrator, I wholeheartedly agree with the Secretary's initiative to commit fully to policies and actions that assure and promote equality of access and opportunity for all employees. As the Secretary noted, understanding is not only the right moral thing to do; it is the right business thing to do.

In line with the Secretary's Task Force, we will continue to reinforce our policy against discrimination of any kind. Faulty communications are frequently the cause of unfair treatment and we will continue to strive to enhance trust between managers and subordinates, peer to peer.

What we accomplished last year—in-depth training for all—helps employees at Western understand the Secretary's message on diversity. I want all of us to apply the training we have had in this area. Across Western, I encourage you to take note of the various special emphasis observances as a direct link in providing local diversity training. I also urge participation in the Secretary's follow-up survey on the stand-down. Our honest input is the only way to ensure that fair treatment is the rule of thumb at Western.

I want to thank all of you who have taken part in the various diversity activities offered across Western. As our Strategic Plan states, "People are the foundation of our success." We will continue to provide a work environment that emphasizes safety, technical improvement, customer focus and diversity.



**Mike Hacskaylo**  
Administrator