

ASSESSMENT OF THE DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD WORKFORCE AND CULTURE

REPORT DNF40T I

Colin J. O'Hara
Paul M. Darmory



DECEMBER 2014

NOTICE:

THE VIEWS, OPINIONS, AND FINDINGS CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT ARE THOSE OF LMI AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS AN OFFICIAL AGENCY POSITION, POLICY, OR DECISION, UNLESS SO DESIGNATED BY OTHER OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATION.

LMI © 2014. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Assessment of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Workforce and Culture

REPORT DNF40T1/DECEMBER 2014

Executive Summary

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB or Agency) is a small, independent organization within the executive branch. Established in October 1989, the Agency was chartered to provide recommendations and advice to the President and the Secretary of Energy regarding public health and safety issues at Department of Energy (DOE) defense nuclear facilities.

DNFSB has experienced significant changes in a compressed time period. In the past 3 years, 14 of 19 leadership, management, and supervisory positions within the Agency have experienced vacancy or turnover. DNFSB's enabling legislation has been changed, new operating procedures have been implemented, and a new performance management system has been rolled out. Inadequate or ineffective organizational communication and change management are contributing to a pervasive sense of organizational instability. While staff members generally have a positive view of their immediate supervisors, management and leadership above that level receive much more negative sentiment, contributing to negative personnel perspectives of management and leadership, illustrated by precipitous declines in indicators such as DNFSB's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results in recent years.

While all the changes have had an impact, perhaps the most important dynamic involves the divisive and dysfunctional relationship among DNFSB's senior leadership: the board members themselves. This situation is causing fractures within the organization and reinforcing a perceived divide between the board and the Agency's staff. The board dynamic is influencing office directors, managers, and group leads and was noted by all levels of DNFSB. Office directors, managers, and group leads, who must act as intermediaries between the board members and Agency personnel, are forced into this board-driven, fractured organizational dynamic, resulting in further fractured and dysfunctional relations at other levels and in personnel perceptions such as the existence of conflicting visions of DNFSB's role, organizational priorities, and purpose. A toxic organizational culture, lack of cohesion, lack of collegiality, and hampered mission effectiveness were noted in both written communications and in data collected through interviews and focus groups. This view is widespread and pervasive. Considerable negative sentiment

regarding the board dynamic was observed in data collected from DNFSB personnel, managers, directors, and board members and in terms used to describe the relationships, such as “uncivil,” “lack of collegiality,” “abusive,” “bullying,” “lack of decorum,” “poisonous,” and “unprofessional.”

DNFSB’s capacity to achieve its mission and provide stable leadership is in jeopardy in the near term. The chairman has recently announced his retirement from the board, leaving two remaining board members. Pending external action, this will also leave the board without a quorum, thus making it unable to fulfill its functions. It is unclear what further impact the chairman’s departure will have. While it will provide an opportunity for new senior leadership within DNFSB, problems identified among the remaining board members may continue to plague the organization’s ability to fulfill its mission. For example, one board member stated the intention to halt the timely review and approval of routine correspondence to DOE pending action on implementation of a particular board policy.

We recommend the following corrective actions to address the root causes of DNFSB’s organizational challenges:

- ◆ Impanel a complete five-person board to address organizational challenges stemming from the board’s current composition and structural imbalance.
- ◆ Improve the cohesion of the board members and increase the board’s capacity to act as a unified body.
- ◆ Improve the tone of all written and oral communications throughout the organization, and address any underlying cause of negative communication.
- ◆ Uphold the mission and reclaim the narrative of DNFSB objectivity, reliance on data and technical expertise as sole discriminators of board opinions, and board members as chief advocates of DNFSB purview and objectives.
- ◆ Institutionalize a practice of continuous change management within DNFSB, including strategic communication.
- ◆ Assess and develop DNFSB’s leadership and management competencies.
- ◆ Thoroughly assess technical and nontechnical competencies throughout the organization to better understand mission requirements and competency development pathways and milestones.
- ◆ Fill vacant leadership and management positions, and develop methods to encourage continuity within leadership and management positions.

- ◆ Identify nonmonetary awards, recognition, and incentives to motivate and engage the staff.
- ◆ Continually measure progress against the baseline of this workforce assessment.

The recommended corrective actions require sustained organizational leadership: commitment, cohesion, and energy from a unified board; enabling management; and engagement of personnel throughout all levels of the organization. The board's current dysfunction could cause implementation of the recommended corrective actions to falter. In the face of continued organizational change with the chairman's departure, this prospect threatens future achievement of DNFSB's mission. Challenges caused by the board's current composition may preclude organizational stabilization, development, and fulfillment of DNFSB's mission.

Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction	1-1
APPROACH	1-2
ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT	1-2
Chapter 2 Organizational Challenges and Root Causes	2-1
PREVIOUS ASSESSMENTS OF EMPLOYEE SENTIMENT	2-1
FEVS Assessments	2-1
EC Assessment	2-3
ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION	2-4
INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP DATA	2-6
ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS	2-12
Chapter 3 Recommendations and Corrective Actions	3-1
Chapter 4 Best Practices	4-1
CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION	4-1
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT	4-3
Leadership Competency Development	4-3
Management Competency Development	4-5
Appendix A Organizational Background and Context of This Study	
Appendix B Interview and Focus Group Question Sets	
Appendix C Interview and Focus Groups: Brainstorming Solutions	
Appendix D FEVS Questions and Index Alignment	
Appendix E FEVS Results	
Appendix F Documents Reviewed	
Appendix G Abbreviations	

Figures

Figure 2-1. Leadership, Management, and Supervisory Positions Affected by Turnover in the Past 3 Years	2-13
Figure 2-2. Major Root Causes of the Declining FEVS Results	2-15
Figure 3-1. Solutions and Their Linkage to Core Issues and Perceptions	3-6
Figure 4-1. CM Approach.....	4-2

Tables

Table 2-1. Percentage of DNFSB and Governmentwide Positive Responses, FY11–FY14	2-2
Table 2-2. Key Themes and Perceptions	2-8

Chapter 1

Introduction

The leadership of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB or Agency) had a number of concerns related to the following:

- ◆ A decline in DNFSB's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results since FY11, which saw the Agency decline from the second best small agency in FY11 to 26th best small agency (of 29) in FY13. Key areas showing declines included performance management, awards and recognition, and policies and leadership.
- ◆ Findings of an internal Employee Committee (EC) follow-on survey and report providing insight into the reasons for the declining FEVS results, identifying individual positions and personnel within the Agency as causes of the declines, and finding that a large proportion of the DNFSB staff "no longer feels trust, confidence, and support for senior management." Key challenge areas identified by the EC include the finding that a "large percentage of follow-on survey respondents no longer had the trust, confidence, and support of senior management, particularly management at the level of the office director and above."¹
- ◆ Continued declines in FEVS results between FY13 and FY14 beyond declines noted in other government organizations over the same time period, and precipitous declines in key management and leadership indicators.
- ◆ A number of instances of negative, unhealthy individual and organizational communication that were perceived by leadership as hampering the Agency's mission effectiveness and overall satisfaction of its employees, driving a request to independently assess DNFSB's "culture of respect."

While implementing what board members perceived as initial corrective actions in several areas following the EC's recommendations, the Agency asked LMI to independently assess DNFSB's workforce, with emphasis on the relationships between management/leadership and employees and the culture of the workplace. The FY14 FEVS results were released during this assessment. DNFSB specifically asked LMI to analyze the root causes of the continued negative FEVS responses and trends and to recommend corrective actions to address the root causes. This report conveys the results of our assessment.

¹ DNFSB's hierarchy includes only office directors and board members themselves in the senior management category.

APPROACH

The focus of LMI's assessment was the DNFSB workforce culture. The assessment covered all full-time federal employees at the Agency, including the board members. Contractors and Professional Development Program participants were not included. To construct a holistic view of DNFSB's workforce that would give us insight into the current culture and allow us to recommend practical and targeted corrective actions, LMI employed a multifaceted approach using quantitative and qualitative data and information.

Our research encompassed several concurrent and sequential activities:

- ◆ Documentation reviews
- ◆ Interviews and focus groups
- ◆ Quantitative and qualitative data analysis
- ◆ Root cause analysis
- ◆ External sources and best practices research
- ◆ Final analysis and recommendations.

Interviews and focus groups gave us additional perspective, providing more depth to the information about the current workforce and organizational culture. We also reviewed and analyzed other publicly available data sources, including documents available on DNFSB's website and webcast and recorded public hearings. Public hearings proved a valuable resource as they provide firsthand insight into the interactions of DNFSB's senior leadership, management, and organizational interfaces, such as with Department of Energy (DOE) counterparts.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

- ◆ Chapter 2 defines the key organizational challenges facing DNFSB and identifies the root causes of those challenges.
- ◆ Chapter 3 contains recommended strategies and corrective actions to address the root causes underlying DNFSB's organizational challenges and suggests immediate next steps to drive implementation planning.
- ◆ Chapter 4 presents research from external sources that illustrate potential connections to DNFSB and identifies best practices that can shape potential courses of action.

- ◆ The appendixes contain supporting detail.
 - Appendix A contains information on DNFSB's organizational framework.
 - Appendix B contains information on interviews and focus groups.
 - Appendix C presents possible solutions recommended by DNFSB personnel during interviews and focus groups.
 - Appendix D lists the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) Viewpoint Survey questions and shows their alignment with the Leadership and Knowledge Management Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF) index.
 - Appendix E reviews results of individual FEVS questions.
 - Appendix F contains a complete list of the documents reviewed.
 - Appendix G is a listing of abbreviations.

Chapter 2

Organizational Challenges and Root Causes

This chapter summarizes previous assessments of employee sentiment; discusses organizational communication, an issue of particular concern at all levels of the Agency; and presents the data and information we obtained through interviews and focus groups. It then presents the root cause analysis. Throughout our analyses, we were mindful that DNFSB's small size and organizational composition increase the likelihood that an organizational challenge in any office, division, or group can significantly influence the overall results. This is especially true of the technical staff, which represents the vast majority of DNFSB personnel. Problems within the technical staff (or even within one or two groups within the technical staff) may be viewed through FEVS results as a systemic organizational problem. For this reason, interviews and focus groups allowed us to look deeper into the organization to find the underlying causes of employee concerns.

PREVIOUS ASSESSMENTS OF EMPLOYEE SENTIMENT

Key assessments pertinent to our research were the FEVS assessments in FY13 and FY14 and the EC assessment. We used those assessments to identify issues and lines of inquiry to drive our research.

FEVS Assessments

In reviewing individual DNFSB HCAAF indices and those indices against governmentwide small/independent agency performance measured by those indices, an interesting picture emerges. DNFSB's results declined from FY11 to FY12, but still outperformed governmentwide small agency results; however, from FY12 to FY14, DNFSB showed precipitous declines, with the highest declines between FY12 and FY13. In contrast, small agency results overall remained relatively flat over that time period. Table 2-1 compares the percentage of DNFSB and governmentwide small agency positive responses between FY11 and FY14.

Table 2-1. Percentage of DNFSB and Governmentwide Positive Responses, FY11–FY14

HCAAF index	FY11		FY12		FY13		FY14	
	DNFSB	Gov't	DNFSB	Gov't	DNFSB	Gov't	DNFSB	Gov't
Leadership and Knowledge	81%	NA	76%	60%	54%	60%	48%	59%
Results-Oriented Performance	71%	NA	63%	57%	48%	56%	46%	56%
Talent Management	82%	NA	75%	61%	53%	59%	50%	59%
Job Satisfaction	82%	NA	78%	65%	54%	64%	50%	63%

Note: The statistics in this table are drawn from OPM summary data that includes all FEVS responses.

The following represent the most significant DNFSB changes from the FY13 to the FY14 FEVS results:¹

- ◆ Overall, positive response rates² to FEVS questions fell 5 percentage points (FY13: 55.9 percent, FY14: 50.9 percent).³
- ◆ The general trend was for decreases in positive responses from FY13 to FY14:
 - Fifty-three questions showed decreases in positive responses from FY13 to FY14, with an average decrease of 8.2 percentage points.
 - Seventeen of those questions showed a 10 percent or greater decline in positive responses from FY13 to FY14.
 - Only 18 questions showed increases in positive responses from FY13 to FY14, with an average increase of 4.4 percentage points.
- ◆ Twenty questions in FY14 received positive responses greater than 65 percent, the threshold for an organizational strength according to OPM.

In the FY14 FEVS results, questions regarding respect for leadership and leadership honesty and integrity, management (office directors⁴) performance, partisan practices, policies supporting diversity, and job-relevant skills and knowledge saw large declines.

¹ FY11 results are used to benchmark recent declines in individual FEVS questions. DNFSB was rated the 2nd best small agency based on FY11 FEVS results.

² “Positive response rate” as used here is the sum of responses denoting “Agree” and “Strongly agree,” “Good” and “Very good,” and “Satisfied” and “Very satisfied.”

³ The comparative statistics in this section reflect analysis of positive response rates to questions 1–71 of the FEVS. Questions 72–84 pertain to work/life balance programs and have been excluded from this analytical assessment. Questions pertaining to demographic indicators have also been excluded from analysis in this section.

⁴ Given the positive performance on the supervisor/team lead series of questions, one can infer that in nearly every unit within this small, hierarchically flat organization, question 60 refers to the level of office director or above (implying board members). This inference is supported through interview and focus group data.

In the FY14 FEVS results, negative response rates⁵ increased again in areas dealing with respect for leadership, leadership policies and practices, partisan practices, management (office directors) performance, job satisfaction, and communication from management relating to organizational issues, goals, and priorities.

The FEVS data also pointed to a number of organizational strengths and to some areas in which the organization has improved in the past years. Of particular note, the question related to the frequency of performance discussions, combined with a 36 percent year-on-year increase in positive response rates on question 23 (on how the Agency deals with poor performers), indicates that the recent implementation of a new performance management system is gaining acceptance and showing some benefits. Meanwhile, interview and focus group participants generally noted more work remained to be done in the areas of training on the system and management communication of performance expectations.

EC Assessment

The Employment Committee was composed of two co-chairs selected by the DNFSB chairman and nine volunteer staff members representing all offices within the Agency. The EC conducted a follow-on survey of Agency personnel to delve more deeply into particular results from the FY13 FEVS to determine underlying causes. The 42 personnel who completed the questionnaires provided significant details regarding concerns and suggestions for improvements. Nearly three-quarters of the responses to the questionnaire were from members of the technical staff, making the results representative of the DNFSB workforce, much like the FEVS results.

The EC's final report provides a snapshot of an organization that has undergone significant changes, as well as a view into DNFSB's organizational culture:

The results of the follow-on questionnaires reflect significant concerns in the topical areas of performance management, awards and recognition, and agency policies and leadership. Overall, the staff feels they no longer have the trust, confidence, and support of senior management, particularly management at the level of the Office Director and above. As a consequence, the staff no longer feels trust, confidence, and support for senior management.

Coming on the heels of a significant senior management change (the turnover from the prior to the current technical director), the rollout of a new performance management system, a year of budget turmoil resulting in near-term salary freezes and no bonuses, and the threat of a reduction in force (RIF), it is not surprising that the report suggests findings of "poor" organizational management and

⁵ "Negative response rate" as used here is the sum of responses denoting "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree," "Poor" and "Very poor," and "Dissatisfied" and "Very dissatisfied."

leadership, in line with similar sentiment from other federal agencies for the same time period.

The EC report contains recommendations that address the need for change management, communication, and staff recognition development activities, such as

- ◆ clarified performance management guidance and training, including communication of expectations, to ensure consistency in implementation;
- ◆ clarified awards and recognition guidance and communication of expectations to ensure consistency in implementation;
- ◆ more extensive nonmonetary recognition, more visible Agency-wide recognition, and improved staff recognition by managers;
- ◆ development of management competencies; and
- ◆ improved interoffice communication.

Several sections of the report deal extensively with the Office of the Technical Director (OTD), showing considerable negative sentiment. The circumstances of the changes in senior staffing of the OTD, as described by personnel during interviews and focus groups, set the stage for division, and in the absence of appropriate, effective communication, the members of the technical staff were left in a position to choose favorites, based perhaps more on personality than on management or leadership competency.

The final recommendations of the EC report called for

- ◆ improved advocacy and a point of contact to manage the board-staff relationship with regard to complaints and feedback,
- ◆ training and/or coaching to improve the technical director's relationship with the members of the technical staff,
- ◆ independent assessment of the board's culture and assistance in improving strained relationships within the board, and
- ◆ improvement of communication and empowerment to openly address and resolve issues.

Considering the environment in which the EC was empaneled, its findings and recommendations are logical, despite the often harsh tone.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

One issue of particular concern to DNFSB's senior leadership (board members) and echoed repeatedly by personnel throughout all levels of the organization was

the negative tone of organizational communication, in both oral and written discourse. That tone was driving perceptions of board dysfunction; a lack of collegiality, cohesion, and, in some cases, civility; and a pervasive sense of organizational instability.

The language used to describe the tone of organizational communication illustrates the extent such communications are affecting DNFSB's culture. The language is itself emotional, and conveyed an intensity of feeling that identified this particular area as requiring special emphasis during this assessment. Below are terms used to describe organizational communication:

- ◆ "Abusive"
- ◆ "Bullying"
- ◆ "Antagonistic"
- ◆ "Unprofessional"
- ◆ "Toxic"
- ◆ "Aggressive"
- ◆ "Polarizing"
- ◆ "Divisive."

While workforce perceptions of organizational communication are addressed in the section containing the key themes and perspectives solicited during interviews and focus groups, the continued emphasis on this issue from personnel throughout all levels of the Agency drove research to identify specific negative examples of oral and written organizational communication substantiating these claims. Besides the preponderance of anecdotal information relayed by numerous personnel, our reviews of several documents and public recorded/webcast events provided tangible evidence of negative tone, including the following:

- ◆ Several instances of notational voting records from board members using condescending language and personal attacks
- ◆ A lack of decorum among board members during public proceedings, such as hearings and business meetings, including interruptions of testimony and argumentative proceedings
- ◆ An email from a board member to all staff members communicating the board member's decision to interrupt the process of routine correspondence between DOE and DNFSB due to a disagreement among the board members regarding action on a particular board policy.

While tone of communications is notoriously difficult to judge objectively, the resources reviewed, particularly the public hearings, lend weight to the numerous allegations of negative tone among other organizational communications that were not reviewed. Anecdotal evidence indicated that this issue is pervasive. Board members, office directors, and others were indicated as sources of negative communications. Additional anecdotal evidence indicated a negative tone in many verbal communications internal to DNFSB, which may be the reason for perceived challenges with regard to a workforce “culture of respect” as reflected in FEVS results.

While this line of inquiry is not exhaustive, we reviewed enough information to conclude that internal organizational communication, focusing on constructive dialogue and conflict resolution, is a fundamental area that DNFSB must address.

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP DATA

Unlike surveys, which are effective for identifying general trends across an organization, interviews and focus groups are highly effective mechanisms for delving into the beliefs and attitudes that underlie survey ratings. The research team conducted 11 individual interviews and 14 focus groups. In all, 62 people from all levels (including all three board members) and from every office, division, and group within DNFSB participated. The participants represented about 60 percent of the DNFSB workforce. Appendix B contains the questions and prompts used to guide the discussions during interviews and focus groups.

To ensure honest and frank dialogue, the participants in the interviews and focus groups were promised that their comments would be anonymous. In addition, employees who did not want to attend interviews or focus groups were allowed to provide anonymous input. Six people submitted anonymous comments (both electronic and manual), which we included in our analysis.

Interviews and focus groups have some limitations, so we designed our approach to minimize potential negative impacts:

- ◆ Ensured participants anonymity to encourage free and open discussion.
- ◆ Used facilitation techniques to ensure that focus groups were not dominated by the most vocal participants.
- ◆ Mitigated the potential for selection bias by having the DNFSB’s human resources (HR) director encourage participation from personnel across the entire organization.
- ◆ Organized participant input into themes to increase the reliability of the findings.

- ◆ Framed focus groups as discussions of personnel perceptions and highlighted they were not designed to arbitrate disagreements. We emphasized that perceptions are neither right nor wrong; they simply document organizational sentiment through the eyes of personnel.

Table 2-2 identifies the key themes addressed in interviews and focus groups, along with the perceptions of the participants about those themes and some examples. Although all comments were anonymous, certain themes and perceptions clearly relate to particular offices.

Table 2-2. Key Themes and Perceptions

Theme	Perception	Examples
Board	Open board disagreements negatively impact morale, create unnecessary duplication of work, and negatively impact Agency effectiveness.	<p>A perception of clear political divisions among board members is negatively impacting staff confidence in the technical integrity of the board's mission and effectiveness.</p> <p>The board's challenges are described as a lack of cohesion, professionalism, civility, and shared vision among the board members of DNFSB's strategic direction and purpose.</p> <p>Partisan approaches to organizational leadership are creating inefficiencies. Some members of the technical staff noted that they received directions from one board member to complete an activity a particular way, followed by a contradictory set of instructions from another board member, which they perceived as motivated by the board members' political affiliations.</p>
	The perception of insufficient information about DNFSB drives rumors and uncertainty about the direction of the Agency.	The chairman's recent resignation announcement was perceived as sudden and without cause, prompting speculation about what drove this and the board's future direction.
	The perception of ineffective or insufficient communication about such organizational issues as management and supervisory personnel actions is contributing to a general sentiment of opaque visibility into the board's functions.	Some commenters speculated about the reasons leadership might have implemented a particular personnel change, showing evidence of unclear communication.
	Trust has been broken between leaders/board and the technical staff.	<p>Technical staff members relayed instances in which the board overrode a sound science-based technical staff analytical finding.</p> <p>Despite communication about the Agency's budget health, bonuses and certain salary actions were frozen.</p>
	DNFSB is perceived by staff members as having strayed from a science focus to a political focus.	<p>Some staff members perceive board members are shaping the technical staff's analysis toward a particular answer without technical substantiation, indicating a probable political bias.</p> <p>Some staff members remarked that in past boards, a majority of scientific areas were within the expertise of the board members but now there is a more limited breadth of area of expertise due to the smaller board and the less-scientifically based criteria placed on new board members.</p> <p>Many members of the technical staff perceive that board "letters" and investigations are driven by board members rather than by safety considerations.</p>

Table 2-2. Key Themes and Perceptions

Theme	Perception	Examples
Board (cont.)	Conflicting visions among board members of the role of DNFSB have resulted in unclear expectations within the organization as a whole, as well as with its primary organizational stakeholders (DOE, contractors, and others).	<p>Technical staff members noted inconsistency between the messages of site representatives to their sites and the messages relayed by board members visiting the same sites, resulting in conflicting information, inconsistency, and situations requiring damage control.</p> <p>This lack of predictability by the board members and, in turn the board, in terms of official letters and other actions, has reduced the intended impact of the Agency as an oversight body and weakened the guiding and oversight authority of DNFSB site representatives as they cannot predictably warn of an Agency letter or other such actions.</p>
Leadership and management	DNFSB's decision to replace the former technical director with the current technical director was a major organizational change that was poorly communicated and has had a significant impact on morale and cohesion among technical staff members that is still observable.	The technical director's actions are still viewed negatively by some members of the technical staff. Many who noted this also believe that the current technical director is reforming and improving his leadership and management competencies. Although his ability to modify his behaviors based on feedback was applauded, there are still comments about his propensity to react negatively to questions and his lack of responses to technical queries from the technical staff.
	Direct supervisors provide opportunities for feedback and opinions, but there is no response or feedback from any higher management level in the organization.	<p>A common statement was "I try to resolve all technical issues between myself and my supervisor because issues that go further never get a response."</p> <p>Several people mentioned not receiving feedback on submissions to a DNFSB comment/suggestion box.</p>
	Supervisors and managers, particularly in the technical staff, lack some management competencies.	<p>While supervisors and managers generally felt they had adequate management training and competencies, many personnel expressed a desire for their managers to receive additional development in critical competencies such as interpersonal communication and conflict resolution.</p> <p>Some participants referenced current management training derogatorily as "charm school."</p> <p>Participants recognized the requirement for management with technical expertise, but expressed a perception that this results in managers becoming managers because of their technical competencies and not because of their management competencies.</p>
Leadership (cont.)	Staff vacancies and "one-deep" staffing drive inefficiencies in operations and communications.	<p>Some participants mentioned situations in which personnel felt they could approach their manager/supervisor with an issue, but did not or would not do so because they viewed their supervisor or manager as not having the time to address the concern due to excess workload caused by a high-level vacancy.</p> <p>Multiple participants mentioned the impact of supervisory vacancies on relationships that result in meaningful performance management assessments and continuous feedback.</p> <p>"One-deep" staffing in some units is causing decreased operational effectiveness, such as limiting work that is being planned for in work plans.</p>

Table 2-2. Key Themes and Perceptions

Theme	Perception	Examples
	Communications about new policies, practices, and expectations can be improved to ensure understanding and more common application of standards and expectations.	Some members of the technical staff noted that new and expanded operating procedures are likely a good thing to implement, but the lack of clarity on the positive impact of this organizational change is having a negative influence on their buy-in. Several participants noted that the person responsible for conducting their performance appraisal was unable to explain or define the actions or performance level required to receive an improved performance assessment rating.
	Missed opportunities to communicate about personnel changes drive rumors and undermine morale.	Nearly every staff focus group began with statements that personnel learn someone has left the organization only when an update to the phone list is distributed. Despite the humor with which this story was related, many staff members noted that this drove suspicions and fed a thriving rumor mill regarding personnel actions. Many also noted their understanding that not all personnel actions can be communicated, but expressed a desire for some form of improved communication, as soon as practicable, regarding personnel actions that affect the organization.
	Many members of the technical staff work to resolve issues between themselves and their supervisors because the escalation of issues beyond that level is met with silence or additional work.	There is a perception of the board as a “black box” into which technical staff products disappear without feedback, leading to lower staff morale and a belief that they are not actively contributing to DNFSB’s mission.
	Workforce demographics (as it relates to age and time with DNFSB) are negatively influencing staff perceptions of organizational change.	Numerous staff members noted a belief that people nearing retirement were not going to be happy no matter what was done within the organization and that only their retirement would improve staff sentiment and perceptions. This was reinforced by many references to an idealized “way things used to be” and a sentiment that they would/could not ever return to that state.
Operating procedures/ reporting process	The administrative burden of new reporting processes and controls is viewed with a mixture of understanding and frustration as it detracts from execution of the mission.	Many staff members noted they thought it was probably important to have documented procedures, but that the new procedures place an unreasonable burden on staff members who are already burdened with mission support requirements. Procedures have not reached a happy medium of providing standardized processes and outputs balanced with a streamlined/sensible administrative burden.

Table 2-2. Key Themes and Perceptions

Theme	Perception	Examples
Performance management/ incentives/ awards/ recognition	The performance management system is seen as increasingly valid although poorly implemented and managed.	<p>Many personnel viewed the performance management system as a way to prepare for the possibility of RIFs. Because the possibility of RIFs alone prompts job security concerns, the performance management system is starting from a negative narrative. Few people saw the new system as a practical way to improve their performance or set development goals for themselves (personally or in coordination with a supervisor).</p> <p>Training on the new performance management system offered 3 years ago has yet to happen.</p> <p>Many supervisors are unable to explain to employees how to attain a rating of “exceeds expectations” in the new performance management system. Whether the failure to explain is intentional or supervisors are poorly trained, employees dislike the lack of direction.</p> <p>Many technical staff members are disgruntled at being forced into a statistical distribution from the previous top rating for a majority of the staff. Given the simultaneous salary and bonus freeze and threat of a RIF, this distribution threatens job security and workforce pay expectations.</p>
	Bonuses and opportunities are not distributed evenly among the members of the technical staff.	The perception of certain programs and work areas being preselected (but uncommunicated or poorly communicated) priorities of senior leadership is contributing to a lack of morale within the workforce supporting nonpriority programs and work areas (winners vs. losers).
	Staff members believe that much of their work is unrecognized and the value of this work underrated.	<p>Many participants noted that slow or insufficient feedback cycles on analytic products result in a perception that their work is not being recognized. This is compounded by an inability for staff members to capture the outcomes of work already completed; thus, the technical staff may wind up redoing similar (or the same) work.</p> <p>Some participants said they understood that bonuses and salary actions are affected by forces outside the Agency (for example, governmentwide actions), but that such actions should be mitigated through the use of other non-monetary incentives and/or recognition.</p>
Other	Staff members think that Congress changed the Agency charter to bend to DOE’s wishes, posing more difficulty for the Agency.	Issues that would prompt a letter now go to the DOE Secretary for that office’s changes to the report.

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

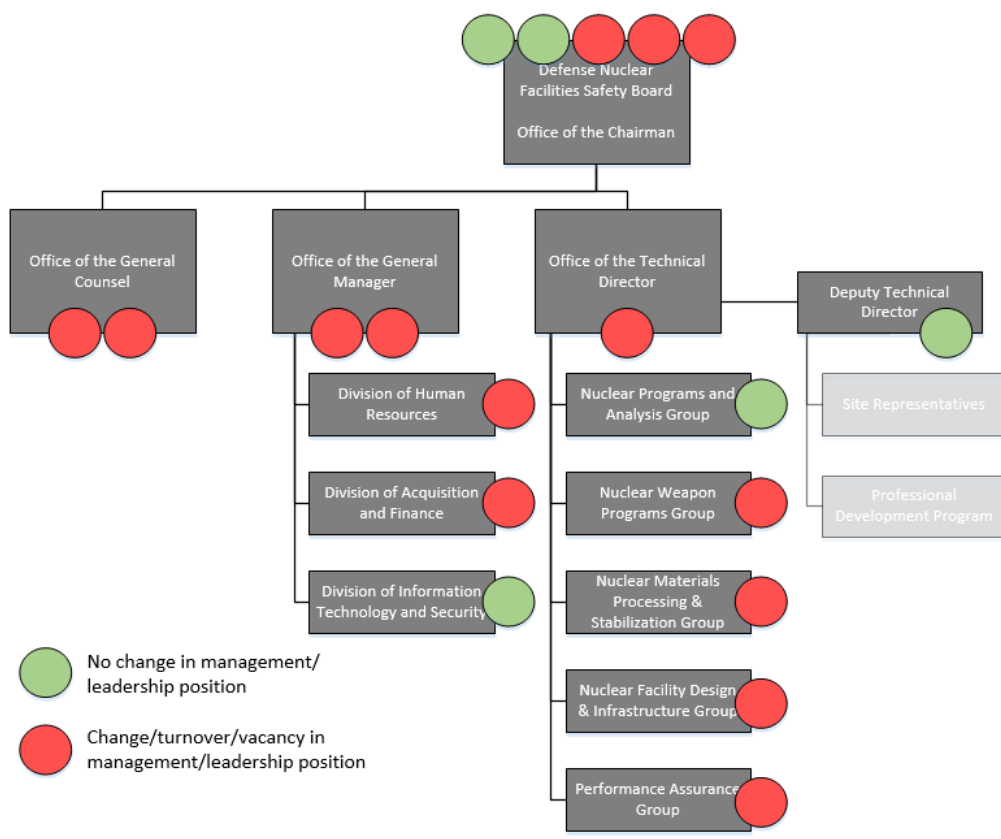
LMI identified several root causes contributing to the organizational impacts driving workforce perceptions and negatively influencing FEVS results:

- ◆ Frequent significant organizational changes—amendments to enabling legislation, new and expanded process requirements, leadership and management changes, new performance management system, etc.—without

effective change management are contributing to lower staff morale, staff confusion, and a perception of organizational instability.

- ◆ Vacancies and lack of stability in key management and supervisory positions are negatively impacting workload, workflow, performance management, and communication. In approximately 3 years, 14 of 19 organizational leadership, management, and supervisory positions in DNFSB (74 percent) have experienced churn (internal movement), vacancy, recusal, or other form of turnover, contributing to a perceived lack of organizational stability.⁶ Extended vacancies in particular contribute to breaks in effective performance management and organizational communication, and they result in increased workload or dysfunctional behavior that exacerbates those issues. Figure 2-1 displays leadership and management positions that have experienced some form of turnover in the past 3 years.

Figure 2-1. Leadership, Management, and Supervisory Positions Affected by Turnover in the Past 3 Years



⁶ Leadership, management, and supervisory positions include board members, office directors and deputy directors, division leads, and group leads.

Note: OGC, OGM, and OTD have 2 management positions, director and deputy. OTD's deputy director is shown as a separate unit. The board has 5 leadership positions (board members).

- ◆ The lack of certain management and leadership competencies within the organization is contributing to ineffective communication, cohesion, and change management. Despite generally positive sentiments as viewed through FY14 FEVS results (Supervisor/Team Lead series⁷), many participants in interviews and focus groups noted that management and leadership competencies could be further improved and that development of management and leadership competencies would have a positive impact on many areas in which the organization is struggling.

⁷ The Supervisor/Team Lead series comprises questions 42–52, of which six questions had positive response rates denoting an organizational strength.

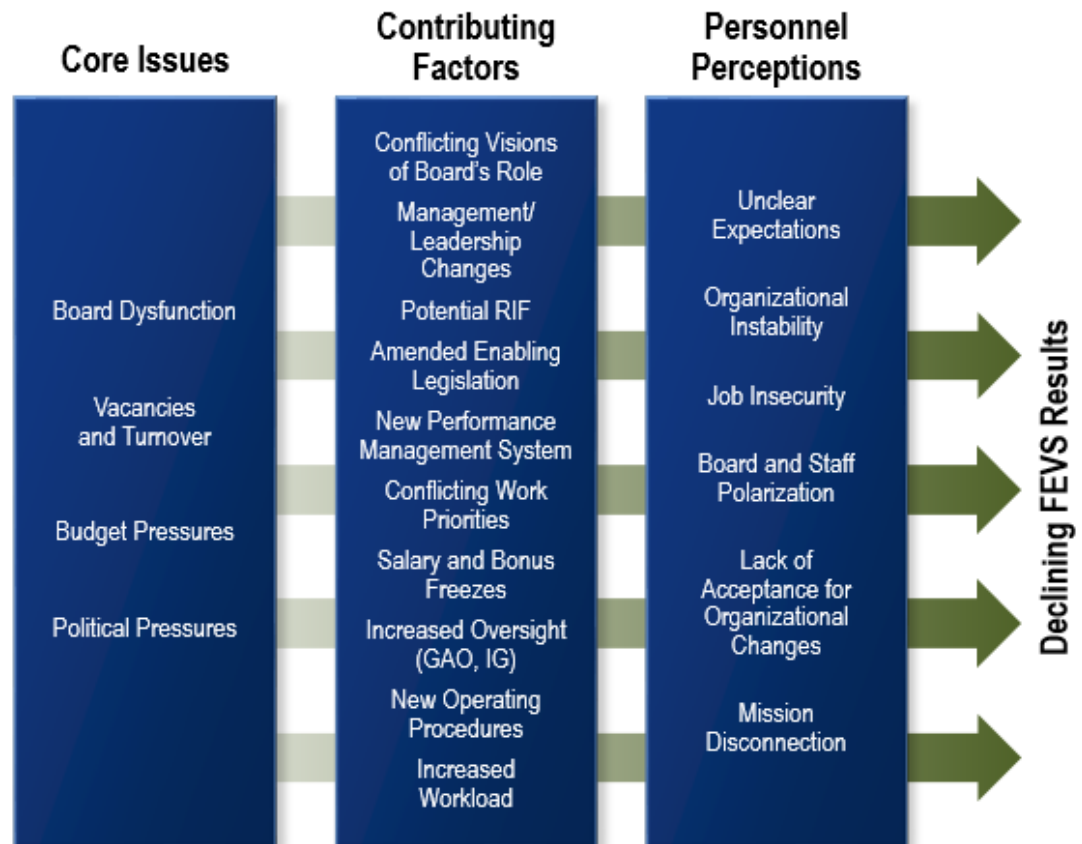
-
- ◆ Ineffective communication (not targeted, not enough information, not frequent enough, or nonexistent) is hampering organizational cohesion and preventing adequate change management. Personnel generally appreciate the all-staff meetings, but there is a widespread sentiment that these meetings convey too much information about irrelevant or less-important topics (such as certain legislative actions that do not affect DNFSB), while significant organizational changes and topics (personnel actions, new systems, etc.) are hardly communicated at all.
 - ◆ The current composition of the board and the resulting dynamic is contributing to a toxic organizational narrative in a number of ways:
 - Competing visions among board members of the role of DNFSB are causing perceived organizational instability, lack of direction, and lack of mission effectiveness.
 - Board members' disagreements and conflicting priorities are resulting in conflicting directions to staff members, weakening mission effectiveness, and generating perceptions of organizational instability.
 - Board members' political views are being seen as increasingly influencing their oversight roles.
 - Polarization within the board is cascading down to Agency personnel, who feel they must choose sides. This weakens bonds among staff members who must partner, coordinate, and collaborate for efficiency and effectiveness. Many staff members who participated in focus groups were vocally supportive of certain board members and clearly mistrusting of others.
 - Discourse within the board has taken on a negative tone and is viewed by many within the organization as uncivil, unprofessional, and potentially damaging to mission effectiveness.
 - Board members' technical backgrounds are being called into question by some members of the technical staff.
 - ◆ Extra-organizational factors—including salary and performance bonus freezes, sequestration, furloughs, and potential RIFs due to budgetary pressures⁸—occurring simultaneously with significant internal organizational changes compound negative personnel perceptions. Further, some of those factors directly resulted in internal organizational changes (such as rollout of the new performance management system, which many

⁸ These factors are facing all government organizations and can therefore be viewed as constants in analyses of FEVS results. Because these factors are occurring at the same time as other significant changes within DNFSB, they are exacerbating (or, in some cases, causing) some of the root causes of the Agency's negative FEVS results.

participants perceived to be a precursor to a RIF). Because these factors threatened pay and job security, any resultant organizational changes not managed carefully and with sensitivity to staff members' concerns generated negative sentiment.

Figure 2-2 shows a cause-and-effect diagram of the major root causes of the negative trends and low scores in the FY14 FEVS results. Core issues and contributing factors are having organizational impacts resulting in negative personnel perceptions and sentiments.

Figure 2-2. Major Root Causes of the Declining FEVS Results



Chapter 3

Recommendations and Corrective Actions

On the basis of our assessment of DNFSB, LMI identified several solutions that address the underlying causes and impacts of the Agency's organizational challenges. We did not attempt to target improvement of individual metrics, such as FEVS question results, although FEVS scores will begin to improve if the agency can address its specific challenges. (DNFSB personnel also recommended a number of solutions during interviews and focus groups; Appendix C lists them.)

Our specific recommendations and suggested corrective actions are as follows:

- ◆ *Recommendation 1: Impanel a full five-person board to address organizational challenges stemming from the board's current composition and structural imbalance.*
 - Corrective actions:
 - 1.a. (External) Congress should immediately work to nominate and impanel a complete five-person board. A complete board would address part of the current dynamic that is responsible for some of the challenges currently facing DNFSB and provide a foundation for efforts to stabilize and develop the organization. While this action is unlikely to occur in the near future, it would increase the chances of successful implementation of the other corrective actions listed below.
 - 1.b. (External) Congress should initiate board member nominations in keeping with and emphasizing the scientific qualifications contained in the enabling legislation to ensure that the board provides scientific credibility both within DNFSB and with external stakeholders.
- ◆ *Recommendation 2: Improve the cohesion of the board members and increase the board's capacity to act as a unified body.* Personnel perceptions of the board's lack of cohesion and collegiality are contributing to and exacerbating organizational instability. As the board enters a period of flux with the chairman's resignation and the pending lack of a quorum, it is critical for the board to act as a unitive body and to provide unified leadership to DNFSB.

➤ Corrective action:

- 2.a. Provide leadership and continued professional development coaching for board members, as well as team-building exercises. This corrective action is critical to the successful implementation of the other corrective actions.

- ◆ *Recommendation 3: Improve the tone of all written and verbal communications throughout the organization, and address any underlying cause of negative communication.* Despite imperfect access to information regarding all organizational communications, it seems clear from the evidence reviewed and gathered during interviews and focus groups that internal organizational communication at all levels must be improved. This corrective action is critical to the successful implementation of the other corrective actions.

➤ Corrective actions:

- 3.a. Immediately ensure a professional tone in all communications, both among board members and throughout the Agency. Consider use of an internal communication code of conduct.
- 3.b. Conduct a comprehensive survey of organizational communication, mapping all communication pathways and methods, and clarify expectations regarding tone and professionalism.

- ◆ *Recommendation 4: Uphold the mission and reclaim the narrative of DNFSB objectivity, reliance on data and technical expertise as sole discriminators of board opinions, and board members as chief advocates of DNFSB purview and objectives.* Although it is not within the scope of this study to determine the accuracy of this sentiment, what is within scope is the impact this shift in narrative has had, primarily on staff morale. The perception of board dysfunction is toxic to morale within the entire organization.

➤ Corrective actions:

- 4.a. Take steps to ensure that any disagreements center on technical issues. The construct of the board's composition (no more than three members from any political party) should be sufficient to ensure a holistic approach to the political facets of technical issues, but they must remain technical issues and not become proxy political battlefields.¹

¹ While it is outside the scope of this effort to determine the extent to which politics plays a role in DNFSB functions and decisions, this solution addresses the personnel *perception* of political bias disrupting DNFSB's function.

- 4.b. Use strategic communication (through agreed-upon methods, vehicles, and messages) as an integral part of the board’s change management platform.
- ◆ *Recommendation 5: Institutionalize a practice of continuous change management within DNFSB, including strategic communication.* DNFSB’s size does not make it impervious to the impact of organizational change on its workforce. In fact, smaller organizations can be even more sensitive to organizational change. In addition, small organizations tend to feed thriving rumor mills; therefore, communication in advance of change is critical. Change is inevitable, but a robust change management practice will help ensure DNFSB remains adaptive and promotes acceptance and buy-in to change processes throughout the organization.
 - Corrective actions:
 - 5.a. Develop a change management organizational competency through training of key change agents (champions) on a selected, prioritized organizational change. Develop a change management plan, and institutionalize the practice through the documentation of a DNFSB approach to change management.
 - 5.b. Assess current organizational change life cycles to determine what initiatives require additional change management.
 - 5.c. Identify planned organizational changes that may require change management support, and initiate change management planning for these change processes.
 - 5.d. Thoroughly assess DNFSB communications and develop a strategic communication component to assist in navigating board–staff communications over an interim period of about 1 year. Re-visit adoption of a “continuing” communications plan.
- ◆ *Recommendation 6: Assess and develop DNFSB’s leadership and management competencies.* Effective leadership and management can address multiple organizational challenges facing DNFSB.
 - Corrective actions:
 - 6.a. Institute leadership coaching for board members and board team-building/strengthening activities.
 - 6.b. Institute tailored management and supervisory training for technical staff management and supervisors. Training must address the unique backgrounds of managers and supervisors, the unique character of the technical staff, and core management issues

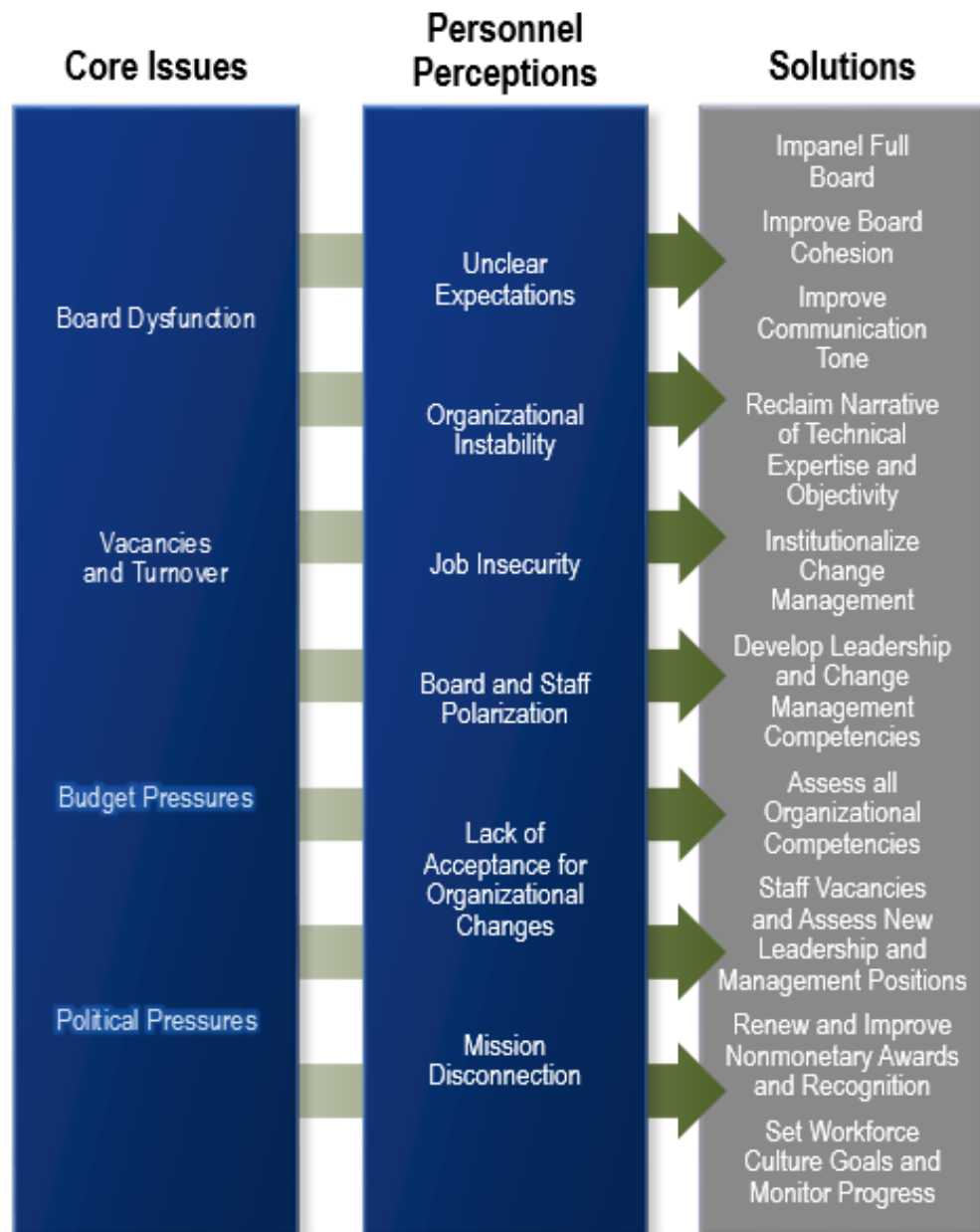
identified through this study, such as interpersonal skills and conflict resolution.

- 6.c. Institute mentoring for personnel who are early in their careers.
- ◆ *Recommendation 7: Thoroughly assess technical and nontechnical competencies throughout the organization to better understand mission requirements and competency development pathways and milestones.* Such pathways and milestones, if developed and instituted properly, could drive enhancements to the performance management system, as well as enhance the training and development system (which could help dispel some negative perceptions of inequitable training).
 - Corrective actions:
 - 7.a. Map all existing and required but unmet organizational technical competencies. Define each competency level using standardized language.
 - 7.b. Develop a competency database for DNFSB personnel. Periodic assessment of the workforce as a whole could promote better management of the HR life cycle (hiring, training and development, performance management, etc.).
 - ◆ *Recommendation 8: Fill vacant leadership and management positions, consider staff proposals for new leadership and management positions, and develop methods to encourage continuity within leadership and management positions.* Although efforts are ongoing to staff key leadership and management positions, our initial assessment concurs with a general perception that some organizational challenges and functions could potentially warrant additional leadership and management positions. While comprehensive workload and functional analyses were outside the scope of this assessment, we identified anecdotal evidence of unmet functional requirements through the current analysis.
 - Corrective actions:
 - 8.a. Continue ongoing efforts to staff vacant management, leadership, and supervisory positions.
 - 8.b. Analyze the requirements for and feasibility and impact of two new positions: chief of staff and technical staff adjunct (a position focused on the organizational/management issues relating to technical staff, leaving the technical director to focus on the interface between board members and technical staff/group leads on technical issues).

- 8.c. Assess retention strategies for leadership, management, and supervisory positions to encourage stability and continuity within these positions.
- ◆ *Recommendation 9: Identify nonmonetary awards, recognition, and incentives to motivate and engage the staff.* Many (though not all) members of the technical staff are at the top of their pay bands. Budgetary pressures put performance bonuses in jeopardy. DNFSB must find alternative methods of recognizing the efforts of its employees.
 - Corrective action:
 - 9.a. Review existing nonmonetary awards (e.g., time-off awards) and recognition incentives. Assess staff sentiment with regard to priorities for nonmonetary incentives, and develop offerings accordingly. Incorporate nonmonetary awards and recognition into any existing incentive awards program/policy.
- ◆ *Recommendation 10: Continually measure progress against the baseline of this workforce assessment.* This assessment provides a useful baseline metric and a framework for discussing progress and setting goals. Assessment should become a continual process to gauge the impact of corrective actions implemented by DNFSB.
 - Corrective action:
 - 10.a. Semiannually or annually, assess progress against workforce assessment-driven action plans and goals. Adapt actions as warranted.

Figure 3-1 identifies the recommended solutions that address organizational challenges that underlie personnel perceptions. Budget and political pressures are primarily external organizational challenges over which DNFSB has limited ability to address. Recommended solutions focus on internal challenges and personnel perceptions.

Figure 3-1. Solutions and Their Linkage to Core Issues and Perceptions



Chapter 4

Best Practices

The challenges facing DNFSB are numerous and multifaceted. While some of the challenges are shared by similar organizations, the unique position of the Agency's board (particularly with regard to its composition, role, and internal dynamics) makes identification of similar organizations difficult. Therefore, we focused our research of external sources and best practices on topical areas assessed to have the greatest overall positive impact on the organization's culture and personnel perceptions.

The research team identified two topical research areas that we believe will have the most profound impact on improving the organizational climate (based on their potential to address multiple root and secondary causes):

- ◆ Change management and organizational communication
- ◆ Leadership and management competency development.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Organizations are constantly undergoing change; the management of that change plays a major role in maintaining organizational stability. An estimated 75 percent of all change efforts fail due to myriad issues and common pitfalls. However, these shortcomings can be avoided, or at least minimized, through careful analysis, planning, and preparation. Leaders in the public and private sectors, as well as academia, have culled key findings and best practices with respect to change management. We have synthesized those findings and developed a unique change management (CM) method focused on organizational learning of change management processes simultaneous with change process implementation.

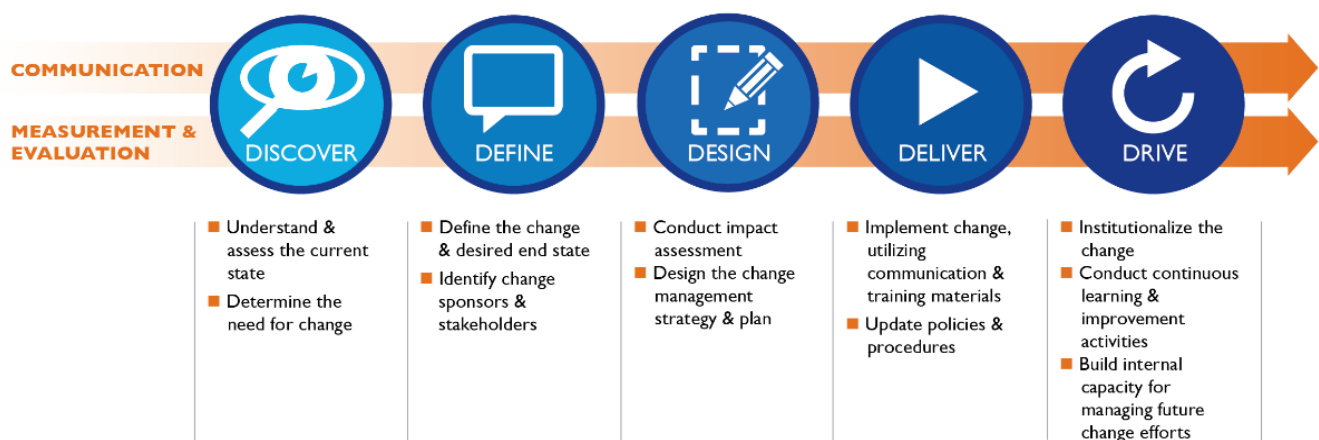
This CM method is based on extensive research, analysis, and lessons learned from case studies in state, federal, and international governments. Service and experience, institutionally funded research, and the study of effective change practices demonstrated in academic and industry-based research have framed LMI's distinct, standardized approach to helping organizations navigate significant organizational changes while minimizing negative impacts. The foundation of this CM method is a set of six guiding principles, which are based on known CM best practices:

- ◆ Principle 1: Change should be people focused.

- ◆ Principle 2: Cultural and contextual knowledge informs change.
- ◆ Principle 3: Ongoing awareness of the current environment is needed throughout the change process.
- ◆ Principle 4: Clear, frequent, and consistent communication is critical for transparency, understanding, and adoption.
- ◆ Principle 5: Ongoing measurement helps monitor change progress and enables redirection if needed.
- ◆ Principle 6: Change management should be taught while managing change.

This CM method has five phases—Discover, Define, Design, Deliver, and Drive—depicted in Figure 4-1. Each phase has clearly defined activities, outputs, and outcomes and is supported by ongoing communication and by measurement and evaluation activities.

Figure 4-1. CM Approach



DNFSB has undergone significant organizational change in a compressed time period, including significant personnel actions, rollout of new systems, changes in DNFSB's operating procedures and enabling legislation, and other threats to the organization's stability, including external threats (such as increasing budget pressures) and internal ones (such as conflicting visions of the Agency's purpose). Any one of those changes would have had a profound impact on DNFSB personnel; however, their simultaneous occurrence requires immediate change management actions to minimize the negative impacts of those changes. Specifically, the most critical actions the Agency should take are as follows:

- ◆ Develop change management strategies and action plans for each organizational change (even ones in progress) addressing high-priority CM requirements (such as training and communication).

- ◆ Identify and publicize change sponsors (champions) who will drive CM efforts for each organizational change.
- ◆ Clearly articulate the benefit of organizational changes—“what’s in it for me”—to the organization as a whole and all personnel affected by the changes.
- ◆ Establish ongoing strategic communication about the organizational changes.
- ◆ Establish internal metrics to track the progress of CM efforts.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT

Senior leadership and management generally believe that the Agency’s current efforts to develop competencies within DNFSB are effective. However, many of the issues identified during focus groups and interviews suggest the need for continued and more energetic development of leadership and management competencies. Improved leadership and management competencies would address numerous issues causing negative perceptions among Agency personnel.

Leadership Competency Development

Several factors related to the composition of the board are driving the need for development of leadership competencies within the organization:

- ◆ A multiperson board led by a chief executive officer (chairman) with members having equal voting rights, access to information, and responsibility and authority for making decisions and determining actions to be taken
- ◆ A board of political appointees with an inherently political construct (with not more than three members of the five-person board being affiliated with the same political party)
- ◆ Fundamental changes in the board’s function as it relates to review of analytical products and release of formal recommendations.

Given DNFSB’s construct and the changes in its functional operations, leadership competency is critical to the Agency’s proper functioning as it relates to mission effectiveness and is equally critical to supporting DNFSB workforce perceptions that affect organizational cohesion and mission effectiveness.

According to the *FY14 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results Governmentwide Management Report*,¹ the score for overall employee perceptions of DNFSB leadership integrity, as well as leadership behaviors such as communication and workforce motivation, dropped 3 percentage points (from 53 percent to 50 percent) from FY13 to FY14 and was significantly lower than that for supervisors (71 percent). Similarly, the Leadership and Knowledge Management HCAAF index, which indicates the extent to which employees hold their leadership in high regard both overall and on specific facets of leadership, is trending lower. The need for improved leadership competencies has never been greater, both governmentwide, and within DNFSB.

OPM provides the following Executive Core Qualifications (ECQ)² as a standard for discussing leadership competencies:

- ◆ *Fundamental competencies.* Interpersonal skills, written communication, oral communication, integrity/honesty, continual learning, public service motivation.
- ◆ *Leading change.* Creativity and innovation, external awareness, flexibility, resilience, strategic thinking, vision.
- ◆ *Leading people.* Conflict management, leveraging diversity, developing others, team building.
- ◆ *Results driven.* Accountability, customer service, decisiveness, entrepreneurship, problem solving, technical credibility.
- ◆ *Business acumen.* Financial management, human capital management, technology management.
- ◆ *Building coalitions.* Partnering, political savvy, influencing/negotiating.

While personnel perceptions are not the only arbiter of leadership competency, analysis of employee perceptions may reveal areas in which further development of individual leadership competencies may improve employee perceptions. Such exercises as a 360-degree competency assessment may improve insight into perceptions of leadership by personnel at all levels.³

Individual and group executive coaching is a proven method of improving individual and group leadership competencies. Given DNFSB's shared executive

¹ See http://www.fedview.opm.gov/2014files/2014_Governmentwide_Management_Report.pdf.

² More information is available at <http://www.opm.gov/services-for-agencies/assessment-evaluation/leadership-assessments/>.

³ DNFSB currently uses 360-degree competency assessments for some positions but would benefit from expanding their use to all management, leadership, and supervisory positions, including board members.

leadership model, development of leadership competencies as a cohesive group is just as critical as ongoing development of individual leadership competencies.

Development of DNFSB's leadership competencies should seek to do the following:

- ◆ *Improve board cohesion.* The strength of the board is in its varied composition, allowing for creative and constructive disagreement. Constructive disagreement and dialogue should not affect the function of the board as a cohesive whole.
- ◆ *Communicate a shared vision of DNFSB's role.* The perception that board members are not starting from a point of a shared understanding of the role and purpose of DNFSB is fundamental to many challenges facing the organization and should be mitigated through board members' collaboration to develop and communicate a shared vision (that should extend through members' operational and programmatic priorities).
- ◆ *Construct and communicate a positive, enabling organizational narrative.* The board must develop its ability to guide a healthy, positive organizational narrative that communicates an enabling and engaging atmosphere for its personnel that minimizes organizational division.

Management Competency Development

DNFSB comprises both technical and nontechnical managers. While many of the managers and supervisors within the Agency's nontechnical units have management experience in other government organizations, managers within the technical staff have different pathways to management and supervisory positions, often including development of technical competencies resulting in eventual promotion to management and supervisory positions. Many technical organizations struggle with similar management pathways through technical competency.

Many technical staff members referred derogatorily to the management training employed by DNFSB (external training, including the Partnership for Public Service and Harvard Kennedy School) as "charm school," while technical staff managers had a more positive perception of that training. Notably, numerous interview and focus group participants asserted that few real changes were observed in managers upon completion of these courses and that little assistance seemed to be offered following completion of such courses. Generally, both technical staff members and managers thought management development within DNFSB's technical staff could be improved. Further, technical staff managers require both highly specialized technical and more general management competencies, precluding the use of "plug-and-play" management within the technical staff.

OPM's supervisory guide⁴ identifies 10 competencies most important for supervisory work:

- ◆ *Accountability.* Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely, and cost-effective results. Determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work. Accepts responsibility for mistakes. Complies with established control systems and rules.
- ◆ *Customer service.* Anticipates and meets the needs of both internal and external customers. Delivers high-quality products and services. Is committed to continuous improvement.
- ◆ *Decisiveness.* Makes well-informed, effective, and timely decisions, even when data are limited or solutions produce unpleasant consequences. Perceives the impact and implications of decisions.
- ◆ *Flexibility.* Is open to change and new information. Rapidly adapts to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles.
- ◆ *Integrity/honesty.* Behaves in an honest, fair, and ethical manner. Shows consistency in words and actions. Models high standards of ethics.
- ◆ *Interpersonal skills.* Treats others with courtesy, sensitivity, and respect. Considers and responds appropriately to the needs and feelings of different people in different situations.
- ◆ *Oral communication.* Makes clear and convincing oral presentations. Listens effectively. Clarifies information as needed.
- ◆ *Problem solving.* Identifies and analyzes problems. Weighs relevance and accuracy of information. Generates and evaluates alternative solutions. Makes recommendations.
- ◆ *Resilience.* Deals effectively with pressure. Remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks.
- ◆ *Written communication.* Writes in a clear, concise, organized, and convincing manner for the intended audience.

Managers are first and foremost communicators. Within DNFSB's technical staff, they must extend that role to include translation. Specifically, they must communicate highly technical issues to an executive team that must determine the import of the information at a high level and develop conclusions as to how DNFSB will proceed. Further, technical staff managers must act as advocates for their staff members and as intermediaries between leadership and the technical staff at

⁴ More information is available at <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-standards/specialty-areas/supervisory-guide/>.

large. Commonly cited issues with technical staff management include the need to develop interpersonal communication and conflict resolution competencies. Finally, with the recent rollout of the performance management system for use by the technical staff, the organization is at a critical point where managers can provide the support needed to significantly influence successful integration and implementation of this system using enhanced management competencies.

Leading and best practices suggest a tailored management development approach that is sensitive to the technical requirements of technical staff managers and the management competencies in which these managers require further development. Tailored management development should address, at a minimum, improved interpersonal communication and conflict resolution, but it should also address all competencies recommended by OPM's supervisory guide.

Appendix A

Organizational Background and Context of This Study

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) is a small, independent organization within the executive branch. Established in October 1989, the Agency was chartered to provide recommendations and advice to the President and the Secretary of Energy regarding public health and safety issues at Department of Energy (DOE) defense nuclear facilities.¹

BACKGROUND

The mission of the DNFSB, as codified by its enabling legislation, is to

provide independent analysis, advice, and recommendations to the Secretary of Energy to inform the Secretary, in the role of the Secretary as operator and regulator of the defense nuclear facilities of the Department of Energy, in providing adequate protection of public health and safety at such defense nuclear facilities.²

DNFSB's regulatory oversight covers both active defense nuclear facilities and sites being closed. Figure A-1 shows the geographical distribution of the sites with which the Agency interacts.

¹ Title 42 Chapter 23 Division A Subchapter XVII-1 § 2286g of the U.S. Code (U.S.C.) defines "defense nuclear facility" as follows:

“(1) A production facility or utilization facility (as defined in section 2014 of this title) that is under the control or jurisdiction of the Secretary of Energy and that is operated for national security purposes, but the term does not include—

(A) any facility or activity covered by Executive Order No. 12344, dated February 1, 1982, pertaining to the Naval nuclear propulsion program;

(B) any facility or activity involved with the transportation of nuclear explosives or nuclear material;

(C) any facility that does not conduct atomic energy defense activities; or

(D) any facility owned by the United States Enrichment Corporation.

“(2) A nuclear waste storage facility under the control or jurisdiction of the Secretary of Energy, but the term does not include a facility developed pursuant to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 (42 U.S.C. 10101 et seq.) and licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.”

² Enabling Statute of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, 42 U.S.C. § 2286 et seq., as amended by the National Defense Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2013.

Figure A-1. Geographic Distribution of Active and Closing DOE Sites



Source: <http://www.dfnfb.gov/about/where-we-work/doe-defense-nuclear-facilities>.

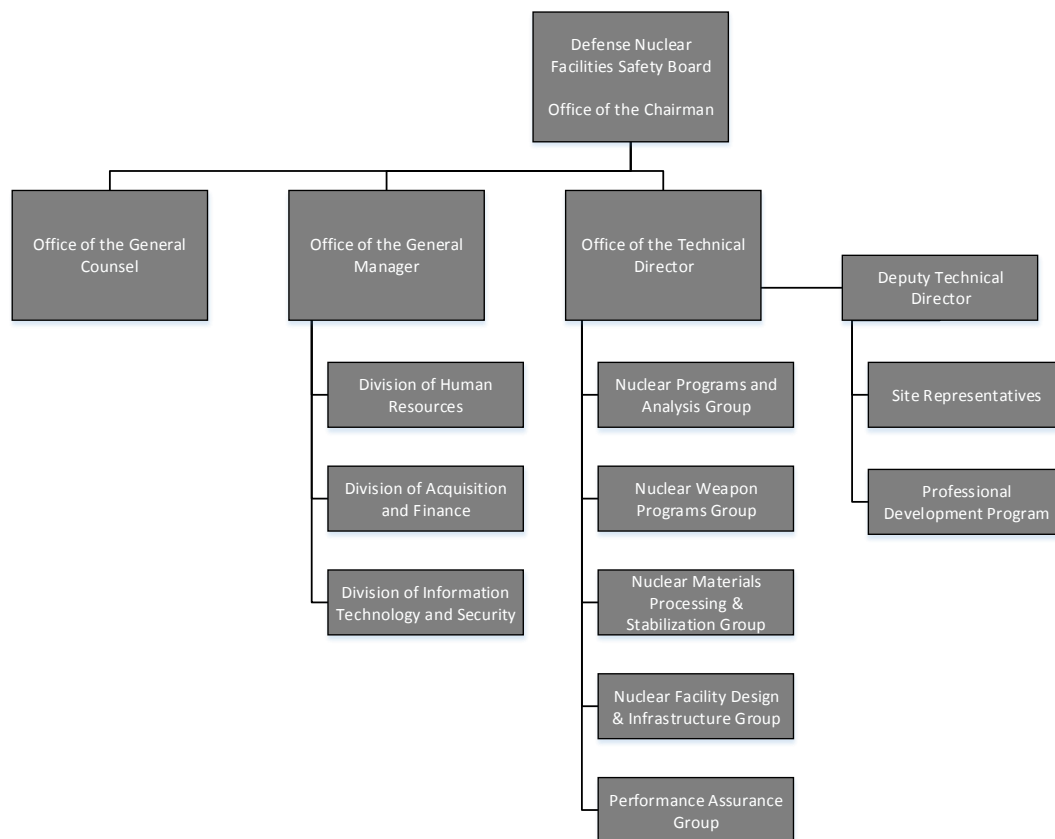
The DNFSB fulfills its mission through

- ◆ review and evaluation of the content and implementation of health and safety standards,
- ◆ investigations,
- ◆ analysis of design and operational data,
- ◆ review of the design, construction, and decommissioning of DOE defense nuclear facilities and
- ◆ recommendations.

The DNFSB produces a range of documents and other vehicles in carrying out its mission. Formal written recommendations to the Secretary of Energy are the primary mechanism by which the Agency achieves its mission. Other vehicles include public hearings, issuance of subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses and production of evidence, formal requests for information or the establishment of reporting requirements, stationing of on-site resident inspectors, and special studies.

To carry out its mission, the DNFSB has a staff of approximately 100 full-time personnel.^{3,4} About 90 percent of the staff works at the Agency's headquarters in the National Capital Region. The remaining personnel (9 as of July 28, 2014) are on rotational assignments as site representatives at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Pantex, Hanford, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and Savannah River. Figure A-2 shows the high-level organizational structure (offices, divisions, and groups) of the DNFSB.

Figure A-2. Primary Organizational Units



The DNFSB currently comprises the following elements:

- ◆ **Board.** The board is statutorily required to have five members, to be appointed by the President for staggered 5-year terms. Currently, the board has three members (chairman, vice chairman, and a board member), which constitutes a quorum, allowing it to direct all DNFSB functions without

³ DNFSB's enabling legislation provides for hiring "such staff as it considers necessary to perform the functions of the DNFSB, including such scientific and technical personnel as the DNFSB may determine necessary, but not more than the equivalent of 150 full-time employees."

⁴ Staffing numbers are drawn from multiple sources, including a staffing snapshot as of July 28, 2014, and current information provided by M. Smith, Division Director, Human Resources. Numbers referenced in this report are estimates (unless otherwise noted) and are cited primarily for comparative purposes.

exclusion or modification. The Agency's enabling legislation further stipulates that not more than three members should come from the same political party. In its current composition, two board members are affiliated with the same political party, and the third is affiliated with a different party, thus fulfilling the presumed intent of this statutory requirement.

- ◆ *Administrative staff.* The administrative staff of the DNFSB consists of personnel within the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) and Office of the General Manager (OGM). The OGM oversees three functional divisions: Human Resources, Acquisition and Finance, and Information Technology and Security. Currently, approximately 25 administrative personnel are supporting the DNFSB; several administrative positions are vacant.
- ◆ *Technical staff.* The DNFSB's technical staff constitutes the majority of the Agency's personnel, at approximately 75 people (excluding participants in the Professional Development Program, a small early career recruitment and development program). Five functionally oriented subgroups report to the Office of the Technical Director (OTD), with a group lead position acting as the primary interface for each; 2 of the group lead positions are currently filled, and approximately 56 technical staff members report to those leads.⁵ In addition, the 9 site representatives report to the deputy technical director, who also oversees the Professional Development Program. The Board's technical staff is characterized by an extremely high proportion of personnel with an advanced degree and by a high proportion of personnel who are nearing retirement eligibility. Figure A-3 shows that 99 percent of OTD personnel have at least a bachelor's degree, and 94 percent have an advanced degree. Figure A-4 shows that 64 percent of OTD personnel were above 35 years of age in 2014 and that 18 percent have 1 year or less to retirement eligibility, while 27 percent are eligible for retirement within 3 years.
- ◆ *Contractor staff.* The DNFSB employs contractors as support staff and to carry out other temporary, intermittent duties as required. The DNFSB's contractors are outside the scope of this study.

⁵ As of November 3, 2014, two group lead positions are filled without issue, one position is filled with a staff member recused from certain duties, and candidates have been selected for two other group lead positions, but await external vetting.

Figure A-3. Educational Attainment of OTD Personnel (Technical Staff)

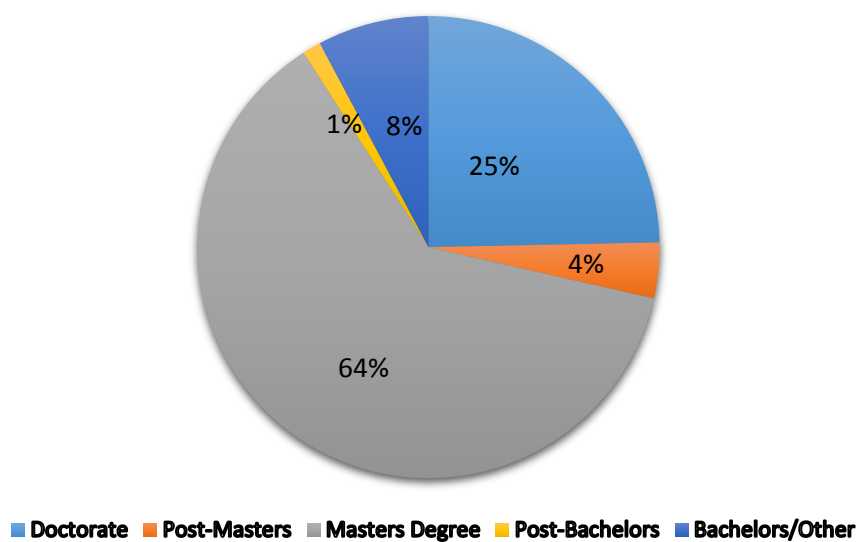
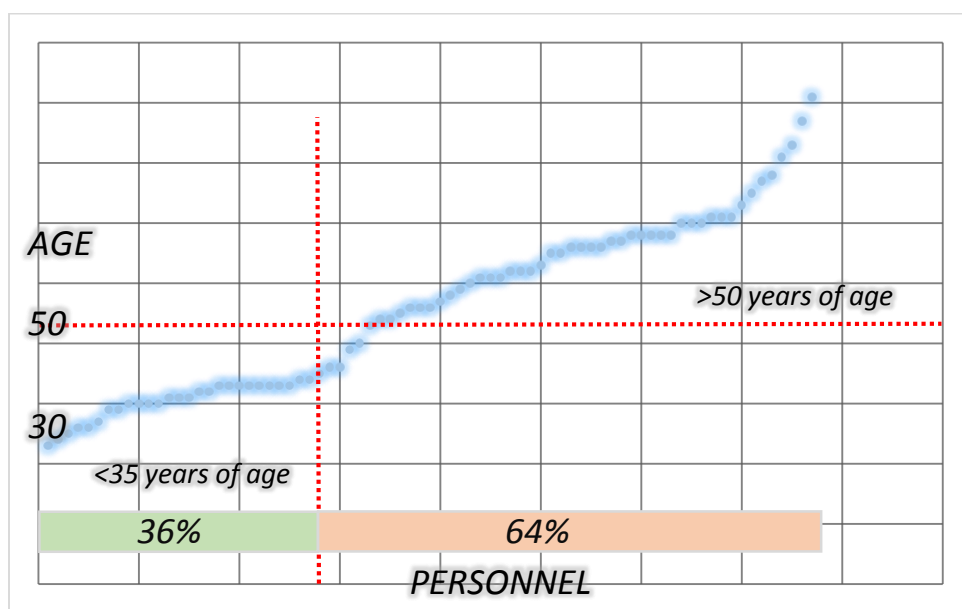


Figure A-4. Age Distribution of OTD Personnel



Appendix B

Interview and Focus Group Question Sets

OPEN (MIXED PARTICIPANTS) FOCUS GROUP

- ◆ Leadership honesty and integrity

Recent Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) data show high declines in positive response rates to employee perceptions of the DNFSB leadership's honesty and integrity.

1. In your opinion what are the largest contributing factors to this decline?
2. Which leadership policies and practices have resulted in a decline in personnel perception of leadership?

- ◆ Leadership respect

Respect for leadership within the organization is declining.

3. What is driving this decline and what can improve organizational cohesion and respect for leadership?

- ◆ Performance management

4. Do you feel the changes being made to the DNFSB's performance management systems are adequate? Are other changes to performance management needed?
5. Have the planned changes to the performance management system been discussed with you adequately?
6. Do you have outstanding questions about how this system is changing, and what impact these changes will have on your work?
7. Do you feel you can/are provided with opportunities to discuss these changes with your immediate supervisors?

- ◆ Input and opinions to supervisors

8. Do you feel comfortable providing input and opinions to your immediate supervisors?

-
9. Do you feel your input is communicated adequately or escalated as required to resolve issues?
 10. What would improve your ability to provide your input and opinions, and ensure follow-on, response, and/or resolution?

◆ Communications

For the following question, please answer mostly effective, somewhat effective, somewhat ineffective, or mostly ineffective:

11. How would you rate communication:

Among DNFSB directors?

Among DNFSB staff?

Throughout the DNFSB?

Between the board members and DNFSB staff?

Between offices within the DNFSB?

Among groups?

12. What actions do you feel would improve communication at any of these levels?

◆ Personnel satisfaction

13. What near-term actions will most effectively improve overall personnel satisfaction? Mid-long-term?

◆ Closing

14. What haven't we asked you about?

15. Do you have any further ideas on how to improve the DNFSB's function? Improve the DNFSB as a workplace?

LEAD/SUPERVISOR-LEVEL FOCUS GROUP

◆ Leadership honesty and integrity

Recent FEVS data shows high declines in positive response rates to employee perceptions of the DNFSB's leadership's honesty, and integrity.

1. In your opinion what are the largest contributing factors to this decline?
2. Can you think of examples where arbitrary action, personal favoritism, or coercion for partisan political purposes has occurred within the organization? Any egregious instances?

◆ Leadership policies and practices

FEVS data shows a notable decline in personnel perception of leadership policies and practices.

3. Which policies and practices contributed the most to this decline?
4. What has contributed the most to the decline in respect for leadership?

◆ Performance management

The Employee Committee findings included several around unclear performance expectations, insufficient performance feedback from supervisors, and inconsistent application of performance standards across or within groups.

5. Are “improvements” and “planned improvements” in the DNFSB’s performance management system going to work? Why or why not?
6. How do you personally plan to improve performance management within your office/unit/group/section/etc.?

◆ Input and opinions from staff

7. Do you provide methods/opportunities for staff in your office/unit/group/section/etc. to provide input and opinions? How?
8. How does your office/unit/group/section/etc. act on/plan to act on staff input and opinions?

◆ Manager training

9. In general, do you feel managers within DNFSB have adequate training for their positions?
10. What skills or competencies do you feel are most important for managers to receive additional or ongoing development in?

◆ Communications

For the following question, please answer mostly effective, somewhat effective, somewhat ineffective, or mostly ineffective:

11. How would you rate communication:

With fellow directors?

With personnel within your office/unit/group/section/etc.?

Throughout the board?

Between the board members and DNFSB staff?

Between offices within the DNFSB?

12. What actions would improve communication at any of these levels?

◆ Personnel satisfaction

13. What near-term actions will most effectively improve overall personnel satisfaction?

14. What mid- to long-term actions will most effectively improve overall personnel satisfaction?

◆ Closing

15. Do you have any further ideas on how to improve the DNFSB's function? Improve the DNFSB as a workplace?

16. What haven't we asked you about?

GROUP LEAD FOCUS GROUP

◆ Leadership honesty and integrity

Recent FEVS data shows high declines in positive response rates to employee perceptions of the DNFSB leadership's honesty and integrity.

1. In your opinion what are the largest contributing factors to this decline?
2. Which leadership policies and practices have resulted in a decline in personnel perception of leadership?

◆ Leadership respect

Respect for leadership within the organization is declining.

3. What is driving this decline and what can improve organizational cohesion and respect for leadership?

◆ Performance management

4. How are you, in your group lead roles, improving performance management within your groups?
5. Are these improvements sufficient? What else is needed?
6. Are your groups adequately aware of the changes in the DNFSB's approach to performance management? If not, how can this be improved?

◆ Input and opinions from staff

7. How can staff in your groups provide input and opinions?
8. Do Group Leads meet, as a group, to discuss staff input and opinions?
9. If so, how often and how does the group act on these inputs and opinions?
10. Are staff inputs and opinions escalated to the appropriate managers/directors in a formal manner?
11. How are follow-on actions communicated to staff within your groups?

◆ Group leadership

12. Would you as Group Leads benefit from additional management training in a particular area?
13. How often do Group Leads meet as a group?

Are meetings formal? Informal?

Are there agendas?

When is the last time you met?

Are outcomes of these meetings documented and communicated to your groups?

◆ Group communications

14. Could communication between groups be improved and if so, how?

◆ Personnel satisfaction

15. What near-term actions will most effectively improve overall personnel satisfaction? Mid-long-term?

- ◆ Closing

16. Do you have any further ideas on how to improve the DNFSB's function? Improve the DNFSB as a workplace?

17. What haven't we asked you about?

DIRECTOR FOCUS GROUP

- ◆ Leadership honesty and integrity

Recent FEVS data shows high declines in positive response rates to employee perceptions of the DNFSB leadership's honesty and integrity.

1. In your opinion what are the largest contributing factors to this decline?
2. Can you think of examples where arbitrary action, personal favoritism, or coercion for partisan political purposes has occurred within the organization?
3. Can you describe the egregious instance?

- ◆ Leadership respect

Respect for leadership within the organization is declining.

4. Which policies and practices contributed the most to this decline?
5. What has contributed the most to the decline in respect for leadership?

- ◆ Performance management

The Employee Committee findings included several around unclear performance expectations, insufficient performance feedback from supervisors, and inconsistent application of performance standards across or within groups.

6. Do you feel improvements and planned improvements in the DNFSB's performance management system are going to work? Why or why not?
7. How do you personally plan to improve performance management within your office/unit/group/section/etc.?

- ◆ Input and opinions from staff

8. Do you provide methods/opportunities for staff in your office/unit/group/section/etc. to provide input and opinions? How?

9. How does your office/unit/group/section/etc. act on/plan to act on staff input and opinions?
10. In general, do you feel managers within DNFSB have adequate training for their positions? What skills or competencies do you feel are most important for managers to receive additional or ongoing development in?

◆ Communications

11. For the following question, please answer mostly effective, somewhat effective, somewhat ineffective, or mostly ineffective:
12. How would you rate communication:
 - With fellow directors?
 - With personnel within your office/unit/group/section/etc.?
 - Throughout the board?
 - Between the board members and DNFSB staff?
 - Between offices within the DNFSB?
13. What actions do you feel would improve communication at any of these levels?

◆ Personnel satisfaction

14. What near-term actions will most effectively improve overall personnel satisfaction?
15. What mid- to long-term actions will most effectively improve overall personnel satisfaction?

◆ Closing

16. Do you have any further ideas on how to improve the DNFSB's function? Improve the DNFSB as a workplace?
17. What haven't we asked you about?

Appendix C

Interview and Focus Groups: Brainstorming Solutions

Table C-1 presents possible solutions recommended by DNFSB personnel during interviews and focus groups.

Table C-1. Recommended Solutions, by Theme

Theme	Solutions
Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Have a full board. The board should have its full complement of five members. ◆ Seek out board members to fill scientific knowledge gaps. The choice of nominees for vacancies on the board should be based on a gap analysis of scientific focuses of current members. ◆ Provide feedback to the staff. The board should provide more feedback on or responses to staff recommendations. ◆ Provide training on team building. Board members should participate in team-building training and events.
Leadership and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fill senior management positions. Senior management positions (e.g., deputy general manager and deputy general counsel) should be filled to ensure continuity, communications, and more of a leadership presence between and within the groups. ◆ Implement 360° evaluations for management/leadership. The 360° reviews would provide managers/leaders with feedback from subordinates. ◆ Adjust time projected for forecasting of hours. To ensure value in forecasting projected hours used by project, the length of time projected for these estimates should be shortened. ◆ Adjust reward system to promote effective oversight. The reward system should promote behaviors that reinforce the mission of the Agency, not behaviors that merely perpetuate paperwork. For example, instead of rewarding employees when they discover a problem, the Agency should reward them when they affect changes to address the problem. ◆ Improve supervisor/managerial training. Supervisors should have both initial and refresher training to enhance their leadership and management abilities. ◆ Provide training on interpersonal skills and conflict resolution. All leaders and supervisors should take interpersonal skills and conflict resolution training to better enable effective communications and management. ◆ Create enforceable supervisor selection criteria. Candidates for supervisory positions should be selected on the basis of their success as a supervisor, not just for their technical competencies. ◆ Improve performance management training for supervisors. All supervisors should be able to explain what employees must do to improve and succeed (e.g., explain how employees can achieve a performance rating of “fully successful” or higher).

Table C-1. Recommended Solutions, by Theme

Theme	Solutions
Organizational communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Communicate across organizational boundaries. Offices should present an overview of their work to other staff teams to increase understanding across the organization. ◆ Ensure complete communications. Agency announcements should be communicated uniformly throughout the Agency and with all the facts pertinent to all internal stakeholders' interests and perspectives. ◆ Provide feedback to the technical staff. Senior leadership, including the board, should provide more frequent and timelier responses to staff requests and questions. ◆ Uniformly communicate agency policies (e.g., the Flex Work policy). ◆ Communicate regularly at all levels. ◆ Explain context of change. Agency leadership should accompany changes with an explanation of the purpose of that change. For example, reporting controls are driven by Congress, and flat wage growth is controlled by the Administration and Congress. ◆ Communicate about the performance management system. Leadership should explain why the system was introduced—its purpose and goals—and dispel the perception that the system's sole purpose is to prepare for RIFs.^a
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Define a training system. Employees' training requests should be evaluated uniformly against consistent criteria. ◆ Engage OPM to define FEVS terms. The Agency should prepare the staff to better understand FEVS terms to ensure informed responses for subsequent years' surveys. ◆ Create forums for technical staff's technical communications. Some form of open internal outlet (SharePoint^b or a similar platform) should be established for the technical staff to disseminate and discuss interim analyses, analyses that are not incorporated into weekly report items, information papers, issue papers, recommendations, technical reports, and other technical analyses to capture lessons learned, provide analytical feedback, and encourage creative dialogue.

^a We note several instances where leadership communicated the purpose of the performance management system as being preparation for a potential RIF. Leadership should clarify the purpose of the system, and to the greatest extent possible, identify and communicate positive drivers and impacts as opposed to negative ones.

^b DNFSB has a SharePoint site, but it is un-moderated and providing limited benefit. DNFSB could address the solution noted here by improving its processes and utilization of existing platforms.

Appendix F

Documents Reviewed

1. Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Administrative Directives:
 - a. 3-1A GS Performance Management
 - b. 6-1C Awards
 - c. 131.1 Performance Management
 - d. 133.1 SES Performance Management
 - e. 171.1 Training and Upward Mobility.
2. Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board All Staff Gathering Briefings:
 - a. 12/18/13
 - b. 01/27/14
 - c. 03/06/14
 - d. 06/20/2014
 - e. 09/17/2014.
3. Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board FEVS Data 2013.
4. Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board FEVS Data 2014.
5. *Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board FY 2013 Performance and Accountability Report.*
6. *Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board FY 2014 Performance and Accountability Report.*
7. Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Historic Attrition Data, 2009–2014.
8. Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Operating Procedures, February 2014.
9. *Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Operations Study.* Mosley & Associates, November 2012.
10. Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Organizational Chart, July 2014.
11. *Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Report of the Employee Committee,* January 2014.
12. Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Staffing Plan, August 2014.
13. *Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Strategic Plan, FY 2014–2018.*

-
14. Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Website. Available at <http://www.dnfsb.gov/>.
 15. Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Workforce Data. Booz Allen Hamilton, 2014.
 16. Enabling Statute of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board 42 U.S.C. § 2286 et seq., as amended by the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2013, December 2012.
 17. *Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results, 2013. Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Agency Trend Report.*
 18. Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results, 2013. DNFSB Survey Summary.
 19. Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results, 2014. DNFSB Survey Summary.
 20. *Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results, 2014. Governmentwide Management Report.*
 21. OPM Website. Available at <http://www.opm.gov/>.

Appendix D

FEVS Questions and Index Alignment

Table D-1 contains the OPM Viewpoint Survey questions and shows their alignment with the Leadership and Knowledge Management HCAAF index.

Table D-1. OPM Viewpoint Survey Questions

Number	Question	Category	Index
1	I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization.	Work Experience	Talent Management
2	I have enough information to do my job well.	Work Experience	
3	I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.	Work Experience	Employee Engagement (IWE)
4	My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment.	Work Experience	Job Satisfaction, Employee Engagement (IWE)
5	I like the kind of work I do.	Work Experience	Job Satisfaction
6	I know what is expected of me on the job.	Work Experience	Employee Engagement (IWE)
7	When needed I am willing to put in the extra effort to get a job done.	Work Experience	
8	I am constantly looking for ways to do my job better.	Work Experience	
9	I have sufficient resources (for example, people, materials, budget) to get my job done.	Work Experience	
10	My workload is reasonable.	Work Experience	KM and Leadership
11	My talents are used well in the workplace.	Work Experience	Talent Management, Employee Engagement (IWE)
12	I know how my work relates to the agency's goals and priorities.	Work Experience	Results-Oriented Performance Culture, Employee Engagement (IWE)
13	The work I do is important.	Work Experience	Job Satisfaction
14	Physical conditions (for example, noise level, temperature, lighting, cleanliness in the workplace) allow employees to perform their jobs well.	Work Experience	Results-Oriented Performance Culture
15	My performance appraisal is a fair reflection of my performance.	Work Experience	Results-Oriented Performance Culture
16	I am held accountable for achieving results.	Work Experience	
17	I can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule, or regulation without fear of reprisal.	Work Experience	
18	My training needs are assessed.	Work Experience	Talent Management

Table D-1. OPM Viewpoint Survey Questions

Number	Question	Category	Index
19	In my most recent performance appraisal, I understood what I had to do to be rated at different performance levels (for example, Fully Successful, Outstanding).	Work Experience	
20	The people I work with cooperate to get the job done.	Work Unit	Results-Oriented Performance Culture
21	My work unit is able to recruit people with the right skills.	Work Unit	Talent Management
22	Promotions in my work unit are based on merit.	Work Unit	Results-Oriented Performance Culture
23	In my work unit, steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve.	Work Unit	Results-Oriented Performance Culture
24	In my work unit, differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way.	Work Unit	Results-Oriented Performance Culture
25	Awards in my work unit depend on how well employees perform their jobs.	Work Unit	
26	Employees in my work unit share job knowledge with each other.	Work Unit	
27	The skill level in my work unit has improved in the past year.	Work Unit	
28	How would you rate the overall quality of work done by your work unit?	Work Unit	
29	The workforce has the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals.	Agency	Talent Management
30	Employees have a feeling of personal empowerment with respect to work processes.	Agency	Results-Oriented Performance Culture
31	Employees are recognized for providing high quality products and services.	Agency	
32	Creativity and innovation are rewarded.	Agency	Results-Oriented Performance Culture
33	Pay raises depend on how well employees perform their jobs.	Agency	Results-Oriented Performance Culture
34	Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, mentoring).	Agency	
35	Employees are protected from health and safety hazards on the job.	Agency	KM and Leadership
36	My organization has prepared employees for potential security threats.	Agency	KM and Leadership
37	Arbitrary action, personal favoritism and coercion for partisan political purposes are not tolerated.	Agency	
38	Prohibited Personnel Practices (for example, illegally discriminating for or against any employee/applicant, obstructing a person's right to compete for employment, knowingly violating veterans' preference requirements) are not tolerated.	Agency	

Table D-1. OPM Viewpoint Survey Questions

Number	Question	Category	Index
39	My agency is successful at accomplishing its mission.	Agency	
40	I recommend my organization as a good place to work.	Agency	Global Satisfaction
41	I believe the results of this survey will be used to make my agency a better place to work.	Agency	
42	My supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues.	Supervisor	Results-Oriented Performance Culture
43	My supervisor/team leader provides me with opportunities to demonstrate my leadership skills.	Supervisor	
44	Discussions with my supervisor/team leader about my performance are worthwhile.	Supervisor	Results-Oriented Performance Culture
45	My supervisor/team leader is committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society.	Supervisor	
46	My supervisor/team leader provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my job performance.	Supervisor	
47	Supervisors/team leaders in my work unit support employee development.	Supervisor	Talent Management, Employee Engagement (Supervisors)
48	My supervisor/team leader listens to what I have to say.	Supervisor	Employee Engagement (Supervisors)
49	My supervisor/team leader treats me with respect.	Supervisor	Employee Engagement (Supervisors)
50	In the last six months, my supervisor/team leader has talked with me about my performance.	Supervisor	
51	I have trust and confidence in my supervisor.	Supervisor	KM and Leadership, Employee Engagement (Supervisors)
52	Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by your immediate supervisor/team leader?	Supervisor	KM and Leadership, Employee Engagement Supervisors)
53	In my organization, leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce.	Leadership	KM and Leadership, Employee Engagement (Leaders)
54	My organization's leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity.	Leadership	Employee Engagement (Leaders)
55	Managers/supervisors/team leaders work well with employees of different backgrounds.	Leadership	KM and Leadership
56	Managers communicate the goals and priorities of the organization.	Leadership	KM and Leadership, Employee Engagement (Leaders)
57	Managers review and evaluate the organization's progress toward meeting its goals and objectives.	Leadership	KM and Leadership
58	Managers promote communication among different work units (for example, about projects, goals, needed resources).	Leadership	

Table D-1. OPM Viewpoint Survey Questions

Number	Question	Category	Index
59	Managers support collaboration across work units to accomplish work objectives.	Leadership	
60	Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by the manager directly above your immediate supervisor/team leader?	Leadership	Employee Engagement (Leaders)
61	I have a high level of respect for my organization's senior leaders.	Leadership	KM and Leadership, Employee Engagement (Leaders)
62	Senior leaders demonstrate support for Work/Life programs.	Leadership	
63	How satisfied are you with your involvement in decisions that affect your work?	Satisfaction	Job Satisfaction
64	How satisfied are you with the information you receive from management on what's going on in your organization?	Satisfaction	KM and Leadership
65	How satisfied are you with the recognition you receive for doing a good job?	Satisfaction	Results-Oriented Performance Culture
66	How satisfied are you with the policies and practices of your senior leaders?	Satisfaction	KM and Leadership
67	How satisfied are you with your opportunity to get a better job in your organization?	Satisfaction	Job Satisfaction
68	How satisfied are you with the training you receive for your present job?	Satisfaction	Talent Management
69	Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job?	Satisfaction	Job Satisfaction, Global Satisfaction
70	Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your pay?	Satisfaction	Job Satisfaction, Global Satisfaction
71	Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your organization?	Satisfaction	Global Satisfaction
72	Have you been notified that you are eligible to telework? Telework means working at a location other than your normal work site during your regular work hours (excludes travel).	Work/Life	
73	Please select the response below that BEST describes your current teleworking situation:	Work/Life	
74	Do you participate in the following Work/Life programs? Alternative Work Schedules (AWS)	Work/Life	
75	Do you participate in the following Work/Life programs? Health and Wellness Programs (for example, exercise, medical screening, quit smoking programs)	Work/Life	
76	Do you participate in the following Work/Life programs? Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	Work/Life	
77	Do you participate in the following Work/Life programs? Child Care Programs (for example, daycare, parenting classes, parenting support groups)	Work/Life	

Table D-1. OPM Viewpoint Survey Questions

Number	Question	Category	Index
78	Do you participate in the following Work/Life programs? Elder Care Programs (for example, support groups, speakers).	Work/Life	
79	How satisfied are you with the following Work/Life programs in your agency? Telework.	Work/Life	Work/Life
80	How satisfied are you with the following Work/Life programs in your agency? Alternative Work Schedules (AWS).	Work/Life	Work/Life
81	How satisfied are you with the following Work/Life programs in your agency? Health and Wellness Programs (for example, exercise, medical screening, quit smoking programs).	Work/Life	Work/Life
82	How satisfied are you with the following Work/Life programs in your agency? Employee Assistance Program (EAP).	Work/Life	Work/Life
83	How satisfied are you with the following Work/Life programs in your agency? Child Care Programs (for example, daycare, parenting classes, parenting support groups).	Work/Life	Work/Life
84	How satisfied are you with the following Work/Life programs in your agency? Elder Care Programs (for example, support groups, speakers).	Work/Life	Work/Life
85	Where do you work?	Demographics	
86	What is your supervisory status?	Demographics	
87	Are you:	Demographics	
88	Are you Hispanic or Latino?	Demographics	
89	Please select the racial category or categories with which you most closely identify.	Demographics	
90	What is your age group?	Demographics	
91	What is your pay category/grade?	Demographics	
92	How long have you been with the Federal Government (excluding military service)?	Demographics	
93	How long have you been with your current agency (for example, Department of Justice, Environmental Protection Agency)?	Demographics	
94	Are you considering leaving your organization within the next year, and if so, why?	Demographics	
95	I am planning to retire.	Demographics	
96	Self-Identify as:	Demographics	
97	Have you ever served on Active Duty in the US Armed Forces (Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps or Navy)?	Demographics	
98	Are you an individual with a disability?	Demographics	

Appendix E

FEVS Results

The following questions showed the greatest declines in positive response rates from FY13. The questions are listed in rank order based upon the percentage decline:

- ◆ *Question 54:* My organization's senior leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity. (65 percent in FY13 to 33 percent in FY14 [89 percent in FY11])¹
- ◆ *Question 37:* Arbitrary action, personal favoritism and coercion for partisan political purposes are not tolerated.
- ◆ *Question 34:* Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, mentoring).
- ◆ *Question 60:* Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by the manager directly above your immediate supervisor?
- ◆ *Question 61:* I have a high level of respect for my organization's senior leaders.
- ◆ *Question 29:* The workforce has the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals.

The following questions had the highest percentage of negative response rates:²

- ◆ *Question 71:* Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your organization? (51.2 percent [0.0 percent in FY11])
- ◆ *Question 66:* How satisfied are you with the policies and practices of your senior leaders? (50.8 percent [8.6 percent in FY11])
- ◆ *Question 64:* How satisfied are you with the information you receive from management on what's going on in your organization? (47.8 percent [7.3 percent in FY11])

¹ Notably, Questions 54, 37, 34, 60, 61, and 29 all had declines in positive response rates governmentwide, though the declines for DNFSB tended to outpace governmentwide declines.

² "Negative response rate" as used here is the sum of responses denoting "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree," "Poor" and "Very poor," and "Dissatisfied" and "Very dissatisfied."

-
- ◆ *Question 61:* I have a high level of respect for my organization's senior leaders. (47.3 percent [8.1 percent in FY11])
 - ◆ *Question 65:* How satisfied are you with the recognition you receive for doing a good job? (44.1 percent [8.2 percent in FY11])
 - ◆ *Question 60:* Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by the manager directly above your immediate supervisor? (43.8 percent [6.4 percent in FY11])
 - ◆ *Question 40:* I recommend my organization as a good place to work. (43.5 percent [3.4 percent in FY11])
 - ◆ *Question 56:* Managers communicate the goals and priorities of the organization. (38.9 percent [10.3 percent in FY11])
 - ◆ *Question 37:* Arbitrary action, personal favoritism and coercion for partisan political purposes are not tolerated. (37.9 percent [0.0 percent in FY11])
 - ◆ *Question 54:* My organization's senior leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity. (35.5 percent [3.6 percent in FY11])

The following questions had response rates in FY14 that correspond with OPM guidance on organizational strengths:³

- ◆ Personal Work Experience (Questions 1–19)
 - *Question 5:* I like the kind of work I do. (70.3 percent)
 - *Question 7:* When needed I am willing to put in the extra effort to get a job done. (91.8 percent)
 - *Question 8:* I am constantly looking for ways to do my job better. (72.9 percent)
 - *Question 12:* I know how my work relates to the Agency's goals and priorities. (66.3 percent)
 - *Question 13:* The work I do is important. (72.4 percent)
 - *Question 14:* Physical conditions (for example, noise level, temperature, lighting, cleanliness in the workplace) allow employees to perform their jobs well. (77.2 percent)

³ OPM defines strengths as FEVS questions receiving positive response rates of 65 percent or higher.

- *Question 16:* I am held accountable for achieving results. (70 percent)
- *Question 17:* I can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal. (69.3 percent)
- ◆ Work Unit (Questions 20–28)
 - *Question 20:* The people I work with cooperate to get the job done. (69.7 percent)
 - *Question 26:* Employees in my work unit share job knowledge with each other. (73.1 percent)
 - *Question 28:* How would you rate the overall quality of work done by your work unit? (76.3 percent)
- ◆ Agency (Questions 29–41)
 - *Question 35:* Employees are protected from health and safety hazards on the job. (91.9 percent)
 - *Question 36:* My organization has prepared employees for potential security threats. (73.4 percent)
 - *Question 38:* Prohibited Personnel Practices (for example, illegally discriminating for or against any employee/applicant, obstructing a person's right to compete for employment, knowingly violating veterans' preference requirements) are not tolerated. (69.2 percent)
- ◆ Supervisor/Team Leader (Questions 42–52)
 - *Question 42:* My supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues. (78.2 percent)
 - *Question 45:* My supervisor is committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society. (68.5 percent)
 - *Question 47:* Supervisors in my work unit support employee development. (69.9 percent)
 - *Question 48:* My supervisor listens to what I have to say. (72.3 percent)
 - *Question 49:* My supervisor treats me with respect. (74.7 percent)
 - *Question 50:* In the last six months, my supervisor has talked with me about my performance. (90.4 percent).

Appendix G

Abbreviations

CM	Change Management
DNFSB	Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
DOE	Department of Energy
EC	Employee Committee
ECQ	Executive Core Qualification
FEVS	Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey
FY	fiscal year
HCAAF	Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework
HR	human resources
OGC	Office of General Counsel
OGM	Office of General Manager
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
OTD	Office of Technical Director
RIF	Reduction in Force

