

# Action Learning Scenario 1



Sept. 2000

# *Action Learning Scenario 1*

- The Human Resources Council (HRMC) makes sense in principle on a division level, but what about on a bureau level?
- How do you explore methods to manage HRMC issues bureau-wide throughout the disciplines?
- Team Leader: Bill McFarland
- Champions: Jeff Armbruster, Lew Wade

# DRAFT

In Reply Refer To:  
Mail Stop 406

## MEMORANDUM

To: All Employees

From: Robert M. Hirsch  
Chief Hydrologist

Subject: The Water Resources Division's Human Resources Management Committee

The Human Resources Management Committee (HRMC) is the Water Resources Division's principal instrument for strategic human resources planning. Because of the size of our organization and the distributed nature of the work that we do including our program development activities, the Committee is the primary tool to ensure a general measure of national consistency in human-resources management, and to see that the highest quality talent in both the sciences and technical management is appropriately placed to ensure the future health and continued growth of the organization.

The HRMC is charged with developing and recommending division policy and guidelines to the Chief Hydrologist on human-resources issues. Issues addressed include those that affect division staff from a national perspective, for example, in response to departmental and bureau policy initiatives. The Committee focuses on what will enhance the division's management of its entire staff, keeping the division on the cutting edge and in a leadership role in human-resources systems development, training, succession planning, staffing and organizational dynamics. A typical agenda includes the following topics:

- Vacancies Requiring Promotion Committee Action (the HRMC is a standing panel for the evaluation of all science-related vacancy announcements in the division at the GS-13 through GS-15 levels, and for others as requested);

- Promotion recommendations to GS-13 and above, including review of the results of the division's Research Peer Panel Evaluation Process;

- Identification of future vacancies;

- Identification of personnel available for reassignment;

- Evaluation of nominations for departmental Honor Awards and other special recognition programs;

# DRAFT

- Classification issues;
- Employee development issues;
- Staffing, diversity, equal opportunity, and targeted recruitment issues;
- Organizational development

GS-13 science positions have traditionally been considered our “expert” level technical staff resources, driving the direction of technical programs at regional or even national scales. GS-13 supervisory and managerial positions have long been considered “upper” middle management, with a direct impact on program development, again at regional or even national scales. The Committee ensures the effective distribution of this talent pool to maximize growth potential for the individual and the organization. Committee members’ collective knowledge of the skills, competencies, and potential of these individuals is invaluable in succession planning activities, and has served the division well since the mid-1960s. The Committee is ideally positioned by its makeup to respond to talent surpluses and deficiencies, to identify career development moves, and to effect transfers due to unforeseen situations such as program growth and cutbacks. It ensures that disparate views based on geographic location or organizational placement are adequately represented, and “levels the playing field”, so to speak, in adding consistency to the substantive review of position descriptions, organizational changes, promotion recommendations, and nominations for prestigious awards and recognition. In addition, the Employee Development Committee, a subset of the HRMC, was chartered to ensure a fertile environment for lifelong learning through evaluation of employee development needs, proposals to address those needs, and recommendations to the HRMC to provide every employee with the competencies they need to excel in their jobs (see WRD Memorandum No. 99.36).

The Human Resources Management Committee is itself a subset of the Water Resources Division’s Senior Staff. Its membership includes the Associate Chief Hydrologist for Program Operations who serves as Chairperson; the Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Research; the Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Information; the four Regional Hydrologists; and one of the Chiefs of the Offices of Surface Water, Ground Water, Water Quality, or National Water Quality Assessment, each serving in turn on a two-meeting rotation. The Chief, Branch of Human Resources Management Support is the permanent Executive Secretary. The Committee meets for two days every two months. The February meeting is a conference call; the June meeting is always in Reston and includes a focus day on employee development; the other four meetings generally are hosted by a field office. The Committee identifies these host offices at the December meeting, and, over time, visits every district and major field installation such as the larger subdistricts, the HIF, etc. Information on the role and responsibilities of the host office can be found on-line at:

<http://www.woper.er.usgs.gov/committee/wrd/hrmc/hrmc.html>

The Committee members look forward to opportunities to get to know host-office staff, and do so at a scheduled all-hands meeting on the first day, over lunch and dinner, or at a formal function typically planned by the host office. The host office also arranges for two hours of technical presentations on the afternoon of the second day, an excellent opportunity to showcase some of the science being conducted by office staff members.

The HRMC needs and welcomes employee input on human-resources issues of concern. Please feel free to contact any member directly.

**U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
WATER RESOURCES DIVISION  
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**CHARTER  
(Revised 1995)**

**PURPOSE**

Provides advice and guidance to the Chief Hydrologist on all matters relating to the management and career development of Water Resources Division employees, and develops and recommends policy, guidelines, and procedures for human resource management by Division line officials.

**SCOPE**

The following areas are within the purview of the Committee:

- a. Promotions
- b. Reassignments
- c. Career development
- d. Recruitment/ceiling management
- e. Review of extra-Division policies
- f. Identification of candidates for key positions
- g. Honor awards

Each of the above areas is enlarged upon as follows:

- a. Promotions--The Committee is charged with developing and recommending Division policy and guidelines to the Chief Hydrologist for his/her consideration. It will serve as a Standing Promotion Committee for science position vacancies at the GS-13 through GS-15 levels, and for others as requested. The Committee will provide lists of best-qualified candidates for vacancies for use by the Chief Hydrologist and other key managers for review and selection. The Committee will also provide recommendations for non-competitive promotions based on professional growth and accretion of duties, including recommendations on the results of the Peer Panel Evaluation Process in the Division's National and Operations-Based Research Programs.
- b. Reassignments--The Committee will develop and recommend policies and guidelines to the Chief Hydrologist regarding reassignment of WRD personnel. The Committee will concern itself with the following specific reassignments: (1) response to talent surpluses and talent deficiencies; (2) career development moves; (3) transfers due to unforeseen situations such as program growth and cutback; and (4) placement after completion of studies under the Division's Graduate School Training Program.
- c. Career development--The Committee will provide advice and guidance on the design of and enhancements to the Career Documentation Profile and provide input to the Division's Technical Training Committee as a part of overall career development. It will also recommend appropriate management training policies and programs.

- d. **Recruitment**--The Committee will assist in assessing the staffing requirements of the Division and recommend to the Chief Hydrologist recruiting goals, standards, and procedures to meet future staffing needs, keeping in mind, current and projected affirmative employment objectives. The Committee will also monitor FTE ceiling use and recommend redistribution to meet recruitment needs in support of critical programs.
- e. **Review of extra-Division policies**--The Committee will review and make recommendations on plans, when appropriate, for WRD response to Department and Bureau memoranda requiring implementation of human resource management directives.
- f. **Identification of candidates for key positions**--The Committee will identify and appraise candidates with high growth potential for key Division positions.
- g. **Honor awards**--The Committee will solicit, review, and recommend nominations for honor awards such as the Superior, Meritorious, and Distinguished Service Awards, and will evaluate and make recommendations on other special media for employee recognition.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The Committee will consist of the following voting members:

Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Operations - Chairperson  
Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Technical Support  
Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Water Information  
Regional Hydrologists, NR, SR, CR, WR  
Chief, Office of Hydrologic Research

The Chief, Branch of Human Resources Management Support will serve as Executive Secretary.

At least five voting members or their representatives must be present to effect any business.

Members may send an alternate in their absence if the agenda contains items of particular importance to the absent member. All alternates will be approved by the Chairperson. Members must discuss the agenda in depth with their alternates to ensure that they come prepared.

Members may occasionally invite a selected staff member to Committee meetings as an orientation opportunity for potential alternates. All guests will be approved by the Chairperson.

Regional Human Resources Management Representatives are expected to attend as observers when meetings are hosted by offices in their Region.

## **SCHEDULE**

The Committee will meet bimonthly, or when called by the Chairperson.



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**Goal 4: Flexibility to respond to the science demands of a changing world**

- Identify skills needed to maintain long-term expertise and core capability (skills/flexibility/leadership)
- Identify new skills needed to respond to emerging science issues and changing external priorities (skills/flexibility/leadership)
- Determine skills and services that can be provided by OTP staff (skills/flexibility/leadership)
- Identify alternatives to permanent hiring to provide rapid response capability e.g. details, IPAs, CRADA's, contracts (skills/flexibility/leadership)
- Implement "Orientation Program" (skills/flexibility)

**Goal 5: Strengthen Performance and Rewards Systems, provide professional enrichment, and create a world-class workplace**

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- Align compensation and rewards with USGS strategic goals and values (rewards)
- Implement Mentoring Program (skills/leadership)
- Enhance education, training, and retraining opportunities (skills/flexibility)
- Provide developmental assignments across disciplines and organizations (skills/flexibility)
- Encourage the use of IDP's (skills/flexibility)
- Train managers on how to achieve high employee morale (leadership/rewards)
- Expand AWS and Flexiplace (leadership/flexibility/rewards)
- Place a priority on employee health and safety (leadership)