

ENCOURAGING A CREATIVE ENVIRONMENT

This, then, is the Federal personnel system as it applies to scientists and engineers in most departments and agencies—a group of principles, policies, and procedures within which laboratory directors can shape the particular environment they seek for their staffs in the light of the missions and goals assigned to the organization.

The development of an environment to foster high productivity and innovation is a large subject, beyond the scope of this pamphlet, and one abounding in subtleties that go far beyond adequate salary rates or generous vacation time. But many personnel factors, as well as other management factors such as the extent to which authority is delegated to the laboratory director, undoubtedly enter into this challenging and complex subject.

Some factors such as those related to pay policies and career development opportunities are mentioned elsewhere in this pamphlet. Among others that should be considered are the following:

- Attendance at conferences of professional societies.
- Giving credit lines or otherwise acknowledging contributors to publications of the laboratory.
- Freedom to publish, teach, or lecture outside of duty hours.
- Scheduling of vacation time. (One definite advantage of Federal employment is that normally vacations do not have to be taken only at certain seasons when an entire operation shuts down.)
- Flexibility in hours of work. (Agency heads have the discretion to authorize variations in the standard 40-hour week. Thus, staff members may work on a "first 40 hours" basis—for example, working late one evening on an experiment and coming in late the next day; or they may work a 40-hour week scheduled to allow them to attend classes during the normal workday when the training is not authorized under provisions of law.)
- Position titles adapted to the profession. (Official titles such as "Supervisory Physicist" are used for personnel and payroll purposes, but agency heads may authorize more professionally meaningful titles for publication on papers, correspondence, etc. Examples are "Member of Technical Staff," "Research Associate," or "Senior Scientist.")

Granted, the laboratory director, like all Federal managers, has to work within a framework of statutes, Commission regulations, and internal agency instructions. Nevertheless, there are real flexibilities built into the framework for personnel management, flexibilities that are not always fully known and less often fully utilized. This pamphlet is designed to help the science and engineering manager keep in mind the whole range of special resources available to him in the difficult task of developing a good laboratory environment.