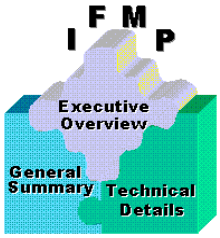
NASA Lewis Research Center

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES
PERSONNEL NEWSLETTER

September 1998

Integrated Financial Management Project

The Chief Financial Officer established the Integrated Financial Management Project (IFMP) to plan, coordinate, and manage all aspects of the work necessary to acquire and implement a single, integrated financial management system throughout NASA.



The IFMP involves changes in both our business processes and the systems software on a NASA-wide basis. Every NASA employee will be affected by this project in varying ways. For example: we at Lewis will replace our Time and Attendance System (TADS), Automated Procurement System (APRS), and our Travel System with new systems. Additional process and systems changes will occur in the areas of core finance, budget formulation, and executive information systems.

Because integrated systems change all related functions and ways of business life, a comprehensive training program is under development to ensure that all employees have the tools to accomplish their work in the new environment. In the near future, information regarding IFMP and the training program will be disseminated at meetings, in LeRC publications, pamphlets, E-Mails, and the IFMP WEB site - http://gemini.lerc.nasa.gov/cfo/ifmp/default.asp.

One of the most important preliminary Centerwide activities will be a questionnaire designed to collect current information regarding employees' computer desktop configurations and their current job functions. This data collection activity will provide the IFMP Training Team with the necessary information to determine which employees will require what specific training.

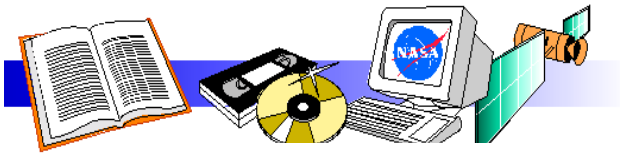
Training will be provided in a number of general areas which will include but will not be limited to:

- -- tools to deal with the effects of broad sweeping change;
- -- basic computer skills;
- -- increasing proficiency in using the Internet;
- -- instructions in the new business processes;
- -- training in the new systems software;
- -- retraining as appropriate.

Initial training events will begin with a measured approach to establishing a baseline proficiency level of employee skills in computer usage, instruction in the "new" business standards such as "full cost" while simultaneously disseminating the tools to understand and deal with the impact of change. As the date for Lewis' changeover to the new systems software comes closer, training events will accelerate. Although it is premature to publish a training schedule at this time, the general approach to the establishment of a firm schedule in the future will take into consideration the large number of people affected.

The NASA Lewis Research Center's date for the IFMP deployment is June 1, 2000.

Learning Center Offers Office 97 Self-Study Training



Located in Building 21, Room 3
Hours are: 7:30 to 4:30, Monday - Friday

Do the new features of Microsoft's latest release of Word have you mystified? Do you want to finally master the advanced features of Excel? Did your supervisor just ask you to create the PowerPoint charts for the next annual report and you do not know where to start?

If so, the Learning Center can help! Self-study training for the 97 versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access are now available. Courses consist of hands-on video instruction combined with a student guide that is yours to keep for future reference.

For more information or to apply for these courses, visit our web site at http://www.lerc.nasa.gov/WWW/LC or contact us at PABX 3-2996 or 2997.

Changes Ahead for Developing Leaders

By next year at this time, chances are that NASA will have new maps with some different vehicles and novel pit stops for individuals on the road to successful leadership in our Agency.

A NASA-wide effort is underway to assure our efforts and investments in leadership development are aligned with the strategic plan, have consistency across the Agency, and continue to reflect the best practices in the field. This will mean that, whether you are an Associate Administrator or a nonsupervisory leader, there will be a set of competencies or performance dimensions benchmarked for your position that reflect and support our strategic direction. Along with that, relevant developmental activities will be identified and facilitated that are designed to provide you with the knowledge, skill, and ability needed for success in your position, as well as, the ones to which you aspire, regardless of where that NASA position is located.

Although the NASA Leadership Initiative is still in the initial study phase, the preliminary data from interviews conducted across the Agency this summer reflects several trends seen in the benchmarking studies and literature reviews. You may expect to see changes in current programs, new programs, and the implementation and or increased use of new learning vehicles: the Internet, peer coaching, broadening assignments, and the like. Once the overall design is completed, the Agency team will develop an integrated strategy for NASA-wide implementation.

In the meantime, keep yourself informed of current training opportunities at LeRC by checking out the relevant quarterly calendars at the OD&TO Web page at http://www.lerc.nasa.gov/WWW/ODT. If you have any specific training needs or requests related to leadership and management development, please feel free to contact Cindy Forman so that we may consider your input as we plan our FY99 program year.

Training is just a click away!

Visit the Organization Development and Training Office Website at: http://www.lerc.nasa.gov/WWW/ODT.
COURSE ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE NOW ON THE WEB.

TECHNICAL JARGON

by Jeannette Owens
Organization Development and Training Office

In June, President Clinton issued a Directive on written communication to all Agency Heads in the form of a memorandum through the Federal Register. In response to President Clinton's recent Directive on "Plain Language in Government Writing," NASA/LeRC will continue to offer a variety of written communication courses for its employees. We are proud to report that even before this Directive was issued, NASA/LeRC was the only Center offering "tailored" WIPE (Write in Plain English) training courses.

According to President Clinton, the reason for this Directive is that the Federal Government must begin to write in plain language so that it can communicate a clear message about what the Government is doing, requires, and offers. He further states that, "Plain language saves the Government and the private sector time, effort, and money." Therefore, by October 1998, all Federal agencies are directed to use plain language in all new documents, as well as rewrite those documents created prior to October 1998, so that by January 1, 2002, we are communicating clear messages.

In response to the President's requirement, Mr. Joe McElwee, Director of NASA/Headquarter's Training and Development Branch, issued a memo to all Training Officers requesting that we offer writing skills courses to selected audiences. Effective October 1998, our Organization Development and Training Office (OD&TO) will post WIPE courses available for FY99 on the OD&TO web page. Since this course is very popular, to avoid being placed on a waiting list, watch your E-Mail or contact me at PABX 3-2990 before October 1, with your request for this training. I will make every effort to ensure that preregistered employees receive priority placement on the training schedule.

We are proud of our accomplishments in the area of written communications over the past year. And I look forward to working with each of you as NASA/LeRC continues to produce technical documents written in PLAIN LANGUAGE on all its communications.

UPCOMING EVENTS/DATES

Retirement Planning Sessions:

Seminar September 14, 15, and 16, 1998.
Evening session for spouses, September 15, 1998, DEB Auditorium, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
Refresher update, September 17, 1998, DEB Auditorium, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
CSRS Offset Employees, September 17, 1998, DEB Auditorium, 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.
CSRS to FERS Transfer Seminar, September 28, 1998, DEB Auditorium.
A-L, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
M-Z, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
For information regarding these seminars contact Judy Budd, PABX 3-5580.

Open Seasons:

FEHB, November 9, 1998, through December 14, 1998. Changes become effective January 3, 1999.
TSP, November 15, 1998, through January 31, 1999.
CSRS TO FERS TRANSFER, NOW through December 31, 1998.

Red Cross Blood Drives:

Administration Building Auditorium
September 28, 29, and 30, 1998
December 7, 8, and 9, 1998

NASA EXTERNAL AWARDS

Every quarter, the Center receives requests for nominations for a wide variety of non-NASA awards. A call letter with nomination criteria summaries is sent to the directorate offices for distribution. Please call the Awards Office at PABX 3-2848, for specific information.

The following is a list of non-NASA External Awards solicitation due this quarter, October to December 1998:

Federal Engineer of the Year Award
AIAA Awards
Achievement in Managing Information Technology
Frank G. Brewer Trophy
Cliff Henderson Award for Achievement
Robert H. Goddard Memorial Trophy

Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership
Donald L. Scantlebury Memorial Award
Stellar Awards
Society of Women Engineers Awards
Alan T. Waterman Award
Engineers' Council Awards

ADVANCE NOTICE FOR EMPLOYEES LEAVING THE CENTER

From time to time, employees ask about the procedures to follow when resigning, transferring, or retiring from the Center. Employees planning to resign or transfer to another installation or Agency should provide written notice at least 2 weeks before they leave to provide adequate lead time for processing the necessary forms and arranging appropriate clearances.

Except applicants for retirement, the exiting employee should obtain a Standard Form 52 from his/her division office and complete part E. The employee will complete parts A, B, and C, and submit the form to Carol Mehallick, M.S. 500-301. Upon receipt of the SF-52, she will send the employee a Separation Clearance Record, listing various offices through which the employee will have to clear before leaving the Center. The employee will be advised of the location of an exit meeting (close to the employee's last workday). The exit meeting will cover temporary extension of coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance, and TSP options. Refunds of retirement contributions can also be discussed during this session

Employees resigning from leave without pay or from a temporary duty station away from the Center can begin the exiting process by writing a letter to the Operations Office of the Office of Human Resources (OHR), M.S. 500-301, stating the date and reason for resignation. This letter should be sent 2 weeks before the separation date. If it is impractical for the employee to appear for the exit meeting, the process can be handled by mail.

Because the retirement process is somewhat more involved than the resignation or transfer process, even more lead time is desirable from employees planning to retire. For example, OHR will initiate the SF-52 and assist the employee in completing the additional paperwork required in processing retirements. OHR must review the employee's civilian service record and, if appropriate, military records to assure that the proper periods of creditable service are submitted to the Office of Personnel Management for prompt and timely payment of the annuity.

Anyone having questions regarding the above should call Carol Mehallick at PABX 3-2507.

ANNUAL LEAVE "USE OR LOSE"

The time of year has arrived when employees should review their annual leave balances, keeping in mind the 240-hour limit on the annual leave carryover balance. If it appears that you will have an excess of annual leave, the following information will be important to you.

EMPLOYEES:

Plan your leave for the balance of the leave year, which ends January 2, 1999. Follow up with your supervisor if you do not receive timely feedback on your leave request. When annual leave is denied, or approved leave is canceled, an alternate period of time should be scheduled. This should be done without delay.

Special attention must be given to schedule leave to avoid forfeiture of annual leave that is in excess of the maximum carryover allowed at the end of the leave year. Use an SF-71, Application for Leave, to request "use or lose" annual leave and submit a new leave request to update your leave schedule if your supervisor cancels "use or lose" leave you have previously submitted.

If you do not request leave, or do not use leave that was approved, any resulting forfeiture will be con-sidered to be by your choice.

The U.S. Comptroller General's decision stated that Federal employees who do not schedule leave in advance and in writing, and who forfeit the leave due to exigencies of public business may not have that leave restored. The Comptroller General also stated that informal notification or verbal requests are not sufficient, even when extenuating circumstances exist.

SUPERVISORS:

Supervisors are expected to assist employees in planning and scheduling the use of annual leave on a year-round basis to provide for reasonable vacation periods and to ensure the use of leave that employees might otherwise forfeit.

Take prompt action on leave requests. Ask the employee to resubmit a leave request for another period if you have had to deny a request and take timely action to approve rescheduled "use or lose" leave. SF-71's which include "use or lose" leave must be dated no later than November 21, 1998.

Request an approval of an "Exigency of the Public Business" if you see no alternative to cancellation of employees' leave which could result in a loss of leave. An "exigency" proposal must be approved by the Center Director before you cancel "use or lose" leave that cannot be rescheduled before the end of the leave year.

CARRYOVER OF EXCESS ANNUAL LEAVE

Unused earned annual leave may be carried over from 1 leave year to the next. However, the amount is limited by Federal law to 240 hours. Under certain conditions, excess leave may be carried over. There are certain regulatory requirements which must be satisfied before an agency may consider approval of excess leave carryover.

1. An SF-71, Application for Leave, must be on file with the employee's timekeeper, before the start of the third pay period prior to the end of the leave year (by November 21, 1998) documenting that the leave was scheduled and approved by the employee's immediate supervisor.

2. The Center Director is authorized to declare an exigency of business exists and thereby cancel the scheduled leave and in turn approve excess leave carryover.

In such cases, the immediate supervisor must prepare a memorandum addressed to the Center Director requesting cancellation of the leave due to an **exigency of business**, noting that no other employee can carry out the work; a description of the effects of postponement of the work; specifying the number of hours of annual leave involved in the request; and the beginning and ending dates of the exigency. The original SF-71 which recorded the scheduling of the leave must be attached.

Carryover of excess leave may also be approved in the event an employee's injury or illness prevented the taking of annual leave before the leave year's end. In such cases, the official authorized to approve excess leave carryover is the Deputy Director for Operations. An immediate supervisor requesting excess leave carryover due to injury/illness must request approval of carryover with a memorandum to the Deputy Director for Operations with the original signed, approved SF-71 attached.

In October, the Office of Human Resources will issue an alert memo to the Center staff providing detailed instructions on the specific procedures to be followed.

EMERGING CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

by Susan Gifford, CTAPC Counselor

Would you be surprised to learn that many NASA employees do not have PC's at home, do not have significant experience on the internet, and do not have any experience finding professional and career development resources online? At the LeRC CTAPC, Chuck O'Brien and I find this to be true in our "Electronic Resumes and Internet Job Search" work- shops. We ask participants to comment on their PC ownership, usage, and internet skill while they are introducing themselves at the start of the workshop. The comment is often, "Well, my kids use the internet a lot, but I do not really know how to find anything!"

Electronic resume banks, Internet job listings, and the use of optical character recognition (OCR) software for resume scanning are being adopted as hiring techniques by HR professionals and managers. However, many prospective candidates do not have the knowledge or skills to write an electronic resume, respond to a job ad via E-Mail, or locate professional development resources on the Internet. They are getting left behind in the advances of career development technology while their kids surf the net in search of the latest computer game.

Professional development resources, online candidate recruitment, and job listings sites on the Internet are clearly growing in number. I worked overseas for 4 months in 1997, during which time I had no Internet exposure. I returned to the U.S. early this year and was stunned by the growth in the number of websites that had occurred during those 4 short months, including job search related sites. Relocating from Boston to Cleveland, and conducting a job search for the first time in 4 years, I found the proliferation of job search websites to be a little overwhelming. I am a longtime participant in "internetworking," discussing professional topics via listserv with colleagues in the same profession. But in terms of job searching, I had to quickly make myself an expert, learning to use the internet in a targeted way. I found the CTAPC job by entering keywords into a local job bank.

While increasing numbers of employers are using the internet to identify qualified candidates for available positions, many potential employees lack skills in targeted online job searching. This gap can be bridged with effective electronic resume and online job searching skills training. The traditional paper resume, along with the scannable and electronic resumes, are three formats utilized by today's job seekers and employers. And while most people are familiar with the traditional paper resume, scannable and electronic resume design requires us to learn new skills.

Keywords, internetworking, online journals, scannable resume formats, company applications online, Internet resume banks, cyberspace recruiters, ASCII files, and listservs are all tools that NASA folks can keep in their toolbox of career development resources. Professionals who are well versed in these techniques will find an abundance of career development resources on the Internet. When used in a targeted way, electronic resumes and Internet job searches can be an effective addition to one's career development knowledge and skills.

So get those kids off the internet games and let the adults start surfing!

CAREER TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CENTER

21000 Brookpark Road
Cleveland, OH 44135
Phone (216) 433-8502
Fax (216) 433-8871

Tuesday, September 22	
9 a.m. - 12 Noon	**Landscape of Electronic Resumes**
Wednesday, September 23	
9 a.m. - 12 Noon	**College Planning**
Thursday, October 1	
9 a.m. - 12 Noon	**ABLE Adult Balanced Life**
Wednesday, October 7	
9 a.m. - 12 Noon	**Pursuing a Career in Higher Education**

Please E-Mail Ms. Cindy Cox at (Cynthia.A.Cox@lerc.nasa.gov)
if interested in attending any of the above events.