

National Aeronautics and Space Administration



2016 ANNUAL REPORT
NASA OMBUDSMAN
PROGRAM





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Executive Summary

The NASA Ombudsman Program was established in January 2004 in response to a recommendation of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board to provide the NASA workforce with a supplemental channel of communication to raise issues and concerns they perceive could impact safety, organizational performance, or mission success. The program is based on the principles of **confidentiality**, **neutrality**, **informality**, and **independence**, as laid out by the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice as established by the International Ombudsman Association. NASA Policy Directive (NPD) 2025.1B, The NASA Ombudsman Program, documents the program policy and direction.

In 2016, the NASA Ombudsmen saw a total 333 visitors, 67 percent of which were civil servants, 32 percent were contractors, and 1 percent students and other. The total number of cases is up 48 percent from 2015. The largest increase in volume was at Goddard Space Flight Center. While most Centers showed modest increase, Goddard Space Flight Center experienced a large increase due to the Ombudsman being asked to provide support on several larger team issues.

The majority of the cases across all Centers were related to organizational performance (86 percent), which includes (but is not limited to) those concerning management behavior, policy issues, interpersonal conflict, career development or job fit, and performance/discipline/termination. Management behavior was a significant category this year. Coaching of the manager and escalation to their supervisor or Human Resources (HR) has resulted in change in behavior in some cases. This process may take several months and has resulted in some employees choosing to move to another position rather than wait for the process to resolve the issue. Several visitors came to the Ombudsman regarding interpersonal conflict this past

year. These conflicts were a result of different work styles, workload and the resulting stress, and unclear communication around expectations and performance from supervisors. The Ombudsmen were able to help visitors address these issues by coaching them on how to have constructive conversations with the other party as well as understand escalation and formal processes. In some cases, the Ombudsman was able to bring the concern to a higher level and more direct action was taken through restructuring or removal of a supervisor.

Safety and Mission Success issues accounted for 10 percent of the cases and the remaining 4 percent fell in an “Other” category. The Safety and Mission Success cases ranged from the potential for workplace violence to workload issues that were impacting work quality. The NASA Ombudsmen were able to ensure formal resources were called in to assess potential violence and escalated concerns about work coverage to address staffing and scheduling concerns that closed safety gaps. In one case, restrictive overtime policies were adjusted.

In addition to seeing visitors, the NASA Ombudsman Program continued its outreach activities and completed two major initiatives in 2016. As required by section 7(c) of NPD 2025, the Ombudsman Program conducted its biennial survey to determine program effectiveness. The program also completed its first strategic plan to guide its efforts over the next five years.

Of the 3,309 respondents to the survey, over 70 percent were aware of the Ombudsman Program with 86 percent indicating they would use the program if the need arose. More significantly, 38 percent of respondents who had used the program said that they would have used a formal resource¹ had the program not existed. The Ombudsman Program’s existence ensures that

¹ Formal resources include Human Resources, the Union, the Office of the General Counsel, etc.

issues are addressed at minimal cost to the Agency and at the lowest possible level without undue escalation.

The NASA Ombudsman Program's Strategic Plan encapsulates its intention to be a catalyst for unhindered communication and fairness by serving as a key influential partner for all, and to ensure NASA's workforce feels valued, safe, and barriers to mission success are removed. With the establishment of four broad goals and corresponding actions covering the breadth of what NASA Ombudsmen do, the plan will

enhance interactions with visitors, formal partners, and NASA Senior Leadership, as well as strengthen Ombudsman expertise.

The NASA Ombudsmen provide a valuable service to NASA and its workforce. As a result of their efforts and assistance, visitors have been able to rebuild work relationships, raise important safety concerns, or move on within the Agency, without spending valuable time and resources working through formal processes.

The Ombudsman Program: An Overview

The Ombudsman Program differs from formal resources, like Human Resources, Unions, the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office and the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in that it provides an opportunity to raise concerns in an “off-the-record” manner. The Ombudsman Program provides:

- Confidentiality – The Ombudsman maintains complete confidentiality as to the identity of visitors, except in situations that present an imminent risk of harm to an individual, damage to property, or a crime.
- Neutrality – The Ombudsman does not serve as a representative or advocate of any visitor’s concerns within NASA, however, Ombudsman does advocate for fair processes and administration.
- Informality – The Ombudsman functions outside all formal management, administrative, or criminal processes. Ombudsman does not serve as an agent for notice to NASA. The Ombudsman assists the visitor in accessing appropriate formal systems, offices, or processes as needed.
- Independence – The Ombudsman is not encumbered by line management functions and in their Ombudsman role report to the Center Director (Center Ombudsman) or Headquarters Executive Director (HQ Ombudsman).

Visitors that come to the Ombudsman have an opportunity to consider options for resolution and discuss the pros and cons of those options. Ultimately, it is the visitor who selects what option will be pursued. If requested, the Ombudsman can also seek out and obtain information for the visitor so that their identity is not revealed and there are no records with Agency officials. Visitors often comment on how helpful it is to have an objective ear to listen to their concerns, gather information and help them strategize on next steps without having to “go public” or start a formal process. Ombudsmen continually help the NASA workforce be heard in a way that they had not previously experienced.

In a limited number of instances Ombudsmen are called on by the Agency to gather confidential informa-

tion on morale, climate, or organizational performance and leadership concerns. The Ombudsmen used focus groups or individual interviews to gather this information, always applying the same four principles they use in individual cases and participation is always optional. All individual identifiers are stripped from messages shared with the Agency, only leaving themes and trends.

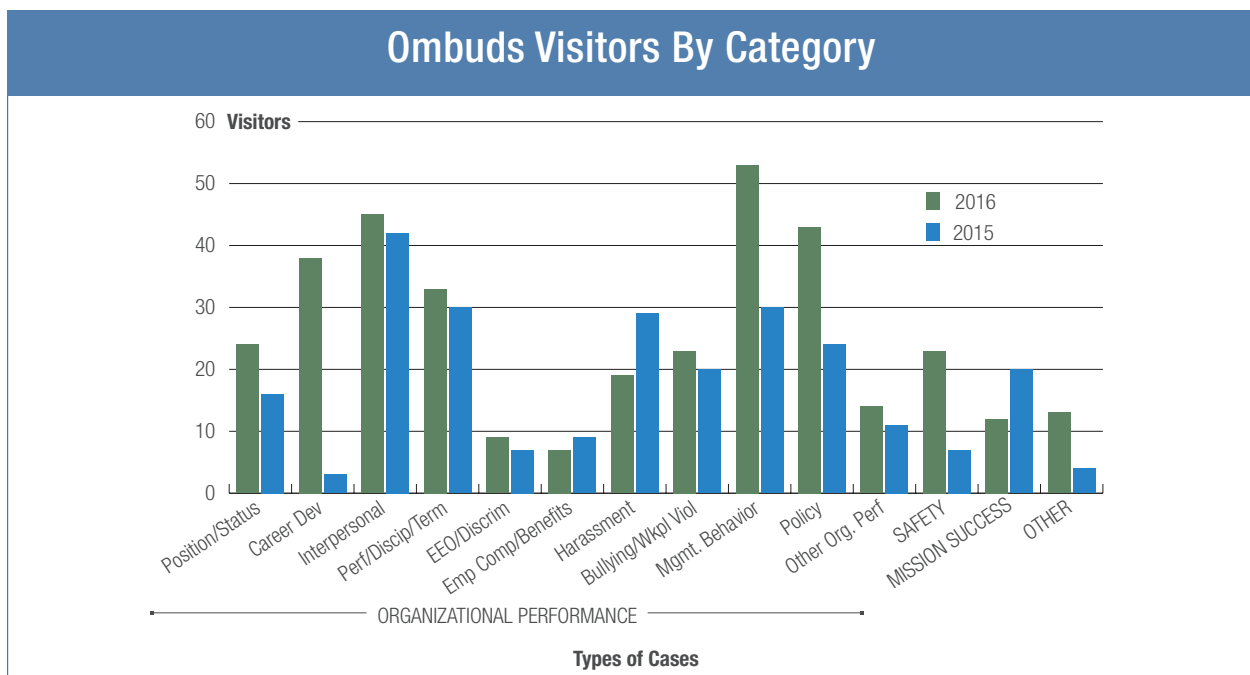
The Ombudsmen have a number of different ways to ensure a visitor’s concerns are addressed. For example, visitors may ask the Ombudsman to meet with a formal resource to gather information or elevate the situation to Center or Agency leadership. In most cases, the Ombudsman only identifies the visitor with his/her permission and works to resolve the issue at the lowest level possible.

2016 Cases and Results

Ombudsman cases are categorized into four types: Organizational Performance, Safety, Mission Success, and Other. Organizational Performance includes management behavior, changes in position status (processes for and communication of promotions, transfers, reorganizations and job classification), interpersonal conflict, discipline/performance/termination, discrimination, harassment, compensation, and benefits and policy. Safety cases are those that affect the health and safety of employees or contractors employed at NASA. Examples of safety cases include: allegations of procedures for safekeeping of materials not being followed, short cuts being taken in building spacecraft to save money or time, unresponsiveness when concerns raised, incomplete inspections, and breach of labor laws that may cause a safety concern to employees or potential violence. Mission Success cases are those that impact the quality, timing, integrity of information or work directed at a mission. While the program gets very few “Other” cases, those cases generally deal with business/financial practices, retaliation, intellectual property, privacy, conflicts of interest, criminal activity (theft, fraud), or job fit.

Since the program’s inception, a majority of the cases have been of an organizational performance nature. In 2016, 86 percent of our cases were concerning issues related to organizational performance, which is relatively unchanged from last year (87 percent).

Organizational Performance, specifically management behavior cases included visitors articulating concerns over supervisors/managers with strong technical skills being promoted without adequate training or emphasis being given to overall leadership skills. Visitor examples ranged from managers not having the skills to deliver hard messages or deal with underperformers to aggressive management styles that resulted in workers not feeling respected or safe in the workplace. Ombudsmen were able to assist visitors by coaching them on how to have productive conversations with their managers and utilize formal resources. Managers’ ability to recognize/reward hard workers and an over-reliance on employees who go above and beyond are indicative of circumstances where additional leadership and communication training could serve NASA well.





Ombudsmen also saw visitors who were experiencing interpersonal conflict (conflict with supervisors and coworkers). These cases included new employees having trouble integrating into a group, resulting in conflict, and conflict occurring because of increased workload and feelings that not everyone on the team is pulling their weight.

In terms of policy issues, we continue to hear concerns around telework. These cases often involved concerns of inconsistent application of the policy. Visitors questioned whether use of telework could impact their performance rating or if they could be denied use of telework due to poor performance or trust issues with the supervisor. Other policy issues included a suspected breach of confidentiality around medical issues, practices and policies regarding travel reimbursements, the policy for filling vacancies, and the practice regarding formal and informal vending services in Center buildings.

In 2016, 10 percent of our cases were categorized as Safety and Mission Success, compared with 12 percent in 2015. Safety and Mission Success cases ranged from potential workplace violence to workload issues that were

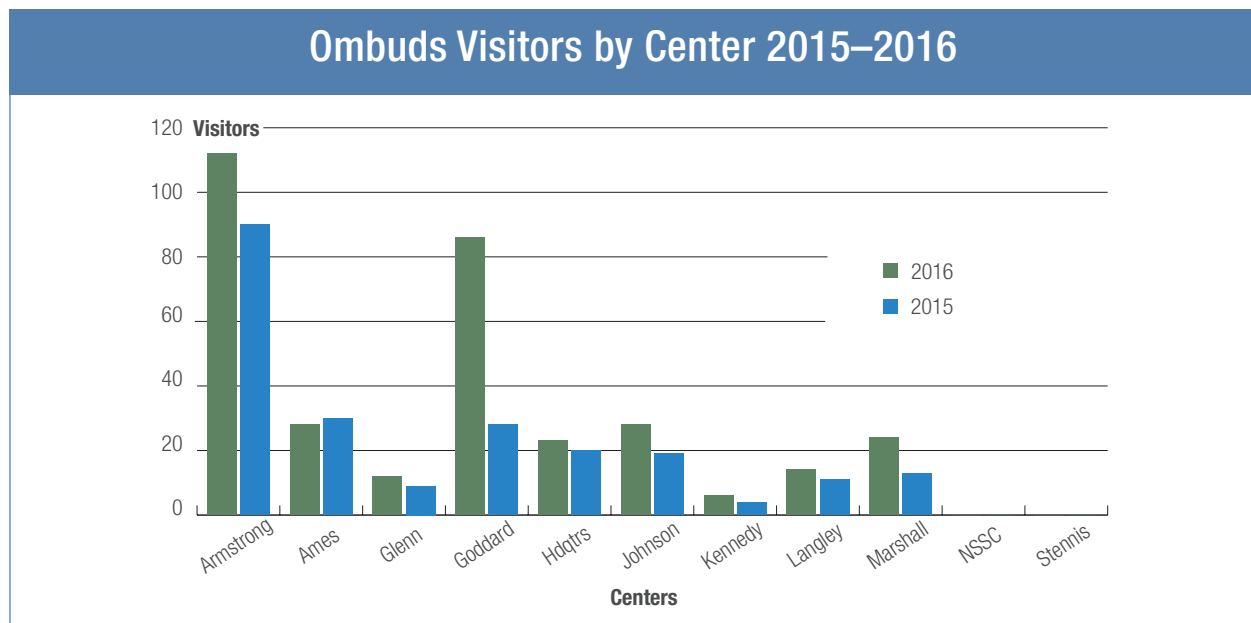
impacting the quality of work and creating potential safety concerns. Other cases included increased work with insufficient staff resulting in workers cutting corners and facility closings not being communicated well.

As in previous years, the percentage of visitors from the civil servant ranks surpassed the percentage of contractors who chose to see an Ombudsman (67 percent vs. 32 percent)². Types of contractor cases in 2016 included:

- Contractor having trouble meeting unrealistic expectations
- Workload issues causing potential impacts on missions and safety
- Civil servants taking credit for contractors work

The Ombudsmen referred contractors to the Center’s Procurement Ombudsman or the Contracting Officer (CO) to resolve issues. The Ombudsman also referred visitors to applicable internal processes when terms of employment such as pay or benefits were involved.

² 1 percent of visitors to the NASA Ombudsman Program are students.



Ombudsman Biennial Survey

In August 2016 the program released its biennial survey of the NASA workforce to garner awareness of the program and to evaluate its effectiveness. A total of 3,309 civil servants and contractors (46 percent and 54 percent respectively) responded to the survey. Of these respondents, 5 percent had actually used the Ombudsman Program in the last two years. The respondents were 58 percent male, 42 percent female with 59 percent of respondents having been at NASA for over 10 years. The largest group of respondents was from the GS 13–15 population.

Good News

- 86 percent indicated they would use the Ombudsman if the need arose as opposed to 77 percent in 2013. This indicates an increased trust level or understanding of the value of the program.
- Respondents were quite familiar with the fact that the Ombudsman Program offered confidentiality (73 percent) and neutrality (75 percent).
- The Ombudsmen were seen as being respectful (82 percent) and timely (77 percent) in responding to calls and of being successful in maintaining confidentiality (73 percent).
- Respondents who had used the Ombudsman Program indicated that if the Ombudsman Program did not exist they would have either gone straight to the formal resources, used external resources, gone to colleagues, taken legal action or left the organization. The existence of the Ombudsman Program allows these issues to be addressed in-house and at the lowest level without undue escalation. Visitors often do not know where to take their issue, and when necessary, the Ombudsman directs them to the appropriate formal resource.
- 60 percent of visitors saw their situation improve when either they or the Ombudsman took action.

Opportunities

- Of the 3,309 respondents, 71 percent were aware of the Ombudsman Program prior to receiving the survey. Although this is commendable, the Program would like to increase this percentage.
- Respondents were only somewhat familiar with the fact that the Ombudsman was informal (61 percent) and not an investigator or decision maker and did not see the Ombudsman as being independent (58 percent).
- Only 56 percent of the respondents indicated that they thought the Ombudsman would or could be useful. There is an opportunity to help the NASA population understand what can be done within the standards of the Ombudsman Program.

Actions

- Develop a targeted awareness plan to reach segments of the NASA population that may not be aware of this resource.
- Look at factors influencing the perceived independence of the Ombudsman while maintaining the collateral duty status.
- Develop a plan to address the perceived usefulness of the program and continue to clarify what the Ombudsman can and cannot do.

Going Forward

In 2016, the Ombudsman Program developed a five-year strategic plan to address consistency across all Centers and to provide stretch goals for the Ombudsman team. Goals were established to:

1. Build Awareness and Outreach
2. Provide Upward Feedback and Increase Opportunities to Influence Systemic Change
3. Execute Case Handling Best Practices
4. Continue Professional Development and Growth as Ombudsmen

Each goal has specific actions and tracking metrics that will allow Ombudsmen to measure their performance. For building awareness and outreach, the Ombudsmen have committed to continuing to reach employees by developing an outreach strategy (June 2017) to look for opportunities where Ombudsmen can increase awareness among the center population regarding what the Ombudsman Program provides. This includes continuing to participate in new employee orientations, engaging contractor councils and increasing presentations among offices/divisions. Standardized awareness materials will be in place by this June 2017

date. Actions around upward feedback will be focused on ensuring that NASA leadership at both the Center and Headquarters level are aware of objective (i.e., the numbers) and subjective (i.e., your gut) trends.

Our goal to execute case handling best practices includes ensuring all visitors are aware of the Ombudsman process including opening statement, getting the story, clarifying the issue, generating options, and deciding on action (if any) to take. By end of 2017, NASA Ombudsman will be meeting 75 percent of the case handling expectations.

In addition, we will be establishing a secure, online location for NASA Ombudsman knowledge management by May 2017. This site will house sanitized Lessons Learned, case studies, recommended book lists, tool sets, Web sites, blogs, case load information, etc. to use as a common knowledge resource.

We also look forward to continually providing NASA's workforce with its only **confidential, neutral, informal, and independent** issue resolution option.

The NASA Ombudsman

Each year The Ombudsman Program says goodbye to a number of Ombudsman who leave our ranks due to retirement and/or change in position. This year the Ombudsman Program said farewell to:

- James Barnett-NSSC
- Louise Boyd-AFRC
- John Lopez-HQ
- Robert Watts-SSC
- Keith Williams-AFRC

Two new Ombudsmen have been appointed to serve their Center populations. We welcome the following individuals to the NASA Ombudsman Program:

- Connie Bosworth-AFRC
- Christine Gex-NSSC

NASA Ombudsman Bios

AMES RESEARCH CENTER

Jim Arnold

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Jim Arnold has been with NASA for 51 years. His contributions have included research, branch management, a tour of duty at NASA Headquarters (Aerothermodynamics Program Manager) and division management. He has worked in many technical areas including aerothermodynamics, computational chemistry, thermal protection systems (TPS) research and development, arc jet testing, advanced life support, and nanotechnology. His mentoring program has enhanced the career development for many who advanced to the highest ranks of leadership, management, and research in NASA.

AMES RESEARCH CENTER

Jack Boyd

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Jack Boyd serves as Senior Advisor to the Center Director, the Senior Advisor for History, and the Center Ombudsman. He started at Ames in 1947, when it was Ames Aeronautical Laboratory and was still part of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA). His own work as an aeronautical research engineer involved wind tunnel studies of supersonic and subsonic aircraft and included major contributions to theories of conical camber. He later did early research on the design of unpiloted planetary probes to explore Mars and Venus, and he helped develop early configurations for the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo capsules. Beginning in the mid-1960s, Boyd increasingly served in managerial positions at NASA Ames. He served as executive assistant to the Ames Center Director, Deputy Director of Dryden Flight Research Center, Deputy and Associate Director of Ames Research Center, and Associate Administrator for Management at NASA

Headquarters. Additionally, he has served as Chancellor for Research for the University of Texas System, and has also been an adjunct professor at the University of Texas, Austin, El Paso, and Pan American campuses.

AMES RESEARCH CENTER

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Lisa Lockyer is the Legislative Director for NASA Ames Research Center in Silicon Valley. In this position, she handles all Federal, state, and local government affairs for Ames. Prior to this position, Lockyer was Deputy Director of the New Ventures and Communications Directorate with responsibility for partnership development, public affairs and education. From 2003 to 2009, Lockyer was Chief of the Technology Partnerships Division. She was responsible for managing Ames' intellectual property portfolio, marketing technologies and partnership opportunities, and assisting in the structure, development, and execution of deals with external partners. She spent a year at NASA Headquarters as Deputy Director of the Innovative Partnerships Program. She earned a B.A. from Harvard University, and a J.D. from Hastings College of the Law in 1993. Prior to joining NASA Ames in 1998, she practiced criminal law as a deputy district attorney in Alameda County.

ARMSTRONG FLIGHT
RESEARCH CENTER

Connie Bosworth

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Connie Bosworth has over 30 years of experience with the Armstrong Flight Research Center and is the newest Ombuds-

man for the Center. Most of her experience has been in human resources with lead roles in staffing, classification, executive resources, and employee relations. She also worked as an Administrative Officer at Armstrong in the engineering organization and the Center Director's office. She has taught courses in human resources management as an adjunct faculty member. She has a B.B.A from the University of New Mexico and an M.B.A. from California State University Northridge. She has also been certified as a Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR). Her most rewarding experiences in her career have involved mentoring employees and resolving employee issues and conflict. She looks forward to supporting problem and conflict resolution through the Agency Ombudsman Program.

ARMSTRONG FLIGHT
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Albion Bowers

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Albion Bowers is the Center Chief Scientist at NASA's Neil A. Armstrong Flight Research Center, Edwards, CA. Al has been at NASA Armstrong for 34 years. In his position, he is responsible for defining NASA Armstrong's strategic technical direction for the Center, including advanced aeronautical designs, research, and space technologies. Prior to his present position, Bowers served as Associate Director of the Research and Engineering Directorate, and Director of Dryden's Aeronautics Mission Directorate and as a project manager. He also served as the Chief of the Aerodynamics Branch of Dryden's Research Engineering Directorate from 2002 to 2004, acted as Deputy Director of the Research and Engineering Directorate from 2004 to 2008, and acted as the Special Assistant to the Associate Administrator of Aeronautics in 2008. He earned a B.S. in aeronautical engineering and an M.E. from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. He was awarded the Exceptional Service Medal in 2006 and the Exceptional Engineering Achievement Medal in 2014.

ARMSTRONG FLIGHT
RESEARCH CENTER

Kevin Reilly

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Kevin Reilly has been employed with NASA for over 16 years. Previously, he worked for The TYBRIN Corporation as an F-16 System Program Manager for Foreign Military Sales to Bahrain and Egypt after retiring from the United States Air Force. While in the Air Force, he flew over half of his 20-year career as an operational test pilot in Boeing B-52s and Northrop Grumman B-2s. Kevin also had experience in crisis action. At AFRC, he initially worked as a system safety engineer supporting numerous Center projects. Due to his operational flight experience, he became the Quality Assurance Branch Chief for 3 years, and when AFRC inherited the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA), he was asked to become the Chief Safety Officer for the SOFIA Airborne Platform Project (APP). He works in the Management System Office.

ARMSTRONG FLIGHT
RESEARCH CENTER

Miriam Rodon-Naveira

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Miriam Rodon-Naveira has been employed with NASA for almost 17 years. Previously she worked for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for 10 years in various capacities from Research Biologist to Branch Chief to Deputy Director for an Exposure Assessment Laboratory. While at EPA she worked on the development of a Diversity Management program within the EPA's Office of Research and Development, as well as leading various Federal Special Emphasis Events and employee empowerment initiatives. Since she came to NASA, Rodon-Naveira has held a number of positions within AFRC including Higher Education Program Manager and Education Director for 5 years. She has a B.S. in psychology, a Ph.D. in microbiology and recently obtained a graduate certification in industrial hygiene from Tulane University, School of Tropical

Medicine and Public Health. She is also fluent in Spanish and conversant in French. She is currently AFRC's Occupational Health Program Manager.

GLENN RESEARCH CENTER

Marsha Nall

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Marsha Nall has been employed by NASA Glenn Research Center (GRC) for over 30 years. She currently manages the Glenn Human Research Program (HRP) and is responsible for implementation of an interdisciplinary bioengineering program. This is a complex and unique space exploration research and technology development program focused on mitigating risks to health, safety and performance of astronaut crews during long duration spaceflight. The GRC focus is in the areas of exercise countermeasures, computational physiology and medical capabilities. Nall started her career at NASA performing research in support of both aeronautics and space systems. She has held both systems engineering and project management roles in development of the International Space Station (ISS) electrical power system and in large facility-class experiment payloads for ISS. Marsha received her B.S. in civil engineering from The Ohio State University and her M.S. in civil engineering from Case Western Reserve University.

GLENN RESEARCH CENTER

Harvey Schabes

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Harvey Schabes has been at NASA for over 30 years. He has served as a researcher, project engineer, project manager and a manager in both technical and administrative organizations and is new to the Ombudsman role. He joined the Technology Transfer Office in October 2015 and serves as the Senior Strategy Manager. He coordinates the overall Space Act Agreement area as well as other key office, directorate, and Center-wide activities. He joined NASA in 1983 as a research engineer, de-

veloping new computer models for predicting the performance of new de-icing systems and performing extensive testing in the Icing Research Tunnel. He earned a B.S. in mechanical engineering from the University of Pittsburgh and an M.S. in mechanical engineering from the University of Toledo. He has a very outgoing personality and enjoys interacting with people.

GLENN RESEARCH CENTER

Gwynn Severt

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Gwynn Severt has been at NASA Glenn for 24 years. She started out at Lewis as a mechanical engineering cooperative education student working on space experiments, but was hired after graduation as a test engineer in the aeronautics test facilities. After a brief period in the Aero-Acoustic Propulsion Laboratory (AAPL), she transferred into the Engine Research Building (ERB) as an engineer for the Advanced Nozzle Test Facility. During her time in that facility, she obtained her master's in both Industrial Engineering and Business Administration. After working in multiple facilities in ERB, she was selected as the facility manager for ERB, the Advanced Subsonic Combustion Rig (ASCR), the 1'x1' Supersonic Wind Tunnel, and the Engine Components Research Facility (ECRL). In that role, she is responsible for managing the budgets and schedules for the various test facilities, and for interacting with the customers, both internal and external, who use those facilities. Throughout her career, she has participated in a number of Center and outreach activities that have enabled her to interact with a multitude of people throughout the Center.

GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER

Ed Rogers

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Ed Rogers is the Chief Knowledge Officer at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, MD. He received a Ph.D. from Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor

Relations focusing on the role of cooperation in high tech firms. In the early 1980s, he performed 5 years of international relief work in southern Lebanon. Prior to returning to academic work at Cornell, Rogers operated a private consulting practice focused on knowledge workers and intelligent enterprise. His research and publications apply game theory models to human behavior in organizations. He has consulted with a number of organizations on building conceptual transparency and leveraging collective knowledge. Before joining NASA, he taught strategic management and entrepreneurship at Cornell, Duke, and the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER

Kim Weaver

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Kim Weaver has been with NASA for 16 years and is currently an astronomer in the Laboratory for High-Energy Astrophysics, using space-based satellites to study galaxies and super massive black holes. Weaver previously served as the Associate Director of Science for the Goddard Space Flight Center Astrophysics Division, program scientist at NASA Headquarters for the Spitzer Space Telescope, and press and education/outreach liaison for the NASA Headquarters Astrophysics Division. As the press and education/outreach liaison, she participated in discussions regarding policy, procedure, and methodology, and worked internal and cross-discipline communications strategy issues. Weaver is also an occasional media spokesperson for NASA.

GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER

Torry Johnson

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Torry A. Johnson has been with NASA for over 10 years and currently serves as the Assistant Deputy Director of Hydro-spheric and Biospheric Sciences in the Earth Science Division at Goddard Space Flight Center. In addition, he heads up the Agency's Tribal College and University Project.

GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER

Joyce Winterton

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Joyce Winterton is the Senior Advisor for Education and Leadership Development for the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center's Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia. Prior to her current position, she served as NASA's Assistant Administrator for Education, directing the development and implementation of the Agency's education programs that strengthen student involvement and public awareness of its scientific goals and missions. Winterton earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from Utah State University. She completed her doctorate in teacher education and administration at Colorado State University. Her previous experience includes work for the U.S. Senate, the U.S. Department of Education, a Presidential Advisory Council, National FFA, USA TODAY, and Winterton Associates, a consulting company she founded.

HEADQUARTERS

Patty Currier

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Patty Currier is a policy analyst in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO). She has been with NASA for over 25 years, initially as a contractor and converting to civil service in 2008. She started her career at ARC, working on life science research and overseeing space flight experiments. She relocated to KSC and expanded her focus to writing, strategy, improving processes and performance, troubleshooting, and enabling mission outcomes. Since moving to HQ, she has worked in the former Exploration Systems mission directorate, the Office of Education, and OCFO. Her work included program management, aligning budget to goals, improving data collection and reporting, communicating effectively with OMB and Congress, and developing policy. Currier has a B.S. from Tufts University, and an M.S. and M.B.A. from Florida Tech.

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John Lopez

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John Lopez joined NASA as the Internal Controls Team Lead in March, 2013. He brings more than 12 years' experience working at different Federal Government entities. Before joining NASA, Lopez worked as an audit manager at the Government Accountability Office (GAO) where he earned multiple awards for his contribution in high visibility engagements such as the review of major defense acquisition programs, contract management reviews, the U.S. Federal Government Consolidated Financial Statement Audit, and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Financial Statement Audit. Lopez holds a B.B.A. with a concentration in accounting from the University of Puerto Rico, and has an M.S. in finance from John Hopkins' Carey Business School. He is also a certified public accountant.

HEADQUARTERS

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Brenda Mulac is the Assistant Director for Planning and Evaluation for Headquarters Operations. A civil servant for 8 years, Mulac began her NASA career as a contractor at Wallops Flight Facility supporting the NASA Airborne Science Program. After joining the civil service, she continued to support the Airborne Science Program and served as the NASA Liaison to the FAA's Unmanned Aircraft Program. Mulac came to Headquarters in 2010 and spent 5 years in the Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate where she was the Strategic Planning Manager for the ARMD Strategy, Architecture, and Analysis Office, and later Acting Deputy Director for Strategy in the Program, Analysis, and Management Office. She holds a B.S. and M.S. in metallurgical and materials engineering from Michigan Technological University and Colorado School of Mines, respectively, and an M.S. in atmospheric science from the University of Colorado.

JOHNSON SPACE CENTER

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Donna Blackshear-Reynolds is the Division Chief, Program Resources Management Division under the JSC Office of the Chief Financial Officer. She began at Johnson Space Center in 1981 as a Presidential Management Intern and has served in progressively more responsible positions involved in budgeting, program planning, and analysis, as well as program evaluation. Her educational background includes a B.A. in government from the University of Texas at Austin; an M.P.A. from Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government; and post-graduate study in public policy at the University of Pennsylvania, Wharton School of Finance.

JOHNSON SPACE CENTER

Craig Dinsmore

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Craig Dinsmore received his bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical engineering from Rice University. He later received an M.S. in environmental management from the University of Houston-Clear Lake, and a master's in space systems engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology. Dinsmore joined the NASA JSC community in 1982, and, after working for several support contractors, became a civil servant in 1988. He has worked in test operations safety, managed several branches within the Crew and Thermal Systems Division (CTSD) in the Engineering Directorate, completed a year rotation at NASA Headquarters, and now serves as Deputy Division Chief in CTSD.

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER

Hortense Diggs

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Hortense Blackwell Diggs is currently Chief of The Education Projects and Youth Engagement Office within the Communications and Public Engagement Directorate at NASA's John F. Kennedy Space Center (KSC). Diggs joined NASA in 2000 as a flight assurance manager in the Expendable Launch Vehicles Safety and Flight Assurance Office, where she was responsible for developing and implementing flight assurance activities. She was the Mission Assurance Manager on both Mars Exploration Rover Missions A and B and the Deep Impact missions. Diggs is a graduate of Prairie View A&M University, where she received a B.S. in mechanical engineering.

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER

Justin Junod

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Justin Junod is currently the civil engineering lead within the Construction of Facilities Division of the Center Operations Directorate at NASA's John F. Kennedy Space Center (KSC) in Florida. In 2000, Junod began his career with NASA as a cooperative education student in the Facilities Engineering Division, where he spent 10 years serving in the roles of project manager, lead design engineer, and construction manager for Institutional and Programmatic facilities and systems. He is a graduate of the University of Central Florida where he received a B.S. in civil engineering and an M.S. in industrial engineering.

LANGLEY RESEARCH CENTER

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Venita Robinson began her career with NASA as a cooperative education student in the Public Information Branch at Marshall Space Flight Center. She is a graduate of Tennessee Technological University and Hampton University with a B.S. degree in English-Journalism and an M.S. degree in management respectively. Robinson has over 30 years of Federal experience, the majority of which has been with NASA. She has enjoyed assignments in public relations, human resources, Equal Employment Opportunity and Logistics Management at both Marshall and Langley. She served as a recruitment manager, senior human resources specialist, disability program manager, and diversity workforce manager, and is currently the LaRC Supply and Equipment Management Officer as well as the Center's Property Disposal Officer. She considers herself fortunate to have enjoyed such a diversified and fulfilling career with NASA.

LANGLEY RESEARCH CENTER

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Shannon Walker began her career as a legal secretary for a law firm in Hampton in 1982. In 1987, she was selected for a civil servant job with the Department of Defense in Norfolk, where she was a contract management assistant. She transferred to NASA LaRC in 1990 as a secretary in Programs and Resources Division (now referred to as CFO). She later worked in the Office of Procurement for several years, and then in the Engineering Directorate. She moved to the Science Directorate in 2000, where she has held several roles (secretary, administrative officer, management and program analyst). She is now a Contracting Officer's Representative for the Science Support Services Contract.

MARSHALL SPACE FLIGHT CENTER

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Susan Cloud has over 35 years with NASA and currently is Special Assistant to the Director of Human Capital and the Diversity Manager for Marshall. Susan has a B.A. from the University of Alabama and a J.D. from Cumberland School of Law, Samford University.

MARSHALL SPACE FLIGHT CENTER

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Nelson Parker has over 40 years of experience with NASA, and currently serves as Deputy Manager of the Chief Engineers Office at the Marshall Space Flight Center. This office provides Engineering Technical Authority at the system level through Chief Engineers across the entire spectrum of MSFC programs and projects, and ensures that integrated systems developed for these programs and projects meet technical requirements and function adequately to achieve mission objectives. Parker's previous assignments include a variety of technical leadership roles at the team, branch, division, laboratory/department, and directorate levels within the Center's Engineering Directorate. He was also selected for a rotational assignment to the MSFC Safety and Mission Assurance Directorate, where he served as Deputy Director for Program Assurance over the final three years of the Space Shuttle Program.

NASA SHARED SERVICES CENTER

Christine Gex

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Christine Gex began her career as a systems analyst for a nonprofit organization. In 2000, she was selected for a civil servant job with the NASA's Stennis Space Center (SSC), where she was a systems accountant, program analyst, and then Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) for SSC. She transferred to the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) in 2009 as the NSSC Deputy CISO and now is the NSSC CISO. Gex received an undergrad degree from University of Southern Mississippi and a M.B.A. from William Carey College.

STENNIS SPACE CENTER

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Robert Watts has been with NASA for 5 years and currently serves as the small business specialist for Stennis Space Center. He is a retired member of our Nation's armed forces, having served 22 years in the U.S. Army. Immediately prior to coming to NASA, Watts served as a regional Contracting Officer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Hurricane Protection Office, where he was involved with the rebuilding of the levees in and around New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. He has also served as Program Manager for ADDX Corporation and as a principal acquisition analyst for CACI.

