



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

October 21, 2010

The Honorable Olympia J. Snowe  
United States Senate  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Snowe:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's technical and engineering resources.

The Commission's immediate human capital needs include economists, econometricians, engineers, technologists and others with experience and knowledge to support the complex and unprecedented data-driven and fact-based mission the Commission must accomplish over the coming months and years. Attracting and maintaining engineering and technical expertise are important operational issues for the success of the FCC's mission.

The Commission shares your concerns and interest in ensuring that it has the necessary resources to handle the wide array of complex issues before it. While the number of engineers at the agency has remained relatively constant over the past five years – 268 in 2006 and 269 today – part of my reform agenda has been to make the Commission a model of excellence in government, and includes increasing our engineering and technical expertise.

To this end, the Commission recently sought and received approval from Congress to use unused funds from previous fiscal years to accelerate the hiring of new staff with critical expertise to support implementation of the National Broadband Plan. Additionally, the Commission sought and received approval from the Office of Personnel Management to use Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) to reshape the Commission to meet critical hiring needs. Since receiving these approvals, the agency has begun recruiting almost a dozen new engineers and expects that there will be additional opportunities gained to make new hires as a result of employees volunteering for the benefit of early retirement. Through this action, the Commission then can continue to replenish its work force with additional new skills that will help meet the immediate and future needs of the FCC.

The Commission employs a broad range of recruiting methods to attract technical talent, including periodic participation in recruiting events organized by the Office of Personnel Management on college campuses. As part of its program to recruit and retain engineers, the Commission also offers many training and career development opportunities. The Commission reimburses engineers for graduate level courses taken at accredited universities to obtain Masters Degrees in engineering disciplines, and it partners with George Washington University's Engineering department to provide in-house Master's level courses to its engineers. While the in-

house courses are held at the FCC's headquarters in Washington, DC, engineers at the FCC's field office locations can participate via video conference. The Commission also offers a wide range of in-house training on engineering topics so staff can stay informed on cutting edge issues, such as emerging wireless and spectrum management technologies. These career development opportunities have evolved over time and have assisted the Commission in attracting and retaining talented engineers over the past several years.

In your letter, you also requested information about the average number of engineering cooperative students or interns compared to the number of legal interns the Commission has annually. While the Commission engages a range of unpaid and a small number of paid undergraduate, graduate, and legal interns, the intern program does not lead to permanent employment. Instead, the Commission relies predominately on its Engineers in Training (EIT) Program to recruit entry-level engineers. This program provides training and career development for entry-level engineers. During the past four fiscal years, the FCC has hired 63 engineers, 46 of whom were hired through the EIT Program. In contrast, the FCC's Honors Attorney Program hired 13 entry-level attorneys during the same time frame.

Thank you again for your continued interest in these issues and for your support of the Commission's efforts to build for the future. I hope this response answers your questions and addresses any concerns you may have about the Commission's plans for the future of its technical work force. Please let me know if you have any further questions or would like to discuss these issues further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julius Genachowski', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Julius Genachowski