

Revision of the appraisal process

The project to revise and update appraisal and promotion processes is underway. The project started with an in-depth working session with a specialist in appraisal theories and procedures. Views were also solicited from representatives of staff associations, employees in general and from recent promotion board members.

The Branch is now in the process of adapting and implementing the concepts agreed upon for each professional category. A new ST-SCY appraisal form is already in use on a trial basis.

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Generic job descriptions for rotationals

The project to design and implement generic job descriptions for all rotational groups is well underway. The EL group has been completed and efforts are now focused on the AS group with the SCY group to follow shortly. The results of this project will lead to the simplification and acceleration of classification and staffing processes which will save managers and personnel officers time and allow them to concentrate on other human resource issues. Anyone who has ever had experience with classification and staffing knows how difficult and involved this process can be. This project should bring needed improvements.

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New Employment Equity, Staffing and Classification Division (APS)

In September, the Employment Equity Program was incorporated into a new division, the Employment Equity, Staffing and Classification Division (APS). One of the main objectives of the program is to identify and eliminate policies and practices that may frustrate equal employment and career opportunities. The program also assists managers in developing initiatives which can provide target group members with the experience and training necessary to compete on an equal basis for positions and promotional opportunities.

Since the new division began work, some of the initiatives they have taken include:

- recruitment initiatives on both the non-rotational and rotational sides of the Department
- stretch assignments and underfilling of positions
- selective use of lateral entry to accelerate the improvement of the Department's employment profile
- increased opportunities for training

A draft five year strategy for achieving specific employment equity objectives is going before Management Committee. For more information on the various services available through the program (career planning, counselling and provision of technical aids), please contact Marlène Picard (APSC) at (613) 992-0365.

New Rotational Administrative Personnel Division (APV)

The Rotational Administrative Personnel Division (APV) has been in operation since last October. Since then, there have been some notable accomplishments.

A first priority was to re-establish an annual system of promotions and appraisals for the ST-SCY, CRs and AS groups. This has been done, and Promotion Boards have been held for the Secretary, Clerk

and Administrative Officer categories. Twenty-five ST-SCY-2s were selected for promotion to ST-SCY-3 in January, while the ST-SCY-3 to -4 results were announced in October. By the time you read this, or shortly thereafter, the results of the CR and AS competitions will also be announced. Appraisal Review Committees have been held for Communicators, and a Promotion Board is scheduled for May.

APV staff have worked hard to re-establish annual promotion boards. The most time consuming operation was simply obtaining well written appraisals in a timely manner. With the effects of the recent position cuts to contend with, they will no longer be able to seek out missing appraisals. In order that all relevant information is available for consideration by the Promotion Boards, employees themselves will be expected to take a much more active role in ensuring that their appraisals are well written and submitted on time.

APV has also paid a great deal of attention to training over the past six months. The first training program for Administrative Trainees (ATs) commenced last November, and will graduate a class of seven ATs in May. The new officers will be heading out to their first postings well prepared to face the increased demands that new technology and devolution of responsibility are placing on missions abroad.

They are planning in the next few months, to review the entire appraisal/promotional system, including revision of the AS appraisal forms. They will also undertake an exercise to reclassify many of the AS positions to better represent the duties assigned to them. Plans are continuing for new recruitment, and we can look forward to welcoming new secretaries, clerks and administration officers later this year. The numbers recruited will, however, be reduced because of the recent position cuts.

One item that has been placed on the back burner is the creation of a single group for foreign service administrative employees. This will have to wait until PS2000 has created the proposed new General Services group, which will include all of the employees currently served by APV (with the exception of the Electronic Technicians), along with 116,000 of your colleagues from elsewhere in the Public Service. In about two years, if and when the new group is created, the Department will establish a rotational counterpart for External Affairs employees, which would embody most of the objectives that had been set out by the Corporate Review for the Foreign Service Employee group. More about this possible development as the project unfolds in the context of PS2000.

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Improvement to the management of new rotational employees

The project to update and strengthen the management of non-rotational employees is well underway:

- A computerized inventory of employees seeking change, transfer or secondment has already been circulated; the listing is circulated monthly to all departmental stream managers. A computer file on each employee who has provided a curriculum vitae has also been created.
- APSP officers have met and counselled more than 150 employees; some have also been provided with guidance testing, if required. APSP has assisted employees in the preparation of their curriculum vitae.
- APSP now administers the development training budget for non-rotational employees. They have sponsored and offered three career development courses for non-rotationals: Career Planning for Women, Career Management and Peak Performance. Fifty employees took advantage of these courses.