

Hotline

The Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory is a United States Department of Energy Facility

DOE Gives Lab Highest Rating

Outstanding. That's what the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) rates PPPL for the Laboratory's operations in fiscal year 1997.

In a report released earlier this month, the DOE gave the Laboratory the highest rating — outstanding — for its scientific and operational accomplishments. The federal agency cited the Laboratory for providing new insights into physical sciences and for constructing and operating leading edge experiments on schedule, within budget, and in a safe and environmentally sound manner. In addition, PPPL was noted for aggressively expanding its role in collaborating with other domestic and foreign fusion programs, as well as for theoretical and computational work, and efforts in technology transfer, public outreach, and education.

“This highest citation from the Department of Energy, which recognizes our first year under the new performance-based contract, is the result of the efforts and dedication of our extraordinary staff,” said PPPL Director Robert Goldston. “It is also a great credit to the leadership of former Director Ron Davidson and former Interim Director John Schmidt during fiscal year 1997.”

N. Anne Davies, Associate Director for Fusion Energy Sciences for the DOE's Office of Energy Research, commended the Laboratory for successfully dealing with difficult challenges during the past year, including a change in top management, downsizing, and the closing of the record-setting Tokamak Fusion Test Reactor.

Continued on page 2

Congressmen Urge President to Support Fusion



U.S. Representatives Rodney Frelinghuysen and Mike Pappas pledge their support for fusion funding during a news conference at the Laboratory in January. During the gathering attended by PPPL staff and several members of the media, the Congressmen signed a letter to President Clinton urging him to fully fund the U.S. fusion research program in his annual budget. From left are Pappas, Frelinghuysen, Princeton University student Daniel Weitz, and PPPL Director Rob Goldston.

Managers Gain Insight through Diversity Workshops

By Patti Wieser

“He’s from there? Hm. I didn’t know they had physicists in that area of the country.”

“He has a college degree and is applying for a secretarial position. Something’s not right.”

“Do you think someone from that culture can handle a management position? Those people are always so non-confrontational. What if she has to tell a staff member that he or she isn’t doing a good job?”

Such stereotypically spiked perceptions could be first impressions managers have of potential employees or promotional candidates. And if the adage “first impressions are the most important” is believed, employment decisions will be affected.

Through a Diversity Awareness program offered to PPPL Council members and senior managers in January, participants worked to break through assumptions, judgments, and stereotyping while demystifying diversity and recognizing its advantages.

“This workshop let people know what diversity is and what it isn’t,” said PPPL Diversity Leader Pamela Lucas.

Diversity includes physical, cultural, and institutional differences, including race and gender, religion and demographic background, as well as management style and

communication modes. Diversity is **not** a new name for affirmative action or a special program to disenfranchise white males. Nor is it a fast track project for women and minorities. Diversity awareness is recognizing and valuing the skills and abilities of all employees, and seeing the worth of alternative perspectives.

Information Services Head Anthony De Meo said, “I expected the program to be about employment quotas, but it was really about how we perceive other people. We were warned not to be fooled by first impressions or preconceived notions of individuals or cultural groups.”

He added that greater communication among different groups is critical.

Refreshing Approach

Computer Head Dori Barnes said the program instructor offered a refreshing approach. “No one was made to feel bad about harboring an inkling of a prejudice about someone or something. The instructor’s philosophy was realistic — we all have natural biases or make assumptions based on perceptions. The trick is how to focus our awareness of differences on their positive aspects and to respect others and understand how differences can be valuable to us and the organization,” she said.

Continued on page 3

Outstanding

Continued from page 1

“Despite these circumstances, PPPL has maintained a balanced, well-qualified staff who, under their new director and deputy director, are highly motivated and dedicated to sustaining their institution’s strong record of scientific and operational accomplishments,” said Davies.

She further cited PPPL for “making the transition from a tokamak-dominated research program to one more focused on innovative concepts, consistent with and fully supportive of DOE’s strategic goals for a restructured fusion energy sciences program.”

Said DOE Princeton Group Manager Jerry Faul, “This rating is the highest that could be earned... I express my appreciation to all of the Laboratory staff who contributed to this successful year.” ●

HOTLINE

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Diversity

Continued from page 2

The workshop, conducted by Centaur Consulting President Ricardo Correia, focused on raising the level of awareness about diversity issues. According to material from the Connecticut-based Centaur, diversity allows people to recognize and appreciate the benefits of diverse experiences and perspectives. The concept encompasses three main elements: respecting all people simply because they are people; being aware that due to the uniqueness of each person's experiences, he or she will bring a different and valuable perspective; and understanding how those perspectives are a business asset and a necessary commodity.

“We are a very diverse society, and it is constructive to view this diversity as an advantage.”

— Steve Jardin

Participant Steve Jardin commented, “I think the main point was that people with different backgrounds see problems and events from different perspectives, and may see solutions or improvements that others miss. We are a very diverse society, and it is constructive to view this diversity as an advantage.”

Thought Provoking

Doug McCune called the training “entertaining and thought provoking.”

“The gist was to remind us to question our assumptions especially as these affect our relationships with others. This is a good thing to do on a continuing basis,” said McCune.

He said the training reminded him of something he read not long ago by a Microsoft manager about the process of building an effective software development team. One of the manager's cardinal rules was “Don't flip the BOZO bit!” Explained McCune, “What he meant was



Diversity trainer Ricardo H. Correia (standing) leads a group of PPPL senior managers during a diversity awareness workshop at the Laboratory. The participants facing the camera are, from left, Anthony Contino, Steve Iverson, Tony De Meo, Tony Bleach, and Rod Templon.

just because somebody on the team once gave you some bad information or a false lead, that is not enough reason to set BOZO=TRUE in regard to this person, and to never again listen to anything he or she says.”

McCune said everybody agrees that making snap judgements based on ill-informed prejudice can be destructive to the set of relationships that forms our institution. He added that diversity training is good, but more important factors are the examples provided by the Laboratory's leadership and the work environment they foster.

“Snap judgements occur frequently when people are pressured to produce beyond their capabilities. Overcoming prejudice requires energy and thought. If one feels ‘I've got to keep moving, I don't have time to think about this,’ then one is going to cut corners. This includes making snap judgements based on prejudice, sacrificing the long-term health of the Laboratory as an institution based on human relationships in the interest of some short-term consideration,” he said.

Lucas noted the workshop generated a lot of discussion among participants, and was successful in heightening the awareness of PPPL's senior managers about diversity issues.

Long Process of Continuing Diversity Efforts

“It is important that department and division managers are involved in this training because we need support from the top for diversity efforts. This day reinforced the Lab's leadership commitment to diversity and we hope this is just the beginning in a long process of continuing diversity efforts,” she said. ●

What's Happening at PPPL



PPPL Deputy Director Richard Hawryluk (left) accepts a \$1,000 donation from Robert F. Kelley, Vice President of the Division of Environment, Safety, and Communications for Formosa Plastics Corporation, U.S.A. The donation is for the Laboratory's research and science education efforts.



The "Toys for Tots" campaign at the Laboratory during the holidays resulted in a cache of gifts for area youngsters. From left are U.S. Marines Gunnery Sergeant David Van Dyk, PPPL's Sue Hill and Anthony Contino, and Gunnery Sergeant Roberto Vazquez. A special thanks goes to Human Resources staff for collecting the donations and to all PPPL contributors for their generosity. Toys for Tots is an annual campaign organized by the U.S. Marines, who distribute the donated toys to needy children in the area.



A radio frequency oven from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is presently at PPPL for testing and modifications as part of a collaborative project between PPPL and the USDA to develop new pasteurization methods that use radio frequency (RF) waves and microwave heating. Next to the oven are members of the PPPL team, including (from left), Chris Brunkhorst, Elmer Fredd, and Dave Ciotti. Not pictured is Randy Wilson. The machine is expected to be returned to the USDA's Eastern Regional Research Center in Philadelphia sometime this summer, where the pasteurization experiments will take place.



Jean Darazio, the popular sandwich maker from PPPL's Cafeteria, retired on Friday, February 20. Staff wished her well during a surprise farewell party. Good luck, Jean!