

Colleagues,

In many things in life, tangible improvement over the long-term is only possible with daily attention. I believe advancing diversity, inclusion and opportunity in the workplace — and more generally in our society — is one of those things. Said another way — perhaps a more strategic way — you often can best achieve your long-term goals by focusing on available near-term actions that will have meaningful immediate impact.

Over the last several months, even though we have been physically separated, we have come together as a Commission, as colleagues, as friends and as fellow Americans to speak with one another about race, racism, diversity, inclusion and opportunity. Among many other topics, we have discussed how we can improve our workplace culture in ways that will benefit everyone, including the public we serve. We have had discussions in groups, large and small, structured and free flowing, formal and informal. I thank NTEU, OMWI, OEEA, the [Diversity Council](#), the Employee Affinity Groups ([EAGs](#)), in particular the African American Council, and every division and office that has participated. I especially want to thank Pam Gibbs, along with Robert Marchman and Dwayne Boyd, for leading so much of the work to support these vital discussions.

I have been struck by the extent to which some of our colleagues have felt the sting of bias in their lives, including at our workplace, as conveyed in the personal experiences that have been shared. I thank them for their courage and candor. These conversations also have affirmed my belief that continued, collective reinforcement of our legal, moral and professional responsibilities will further strengthen our culture and our performance, including in ways that enhance our mission effectiveness. The conversations will continue.

While we have done much in the past few months and have much work to do in the days ahead (more on that below), I want to acknowledge the foundation for enhancing diversity, inclusion and opportunity that OMWI and others have helped us establish and that our colleagues throughout the agency have enthusiastically supported. As just very few examples, I am pleased that the SEC (1) approved its Diversity and Inclusion [Strategic Plan](#) in March (the goals of which are reflected in many of the initiatives discussed below); (2) created the position of Senior Policy Advisor on Diversity and Inclusion in December 2019; (3) released two upgraded dashboards on diversity in our workforce and in FEVS in March and June; (4) in April initiated the Un.Covering Task Force to promote inclusion in our workplace; and (5) launched manager training on conscious equity in May. The Diversity Council, EAGs, and others have worked tirelessly to make this happen. Here, I thank NTEU for their work and engagement, directly as well as through the Diversity Council and other channels.

Externally, we are working to bring more diverse perspectives in the public-facing and mission-oriented work of the Commission. For example, OASB's Small Business Forum recently highlighted the experiences of African American women in venture capital and the Asset Management Advisory Committee held a special public meeting on the issue of minority underrepresentation in the asset management industry. More generally, we are working to ensure that the SEC's independent advisory committees consider diversity and inclusion in their membership, their areas of expertise and their events. I have seen these actions, and many others, foster yet more discussion and recommendations on how we can improve as a Commission.

With that recent background, I turn to near-term actions. As a result of the efforts of many hundreds (yes, many hundreds) of colleagues throughout our organization, I am pleased to announce the

Commission will move forward with the initial near-term actions listed below. In deciding on these near-term actions, we took into account suggestions from the organizations mentioned above, as well as suggestions from individuals and small groups, representing perspectives from throughout the Commission. Our criteria for this initial list is straightforward. We chose actions that are specific, have the potential to improve our organization in terms of culture, internal and external opportunity, and accountability and importantly, that can be implemented, funded, finalized or approved in the near term. Some of these initiatives are new and others are prior suggestions that require a nudge, which I am pleased to provide. We are engaged, of course, with NTEU and many others on the particulars of these initiatives, as well as longer-term initiatives, and we will continue that dialogue as we move forward. Importantly, while implementing some initiatives will involve additional guidance or action from OMWI and OHR, I must stress that the work of creating a more diverse and inclusive organization belongs to all of us, including division and office directors and other senior officers and managers. As in so much of what we do — including coming up with this list of near-term actions and implementing them — ours is a team effort.

The selection of these initial actions is unlikely to please everyone. Some may view them as insufficient and others as unduly burdensome. In their way, both views are worthy of consideration as we move forward. Certainly, these actions alone will not address much of the pain felt by our colleagues, particularly our African American colleagues, and to which much of our society is recently, and belatedly, more attuned. Importantly, not all of our ideas and actions will succeed as intended. What I do ask, regardless of whether you believe it is too much or too little, is that we be willing to take these steps, learn and, where we fall short, adjust. And where we meet success, invest further to improve our culture in a substantive and sustained manner.

Near-Term Initiatives

With that as context, the following are a set of initiatives that the agency will be pursuing in the near term to improve our culture, enhance internal and external opportunity, and promote accountability:

- 1. Enhance Diversity on Hiring Committees and Interview Panels:** Increasing emphasis and transparency on the diversity of the panels who select and promote our colleagues can help us advance diversity in the overall workforce.
- 2. Develop New Protocols to Promote Equity and Opportunity for Selection to Senior Leadership Positions:** Taking additional steps to ensure we recruit, interview and assess candidates for senior positions in ways that can help us achieve a more diverse leadership cadre.
- 3. Improve Succession Planning by Providing More Leadership Development Opportunities:** Building out the planned *Senior Officer Cohort Program* and discussing with NTEU a proposed *Rotational Program*, which can help more colleagues get exposure to new assignments and career opportunities.
- 4. Require Annual D&I Training for Managers and Supervisors:** A common baseline understanding of requirements and opportunities can improve accountability and promote a culture of inclusion.

5. **Require Annual Division and Office Reporting on D&I Engagement:** Many divisions and offices engage in mission-related outreach and engagement, including in ways that can help build interest in future employment by potential SEC candidates; division and office heads should report on how they have proactively woven diversity, inclusion and opportunity into those efforts.
6. **Enhance Inclusion for Colleagues with Disabilities:** We have worked to promote inclusion for persons with disabilities during mandatory telework. We should explore ways to improve during our current operating status and take specific actions to support all of our colleagues when we begin to transition back to our offices.
7. **Establish a Paid D&I-focused Summer Internship Program:** This is one of the most frequently-mentioned ideas and building a more diverse pipeline at the Commission will benefit us all.

Additional Initiatives

In addition to the above near-term actions, which, again, are just a subset of the proposals we are considering — ones that are straight-forward enough to approve and implement now — I want to acknowledge that there are many other suggestions for action that individuals and groups are discussing actively, many of which are also contemplated in the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. The themes of culture, opportunity for current and future colleagues and accountability also feature prominently in these suggestions, which I emphasize are both compelling and numerous. For example, additional initiatives our thoughtful colleagues have proposed for consideration include:

- Establishing a fellows program focused on bringing more diverse legal and business talent to our team at various levels;
- Increasing the number of participants in our Mentor Program and initiating formalized peer-to-peer career-focused discussions;
- Increasing accountability and clarifying how we can better measure and appropriately reflect diversity and inclusion performance by divisions and offices and individual leaders;
- Expanding methods for employees to express work preferences and professional development interests;
- Researching how procedures, such as job definition decisions, may be adjusted to increase diversity, particularly in management roles traditionally held by attorneys; and
- Highlighting diverse voices and themes in our internal and external communications programs.

Some of these ideas are excellent and moving them forward could be highly beneficial. However, doing so may require additional time and resources to consider, research, clarify, design, approve formally, fund or implement them. In that regard, we will discuss proposed changes as appropriate with NTEU and we will continue to work with organizations such as OMWI, OHR, OEEEO, the Diversity Council, and others to make our diversity-related initiatives strategically sound and mutually reinforcing. Those efforts are crucial; our goal is that they continue in parallel, not in series, with implementing the near-term objectives listed above.

In closing, I emphasize that the near-term actions listed above are the next, positive steps in our efforts to promote continued, daily progress in the short term, even as we consider many additional proposals

and work more generally to implement our Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. In the face of many challenges, I believe that we are planting these seeds of progress in fertile ground due to the caring, purposeful and positive engagement of so many throughout the Commission and the hard work over time by our colleagues in OMWI, the Diversity Council, the EAGs, NTEU and others. I encourage you to engage in the dialogue surrounding these efforts, to reach out to these organizations and to consider how you can support the themes discussed here through your role in the Commission. You may also share your ideas by emailing diversity@sec.gov.

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