



2008 FALL SYMPOSIUM

Navigating Transition, Leading Change

SESSION SUMMARY

Pathways to Leadership: Building Leaders for the Budget Community

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The Office of Management and Budget predicts that by the year 2016, about 60 percent of the Federal workforce will be eligible for retirement. This panel session addressed how agencies can prepare for the forthcoming transition and what employees can do to enhance their chances of moving into a leadership position. The session highlighted an exciting new leadership certificate program available through the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Academy.

Karin O’Leary, the Budget Director for the Department of Justice (DOJ), explained that the department’s current budget staff is composed of 58 employees, 23 percent of whom will be eligible for retirement within the next 5 years, and 40 percent of whom have less than five years of federal service. Ms. O’Leary said, “The main challenge is finding the time to train and coach an employee for management roles, as opposed to just enhancing their technical skills.”

The goal of the DOJ Succession Plan is to provide training and develop-

ment opportunities to analysts and create a pool of qualified candidates to choose from for leadership positions in the department. The plan is founded on three principles:

- Leadership—initiative and self-management,
- Perspective—broad exposure to DOJ, its people, and emerging ideas in the field of justice programs, and
- Expertise—training, short-term projects, and rotational assignments that build transferable skills

Each trainee has an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that provides a path for enhancing core competencies (such as negotiating and communication) to help achieve established career goals. By investing time and energy in their staff, DOJ is presenting them with opportunities to learn and grow, while encouraging them to continue their career within the department.

Sandra Gregory, from the Office of the Comptroller of the Department of Defense, said she wanted

to work for the government because it gave her a chance to give back to the government that has given her so much. Her department is working on several levels to develop and retain staff. She recently worked on a Senior Development Plan where a senior panel reviewed each supervisor’s individual career plan and gave feedback on possible next steps. This review provided insight on who had potential and where they should invest resources for long-term development.

For those not yet in leadership positions, Ms. Gregory presented advice on how to enhance one’s chances of being selected. She said to have the mindset that everyday is a job interview. She further explained with the following examples:

- Sometimes you think you are not being watched, but you are.
- Performance! You are only as good as your last briefing; build a history.
- Looking good is a full time job; you never know who you will meet.

- Work your boss's agenda, not your own.
- Processes do count; understand them and how fast they can change.
- Look outside your inbox; watch the news, see how it is affecting us today.
- You are only as good as your weakest link; what can you do to strengthen it?
- Play well with others as it will be noticed.
- Seek out mentors; create your own board of directors.
- Build relationships; you never know where you will find information, a connection, or help.

Finally, Ms. Gregory suggests that since the economy is down, employers should start hiring now because the government is in a better position to compete with the private sector on offers of salary and

benefits to new hires. "People are looking for work, and the budgeting world has work to offer, so take advantage; it is a win-win situation."

Ricardo Aguilera, representing the CFO Academy and National Defense University, presented information on a CFO Leadership Certificate, created collaboratively with the Information Resources Management College of National Defense University and the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Aguilera said, "The agencies have road maps, but no compasses to know where they are going." The CFO Academy decided education would provide a strategic growth of leaders. The certificate generally takes 4 years to complete and consists of 8 courses: 1 general requirement, 3 specializing in management, and 4 that are interdisciplinary. The Chief Financial Officer

Academy is an accredited university which works with 38 other schools.

The first class started September 22, 2008, with the theme, "The Changing World of CFO." The students represented 36 different agencies and benefited from the sharing of information. They learned that no one is alone in their struggles, as the program is a community of people with the same aspirations. Mr. Aguilera ended the session by explaining, "The CFO Academy is an attempt to break down barriers between agencies and bring a community together to form leaders. The CFO Academy is teaching students what it is like to hold the compass, when they are used to a manager holding the map."

For more information please visit <http://www.NDU.edu/IRMC>, search programs, then CFO Academy.