

EVALUATION OF THE EPA INTERN PROGRAM

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Human Resources and Organizational Services
Office of Planning, Analysis, and Accountability
Washington, DC 20460

Prepared by:

Industrial Economics, Incorporated
2067 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 1997, the EPA Intern Program (EIP) is a two-year entry-level employment and development program that seeks to recruit high potential employees to become the next generation of EPA leaders. The program strives to recruit a pool of diverse, high-quality candidates drawn from a variety of academic disciplines. EPA Interns are hired as full-time EPA employees. For the two years they are in the EIP, Interns are assigned to a Headquarters or Regional office (the Intern's "home office"). During this period, Interns also participate in several rotational assignments to obtain experiences outside of their initial placement. These rotations include time at both headquarters and time in regional offices. In addition, Interns receive career development assistance, including the opportunity to participate in three conferences throughout the two year period: an orientation conference, a field study, and a final closing conference.

EPA is in the process of evaluating its human capital programs and with five classes of Interns hired, it seems an appropriate time to evaluate the effectiveness of the Intern program. To oversee the evaluation, EPA established a workgroup comprised of representatives from the Office of Human Resources and Organizational Services (OHROS), the Office of Planning, Analysis, and Accountability (OPAA), regional offices, current and former Interns, and Intern managers. The workgroup included Agency evaluation experts as well as individuals familiar with the EIP. Following several meetings, the workgroup identified three major objectives for the evaluation. Specifically, the evaluation is intended to answer the following questions:

- Is the EIP meeting its identified goals and objectives?
- What is the level of satisfaction among participants?
- Are there lessons learned or recommendations for improving the program?

The workgroup conducted focus groups with Interns and managers and also interviewed senior managers to help guide the focus of the evaluation. Employing this utilization-focused approach, the workgroup involved those who would be charged with implementing any recommendations in the evaluation design. To evaluate whether the EIP was meeting its goals and objectives, the workgroup developed a set of comprehensive evaluation questions that focused on the program's goals. The key, overarching evaluation questions, and their relation to the overall program goals, are described in the table below.

EPA Intern Program Goals and Key Evaluation Questions	
Goals	Evaluation Questions
Recruit a group of high potential, diverse employees to be the next generation of EPA leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How diverse are EPA Interns and how does this diversity compare to other similar groups of employees, like Outstanding Scholars or the Presidential Management Interns (PMIs)? To the Agency as a whole?• What level of education have EPA Interns achieved and how does this compare to Agency employees at a similar level?• How are EPA Interns recruited? How does the hiring process work?

EPA Intern Program Goals and Key Evaluation Questions	
Goals	Evaluation Questions
Clearly link the EPA Intern Program to other aspects of the Agency's Workforce Development Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the EPA Interns' educational backgrounds? • What are the skills and strengths of incoming EPA Interns and EIP graduates and how do these compare to Agency employees at a similar level? Are there any skills or qualifications that are missing? • After graduating from the program, are EPA Interns staying at the Agency? Why or why not? And how does this compare to other groups of employees, like the Outstanding Scholars or PMIs?
Help jump-start Intern's careers and develop their potential for advancement at EPA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the benefits of the EIP's career development tools, including participating in class conferences and rotations and learning from mentors? • Are Interns and their managers getting the assistance and guidance they require? • Is the EIP experience living up to Interns' expectations?

To answer these questions, the evaluation team relied upon surveys sent to former and current Interns and managers as well as interviews with selected managers and Interns. In addition, the team collected and reviewed available demographic data on the Interns. In analyzing this data, the workgroup also focused on the two other objectives of the evaluation, determining whether EPA Interns and hiring offices are satisfied with the program and developing lessons learned and recommendations for improving the program. The evaluation team identified findings and conclusions for the following categories:

- Intern demographics;
- Recruitment, application, and hiring;
- Activities during the internship, including rotations, training, conferences, and other career development efforts; and
- After the internship is finished.

As described in detail in the report, the EIP does seem to be meeting its goals. Moreover, the evaluation results indicate that Interns and managers alike support and endorse the program. These successes notwithstanding, the evaluation did identify a number of opportunities for improving the program. Some of the key findings for each section are noted below, and a list of major recommendations for the program to consider follows.

Demographics

- EPA Interns are more ethnically diverse than Presidential Management Interns (PMIs) and other recent Outstanding Scholar hires.
- EPA hired a higher proportion of employees with disabilities and veteran status through the EIP than through either the PMI or Outstanding Scholar programs.

Recruitment, application, and hiring

- EPA Interns and Intern managers most frequently hear about the EIP through EPA employees. In addition, nearly one third (22 respondents) of the current and former EPA Interns learned of the program from government employment websites and 20 percent (16 respondents) from Program recruiting efforts.
- EPA Intern Managers believe that the selection process for EPA Interns is more rigorous than for other agency applicants. Overall, managers responding to the survey believe that the EPA Intern Program attracts higher quality candidates than standard entry-level positions.
- EPA Intern Managers generally believe that the interview process is well-run. However, 32 percent (seven respondents) noted that the level of effort expended for the process was too high.
- Interns' expectations about what their EIP experience would provide were greatly influenced by what they learned during the interview process.
- Interns understand the interview and selection processes, but do not necessarily feel they are kept informed about their progress throughout the process.

During the Internship

Class Conferences

- Overall, EPA Interns found the field study and orientation conferences to be valuable experiences.
- The class conferences do not seem to be readily accessible to Interns with disabilities.
- The most helpful aspect of the orientation conference for incoming EPA Interns is the opportunity to meet other Interns. EPA Interns also reported that the conference provided a good overview of the EIP and the Agency.
- Interns gain experience in local environmental issues like environmental justice during the field study. By working with other EPA Interns, respondents also noted that they worked as part of a team and appreciated the opportunity to interact with other Interns.
- As compared with the orientation conference and field study, a smaller proportion of the Interns identified a specific benefit associated with attending the closing conference. However, more than 50 percent of the group benefitted from the training and guidance offered during the conference.

Rotations

- Overall, Interns believe that rotations are very valuable experiences, particularly for meeting staff in other EPA offices and gaining a better understanding of the Agency and the diverse work performed by EPA.
- Interns generally believe that their rotations are of appropriate length and that there are a sufficient number of rotations. However, Interns responses also suggest that the number of rotations each Intern finds appropriate differs.
- Both Interns and managers believe that considering an individual Intern's interests and career goals is crucial in locating a valuable rotational assignment. Some Interns report that

where Interns do not have a specific task or goal in mind, rotational experiences do not effectively support their development.

Training and Guidance Received

- Interns report varying levels of satisfaction with the amount of training they received. Approximately 80 percent (57 respondents) of Interns have received training funded by their home office and nearly half (34 respondents) of the EPA Interns received training funded by the EIP.
- Fifty-eight percent (41 respondents) of EPA Interns responding to the survey note that the guidance and support they received from the EPA Intern program was below their expectations.
- Interns consistently report that home office and rotational managers are a useful source of information and provide guidance concerning a wide range of issues.
- Most survey respondents report having a mentor. Responses from Interviewees suggest that Interns who gradually developed a relationship with a mentor found these relationships more valuable than having an individual assigned to be their mentor.

After the Internship

- Managers generally believe that EPA Interns are better qualified than other employees who have been at the Agency for a similar period of time.
- Intern interviewees believed the EIP prepared them well for work at the Agency and all said they would recommend the EIP to a friend.
- Most Interns believe they will stay with the Agency for at least several years beyond their EPA Intern experience. Survey results indicate that most the former Interns who continue to work at EPA have remained in their original home office.
- The rate of resignation among EPA Interns is much lower than for other Outstanding Scholars and PMIs.

Overall Recommendations

Recruiting, Application, and Hiring

- EIP should encourage the Interns' future supervisors to participate in the interview conference.
- Participating offices should also clearly articulate the position that is available and the responsibilities and tasks associated with that position.
- The EIP should provide some additional guidance, explanations, and updates on the selection and placement process.

During the Intern Program

- Since one goal of the EPA Intern Program is to recruit and hire people with disabilities, the EIP program needs to work with the appropriate AA/RAships to ensure Interns with disabilities have the resources they require in their home offices, during rotations, and at the

class conferences.

- Work with EPA Interns and their managers to identify opportunities to offer training that meet specific needs, particularly at the closing conference.
- While Interns note that it is important to identify their own rotations, some additional guidance would be beneficial. For example, Interns suggest that the EIP develop a database where Interns can enter information about positive or negative rotation experiences. This information would be useful for other Interns as they try to identify assignments. Others recommend developing a website or database where managers could post rotation opportunities that are available to EPA Interns. The EIP should also encourage Interns to be proactive in identifying and building relationships with mentors at all levels of the Agency.
- Supervisors need to work closely with Interns to ensure that appropriate and effective mentors are assigned to them.

I. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

A. Background and Evaluation Objectives

Established in 1997, the EPA Intern Program (EIP) is a two-year entry-level employment and development program that seeks to recruit high potential employees to become the next generation of EPA leaders. The program strives to recruit a pool of diverse, high-quality candidates drawn from a variety of academic disciplines. The EIP grew out of the Agency's 1997 Diversity Action Plan and is part of EPA's Workforce Development Strategy.

EIP Goals

- ' Recruit a group of high potential, diverse employees to be the next generation of EPA leaders.
- ' Clearly link the EPA Intern Program to other aspects of the Agency's Workforce Development Strategy.
- ' Help jump-start Intern's careers and develop their potential for advancement at EPA.

EPA Interns are hired as full-time EPA employees. For the two years they are in the EIP, Interns are assigned to a Headquarters program office or a Regional office (referred to as Assistant Administrator/Regional Administratorships or AA/RAships). Interns assigned to Regional offices (RAships) are also generally assigned to a particular office within the Region (e.g., the Air Office within Region 9). This initial assignment is referred to as the Intern's "home office." During their two years in the EIP, Interns also participate in several rotational assignments to obtain experiences outside of this initial placement. These rotations include time at both headquarters and regional offices. The EIP also provides Interns with special programs including a week-long orientation conference, a week-long field studies conference, and a week-long Closing Conference. These conferences seek to build familiarity with EPA and environmental issues; to facilitate networking between Interns; and to build team, interpersonal, and leadership skills. Interns are encouraged to create Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and use them as roadmaps for the two-year internship experience. Interns are also encouraged to identify mentors from all levels of the agency to help them refine their IDPs.

The EIP is managed by the EPA Institute for Individual and Organizational Excellence, which is located in the Office of Human Resources and Organizational Services (OHROS). Since the program's inception, the EIP has been managed with only two and one half full-time employees (FTEs). Recently, the number of EIP staff has been increased to three FTEs. These staff support approximately 25 Interns hired by the Agency each year. While in the EPA Intern Program, the FTE for these 25 Interns are held by OHROS and funded by the EIP. As a result, these Interns are referred to as "centrally funded Interns." AA/RAships may also elect to hire additional, office-funded Interns through the program. Each year, more and more offices choose to "buy-in" to the

program. The EIP Class of 2002 has over 41 members, bringing the total hired since 1998 to 152 Interns.

EPA is in the process of evaluating its human capital programs and with five classes of Interns hired, it seems an appropriate time to evaluate the effectiveness of the Intern program. To evaluate the program, the EIP received funding from the Office of Planning, Analysis, and Accountability (OPAA) and the Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation (OPEI), through the “Improving Results Competition,” an Agency-wide competition to conduct program evaluations. To oversee the evaluation, EPA established a workgroup comprised of representatives from OHROS, OPAA, regional offices, current and former Interns, and Intern managers. The workgroup included Agency evaluation experts as well as individuals familiar with the EIP. Industrial Economics, Inc. (IEc) was hired, using the competition funds, to provide contractor support. For a list of the workgroup members, please see Appendix A. Following several meetings the workgroup identified three major objectives for the evaluation. Specifically, the evaluation is intended to answer the following questions:

- Is the EIP meeting its identified goals and objectives?
- What is the level of satisfaction among EPA Interns and Hiring Offices?
- Are there lessons learned or recommendations for improving the program?

The workgroup conducted a process evaluation to determine whether the program is meeting its goals. A process evaluation examines how the program is operating and to what extent program operation corresponds to design. In conducting this evaluation, the workgroup sought to examine program processes, monitor activities within the EIP, and assess how the actual processes and activities mirror the Program’s goals and intent.

B. Methodology

Framing the Evaluation

The main data collection consisted of surveys sent to former and current Interns and managers, as well as interviews with selected managers and Interns. Prior to developing and distributing these instruments, the evaluation workgroup took a number of steps to help define the scope and focus of the evaluation. The workgroup opted to conduct a utilization-focused evaluation, the objective of which is to gear the evaluation to “intended use by intended users.” In other words, the evaluation focuses on providing information that will be useful to those decision-makers who have the ability to apply the findings and recommendations that result from the evaluation.¹ With this concept in mind, the workgroup wanted to provide EIP and OHROS staff, senior managers, EPA Interns, and EPA Intern managers with an understanding of what aspects of the program are working well and how specific components of the program might be improved. Before beginning the evaluation, the workgroup met with stakeholders and completed a scoping analysis to ensure that the evaluation focused on the right questions. The workgroup distributed a preliminary survey via email to all current and former Interns and managers, conducted focus groups with a randomly

¹Michael Quinn Patton, *Utilization-Focused Evaluation (U-FE) Checklist*, January 2002.

selected set of Interns and managers, and interviewed several senior EPA managers familiar with the program in order to inform the evaluation process.

Email Survey

As a first step in this scoping process, the workgroup distributed an email survey to all current and former Interns (1998 - 2001 EIP classes)² and Intern managers still working at the Agency. In order to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act, the evaluation team involved only interns and managers still at EPA in this survey and other data collection efforts. The survey asked respondents to identify those areas of the program the evaluation should focus upon and why. A copy of the questions posed in this survey is included in Appendix A. The workgroup received 35 responses to the email survey and grouped the responses according to common themes. From these themes, the workgroup identified seven key phases of the program that respondents believed should be studied in the evaluation:

- Recruitment;
- Selection and placement;
- Class conferences;
- Developmental rotations;
- Integration;
- Ongoing program support; and
- After the Closing Conference.

Focus Groups

In order to flesh out the issues and concerns program stakeholders had raised regarding the seven key phases of the program, the workgroup conducted three focus groups. The first focus group included eight Interns from the classes of 1998 and 1999, the next included nine Interns from the classes of 2000 and 2001, and the final focus group consisted of five EPA Intern managers. Participants in the focus groups were selected randomly from the complete lists of Interns and managers.

Participants in the focus groups were assured that their comments and feedback would not be attributed to any individual and that they could speak candidly about their experiences. At the beginning of each focus group, participants were asked to rate the importance of each of the seven phases of the program. Based on the level of importance rating given to each phase, the facilitators guided the participants through a discussion of each phase. Participants were not asked specific questions and were simply asked to voice their concerns or comments about each phase. The evaluation team prepared summaries of all comments received, which are included in the analysis, and full write-ups of the focus groups are included in Appendix A.

²The 2002 Intern class had not yet started work when the survey was distributed.

Senior Management Interviews

While the workgroup wanted to focus the evaluation on the areas of concern to Interns and managers involved in the program, the group was also conscious of the need to ensure that the outcomes of the evaluation met the needs of the program's senior management. To this end, workgroup members conducted interviews with five senior managers using a semi-structured interview guide. The questionnaire asked about managers' experience with the EPA Intern Program, the areas and issues they would like to see addressed in the evaluation, and the type of information that would be helpful as they make decisions about the future of the EPA Intern Program. Both the interview guide and a list of interviewees is included in Appendix A.

The workgroup also interviewed EIP staff and a representative from EPA's human resources office located in Las Vegas (Team Vegas) to gain a more complete understanding of each aspect of the EPA Intern Program. These questions and a list of the interviewees is included in Appendix A.

Analyzing the Scoping Data

For analytical purposes, the information gathered from these three sources— the email survey, focus groups, and senior management interviews— was put into an MS Access Database. During a workgroup meeting, the group used reports summarizing the collected data to develop a set of key evaluation issues for each of the seven themes. For example, under the Recruitment phase, the workgroup determined that the evaluation should focus on the issues of diversity, timing, and expectations, among others. These issues were intended to capture the specific questions and concerns raised during the scoping process and to determine whether the EIP was meeting its goals and objectives. In analyzing the data collected to examine these phases, the workgroup also expected to focus on the two other objectives of the evaluation— determining whether EPA Interns and hiring offices are satisfied with the program and developing lessons learned and recommendations for improving the program. Following the workgroup meeting, individual team members elaborated on each evaluation issue by developing a set of key questions the evaluation should attempt to answer. In addition, workgroup members determined the appropriate data source for each evaluation question. The key, overarching evaluation questions and their relation to the overall program goals are described in the table below.

EPA Intern Program Goals and Key Evaluation Questions	
Goals	Evaluation Questions
Recruit a group of high potential, diverse employees to be the next generation of EPA leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How diverse are EPA Interns and how does this diversity compare to other similar groups of employees, like Outstanding Scholars or the Presidential Management Interns (PMIs)? To the Agency as a whole?• What level of education have EPA Interns achieved and how does this compare to Agency employees at a similar level?• How are EPA Interns recruited? How does the hiring process work?

EPA Intern Program Goals and Key Evaluation Questions	
Goals	Evaluation Questions
Clearly link the EPA Intern Program to other aspects of the Agency's Workforce Development Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the EPA Interns' educational backgrounds? • What are the skills and strengths of incoming EPA Interns and EIP graduates and how do these compare to Agency employees at a similar level? Are there any skills or qualifications that are missing? • After graduating from the program, are EPA Interns staying at the Agency? Why or why not? And how does this compare to other groups of employees, like the Outstanding Scholars or PMIs?
Help jump-start Intern's careers and develop their potential for advancement at EPA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the benefits of the EIP's career development tools, including participating in class conferences and rotations and learning from mentors? • Are Interns and their managers getting the assistance and guidance they require? • Is the EIP experience living up to Interns' expectations?

The workgroup developed the surveys and interview questionnaires to answer these and other questions. These efforts are described in detail in the following section.

Collecting Evaluation Data

As noted, the workgroup administered a survey to past and current EPA Interns and EPA Intern managers, collected demographic information from Team Vegas, and supplemented survey data with in-depth interviews with Interns, home office managers, and regional managers.

EPA Intern and Manager Surveys

The workgroup drafted two surveys, one for the EPA Interns and one for the Intern managers. The workgroup distributed the surveys to 102 managers and 134 Interns via email. The 30 manager surveys and 79 Intern surveys that were returned, reflecting response rates of 29 and 59 percent respectively, form the basis for the results discussed in later chapters.³ Copies of the surveys are included in Appendix B.

³One manager survey could not be compiled because it was returned after the survey results were analyzed. One Intern survey could not be compiled because the Intern completed a draft copy of the survey that did not conform to the final survey format.

Survey Statistics

- 102 manager surveys distributed
 - 30 manager surveys returned
 - 29 percent response rate
- 134 Intern surveys distributed
 - 79 Intern surveys returned
 - 59 percent response rate

Questionnaires for Interviews

In order to supplement the data collected from the surveys, the workgroup conducted telephone interviews with a sample of ten Interns, five based in headquarters and five based in regional offices, and with six managers, three from headquarters and three from regional offices.

Interview Statistics

- Five interviews with headquarters Interns
 - Two current Interns
 - Three former Interns
- Five interviews with regional Interns
 - Two current Interns
 - Three former Interns
- Three interviews with headquarters managers
- Three interviews with regional managers

Interviewees were selected using a purposive sampling methodology, that relies on the researcher's knowledge and understanding of the program to select the elements that they want to examine in their study. The workgroup used purposive sampling to seek out Interns and managers who would be able to provide thoughtful comments about their experience with the EIP. As a result, the interview participants may be more outspoken or self-motivated than Interns or managers as a whole. The questions posed to the Interns and managers are included in Appendix B.

Demographic Data

With the help of Team Vegas, the workgroup collected demographic information on all EPA Interns, PMIs, and Outstanding Scholars hired outside of the EIP, employed at EPA between 1998 and 2002. The evaluation team compiled this information to compare statistics including ethnic background and national origin, levels of education, and retention rates. The evaluation team also

compared these findings to information summarized in OHROS's Fiscal Year 2002 Semi-Annual Report on EPA's Workforce (May 2002).

C. Organization of the Report

Chapter 2 of the report includes a description of the demographic data collected from Team Vegas. Next, the report addresses the three major areas of our evaluation: the recruiting and hiring process is covered in Chapter 3, the EIP experience itself in Chapter 4, and issues related to time spent after the internship in Chapter 5. The final chapter of the report, Chapter 6, discusses our key findings and recommendations and answers the questions related to the objectives of the evaluation. Each chapter begins with a short description of the key evaluation questions relevant to that topic. Finally, all the surveys, questionnaires and related materials used in the evaluation are included in Appendices A, B, and C.

This report does not analyze the survey data with respect to statistical significance. Instead, it reports key survey findings, integrating them with important information gathered from interviews and focus groups to emphasize critical issues that this evaluation illuminated. Throughout the report, detailed information on the total number and percent of respondents is provided. For the purposes of this report, the term "several" refers to three or more respondents. When an opinion is held by more than half of respondents, the report refers to this group as the majority of the respondents.

II. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

A primary goal of the EPA Intern Program is to attract a diverse group of candidates with a range of academic backgrounds and with the potential to become the next generation of EPA leaders. As will be elaborated in subsequent sections, the EIP makes a concerted effort to reach diverse candidates and inform them of the opportunities available through the EPA Intern Program. To understand whether the EPA Intern Program is achieving its goals, the evaluation team compared demographic statistics of EPA Interns, Outstanding Scholars who are not EPA Interns, PMIs, and the EPA as a whole to illustrate:

- How diverse are EPA Interns and how does this diversity compare to other similar groups of employees? To the Agency as a whole?
- What level of education have EPA Interns achieved and how does this compare to Agency employees at a similar level?
- What are the EPA Interns' educational backgrounds?

Outstanding Scholars and the PMI program both serve as useful comparisons to the EIP because the entry requirements or, in the case of the PMIs, the content of the program is similar. Outstanding Scholar is a hiring authority for entry-level employees with impressive undergraduate academic records, applicants must have a GPA of at least a 3.45 or have graduated in the top ten percent of their classes. While EPA Interns may also be hired using other hiring authorities, EPA Interns are frequently hired using the Outstanding Scholar hiring authority.⁴ The pool of Outstanding Scholars serves as a good comparison to EPA Interns because of the similar application requirements. The application requirements for the PMI program are, however, slightly different. Applicants must have an advanced degree and must also be nominated by a college or university. While the entry requirements differ, the content of the PMI program is similar to the EIP in several ways. PMIs attend orientation and graduation programs, develop IDPs, receive formal training during their time in the program, and participate in at least one rotational assignment. Therefore, the PMI program also serves as a helpful comparison.

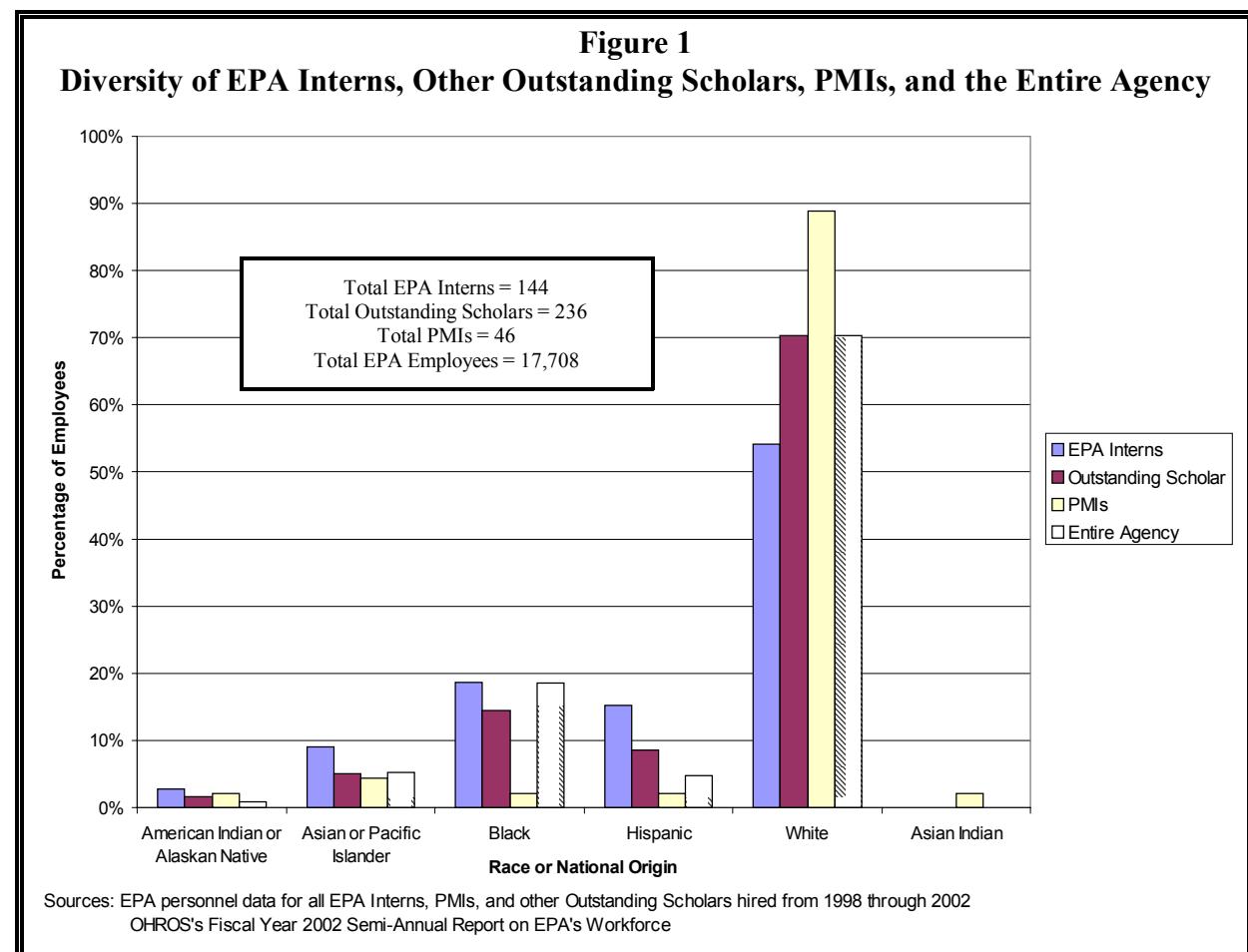
In comparing demographic data, the workgroup collected personnel data for all EPA Interns hired between 1998 and 2002, even those who are no longer employed at EPA. The workgroup's other data collection efforts (e.g., surveys and interviews) focus on only those EPA Interns that are still employed by the Agency. For the purposes of comparison, the workgroup also collected personnel data for all PMIs and Outstanding Scholars hired outside of the EIP who were hired between 1998 and 2002. All personnel records were kept anonymous, and the workgroup analyzed the information in aggregate. Aggregate EPA data was obtained by examining OHROS's "Fiscal Year 2002 Semi-Annual Report on EPA's Workforce." The results of this examination are presented below.

⁴For more detailed information on the hiring authorities used by the EIP, please see the "Recruiting Candidates for the EPA Intern Program Section."

A. Demographic Findings

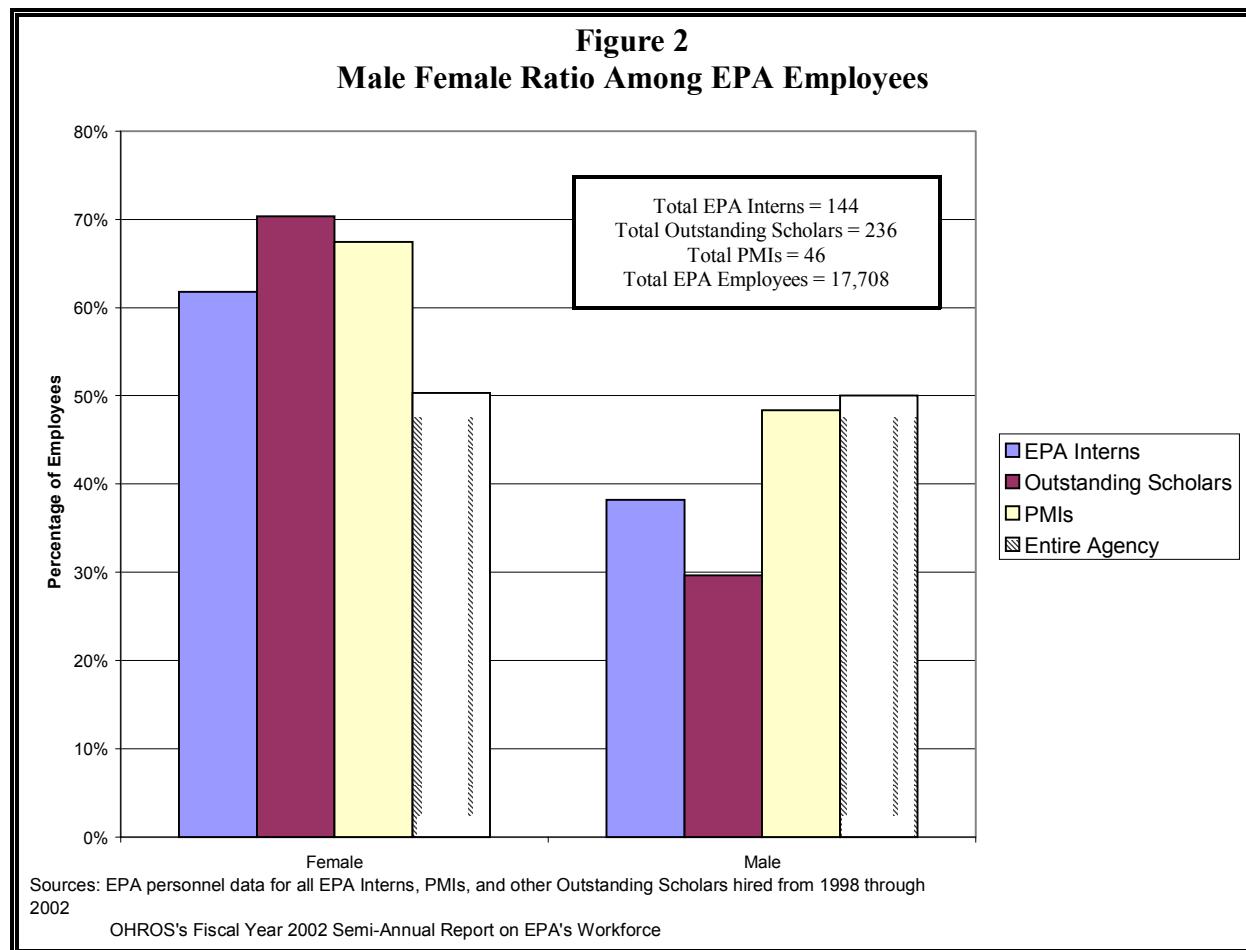
- **EPA Interns are more ethnically diverse than PMIs and other recent Outstanding Scholars hired.**

Since 1998, the EPA has hired a higher percentage of Black, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Natives, or Asian and Pacific Islanders through the Intern Program than through other comparable hiring mechanisms. While 89 percent (40 program participants) of the PMIs hired between 1998 and 2002 and 70 percent (166 hires) of non-EPA Intern Outstanding Scholars hired over the same time period are White, just over half, 54 percent (78 program participants), of EPA Interns are White. EPA Interns are also considerably more diverse than the Agency's workforce as a whole. In 2002, 70 percent (12,457 EPA employees) of the EPA workforce was white, as compared to only 54 percent of the EPA Interns hired between 1998 and 2002. Figure 1 presents these findings graphically.



- All three entry level hiring programs hire significantly more females than males. However, the Agency as a whole has approximately equal percentages of both sexes.**

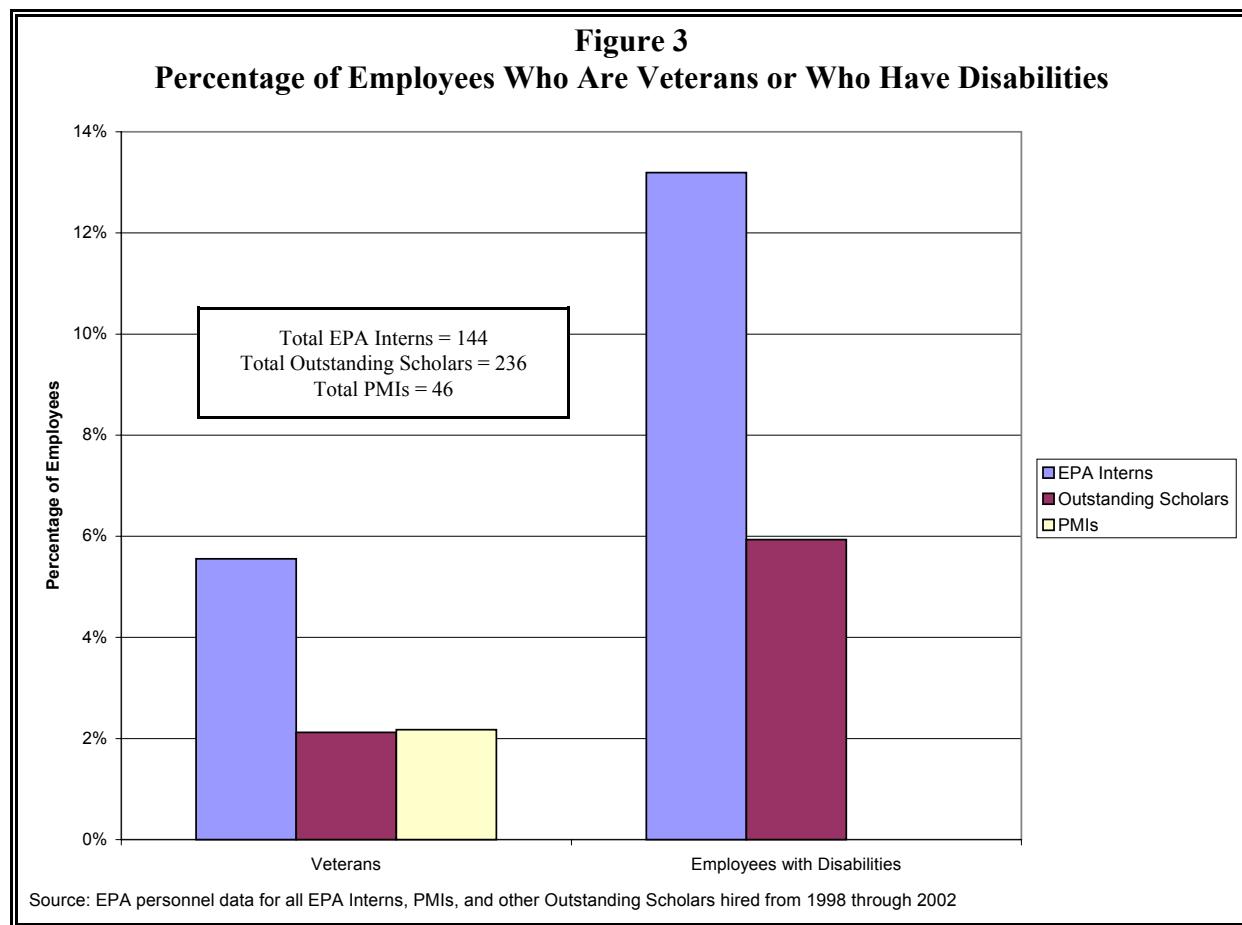
Seventy percent of the Outstanding Scholars hired outside of the EPA Intern Program since 1998 are female. Females also make up the majority of PMIs and EPA Interns, though by slightly smaller margins, 67 percent (32 hires) and 62 percent (89 hires) respectively. Since 1998, all three programs have hired significantly higher percentages of females than the Agency as a whole. The breakdown of employees is presented in Figure 2.



- EPA hired a higher proportion of employees with disabilities and veteran status through the EIP than through either the PMI program or Outstanding Scholar hiring authority.**

The EIP makes a concerted effort to attract veterans and candidates with reported disabilities. As a result of these efforts, significantly more individuals who are veterans or who have reported

disabilities are hired as EPA Interns compared to the other programs.⁵ While nearly 13 percent (19 program participants) of EPA Interns hired between 1998 and 2002 have reported disabilities, only six percent (14 hires) of individuals hired as Outstanding Scholars over the same time period have reported disabilities, and no individuals with reported disabilities have been hired as a PMI between 1998 and 2002. Similarly, six percent of EPA Interns hired (eight program participants) are veterans while two percent of Outstanding Scholars (five hires) and two percent (one program participant) of PMI program participants hired between 1998 and 2002 are veterans. These statistics are presented in Figure 3.

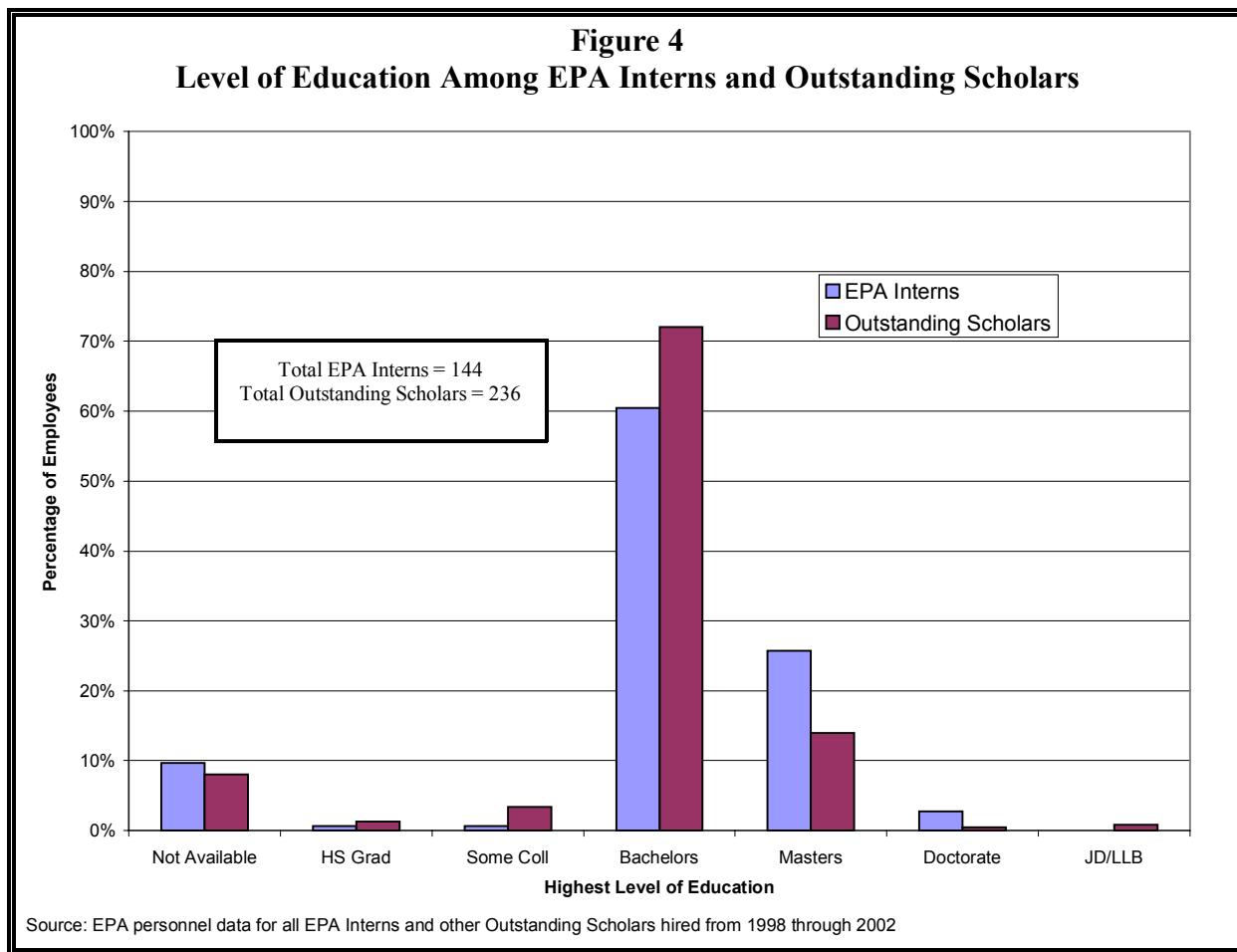


- **The large majority of both EPA Interns and Outstanding Scholars have completed at least a bachelors degree. However, more EPA Interns have advanced degrees than other Outstanding Scholars.**

The PMI program requires its participants to have completed an advanced degree; as a result, their level of education is not comparable to EPA Interns. However, EPA Interns can be compared

⁵For the purposes of this analysis, the workgroup used personnel data to identify employees with targeted (“TARG”) or other disabilities (“OTHD”).

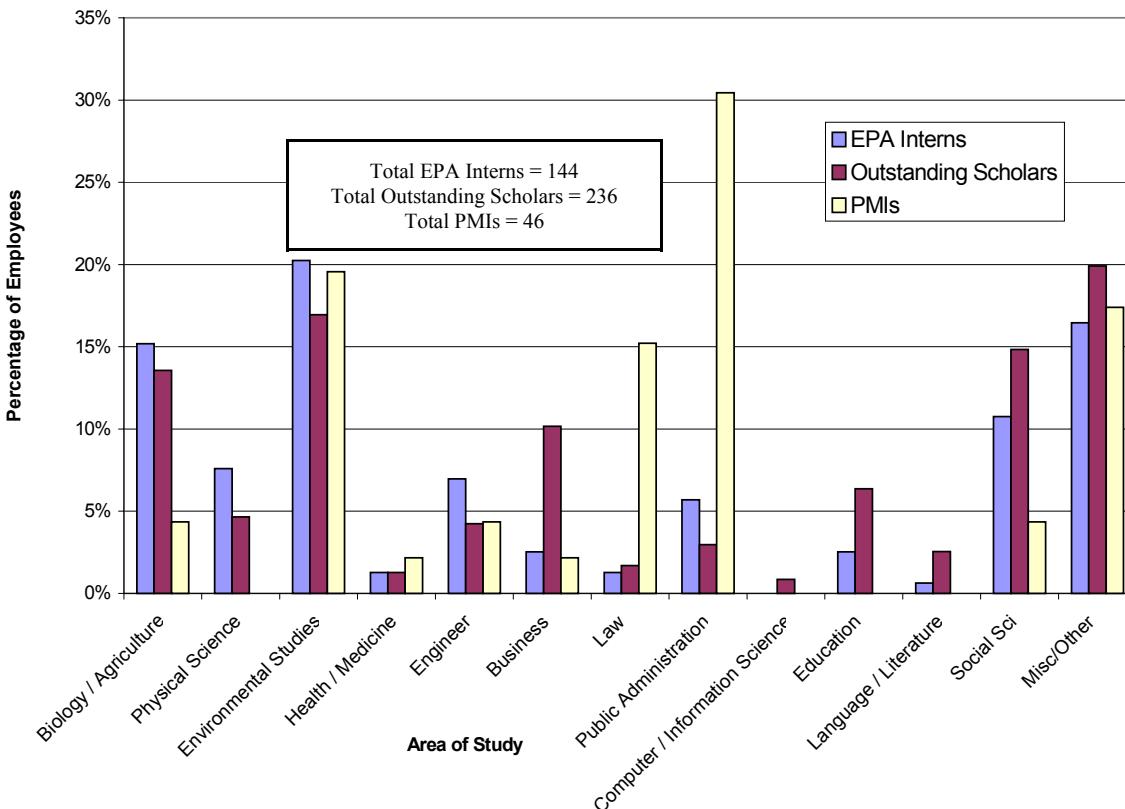
to other Outstanding Scholars hired by the Agency. The majority of both groups of employees have a bachelors degree. Sixty percent (87 program participants) of EPA Interns and 72 percent (170 hires) of other Outstanding Scholars hired between 1998 and 2002 have completed a bachelors, but have not completed an advanced degree. A slightly higher percentage of EPA Interns have completed an advanced degree. Twenty-six percent (37 program participants) of EPA Interns have received a masters degree compared with only 14 percent (33 hires) of Outstanding Scholars (See Figure 4).



- **EPA Interns, other Outstanding Scholars, and PMIs hired over the last five years have a wide range of educational backgrounds.**

The data demonstrate that EPA Interns, PMIs, and Outstanding Scholars have diverse interests and training. Employees' areas of study or major are classified into a range of interest areas in the Agency's personnel data. No more than 30 percent of the employees in any one group has the same major. EPA Interns most frequently major in environmental studies (20 percent or 32 program participants), biology and agriculture (15 percent or 24 program participants), or an area classified in the miscellaneous/other category (16 percent or 26 program participants). Other Outstanding Scholars have similar areas of concentration. Figure 5 illustrates these findings.

Figure 5
Area of Study Among EPA Interns, Outstanding Scholars, and PMIs



Source: EPA personnel data for all EPA Interns, PMIs, and other Outstanding Scholars hired from 1998 through 2002

B. C o n c l u s i o n s **R e c o m m e n d a t i o n s f r o m D e m o g r a p h i c I n f o r m a t i o n**

- **The EPA Intern Program is successfully hiring a diverse workforce. In fact, the EPA Interns are considerably more diverse than those hired under similar programs, and in the Agency as a whole.**

The EIP seems to be achieving its goal of recruiting and hiring a diverse workforce. There are a higher percentage of American Indian or Alaskan Natives, Asian or Pacific Islanders, Black, and Hispanic employees hired as EPA Interns than hired as PMIs or other Outstanding Scholars. This diversity in hiring improves the diversity of the Agency as a whole. Similarly, the EPA Intern Program hires significantly more veterans and employees with disabilities than other comparable programs.

- **Overall, the EPA Intern Program hires a slightly more highly educated workforce than the Agency hires through the Outstanding Scholar hiring authority.**

While the majority of EPA Interns and Outstanding Scholars have received only a bachelors degree, a higher percentage of EPA Interns have also completed a masters or doctorate degree. The EPA Intern Program may be attracting more highly qualified candidates because of the additional flexibility and opportunities available to EPA Interns.

III. RECRUITMENT, APPLICATION, AND HIRING

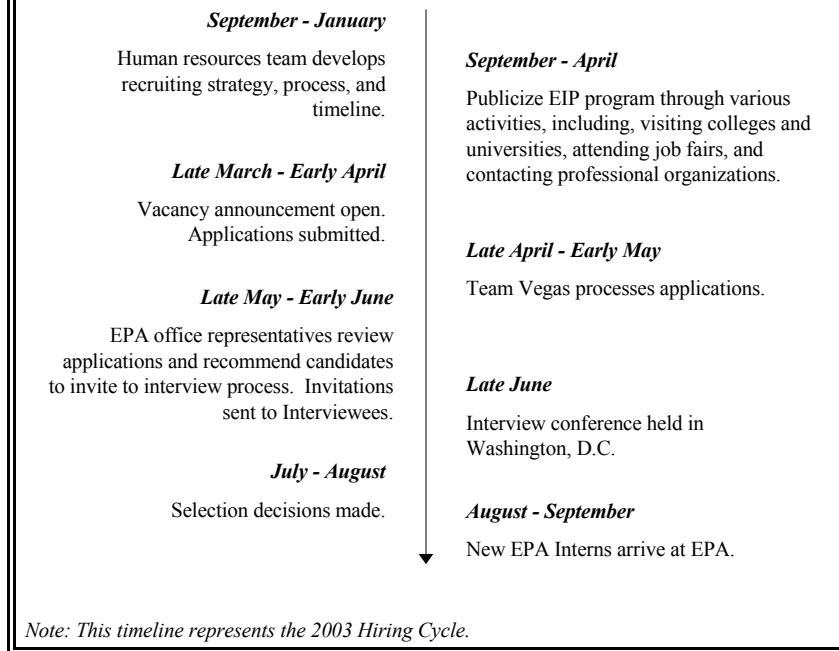
The EPA Intern Program hires both recent graduates and individuals with several years of work experience. To determine whether the process the EIP uses to recruit and select these individuals is meeting the program's goals, the workgroup sought to answer:

- How are EPA Interns recruited?
- What are the skills and strengths of incoming EPA Interns? Are there any skills that are missing?
- Is the EIP living up to Interns' expectations?

During data collection, many Interns, managers, and senior staff had questions or concerns about how the recruitment, application, and hiring process works. As a result, the workgroup also collected information about the current process and suggestions stakeholders provided for how it could be improved.

To recruit applicants, the EIP publicizes the program at colleges and universities as well as through national organizations and career fairs. The candidates interested in joining the EPA Intern program must complete an extensive application and participate in a week-long interview conference. Following this process, managers in the offices wishing to hire an Intern select their top candidates, and EIP and human resources staff extend offers to the applicants. To understand how this process is designed, the evaluation team interviewed program stakeholders and reviewed relevant written materials. The evaluation team also surveyed and interviewed EPA Interns and managers to understand how the process functions in practice and whether stakeholders believe the current process is effectively recruiting diverse and qualified candidates, as well as selecting and placing these candidates in relevant positions at EPA. A timeline demonstrating the recruitment, application, and hiring process is presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6
Timeline of Recruitment, Application, and Hiring Process



A. Recruiting Candidates for the EPA Intern Program

The EPA Intern Program strives to recruit a diverse pool of high-quality candidates. As a result, Program staff make a special effort to target and conduct outreach with students with disabilities and diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. To meet this goal, Program staff have worked with national groups such as the Office of Civil Rights to identify minority-serving organizations. These organizations include the President's Council on People with Disabilities, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), Tribal Colleges, and various professional and student organizations. During the recruiting process, Program staff identify targeted colleges and universities and attend national recruiting fairs and conferences held by minority-serving organizations. EIP staff inform managers in Regional EPA offices about upcoming recruiting events, and managers assist EIP with their recruitment efforts. EIP staff collect contact information from interested candidates during these fairs and conferences. Prior to publishing the vacancy announcement, EIP sends details about the application process to these contacts.

The EIP Office attends certain events each year such as the events held by American Indian Science and Engineering Society and the National Hispanic Environmental Conference. In addition, EIP staff partner with Regional managers to attend other events according to the program's recruiting goals. EIP staff attended 17 career conferences or college/university events to recruit the 2000 Intern class and 18 events for the 2001 class. EIP codes data collected at these fairs into its database and contacts individuals about the job announcement. EIP increased the number of events they attended to recruit the classes of 2002 and 2003; EIP staff attended 24 events in the 2002 hiring cycle and 28 events to recruit the 2003 class. While cost information is not available for each year, the EIP reports spending \$39,400 on travel and registration fees in recruiting the class of 2002. Costs decreased the next year; the EIP estimates that the Office spent \$19,390 on travel and registration fees for the 2003 class.⁶

In addition to its own recruitment efforts, the Program coordinates with other organizations to publicize the program more widely. For example, the Program coordinates with academic institutions, the President's Workforce Recruitment Program, and Hispanic Employment Program Managers to publicize the opportunities available through the EPA Intern Program. In addition, Program staff work with current Interns and Intern managers to encourage these stakeholders to publicize the program and, where possible, attend recruiting events.

In support of these recruitment efforts, the Program works with Team Vegas to draft the vacancy announcements for the program. The EPA Intern Program currently uses seven hiring authorities that are illustrated in Figure 7. The vacancy announcements and a program flyer are distributed in advance to the recruitment mailing list comprised of individuals identified through job fairs, conferences, and college visits as well as potential candidates on mailing lists obtained

⁶Information provided by EIP staff: *EPA Intern Program Class of 2000 Job Fair Log Sheet*, *EPA Intern Program Class of 2001 Proposed Recruitment Events/Conferences* (November 2, 2000), *EPA Intern Program 2002 Outreach Travel Log* (April 30, 2003), and *EPA Intern Program 2003 Outreach Travel Log* (May 1, 2003).

from partner organizations. Shortly afterwards, the announcements are made available on the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) USAJobs website and, beginning in 2000, on the EZHire website.

Figure 7
Hiring Authorities Used by The EPA Intern Program
1998 - 2003

Hiring Authority	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
* Competitive Examining Authority: The traditional method to enter Federal service is by appointment through the competitive examining process. Because of a 1995 amendment to 5 U.S.C. 1104, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management delegates authority to agencies to examine for all their positions (except for administrative law judges). Jobs announced under this process are open to the public.	X					
* Administrative Careers with America: Administrative Careers With America (ACWA) is a recruitment source or examination program available through OPM. ACWA program provides for entry-level hiring for administrative occupations. The program covers positions found in such fields as Health, Safety and Environment; Writing and Public Information; Business, Finance and Management; Law Enforcement; Personnel, Administration and Computer Operations; etc.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Outstanding Scholar: The Outstanding Scholar Program is a special hiring authority established to be used as a supplement to competitive examining for some entry-level positions. Agencies may hire directly, without regard to lists of eligibles established through competitive examining procedures, for those college graduates who obtained a grade point average of 3.45 or higher on a 4.0 scale for all undergraduate courses completed toward a baccalaureate degree or who stand in the upper 10 percent of their graduating class. Individuals meeting the outstanding scholar eligibility criteria must also meet qualification requirements for the position.	X	X	X	X	X	X
* Federal Career Intern Program: The Federal Career Intern Program is designed to help agencies recruit and attract exceptional individuals into a variety of occupations. It was created under Executive Order 13162, and is intended for entry level positions. In general, individuals are appointed to a two-year internship. Upon successful completion of the internships, the interns may be eligible for permanent placement within an agency.					X	X

Figure 7
Hiring Authorities Used by The EPA Intern Program
1998 - 2003

Hiring Authority	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Schedule A: This program is designed to help qualified people with disabilities obtain employment in positions consistent with their level of skills and abilities. Persons may be appointed if (1) they have already demonstrated their ability to perform the position duties satisfactorily on a temporary trial appointment or (2) they have been certified by counselors of State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies or the Department of Veterans Affairs as likely to succeed in the performance of the position duties. After completing two years of satisfactory performance, employees may be converted to appointments in the competitive service.	X	X	X	X	X	X
30% Disabled Veterans Hiring Authority: Certification from the Department of Veterans Affairs that the person has a service-connected disability of 30% or more. 30% disable veterans are hired under a temporary appointment. Agency may then convert the employee to a permanent career-conditional appointment.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Peacecorp Vista Americacorp: Persons participating in these program may be hired within one year of completing qualifying services. Individuals are required to submit certification of their service.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Notes:						
* Indicates that the higher authority is subject to veterans preference. By law, veterans who are disabled or who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during certain specified time periods or in military campaigns are entitled to preference over nonveterans both in hiring from competitive lists of eligibles and in retention during reductions in force.						
Sources:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation with Alfredo Torres, Team Vegas, 8/8/03. • U.S. Office of Personnel Management Website, "Primary Appointing Authorities for Career and Career-Conditional Appointments," http://www.opm.gov/employ/html/sroa2.htm#Competitve%20Examining. Viewed 8/4/03. • U.S. Office of Personnel Management Website, "A Manager's Toolkit for Hispanic Recruitment: Hiring Authorities & Programs," http://www.epa.gov/hispanicoutreach/projects/5programs.html. Viewed 8/4/03. • U.S. Office of Personnel Management Website, "Federal Career Intern Program," http://www.opm.gov/careerintern/index.htm. Viewed 8/4/03. • U.S. Office of Personnel Management, USA Jobs Website, "Veterans Preference," http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei3.asp. Viewed 8/4/03. • U.S. Department of the Interior Website, "Personnel Manager: Administrative Careers with America," http://www.doi.gov/hrm/pmanager/st4k.html. Viewed 8/4/03. 						

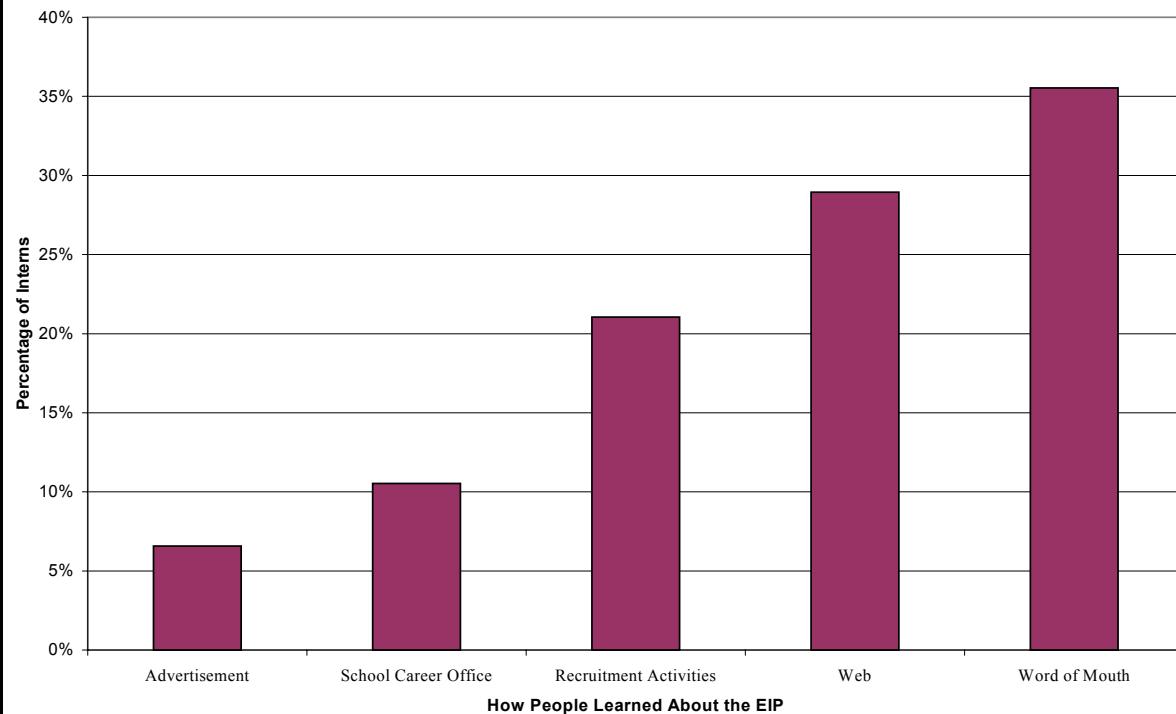
Recruitment Findings

- **EPA Interns and Intern managers most frequently hear about the EPA Intern Program through EPA employees. In addition, nearly one third (22 respondents) of the current and former EPA Interns learned of the program from government employment websites and 21 percent (16 respondents) from Program recruiting efforts.**

Seven percent (five respondents) of the survey respondents noted that they heard about the EPA Intern Program from multiple channels. Overall, 36 percent (27 respondents) of Interns learned of the program through word of mouth. Of these 27 respondents, 15 percent (four respondents) were informed by a current or former EPA Intern and 70 percent (19 respondents) heard about the EPA Intern Program from another EPA employee. During the scoping phase of the evaluation, one manager commented that the “word of mouth process” was not adequate problem because it was not systematic and thus did not ensure sufficient awareness.

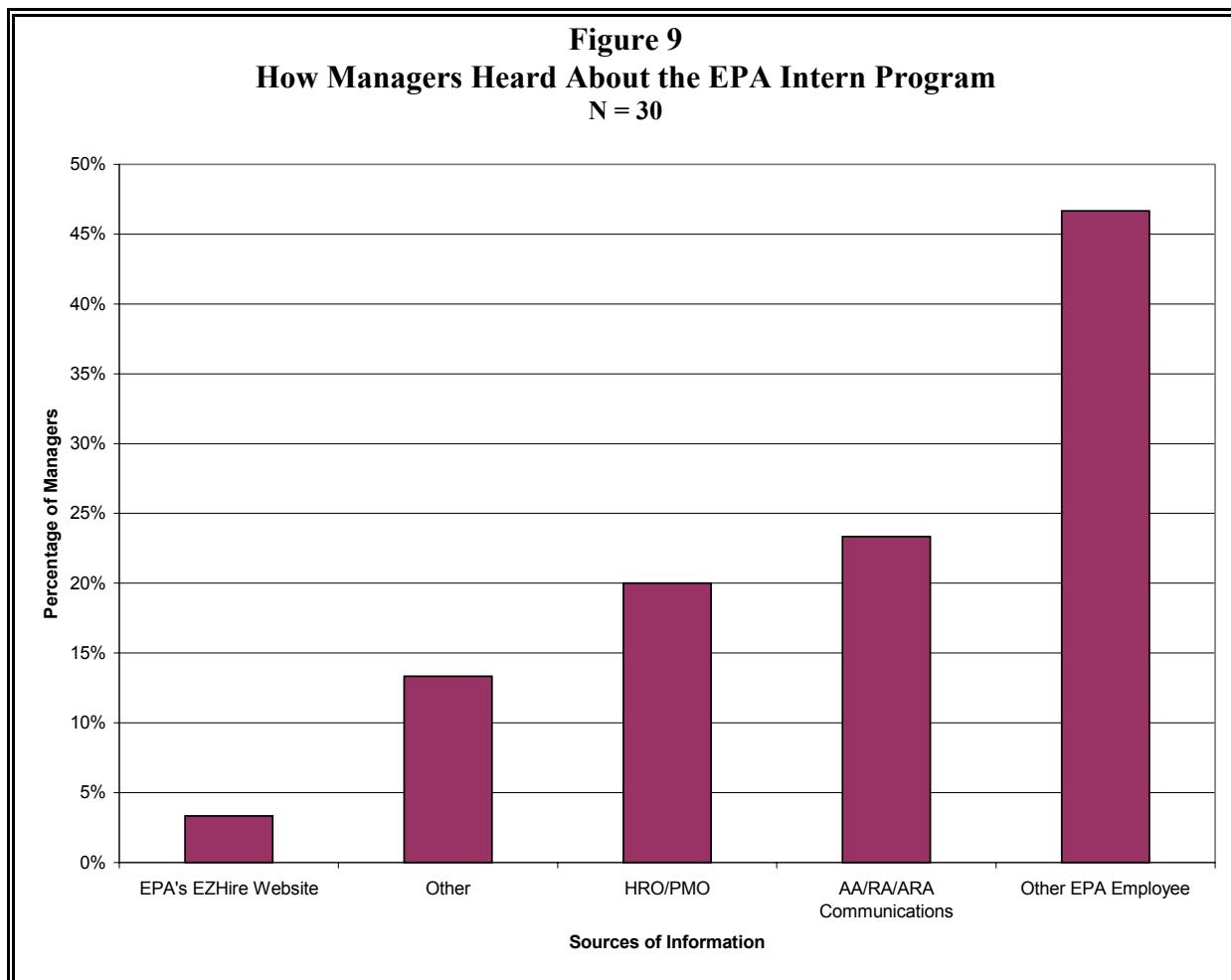
Twenty-one percent (16 respondents) of current and former Interns responding to the survey were reached through the Program’s formal recruitment efforts (e.g., mailings, career conferences). Approximately, 29 percent of Interns (22 respondents) learned about the program from the Web, either through EZHire (12 percent, nine respondents) or USAJobs (17 percent, 13 respondents). A summary of how Interns learned of the EPA Intern Program is illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8
How Interns Heard About the EPA Intern Program
N = 76



Interns who participated in phone interviews reported that they heard about the program through similar avenues. Interns noted they were informed through government websites, other EPA employees, including Interns, and through mailings to diverse students or students with disabilities. Only one of the ten Interns with whom we spoke noted that the program was well publicized at her school.⁷

Managers of EPA Interns also reported that they most commonly learned of the EPA Intern Program from other EPA employees. A total of 47 percent (14 respondents) were informed by other employees and 23 percent (seven respondents) were educated through official communications within their office. Manager's responses on this topic are summarized in Figure 9.



⁷EIP applicants in 2002 and 2003 reported how they heard about the program on their applications. This information is available in EZHire, but the workgroup did not analyze the data for the purposes of this report. This is a potential area for further research.

- **While the Program's recruitment efforts reached over a third of all current and former Interns, no single effort appears to be informing a significant percentage of future EPA Interns.**

As illustrated in Figure 8, the Program's recruiting efforts reached about a third of the Interns eventually hired by the program. However, no single effort appears to be attracting a significant proportion of the Interns. The two most successful methods of information dissemination are through school career offices, which informed 11 percent (eight respondents) of the Interns, and communications through organizations for students with disabilities, which informed nine percent (seven respondents) of the current and former Intern classes. Job fairs and campus recruitment informed only seven and four percent of Interns, respectively.

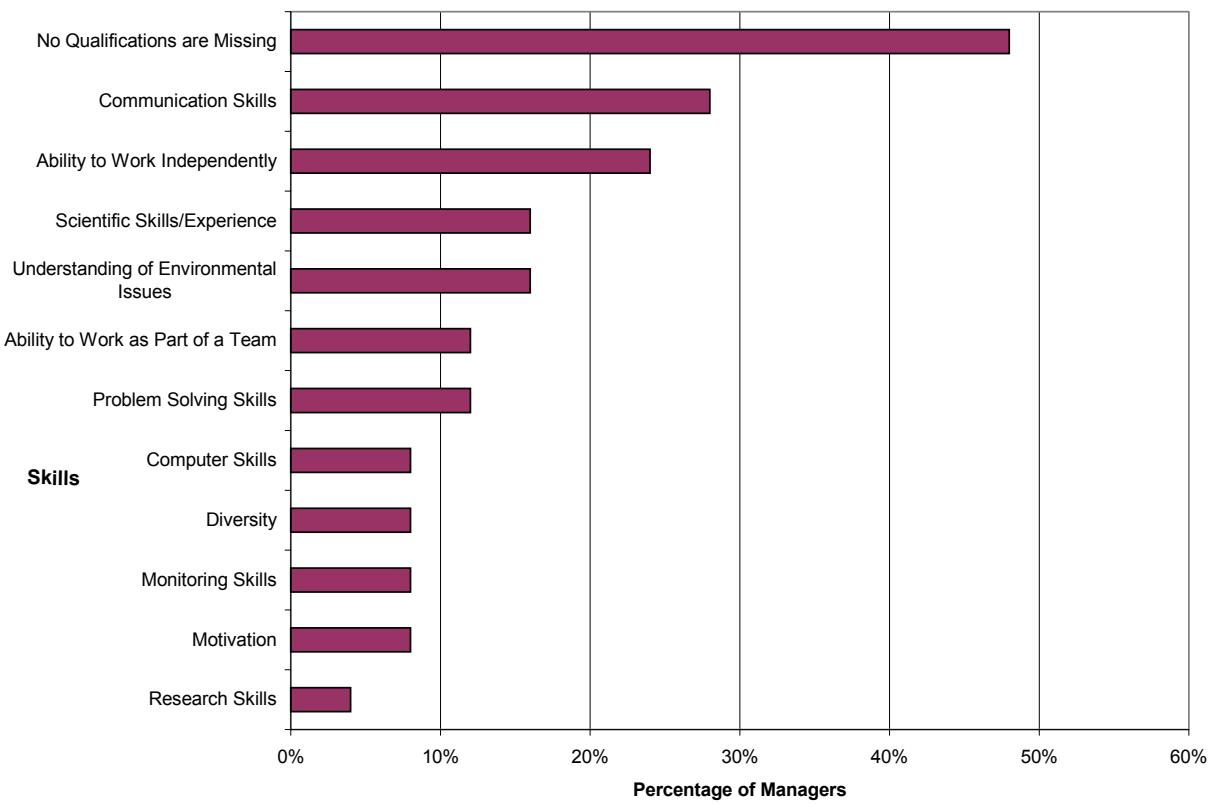
While each of these recruitment efforts attracts only a small proportion of the EPA Interns, these targeted efforts may be crucial to the Program's ability to attract diverse candidates and students with disabilities. EIP is required to ask applicants to the Outstanding Scholar authority to volunteer demographic information on their applications, however is prohibited from collecting this information from other applicants. Because this information is not collected from all applicants, the workgroup cannot evaluate whether recruitment efforts are effectively attracting a diverse group of applicants. It is important for future studies to examine this area.

- **Managers believe that the pool of EPA Intern applicants is well qualified.**

Nearly half of the managers who responded to the survey, 48 percent (12 respondents), indicated that they did not believe there were any skills or qualifications missing from the pool of applicants. Those managers who did note the need for more qualified applicants most frequently cited a need for enhanced communication skills (28 percent, seven respondents, noted Interns were not qualified in this area) and the ability to work independently (24 percent, six respondents, said that Interns were not qualified in this area). The managers responses are illustrated in Figure 10. Intern interview respondents also noted it was important for Interns to be self-motivated and able to work independently. These deficiencies could have a significant impact on Interns' ability to make the most of the EPA Intern Program.

The second most commonly identified gaps were scientific skills (16 percent, four respondents) and an understanding of environmental issues (16 percent, four respondents). In 2002 and 2003, EIP has been able to expand to allow the program to hire EPA Interns through the biologist and environmental scientist series. This additional series may enable EIP to better target individuals with scientific skills and knowledge of environmental issues. Very few managers noted that they would like to see more applicants with specific skills, such as technical skills related to monitoring environmental indicators or computer skills. One interview respondent noted that, rather than missing specific skills, candidates were simply not as ethnically or racially diverse as candidates recruited in the earlier years of the program. Only two survey responses or eight percent of respondents supported this concern.

Figure 10
Skills or Qualifications Missing from the EPA Intern Applicant Pool
N = 25



Recruitment Conclusions and Recommendations

- **Informal recruitment (e.g., word of mouth) is one of the most effective tools to recruit candidates to the EPA Intern Program.**

Both managers and Interns responding to the survey illustrated that current and past Program participants as well as EPA employees are important sources of information about the Program. Most participants heard of the program by word of mouth; through current or former EPA Interns, EPA employees, or contacts outside EPA familiar with the Program, such as academic advisors. The importance of program participants' promotion in recruiting future EPA Interns should be widely publicized to program stakeholders so that they might know the importance of their role in recruitment. Several Interns also noted that Program staff could rely on Interns more heavily for recruitment purposes. For example, more EPA Interns could travel to colleges or universities in their area to educate upcoming graduates about the Program. It is also important to note that one OHROS manager had concerns about relying upon word of mouth as a recruiting mechanism because it does not systematically reach all groups of potential applicants. EIP should consider this concern further, and if necessary, attempt to revise recruiting mechanisms to more systematically reach those applicants who are contacted through word of mouth.

- **EIP should consider trying to increase awareness on college and university campuses.**

Of the 55 Interns who suggested ways to improve the recruitment process, 27, or 49 percent, suggested that the program target a broader number of colleges and universities. Only 11 percent (eight respondents) of Interns who completed the survey heard about the program through their college or university career office and only four percent (three respondents) of Interns were recruited through campus visits. Similarly, only one of the ten EPA Interns the workgroup interviewed recalled any recruitment effort at her school. One survey respondent noted that the Program should, “advertise in school papers, send information to recruitment offices, [and] ask Interns to contact their professors.”

Several respondents also noted that the program should target a wider range of universities, not solely historically black or Hispanic colleges or universities. These Interns expressed concern that this targeted recruitment was unfair and that “the program should be focused on recruiting and retaining top talent regardless of race [or] sex.” However, one Intern did note that while “in search of minorities, keep in mind that minorities are not just at HBCUs or minority-serving institutions.”

- **EIP could consider regionalizing the recruiting and selection process.**

Managers in two EPA regions noted that regionalized recruiting and selection would be helpful. For example, one manager suggested that a team of recruiters based in a certain geographic region could conduct “an aggressive and extensive” recruiting effort in that region. Interviews could also be conducted in geographic regions throughout the country, rather than entirely in Washington, D.C. One regional manager suggested that by recruiting and selecting candidates in the immediate area, regional offices might have better success attracting and retaining candidates. Both regional managers indicated they could run effective recruiting campaigns in their area to recruit high quality candidates for the program. They did not believe that they received significant added value from participating in the national recruiting and hiring process. While the recruitment process has evolved and some initial problems have been resolved, both managers and interns continue to cite it as a problem.

B. The Selection and Hiring Process

The selection and hiring process has evolved over time, but the workgroup and this evaluation focuses on how the selection and hiring process is structured during the 2002 - 2003 recruiting year. The workgroup’s understanding of this process is based on conversations with EIP staff and Team Vegas, as well as review of current documentation.

The application period for the EPA Intern Program occurs each year in early to mid April. During the open period, applicants are asked to submit:

- an application,
- a resume,
- two, one-page essays,
- two letters of recommendation,
- a geographic preference form,
- a transcript,
- responses to a series of questions focused on past experiences,
- an interest form to provide basic information on academic achievements and the type of position or area of EPA in which the applicant would like to work.

Applicants are asked to submit a complete application package for each geographic location for which they are applying. Since 2002, applicants have had the ability to submit application materials electronically through EPA's EZHire website.

After applications are submitted, Team Vegas reviews each application to identify whether the applicant meets the requirements set out in the terms of the hiring authority. Potential Interns may apply under several different hiring authorities. These include applying as an Environmental Protection Specialist position under the special hiring programs for Outstanding Scholars, an environmental scientist position under the Federal Career Intern Program, and a biologist position also part of the Federal Career Intern Program. Applicants can review the qualifications for each hiring authority before completing their applications and thereby determine which position is the best fit for them.

In mid-April, EIP staff send information about the selection and hiring process to human resources staffs and current and former Interns and managers requesting participation in the program. After the applications are reviewed, the applications of eligible candidates are then forwarded to the EPA Intern Program Office for review and distribution to interested AA/RAships. Staff from the EPA Intern Program and AA/RAships review each eligible application to determine which applicants they would like to invite to the interview conference.

Potential Interns are invited to participate in a four day long interview conference, held in Washington, D.C. in late June. Candidates' costs are paid for by the EIP program. The conference begins with an orientation session where each candidate is given the opportunity to introduce him or herself to the other Interns and participating managers. During the second day of the conference, each candidate participates in one 30-40 minute interview with a panel of managers. Following the panel interview, managers conduct one-on-one interviews with Interns who they are considering for positions in their AA/RAship.

Following the one-on-one interviews, interviewers provide a prioritized list of the five candidates the AA/RAship would like to hire. Once the list of selections for each office has been finalized, Team Vegas vets the selections for a final review of eligibility. For example, Team Vegas will ensure that it has received final transcripts where they are required. EIP staff or human

resources staff in headquarters and regional offices then make verbal offers. Once an offer is accepted, HR staff send applicants a formal written offer.

The offering system can become complicated if the same candidate is selected by more than one office. Offers are made to the candidates in order, beginning with the number one candidate. For certain authorities, veterans are given preference in hiring decisions (see Figure 7, *Hiring Authorities Used by the EPA Intern Program 1998 - 2003*). After the first offer is made, if the number one candidate accepts the offer, the other candidates on the list do not receive an offer. If the first candidate declines the offer, the second candidate on the list is contacted. This process continues until each position is filled. In order to give candidates the ability to choose the position in which they are most interested, should they be selected by multiple offices, offices must inform candidates when a position is open to them, even if that candidate has already accepted another position. In fact, OPM requires EIP to extend offers to all Interns who receive an offer from an Office, even if those candidates have already accepted a position.

While the process is designed to ensure that applicants have the opportunity to consider all possible offers, it can have some unintended consequences and create uncertainty and confusion among both applicants and the EPA offices. For example, applicants are told that if they receive more than one offer, they will get them at the same time. This is true if a candidate is the number one choice of more than one office, but may not play out otherwise. It may be confusing for a candidate to get a job offer, accept it, and then get another offer from the EIP. To mitigate this confusion, Team Vegas and the EIP wait to extend offers to applicants who are both first and second choice candidates. For example, if a candidate was the first choice of Office A and the second choice of Office B, Team Vegas would hold any offers to him until it heard from Office B's first choice. If Office B's first choice accepted the position, the candidate would receive an offer from only Office A. If Office B's first choice declined, the candidate would receive both offers. However, other candidates who are listed as a third, fourth, or fifth choice may find out about their offers later, after the first and second candidates have declined.

Selection and Hiring Process Findings

- In general, Interns felt that the application process was more extensive than a typical job application. However, most Interns believed that the application was appropriate for the EPA Intern Program.**

Of the nine EPA Interns that commented on the application process during phone interviews, six noted that the application process was time consuming. Two of those Interns noted that the information requested was consistent with other positions to which they applied. However, one Intern noted that the application was much more extensive than those for other comparable federal jobs. Having to complete a separate application for each region to which the candidate wanted to apply was particularly burdensome. One Intern also noted that it was unclear whether applying to multiple locations would improve his chances of receiving any position with the Agency. Since 1999, the EIP application packages do clarify this point.

Staff from Team Vegas noted that placing the burden of completing separate applications on program applicants reduces the burden on EPA. This additional burden may also discourage

candidates from applying to positions for which they are not truly interested. Beginning in 2002, applicants are able to complete the application online using EPA's EZHire website. EZHire allows applicants to automatically submit applications to multiple regions, significantly reducing the burden associated with creating duplicate applications.

One Intern noted that the main difficulty in completing the application package was the limited time the Intern had to collect and complete the materials. As many Interns only learn of the program once the announcement is published, a large number of applicants would have to complete the application in a matter of weeks.

- **EPA Intern Managers believe that the selection process for EPA Interns is more rigorous than for other agency applicants. Overall, managers responding to the survey believe that the EPA Intern Program attracts higher quality candidates than standard entry-level employees.**

One manager with whom the workgroup spoke explained that the screening process for the program, including application materials, panel discussions, and interviewing, is more rigorous than for standard hires. In general, the survey respondents indicated that they believe the application, interview, and selection process is better than the process for standard hires. Seventy-one percent (20 respondents) of managers responding to the survey describe the screening process for the EPA Intern program as better than the application screening process used for other entry level EPA employees; 21 percent (six respondents) of managers believe screening is comparable and seven percent believe it to be worse. Just over half, or 57 percent (13 respondents), of managers believe the interview process is comparable to other selection processes; 35 percent (eight respondents) believe the EPA Intern interview process is better and only nine percent (two respondents) believe it is worse. Finally, 52 percent (11 respondents) of managers believe the post-interview selection process is better than the selection process for other entry-level EPA employees; 29 percent (six respondents) describe it as comparable, and 19 percent (four respondents) describe it as worse. However, one focus group participant worried that the managers chose Interns according to a rigid set of position oriented criteria, making the focus of the search too narrow and less appropriate for a process intended to identify strong Agency candidates.

Overall, managers who responded to the survey also believe that the quality of applicants and eventual hires into the EPA Intern Program was higher than the quality of applicants for positions and the corresponding new employees at a similar jobs. A total of 65 percent (17 respondents) of the survey respondents believed the quality of new Intern hires was better than the overall quality of entry-level hires into the Agency. Twenty-seven percent (seven respondents) believe the quality was the same, and only eight percent (two respondents) stated that the quality of Interns was worse than entry-level hires in general.

In a slight discrepancy, when asked during phone interviews, managers did not indicate that EPA Interns were more qualified than other entry level employees. In fact, one manager described the quality of the Intern class as "not of high caliber." Another manager noted that the quality of

Interns selected seems to have declined over time. However, one manager believes the pool of applications is “better and broader” because EPA Interns are interested in EPA’s mission.⁸

Manager survey respondents also rated incoming Interns against other new hires at similar jobs. In general, managers indicated that EPA Interns’ skills and abilities were better than or equal to other new hires. The survey listed 11 skills and qualifications, from motivation and ability to work as part of a team to monitoring skills. Managers rated EPA Interns as better than other employees for five skills and equal to other employees for four skills. For two skills, an equal number of managers rated Interns as better or equal. A complete summary of managers’ responses is shown in Appendix C.

- **EPA Intern Managers generally believe that the interview process is well-run. However, 32 percent (seven respondents) noted that the level of effort expended for the process was too high.**

EPA Intern managers responding to the survey generally believed that the timing of, effort expended for, and number of candidates invited to the interview conference were on target. Eighty-seven percent of manager respondents (20 respondents, N = 23) noted that the interview conference was timed well. The remaining managers believe that the conference is held too late in the year. Over two-thirds of respondents (15 managers, N = 22) also noted that the effort managers expend as part of the interview process is appropriate. The remaining respondents stated the required level of effort was too high. However, one interviewee noted that the interview and selection process was too time consuming. Seventy-six percent of survey respondents (16 managers, N = 21) indicated that the number of candidates participating in the interview conference was about right, whereas 19 percent (four respondents, N = 21) believed there were too many candidates. Only five percent (one respondent, N = 21) thought there were too few. Only one interview respondent commented on the number of participants in the interview conference; this respondent believe that there were too many candidates and that the interview pool should be more selective. One manager noted in the focus group that the interviewer might not be the Home Office manager for whom the Intern will work. She was concerned that this practice makes it more difficult for both the Interns and managers to ensure that they find a good fit.

- **Three of the six managers interviewed commented on the process by which offers are made to Interns. These managers had differing opinions about how the process should be improved.**

Two managers noted that confusion was created because offers must be made to candidates in order, even when applicants had accepted positions with other offices. One manager believed it was unfair to the applicant to receive offers at different times from all offices for which they are rated among the top five candidates. Another manager believed that the process of offering positions to candidates in order of their rank creates confusion because the offering process stretches

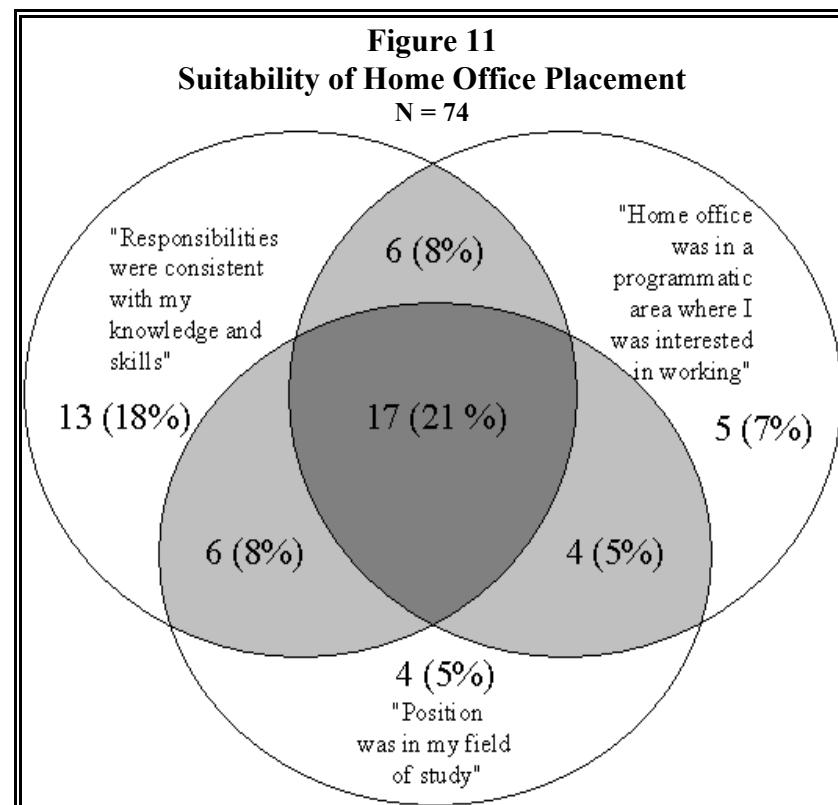
⁸While these responses are interesting, because phone interviews were conducted with a much smaller proportion of the managers than participated in the survey, the evaluation team believes the survey responses are more representative of the entire group of EIP managers.

out for several weeks. However, discussions with members of the workgroup make clear that by offering all positions simultaneously, multiple candidates might accept an offer for a single position. To avoid this problem, offers must be made sequentially. One manager also noted that it was not efficient to make offers to Interns who would prefer to be in another geographic area. To combat this difficulty, this manager suggested that it would make more sense to allow offices to recruit, interview, and hire Interns on a regional basis. In other words, Interns would apply to and be available for offered positions for a single regional office.

- The majority of Interns noted that their initial position was in some way consistent with their background or interests. However, approximately one third of the Interns surveyed noted that their initial placement was not a good fit.**

Fifty-seven percent (42 respondents) of Interns noted that the responsibilities they were given in their home office were consistent with their skills, represented in Figure 11 by the sum of the numbers lying within the appropriately labeled circle. While still a significant percentage, a smaller percentage of Interns, 42 percent (31 respondents), noted that their home office position was aligned with their field of study (similarly indicated on the diagram below). Finally, 43 percent (32 respondents) of Interns reported that their home office was in a programmatic area in which they were interested. Twenty percent (16 respondents) of Interns noted that two of the above statements were true, and 21 percent of respondents (17 respondents) reported that all three statements applied. Interns noting that more than one of the statements was true about their home office placement are represented in Figure 11 by the numbers in the overlapping portions of the appropriately labeled circles. A total of 76 percent (55 respondents) noted that at least one of these statements is true.

While the majority of respondents believe their home office placement was in some way consistent with their skills or interests, approximately one third of the Interns who responded to the survey, 32 percent (24 respondents), noted that their home office placement was not a good fit. In fact, seven percent of respondents (five Interns) reported that either their responsibilities were consistent, they were interested in the programmatic area, or the position matched their field of study, and yet the placement was not a good fit.



- **Interns who are interviewed by their future managers tend to be more frequently well-placed within their home office. Interns also appear to more frequently meet their managers' expectations when they are interviewed by the manager during the interview and selection process.**

A total of 24 Interns (32 percent of respondents) noted that their initial placement in their home office was not a good fit for their skills, interests, or strengths. Two-thirds, or 16, of these Interns were not interviewed by their home office manager during the interview process. Only one-third, or eight, of the Interns who were not placed well were interviewed by their home office manager. One Intern participating in the focus group noted that since “recruiters select the Intern rather than managers, there may not be a connection (between the Intern and) the direct supervisor.”

Intern managers were not asked about the overall quality of placement. However, managers were asked whether Interns met their expectations for various skills or qualifications. The number of Interns who exceeded expectations for a particular skill or qualification and were interviewed by their manager is approximately equal to the number of Interns who exceeded expectations and were not interviewed by their manager. However, in 68 percent of the cases where an Intern met expectations, the manager had interviewed the Intern.⁹ Therefore, it appears that those managers who interview candidates for the EPA Intern position have a better understanding of how the Intern will perform and what skills or qualifications the Intern possesses. Because of the apparent enhanced understanding that results from interviewing Intern candidates, these managers may be better able to identify projects or activities that might be a good fit for a newly hired EPA Intern.

- **Interns' expectations about what their EIP experience would provide were greatly influenced by what they learned during the interview process.**

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of various sources of information in shaping their expectations about the EPA Intern Program. Four of these sources were rated as “Very Important” or “Extremely Important” by over 70 percent of the Interns. One of these sources was the interview process. EIP materials, EIP staff presentations, and the EIP orientation were also highly rated. More than 50 respondents, or more than two-thirds of respondents, rated the following as sources of information that did not shape expectations: “Employee matters” newsletter, career fair information, the Ezhire website, USAJobs website, and their school career office.¹⁰

- **Managers generally understand how the interview and selection processes are supposed to work. Many respondents noted that they were not kept informed about the progress of the interview and selection process.**

⁹ Two managers interviewed applicants in some cases, but did not in others. Therefore, the workgroup could not analyze their responses for the purposes of this question.

¹⁰ Some Interns responding to the survey did not rate each source of information, therefore, the total respondents (i.e., “N”) varies slightly for each source of information. Between 70 and 76 Interns rated each information source.

Eighty-seven percent (13 respondents, N = 30) of managers who attended the introductory orientation session held before the interview process found it helpful. However, only half of the managers (15 respondents, N = 30) responding to the survey noted that they participated. Despite this low attendance rate, the three managers who commented on the interview and selection process during phone interviews noted that they were informed about how the selection process was intended to work.

- **Interns understood the interview and selection processes, but do not necessarily feel they are kept informed through the process about their progress.**

Overall, Interns did not note that they needed additional guidance on the interview process. One Intern explained that he received inconsistent information about how the process was supposed to function. At first, he was told that he could only interview with those offices to which he applied. Later, the Intern learned that he could interview with other offices, but could not receive an offer from these offices. Interns also noted that they did not need additional clarification about the selection process, however, Interns expressed the need to provide candidates with more consistent updates throughout the process. One Intern noted that he received periodic emails from the Program office informing him of the status of the process. However, several other Interns noted that they were not kept informed about how the selection process was progressing and when they might expect to receive an offer.

Selection and Hiring Conclusions and Recommendations

- **While rigorous, the application, interview, and selection process are appropriate for the program and should be maintained.**

Interns and managers agree that the current application and selection process are appropriate. In addition, the application and interview process do enable managers to hire more qualified candidates than might be hired through other channels. One Intern recommended that the first two days of the interview conference should be cancelled. It is the evaluation team's understanding that for Intern candidates, these two days are devoted to an orientation on the interview process and provide opportunities for candidates to interact. Managers also use these first two days to begin their evaluation of candidates. While more in-depth orientation and guidance document could be provided to the Interns prior to the conference, these first two days of the conference should not be eliminated because of their importance to Intern managers.

- **The Program should encourage or even consider requiring the Interns' future supervisors to participate in the interview conference. Participating offices should also clearly articulate the position that is available and the responsibilities and tasks associated with that position.**

To better ensure Interns will meet their managers' expectations and that Interns have reasonable expectations about their EIP experience, the Program office should encourage the manager who will be supervising the Intern to participate in the interview process. Several Interns responding to the survey suggested that supervisors should be required to interview the Intern they planned to hire. While EIP staff would likely be unable to ensure these managers participate in the

interview process, providing participating offices information on the importance of supervisors' participation and the impact participation has on successful placement might encourage more supervisors to participate.

In addition, survey respondents suggest requiring hiring offices to provide more detail on the position that is being offered and what skills and responsibilities that position entails. In doing so, the program would be able to bridge what one manager called "a reality gap" between Interns' expectations and the reality of the position. For example, one Intern recommended that offices be required to, "provide specifics of positions that are available to Interns, so they [Intern candidates] have a real idea of what they will be working on, instead of just what office they will be working in." Information on potential positions should be presented at the interview conference and, in more detail, when a candidate receives an offer from a particular office. One manager notes that her office does not make an offer with a specific position in mind so that they can be flexible and structure the position to the Intern's skills and interests. While this consideration is important, it seems candidates decisions about accepting an offer are closely linked with their expected role and responsibilities within the office.

To provide a positive experience for both the hiring office, the supervisor, and the Intern candidate, clearly stating expectations about the Intern's role and responsibilities seems crucial. Inaccurately or incompletely portraying the responsibilities and tasks of available positions will likely result in supervisors and/or Interns being dissatisfied with the content or quality of the work.

- **While Interns and managers note that they generally understood the selection and placement process, some additional guidance, explanations, and updates would be helpful.**

Managers and Interns noted several areas where guidance was unavailable or unclear. One manager believes that managers participating in interviews do not have enough interview experience to effectively interview candidates. One Intern participant received conflicting guidance regarding the offices with which he could interview during the interview conference. Two Intern interviewees also noted that significant time passed between the interview and when they heard about a job offer. While these Interns report a lack of updates from the EIP, another interviewee did receive updates via email. To ensure Interns and managers receive complete and consistent guidance on the process, the Program should develop a manual describing the stages and schedule of the interview and selection processes. This guidance document could be given to all participants prior to the interview conference. It could also form the basis for the orientation session held at the start of the conference. Much of this guidance may already exist, but it would be useful to compile it in a single document that could be circulated to all participants.

Several managers also expressed some frustration at the selection process and the order in which offers have to be made. The logic behind the selection process is sound, but does not seem to be made clear to all participants. Including an explanation of the selection process in the guidance document as well as explanations for why the process is structured as it is (e.g., Federal requirements dictate candidates must be offered each position that is available to them) might resolve managers concerns about the process.

Finally, although EIP staff note that the office has sent information to all candidates since 2000, Interns did not consistently seem to receive updates about the status of the selection process. In developing consistent guidance for the process, it would be helpful to schedule regular status messages that could be sent to all EPA Intern candidates. During the focus group, one Intern mentioned that he/she felt the selection process should be more transparent.

IV. DURING THE EPA INTERN PROGRAM

Once EPA Interns are selected, they begin their “on-going, two-year Agency familiarization and career development program designed to foster both their personal and professional growth.”¹¹ In addition to the work and training that occurs in the home office, this experience includes:

- Class conferences including the orientation conference, the Field Study, and Closing Conference;
- Rotational assignments in both headquarters and regional offices;
- Career development and networking opportunities, including mentoring and developing IDPs; and
- Monthly teleconferences.

The entire EIP experience is intended to train Interns on the skills and qualifications they need to contribute effectively to the Agency, jump-start their careers, and develop their potential for advancement. In examining the ability of the program to meet these goals, the workgroup sought to determine:

- What are the benefits of the EIP’s career development tools, including participating in class conference and rotations and learning from mentors?
- Are Interns and their managers getting the assistance and guidance they require?
- Is the EIP experience living up to Intern’s expectations?

The evaluation workgroup asked Interns and managers to provide details on how Interns obtained career development opportunities, the value of each aspect of the program, and what guidance both Interns and Managers received and needed during their time in the program. The following section provides more detail on Interns’ and managers’ experiences as well as feedback and recommendations for potential areas of improvement during the internship.

A. Class Conferences

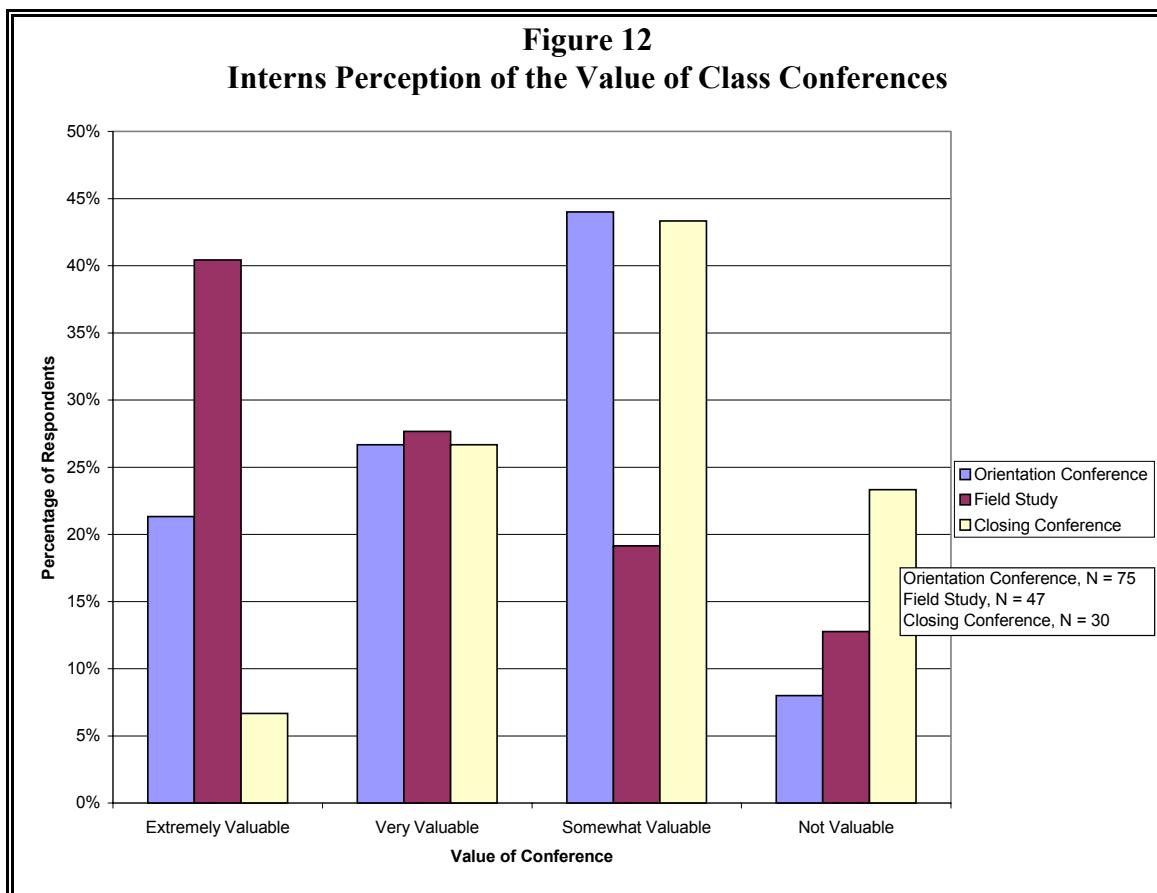
EPA Interns participate in three week-long conferences with all members of their class (e.g., all Interns hired in 2002). These include the Orientation Conference, Field Study, and Closing Conference. General findings related to the class conferences as a whole are presented below. More detailed findings on each conference are discussed individually in subsequent sections.

¹¹*EPA Intern Program Guidance Manual*, October 2002, page 4.

Class Conference Findings

- Overall, EPA Interns found the Field Study and Orientation Conferences to be valuable experiences. While Interns believed the Closing Conference was also valuable, it was not rated as highly.

Over two thirds of respondents (68 percent, 32 respondents) rated the Field Study as “very” or “extremely” valuable. Almost half of the respondents (48 percent, 36 respondents) gave the Orientation Conference the same rating. Most respondents who have attended the Closing Conference (43 percent, 13 respondents) believed it was only “somewhat” valuable. Additionally, approximately one quarter of the respondents (23 percent, seven respondents) believed that the Closing Conference was not valuable. Figure 12 illustrates Interns’ responses.



While managers with whom the evaluation team spoke generally believed that career development and the class conferences are valuable, some believe the conferences were too long, often confusing, and may not focus on the issues of greatest importance to the Interns. While the manager did not provide specifics, one manager noted that some Interns had to be retrained on issues that had been discussed during the Orientation Conference.

- **The class conferences do not seem to be readily accessible to Interns with disabilities.**

Two Interns with whom the evaluation team spoke noted that they or their classmates were unable to participate in one or more of the conferences because resources were not available to accommodate their disability. Interns participating in the focus groups also noted this concern. Interns reported that trainers attending the conference were made aware of disabilities, but nevertheless did not provide the tools these Interns needed to participate. For example, Interns with visual disabilities were unable to view presentations given to the class. Trainers did not explain the presentation and the only resource the Intern was provided was a hard copy print out of the presentation materials, which did not provide him the assistance he required. In other instances, interpreters attending the conferences to assist Interns with hearing disabilities were not present when Interns were socializing informally. As a result, some Interns were unable to communicate and interact with their class. One manager felt that the lack of resources for Interns with disabilities demonstrated the Program's desire to simply meet the Program's hiring goal and not to take the necessary steps to integrate these Interns into the Program. This individual also felt that managers needed to be trained on how to work with Interns with disabilities.

Orientation Conference

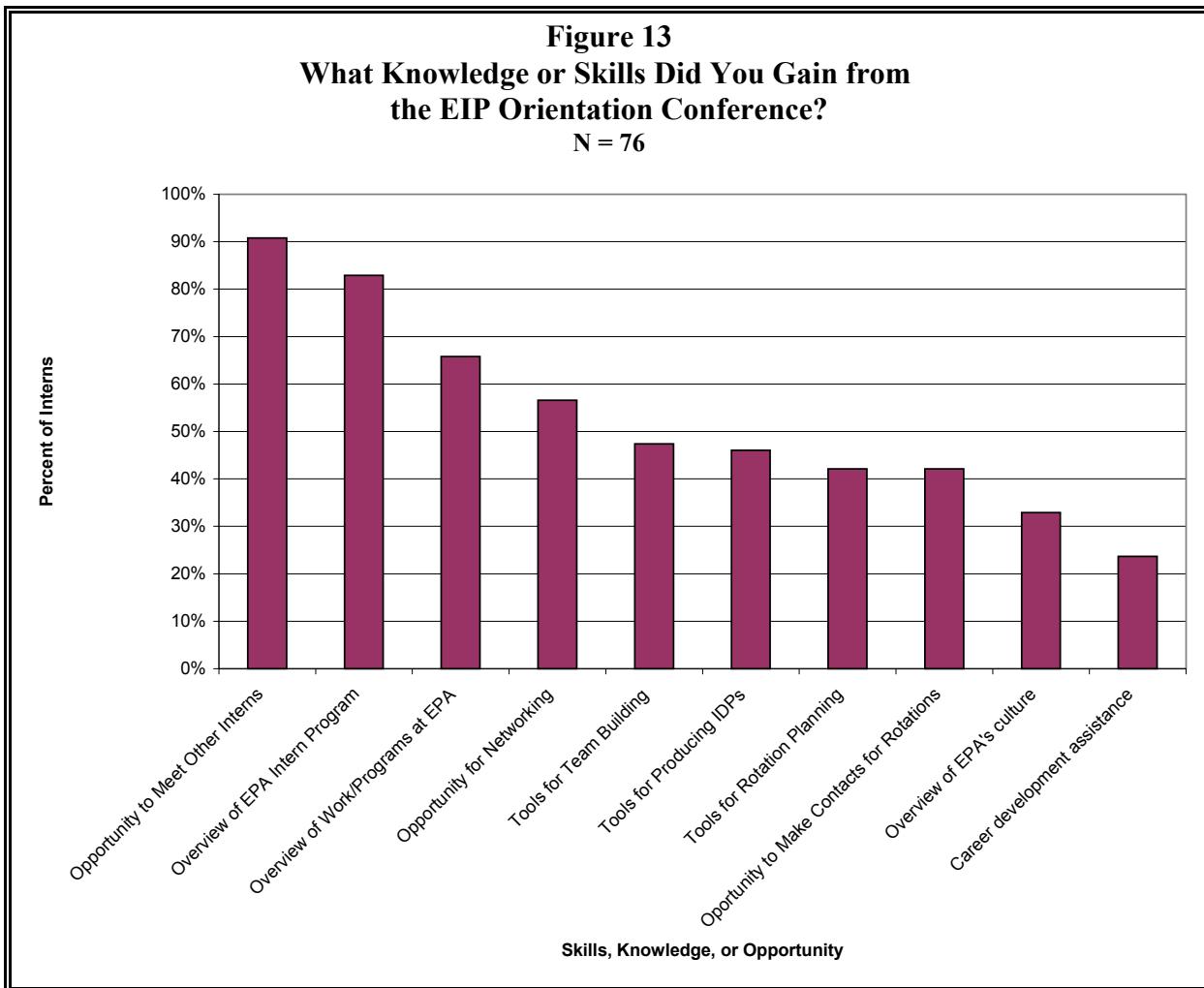
In early September EIP hosts a joint Intern and manager meeting to discuss how program participants can get any guidance they might require. More extensive information is provided during the Orientation Conference, held each October in Washington, D.C. The aims of the Orientation Conference are to present new Interns with an overview of EPA and the EIP; to provide training on team-building, developing career competencies, planning rotations, and producing IDPs; and to allow EPA Interns to meet and get to know other Interns.

Orientation Conference Findings

- **The most helpful aspect of the Orientation Conference for incoming EPA Interns is the opportunity to meet other Interns. While EPA Interns also reported that the conference provided a good overview of the EIP and the Agency, it did not provide them with an adequate overview of EPA's culture or provide career development assistance.**

Over 90 percent (69 respondents) of Interns noted that the Orientation Conference allowed them to interact with other Interns. Interview respondents supported this point. Half of the Interns the evaluation team interviewed noted that the most important aspect of the Orientation Conference was the ability to meet other Interns and learn about their experiences. Most Interns also reported that the conference provided an effective overview of the EPA Intern Program and an overview of work and programs at EPA; 83 percent (63 respondents) of Interns reported they received an overview of the Program and 66 percent (50 respondents) reported receiving an overview of EPA. Interns found that the Orientation Conference was less effective in providing them with career development assistance and an understanding of the EPA's culture. Twenty-four percent (18 respondents) felt they benefitted from career development assistance during the orientation and only 33 percent (25 respondents) believed it provided them with an understanding of EPA culture. At least one Intern participating in the focus group emphasized the importance of manager participation

in these activities so that they are aware of the Interns' responsibilities to the EIP, particularly with respect to rotations and performance capabilities. A summary of the skills and knowledge Interns reported gaining from the Orientation Conference is provided in Figure 13.



Field Study

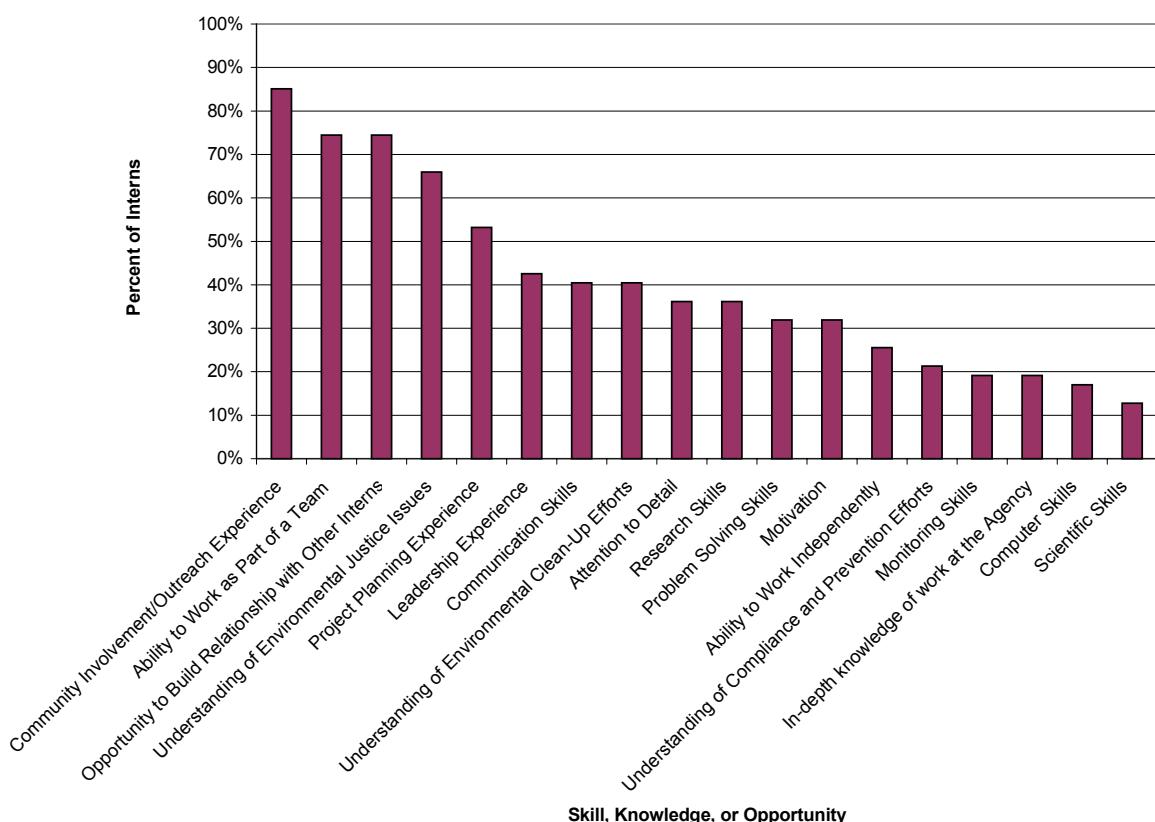
The Field Study is a week long conference held in the middle of the two year experience. EPA Interns take the lead in planning and organizing the fields study, which is intended to provide EPA Interns hands-on training in the work of the Agency. Activities conducted during the Field Study can be related to research, monitoring, environmental clean-up, regulatory compliance, or community involvement, among others.

Field Study Findings

- **Interns gain experience in local environmental issues like environmental justice during the Field Study. By working with other EPA Interns, respondents also noted that they worked as part of a team and appreciated the opportunity to interact with other Interns.**

The majority of Interns who have participated in the Field Study reported gaining experience in community outreach and environmental justice issues. Eighty-five percent (40 respondents) of respondents who participated in the Field Study reported gaining outreach experience and 66 percent (31 respondents) learned about environmental justice issues. A majority of Interns also reported benefitting from the interaction with other members of their class. Seventy-four percent (35 respondents) of respondents noted that the Field Study was a helpful opportunity to build relationships with other Interns as well as offering them the chance to learn how to work with a team. Interns responses are illustrated in Figure 14. Two Interns that we spoke with were part of the planning committee for their respective class's Field Study. These Interns both noted that the Field Study was a very valuable experience, and that they both benefitted from the planning and organizational experience they had as members of the planning committee.

Figure 14
What Skills or Knowledge Did You Gain During the EIP Field Study?
N = 47



However, Interns felt that they gained less with respect to a number of fundamental skills from the Field Study. Research, problem solving, attention to detail, communication, and leadership skills were identified by 30 to 40 percent of Intern respondents (15 to 20 respondents) to have been enhanced by the Field Study. Scientific, computer, in-depth knowledge of the EPA, and understanding of compliance and prevention issues were identified by ten or fewer respondents as a skill that the Field Study helped them to develop. A breakdown of the skills, knowledge, and opportunities Interns gained from the Field Study is presented in Figure 14.

Closing Conference

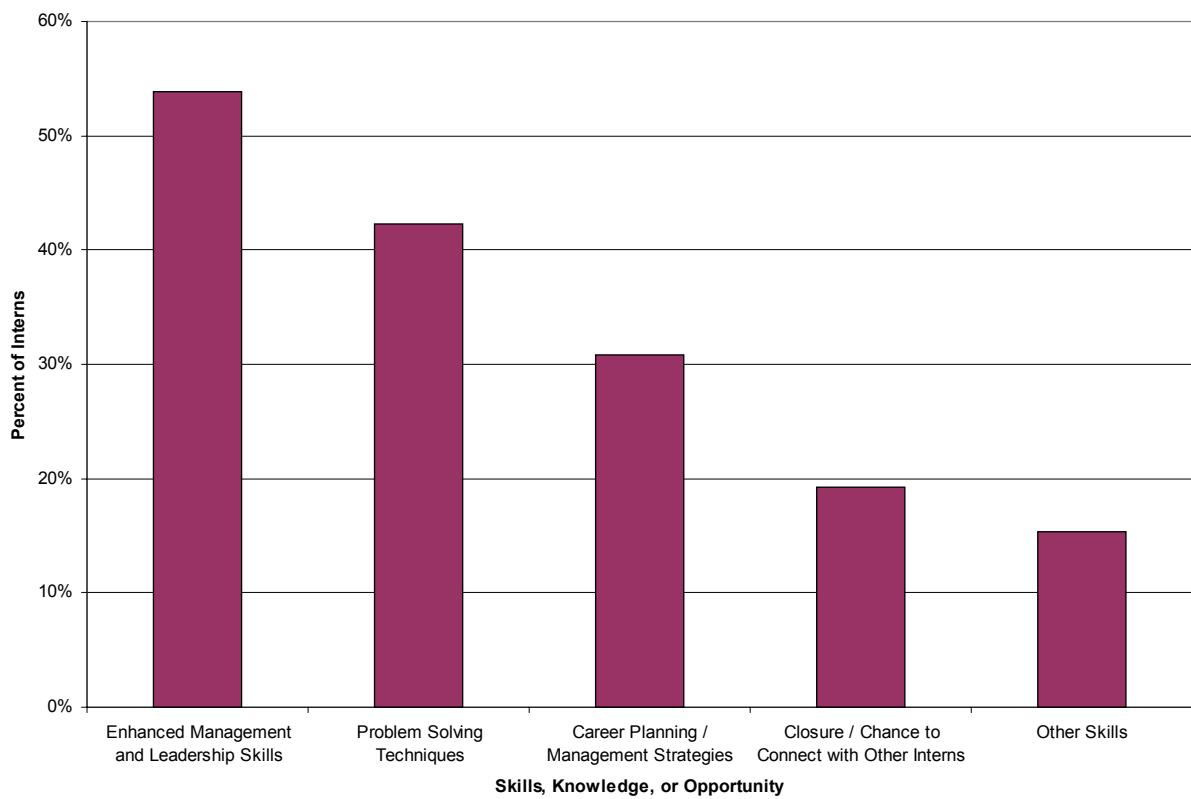
Finally, EPA Interns participate in a week long Closing Conference. The conference includes training on leadership and management and guidance on developing strategies for environmental management, problem solving, and career management. The Closing Conference also provides an opportunity to recognize the class's accomplishments and concludes with a graduation ceremony.

Closing Conference Findings

- **As compared with the Orientation Conference and Field Study, a smaller proportion of the Interns identified a specific benefit associated with attending the Closing Conference. However, more than 50 percent of the group benefitted from the training and guidance offered during the Closing Conference.**

When examining data from the Closing Conference, it is important to note that since a number of Interns responding to the survey have yet to attend the Closing Conference, fewer respondents addressed this issue. Approximately half of the respondents, 54 percent or 14 respondents, noted that the Closing Conference was an opportunity to gain enhanced management and leadership skills. Approximately 40 percent (11 respondents) learned problem solving techniques and only one third (eight respondents) of the group gained skills in career planning and management. While some portion of the Interns did take away the skills and knowledge that the Closing Conference intended to convey, a much smaller percentage of the Interns noted that they learned a particular skill or had a particular opportunity during the Closing Conference, as compared to the other class conferences. Respondent feedback is illustrated in more detail in Figure 15.

Figure 15
What Skills or Knowledge Did You Gain From the Closing Conferences?
N = 26



Conclusions and Recommendations for Class Conferences

- **Most Interns and managers view the class conferences as valuable experiences. However a number of specific recommendations for improving the conferences were made.**

Several Interns commented that the Orientation Conference involved a significant amount of lecturing and that it was difficult to absorb all the information presented. One manager also noted that Interns have had to be retrained on issues discussed during the conferences. It would be useful to collect more detailed information from managers about the issues on which Interns need to be retrained. For these reasons, one interview participant suggested focusing on more interactive exercises during the orientation. Interactive exercises would also allow Interns more time to work together, a key benefit of the Orientation Conference cited by Interns.

Several Interns also commented that the training offered at the orientation or Closing Conference was not as useful as it could have been. While it appears that at least a portion of the Interns gained some skill or knowledge in all of the areas on which the EIP focuses during orientation, Interns may have a need for alternative training. During the evaluation team's interviews, Interns recommended that each office provide a more substantive background, including

information on their legislative authority and their overall place in the Agency. It might be useful to systematically assess the issues or concerns for which orientation training might be useful. This is an area of potential further research. Due to the broad range of issues that could be covered during the conferences, the EIP Office should consider defining a targeted goal for each conference and conduct training and exercises that contribute to this goal. Both Interns' and managers' opinions should be solicited in defining this goal. For example, to ensure that the training provided at the Closing Conference meets the Interns' needs, managers might be able to suggest key areas or skills to focus on during the Closing Conference.

- **The EIP needs to ensure that the needs of Interns with disabilities are met to ensure that these individuals can fully participate in each conference.**

All Interns attending the class conferences should have the ability to engage fully and receive the full benefit of training, field trips, and interaction with their fellow Interns. In some instances, resources were not available to provide all Interns this ability. Interns highlighted the importance of having interpreters available at all times to assist Interns with hearing impairments. As an important component of each conference is meeting and interacting with fellow Interns, interpreters and other necessary assistance should be available during less formal social situations, as well as on hand to assist Interns with disabilities during lectures or field trips. In addition, the EIP should work more closely with trainers to ensure that they make the necessary accommodations. While trainers have apparently been informed about the need to provide resources for Interns with disabilities, these needs are not consistently being met. As a result, the EIP needs to make more detailed arrangements with trainers to ensure each Intern receives the full benefit of the class conferences.

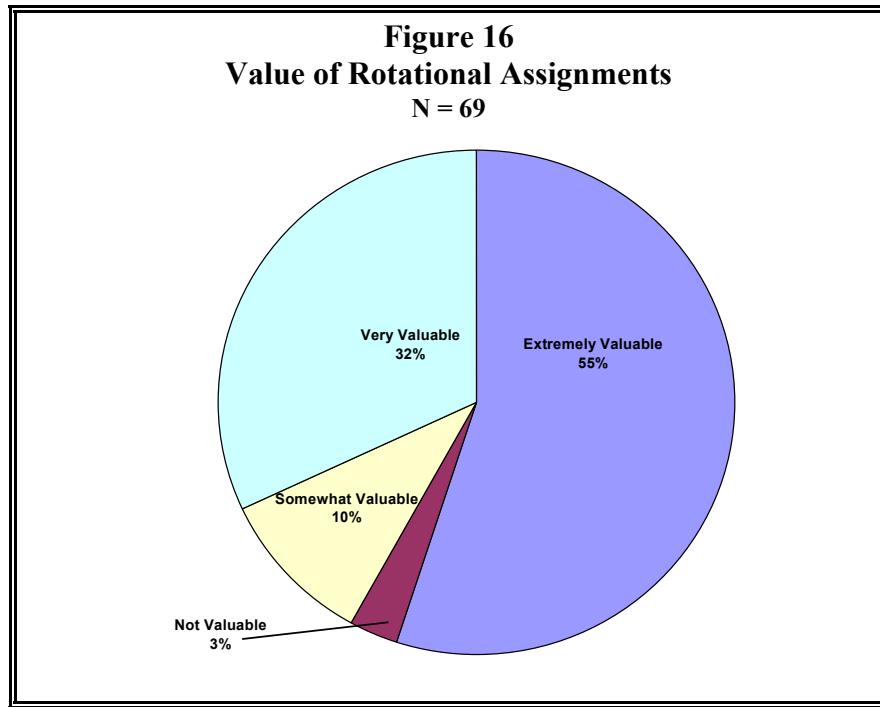
B. Rotational Assignments

Rotations within and outside of Interns' home office divisions are a key component of their experience as an EPA Intern. During the focus groups and interviews, Interns and managers noted the importance of rotations to the Intern experience. Rotations contribute to an Intern's career development and understanding of the Agency, its mission, and its key programs. EPA Interns are encouraged to participate in at least four rotations, at least one of which should be completed in an office or division outside of the Intern's home office. The EIP pays the costs associated with conducting one of these rotations in a different geographic location for centrally funded Interns. Regional Interns must spend this rotation in a headquarters office. Finally, Interns do have the flexibility to conduct rotations in a non-profit organization or other branches of Federal Government, state, local, or tribal governments. The following section provides more details on the rotations and the value placed upon them.

Rotation Findings

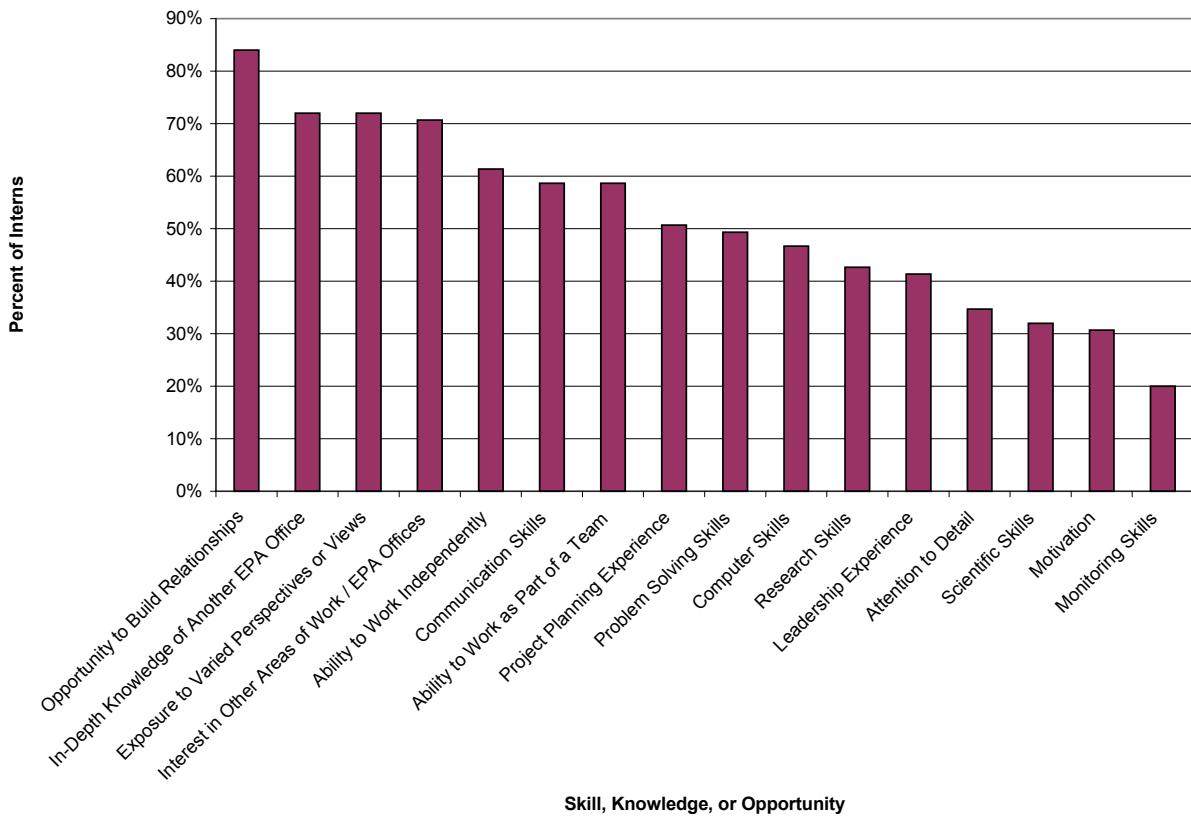
- **Overall, Interns believe that rotations are very valuable experiences, particularly with respect to meeting staff in other EPA offices and gaining a better understanding of the Agency and the diverse work performed by EPA.**

As shown in Figure 16, over half (38 respondents) of the Interns responding to the survey rated the rotational assignments as “extremely valuable.” An additional 32 percent (22 respondents) rated the rotations as “very valuable.” Very few Interns believed that the assignments had little impact on their overall experience and career development. In addition, interview respondents all agreed that the rotational assignments were valuable experiences for them. One focus group respondent agreed, noting that “developmental rotations are the essence of the Program – this is where the Interns grow.”



In particular, Interns appear to benefit from the opportunity to meet staff throughout the Agency through their rotational assignments. Eighty-four percent (63 respondents) of respondents noted that rotations afforded this opportunity. Over 70 percent (54 respondents) of Interns reported that the experiences provided an opportunity to learn about other EPA offices, develop interests in varied work conducted by the Agency, and gain exposure to varied views and perspectives. In general, however, Interns felt that the rotations were less effective in addressing basic skills, such as scientific, computer, leadership, research, and problem solving. While Interns believed the rotations to be less effective with respect to honing these skills, they still believed these skills had benefitted from their participation in rotations. Figure 17 presents more details on the skills and opportunities gained through the rotational assignments.

Figure 17
What Skills or Knowledge Did You Gain From Your Rotational Assignments?
N = 75



Interns and managers, during the scoping phase and during interviews, recognized that the benefits associated with the rotations might come at the expense of an Intern learning more about his or her own office and the position they would take after the EIP experience was over. However, the rotations appear to contribute to the overall development of the employee and the evaluation team believes that missing time in the home office is generally worth the experiences gained through the rotations.

- **Interns generally believe that their rotations are of appropriate length and that there are a sufficient number of rotations.**

As shown in Figure 18, nearly two-thirds (42 respondents) of the Interns believe the rotations are generally a good length. The remaining Interns generally believe the rotations are too short. Similarly, 62 percent (44 respondents) of Interns believe they had the appropriate number of rotations. An additional 28 percent (20 respondents) of Interns believe there are too few rotational opportunities (see Figure 19). These responses provide additional evidence of the value of the rotational opportunities.

Figure 18
Length of Rotations
N = 69

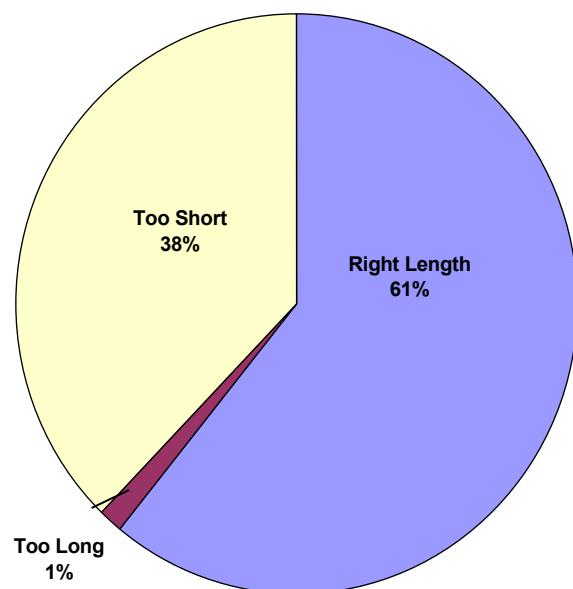
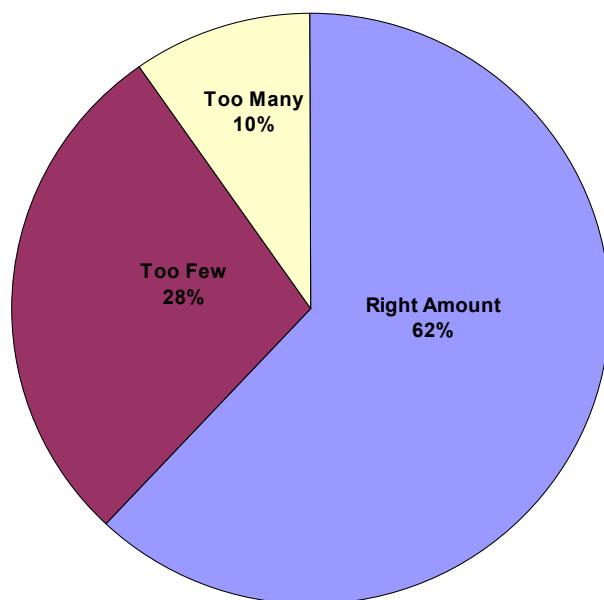
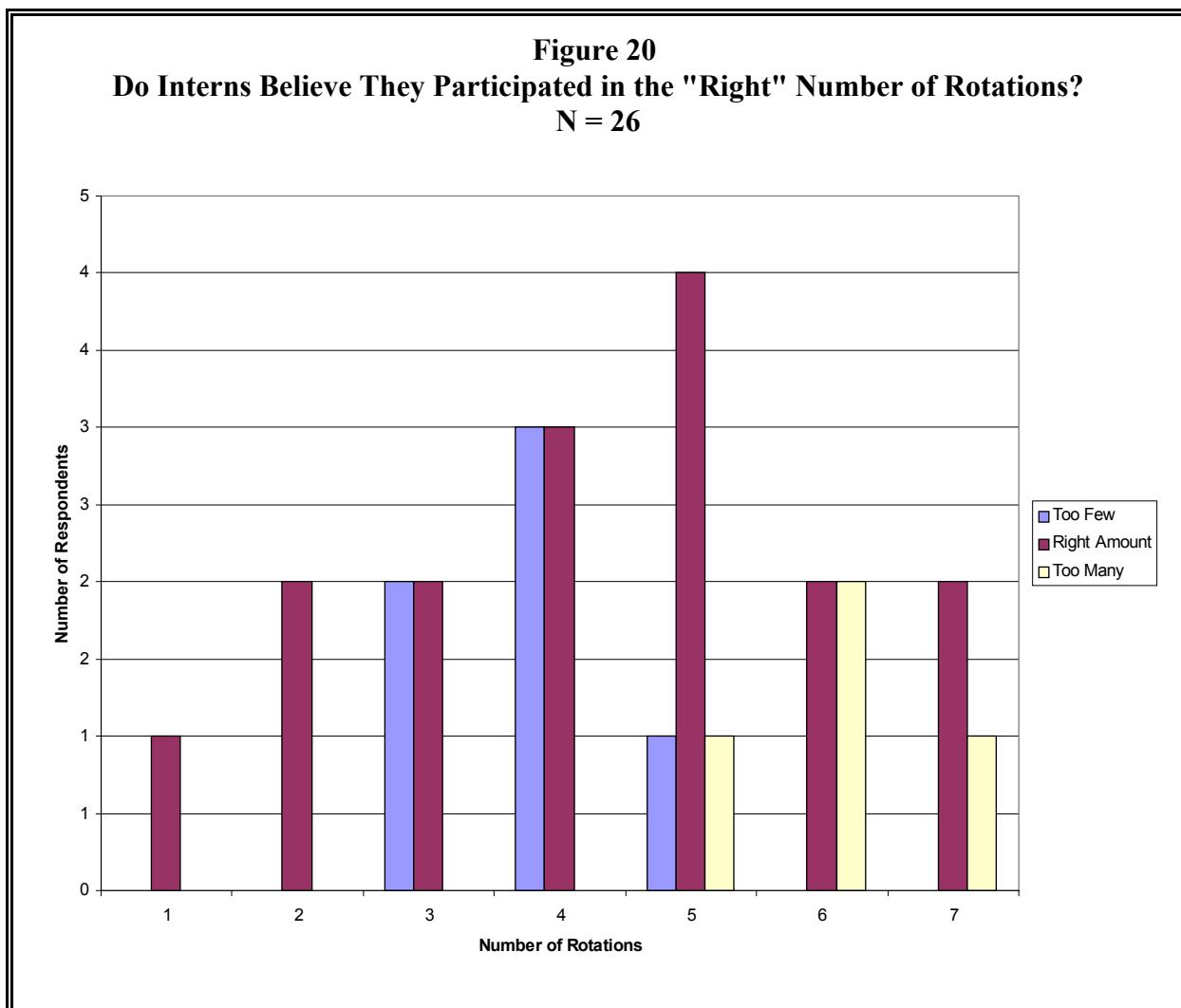


Figure 19
Number of Rotations
N = 71



The former Interns who responded to the survey had varied opinions on the “right” number of rotations.¹² Forty-seven percent (seven Interns) went on three or four rotations, but some went on as little as one or as many as seven. While the number of rotational opportunities Interns experience varied, the majority, 62 percent of these respondents (16 Interns), believed they had the right number of rotations. While the number of rotations Interns find appropriate varied, most of the Interns who were satisfied with their rotational opportunities went on five rotations. As might be expected, all those Interns who believed they had too many rotations went on five or more rotations. All those who felt they had gone on too few went on five or fewer rotations. Interns responses are illustrated in Figure 20.



¹²Thirty-five percent (27 respondents) of the Interns responding to the survey were former Interns. Thirty-four percent (26 of the total respondents) provided information on the number of whether they believed the rotations they went on was the right number of rotations.

- **While the majority of EPA Interns are able to complete at least four rotations, a number of Interns report that they did not complete the recommended number of rotational assignments.**

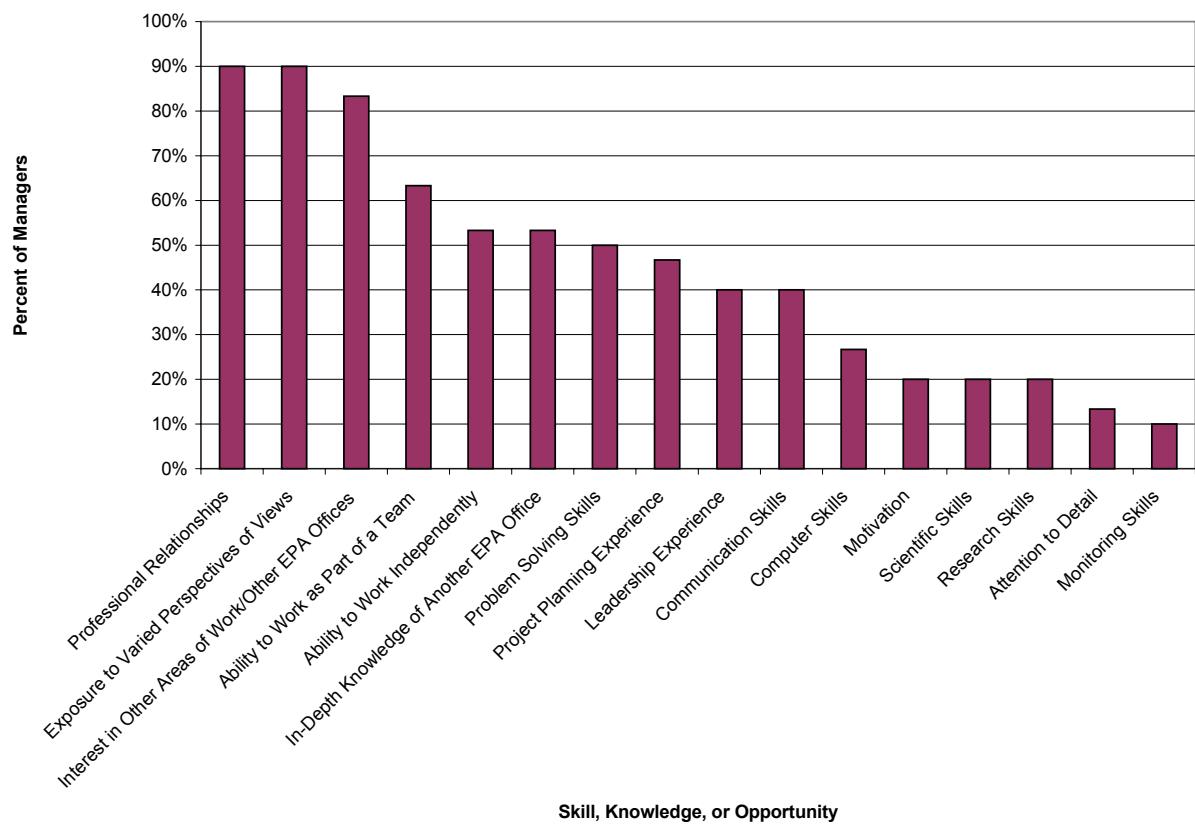
EPA Interns are encouraged to complete at least four rotations during their time as an EPA Intern. Eighty-one percent of Interns who responded (47 Interns) report that they met this recommendation. However, 19 percent of Interns (11 respondents) report that they did not complete four rotations. Survey responses do not clarify whether Interns did not complete the rotations because they did not pursue rotational opportunities or because they were prevented from doing so by their manager, lack of resources, the inability to locate suitable rotations, or for another reason. Several Interns participating in the focus groups noted that managers did not support their pursuit of rotations. In one case, the Intern's manager was replaced mid-stream with an individual who viewed the Intern as "free labor" and did not feel obligated to allow him/her to participate in a rotation.

- **EPA Intern managers' reports of the skills and opportunities gained during the rotational experiences generally coincide with Interns' accounts.**

Interns and managers most frequently cite building professional relationships, gaining exposure to varied views and perspectives, and developing an interest in other areas of work at EPA as the three most important aspects of rotations. Ninety percent of managers (27 respondents) believe that rotations enable Interns to build relationships with colleagues in other EPA offices. In addition, 90 percent (27 respondents) of managers believe Interns gain exposure to varied views and perspectives and 83 percent (25 respondents) believe Interns develop an interest in other areas of work or other offices at EPA as a result of the rotations. Like Interns, only 47 and 40 percent of managers (14 respondents and 12 respondents), respectively, believe that the rotations fulfill the key goal of providing project planning and leadership experience.

Managers and Interns opinions do differ in one area. While 72 percent (54 respondents) of Interns believe rotations offer them an in-depth understanding of another EPA office, only 53 percent (16 respondents) of managers agree. This difference suggests that managers may have a more rigorous definition of what comprises an "in-depth understanding". Despite this difference managers and Interns have similar views overall of the skills and opportunities gained through their rotations. These views indicate that the EIP is fulfilling one of its key mandates through rotations - to groom well-rounded EPA employees and leaders. Managers' responses are illustrated in Figure 21. Although most managers agree that rotations are very important, some regional managers noted that rotations were not effective, taking time away from the main business in the home office.

Figure 21
Managers' Belief of the Skills and Knowledge Interns Gain During Rotations
N = 30



- Both Interns and managers believe that considering an individual Intern's interests and career goals is crucial in locating a valuable rotational assignment. Some Interns report that where Interns do not have a specific task or goal, rotational experiences do not effectively support their development.

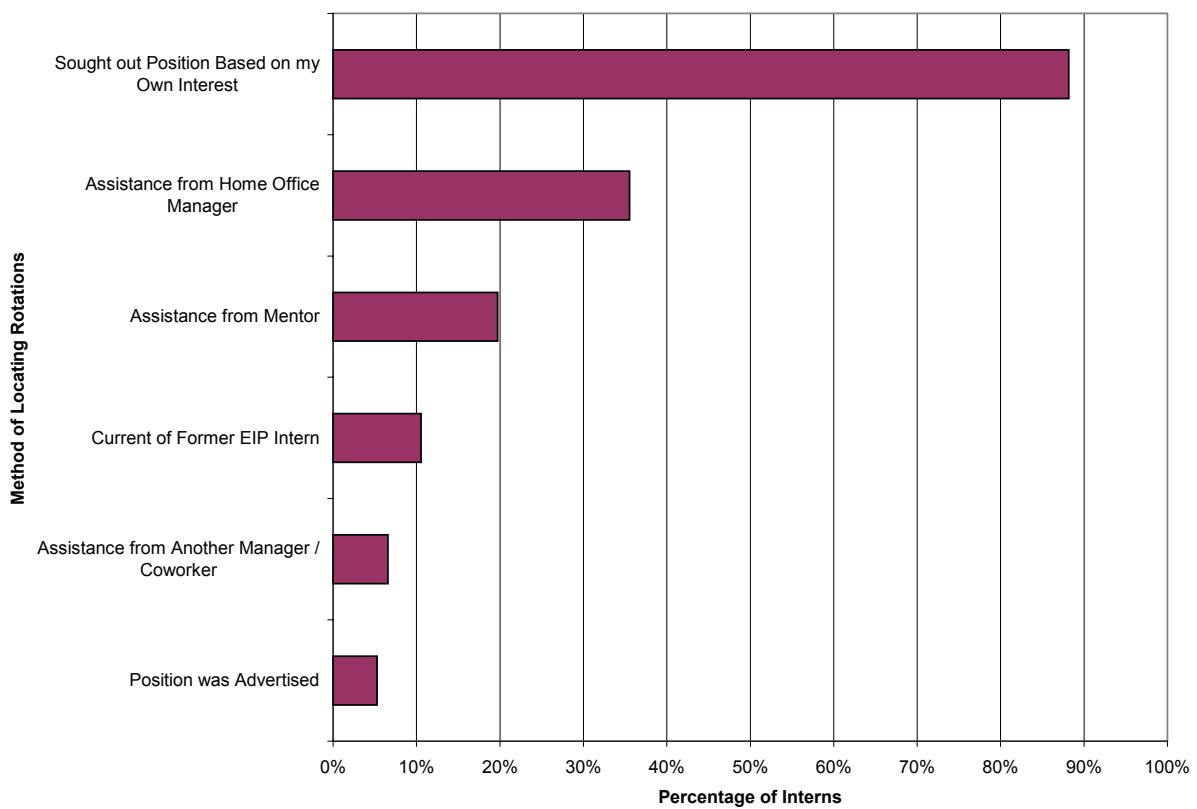
Interns and managers note that it is important to have a specific project or goal in mind before a rotation begins. Interns remark that having a specific goal in mind, whether it be simply learning and experiencing or conducting substantive work in a specific area, focuses Intern's efforts to locate a rotation. By having a specific goal in mind, Interns can also better ensure that the rotation will be a valuable experience and it will contribute to their career development. Several Interns the workgroup interviewed or met during focus groups noted that the work they were given during rotations was not substantive and that they did not feel the rotation contributed to their professional development. Managers stress that rotational supervisors should also carve out specific tasks and goals for the rotating Intern to ensure both the Intern and the supervisor effectively use the brief rotation. For example, home office managers, rotation managers, and Interns can flesh out the goals and content of the rotation prior to its commencement.

Because not all Interns have the same interests or the same sense of direction regarding their future goals, different types of rotations will be valuable to different Interns. For example, one Intern with whom we spoke knew very little about EPA, its mission, its programs, or the work that the Agency does on a daily basis. As a result, he benefitted from a large number of short rotations during which he could learn about and experience different aspects of the Agency. On the other end of the spectrum, another Intern had a very clear sense of the work he hoped to ultimately perform and the goals he wished to achieve upon entering the Agency. For this Intern, it was more valuable to spend a significant amount of time in his home office, where he ultimately hoped to work. While the rotation experience was still valuable, the Intern felt that participating in a single rotation was the most valuable course for his career development. Interns who are less certain about their focus or interests will likely find it helpful to move through several rotations and experience different aspects of the Agency. However, those Interns who have already focused in on a specific area of interest or career may benefit more from spending more time in a specific place in order to accomplish substantive work.

- **The majority of Interns sought out rotational positions based on their own interests.**

Eighty-eight percent (67 respondents) of Interns note that they sought out positions independently. However, Interns also note that they receive assistance from other managers and coworkers, including current or former Interns. Figure 22 provides more detail on how Interns generally locate rotations. While the interviewees found it appropriate to seek out rotations independently, three within this group indicated they could have benefitted from more guidance. A large proportion of Interns participating in the interviews discussed potential rotations with their home office manager or mentor to get feedback and their opinions on the assignment. Those Interns who had managers who were able to provide helpful guidance seem satisfied with the process for locating rotations. However, those Interns whose managers were not able to provide guidance, did note that additional resources to guide their decision would be useful.

Figure 22
Means Through Which Interns Locate Rotations
N = 76



Rotation Recommendations

- **EIP should encourage Interns to spend time formulating their informal goals and career objectives prior to locating a rotation. Interns can then identify rotational assignments that will further their goals and objectives.**

As Interns have explained, each Intern's goals for their EPA Intern experience are different. While some Interns hope to simply gain a broad view of many parts of the Agency, others choose to focus on a defined area of work or a specific skill. Based upon these goals, Interns can locate a rotational assignment that meets their needs. Interns' home office and rotational managers should also help to guide Interns in formulating their goals and locating rotational opportunities that will enable them to make further progress toward these goals.

- **While most EPA Interns participate in rotations, some do not. The reasons for any lack of participation in rotational opportunities should be examined in more detail.**

Some Interns noted that because their interests were very focused, it was not necessary to complete four rotations. Based on an Intern's interests and previous work experience outside or

within the Agency, the number of rotations that Intern should complete may vary. This decision should be made cooperatively by the Intern and the Intern's home office manager. Because some Interns may not benefit from the recommended number of rotations, the EIP Guidance Manual should be clarified to note that in some cases, Interns and their managers may determine that additional rotations are not necessary.

However, if an Intern feels as though rotations would be beneficial to their career development, the Intern should be allowed to complete four, two to four month rotations. If Interns are restricted from completing the required rotations, the EIP should work to eliminate these barriers. For example, the EIP could consider requiring incoming Interns and managers to submit signed agreements noting that Interns will work to locate rotations that further progress towards their goals and that managers will allow their Interns to participate in rotations.

- **While it is important for Interns to identify their own rotations, some additional guidance would be beneficial.**

Interns whom the evaluation team interviewed almost universally believe that Interns themselves should be responsible for locating rotational opportunities. However, Interns also found it helpful to have managers or mentors serve as a source of information or as sounding board for ideas about rotational assignments. Where managers or mentors are unable to provide the guidance Interns require, some additional source of information would be helpful. One survey respondent described the need for "a more established process for Interns to identify good rotations." Several Interns suggested means to better leverage the knowledge and experience of former Interns. For example, Interns suggest that the EIP develop a database where Interns can enter information about positive or negative rotation experiences. This information would be useful for other Interns as they try to identify assignments. Others recommend developing a website or database where managers could post rotation opportunities that are available to EPA Interns.

- **EIP should consider providing managers more extensive guidance on the rotation process.**

Both managers and interns stress the importance of ensuring supervisors in the home office and rotational office understand the purpose of the rotations. As one survey respondent noted, "EIP should stress to home office supervisors the purpose and/or importance of rotations." Home office supervisors should be aware that Interns are required to participate in rotations. Several respondents noted that managers should expect Interns to leave for short rotations and should plan for these experiences. Interns suggest that raising awareness about the goals of the program would help ensure that an Intern is not "monopolized" by their home office. If additional resources are made available to locate rotational opportunities, managers should be made aware of these resources to ensure they can assist Interns in locating rotations wherever possible.

Managers whom the evaluation team interviewed also believe that rotational managers should be given guidance on how to make the best use of rotational experiences. By learning that it is important to define discrete tasks, project goals, budgets, and timelines prior to bringing the Intern on board, the manager can ensure the experience is more valuable for the Intern as well as the rotational office. Managers also noted that potential rotational supervisors should be cautioned that

not all work is appropriate for Interns. When defining a project, there must be sufficient substantive work for Interns to complete, but the project should have a discrete, short-term timeline.

- **To generate more opportunities for rotations, the EPA Intern Program and the rotational component should be advertised more widely throughout the Agency.**

One survey respondent that the most valuable source of information regarding rotations were staff at the Senior Executive Service (SES) or management level. To facilitate this communication, the EIP could work to educate more upper level management throughout the Agency about the EIP and the possibility of allowing an Intern to rotate into the manager's Office. One respondent noted that awareness is greater within Headquarters and that increased publicity is especially important within regional offices. As part of the effort to increase rotation opportunities, one respondent also suggested that the EIP work with Offices throughout EPA to define a list of rotational opportunities that can be distributed to Interns.

C. Career Planning and Development

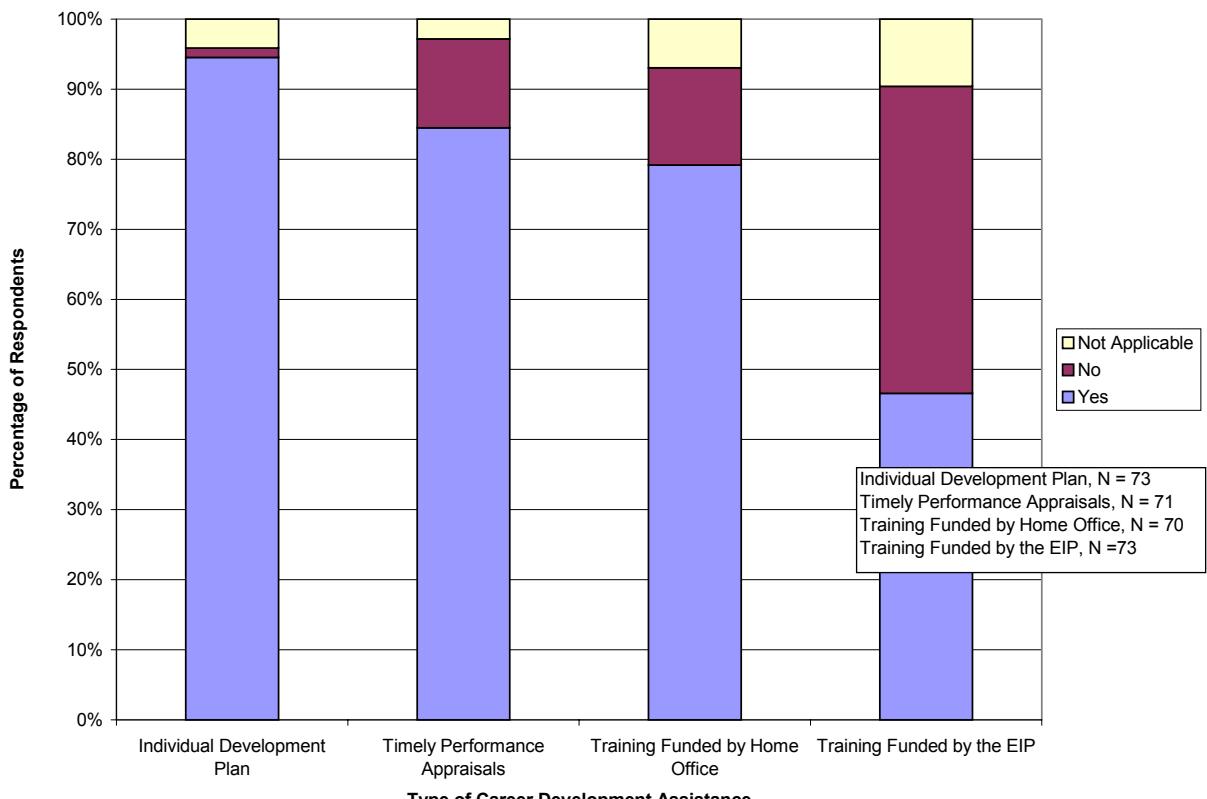
In addition to experience in the home office, rotational opportunities, and class conferences, EPA Interns work with their managers to develop Individual Development Plans (IDPs) to serve as a roadmap for career development during the course of the two year program. Interns may identify certain areas where they believe they need additional training in their IDP. In these cases, the home base office is encouraged to provide Interns the training they request. Interns may also receive training resources from the EIP if the budget allows. Finally, managers are required to provide timely performance appraisals, following the Agency's PERFORMS protocols. The following section presents information on the career development assistance EPA Interns are currently receiving and the feedback Interns provide regarding career development opportunities.

Career Development Findings

- **Nearly all Interns have completed IDPs and have received timely performance appraisals from their managers.**

Ninety-five percent (69 respondents) of EPA Interns responding to the survey report that they have completed an IDP. While still a significant percentage, a slightly lower portion, 85 percent (60 respondents), of the Interns have received timely performance appraisals from their managers. Interns' responses on IDPs are illustrated in Figure 23.

Figure 23
Percentage of EPA Interns Who Received Career Development Assistance



- **Interns report varying levels of satisfaction with the amount of paid training they received. Approximately 80 percent (57 respondents) of Interns have received funding from their home office and nearly half (34 respondents) of the EPA Interns received training funded by the EIP.**

Sixty-five percent of Interns (47 respondents) note that training met or exceeded their expectations. However, approximately 35 percent of Interns (25 respondents) report that training fell below their expectations. Interns generally receive funding from their home office to receive training; 80 percent of Interns report receiving training. One interviewee notes that his home office was very proactive in getting him the training he required.

Funding from EIP for training varies among Interns. Approximately half of the Interns report that they received funding from EIP. Details on the percentage of Interns who received funding for training is illustrated in Figure 23. Several Intern interviewees note that the EIP is frequently vague when committing to funding for training. The Guidance Manual indicates that training may be funded from the Intern's home office or AA/RAsip. In fact, it indicates that any training beyond that specifically outlined in the Manual should be supported by home offices. According to the Manual, further funding from the EIP is provided only if the budget allows. This

decision is made mid-way through the program. However, the factors impacting whether training can be offered is not clearly communicated to Interns. One interviewee explained that his class was confused about whether funding would or would not be available. A final decision was never shared with all Interns and some received funding, while others did not. This Intern noted that because only some Interns received training, there was a sense of favoritism on the part of the EIP.

Career Development Recommendations

- **To ensure that all Interns complete IDPs and receive performance appraisals in a timely manner, these requirements should be publicized among EPA Interns and their managers.**

The EIP includes a comment about both IDPs and appraisals in the 2002 Guidance Manual. To ensure that Interns and their managers are clear on their responsibilities regarding IDPs and appraisals, the EIP should ensure this issue is raised during the Orientation Conference and in communications introducing managers to the Program.

- **The EIP should be more transparent about whether funding will be available to support training for EPA Interns. Expectations should be managed more effectively to avoid scenarios as in which the allocation of funds is perceived as unfair.**

EPA Interns reported confusion about why training might be available one year and not the next or why certain Interns might be selected to receive training. The Guidance Manual emphasizes the importance of training to the Intern experience, even requesting that Interns maintain a Training Log. Given the emphasis placed upon training in this document, it is not surprising that there was some confusion about the availability of funding. By indicating that training is an integral part of the EIP experience, the Manual seems to indicate that training is easily accessible. Program staff indicate that they have distributed notices to Intern classes when funding for training has become available. However, confusion on the issue of whether training will or will not be funded persists.

The EIP should include more information in the Guidance Manual or in more regular updates to Interns about the factors impacting the training budget. In addition, when funding becomes available, the EIP should make clear the factors that impact why one Intern receives training while another might not. In the absence of this information, EPA Interns get the impression that some Interns are favored over others. The Home Office's role in providing training also need to be clarified. One focus group participant noted that there needed to be standard operating procedures with respect to what the EIP provides and what the home office provides to Interns.

D. General Program Guidance for EPA Interns and Intern Managers

Interns and managers receive guidance throughout their time in the EIP, both formally and informally. Guidance and assistance is provided during the Orientation Conference, from supervisors and mentors, through informal emails and communications from EIP, through conversations with other Interns or managers on facilitated conference calls or in day-to-day interactions, and through the EPA Intern Program Guidance Manual. The following section presents

feedback on whether Interns and their managers are receiving the guidance they require and identifies additional guidance and assistance that might be helpful.

Findings on Program Guidance

- **Interns consistently report that home office and rotational managers are a useful source information and guidance concerning a wide range of different issues.**

The evaluation team asked respondents to the Intern survey to provide information on helpful sources of information for 10 types of issues, from administrative questions (e.g., how to file a travel voucher) to locating a permanent position with the Agency. In eight of the ten areas, home office managers were noted as one of the top two sources of information.

Seventy-four percent of Interns responding to the survey note that the guidance they received from their home office manager met or exceeded their expectations. Similarly, 81 percent of Interns report that the guidance they received from their rotational supervisor met or exceeded expectations. Twenty-six percent of the Interns believed that the guidance from their home office manager and 14 percent believed the assistance from their rotational manager was below their expectations. While Interns generally report that their managers are a good source of guidance and support, these responses suggest that guidance the Interns receive may vary considerably depending on their manager's familiarity with the program and that the amount of guidance Interns expect or need may also vary considerably.

Focus group participants tended to have a different outlook on the guidance their managers provided. Participants reported that there was frequently a disconnect between EIP guidance for managers and managers' practices, particularly in terms of the support given to Interns. One focus group participant noted that there is no means to hold managers accountable for providing guidance and other resources to their Interns.

- **It is important for Intern managers to have strong management skills, particularly in addressing the needs of entry-level employees.**

Two Interns commented during the focus group that managers need to be skilled at providing direction to entry-level employees. One Intern even suggested that managers be screened for such abilities and another recommended that managers receive training to teach them how to address the needs of Interns.

- **Both Intern and manager respondents note that they had difficulty getting assistance for Interns with disabilities.**

While the majority of Interns reported that they did not investigate whether guidance was available, 44 percent (seven respondents, N = 16) of those who did attempt to locate guidance on resources available to those with disabilities found no helpful sources of information. One manager stressed that "the lack of resources for Interns with disabilities is a gaping hole in the program... With...so much encouragement to hire persons with disabilities, our support of these Interns in the

Regions is very negligent. The Intern program must provide these resources in the future if they want to support Interns with disabilities.” Our understanding is that the lack of resources for persons with disabilities may be an Agency-wide problem.

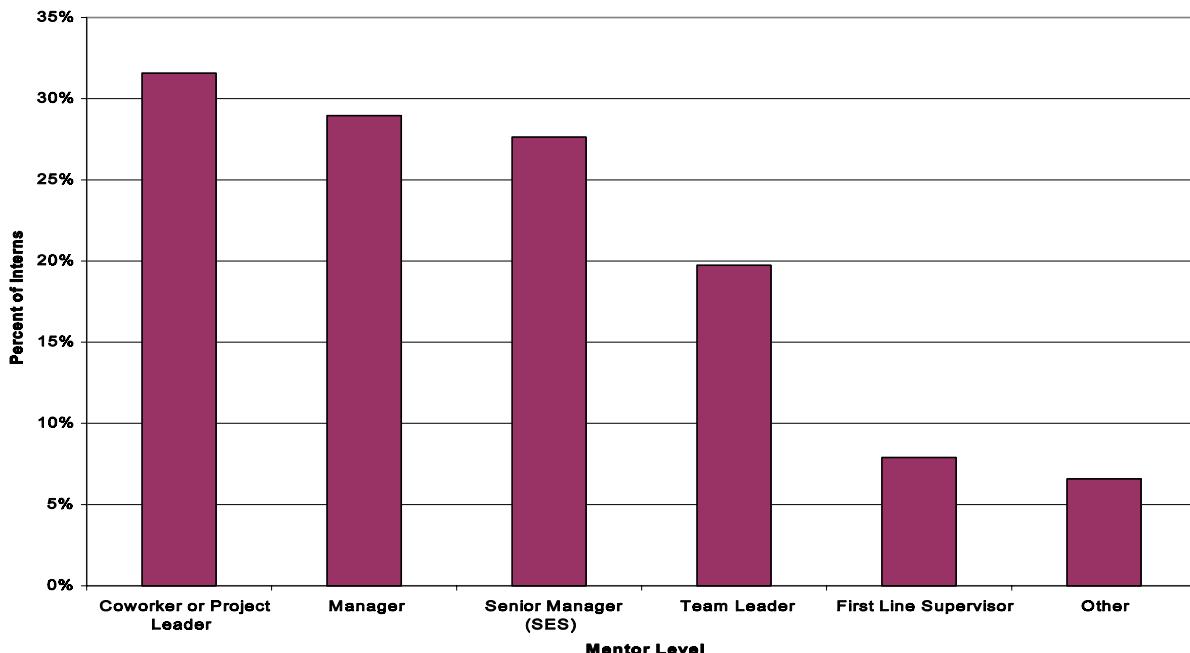
- **Most survey respondents report having a mentor. Responses from Interviewees suggest that Interns who gradually developed a relationship with a mentor found these relationships more valuable than having an individual assigned to be their mentor.**

Many Interns noted that they had difficulty finding a source of assistance to help them locate a mentor. Despite this absence, 74 percent of Interns report having a mentor, either formal or informal. Interns report that their mentors are at various levels, with approximately one third of Interns each reporting that a coworker/project leader (24 respondents), a manager (22 respondents), or an SES manager (21 respondents) served as a mentor. While finding an informal mentor is important and should be encouraged, Interns can gain significant professional exposure from interactions with senior level managers. Establishing a formal mentor-mentee relationship between Interns and SES managers can provide this opportunity to all Interns. The breakdown of Interns’ mentors’ positions is illustrated in more detail in Figure 24.

Survey responses suggest that the guidance and support received from their mentors also varies. Forty-four percent of respondents (25 respondents) note that the guidance and support they received from their mentor met their expectations. Twenty-five percent (14 respondents) felt as though the guidance and support was below their expectations. However, 32 percent (18 respondents) noted that the guidance exceeded their expectations.

The majority of Interns whom we interviewed have or had a mentor. Approximately half of these Interns had a mentor assigned to them, while others sought out mentors on their own. It is our understanding that some offices or regions regularly assign mentors to incoming staff members. In nearly all cases where a mentor was assigned, Interns report that this individual did not serve an important role in the Intern’s development. Most Interns who were assigned mentors ultimately have found another mentor in a supervisor or coworker. Without exception, those Interns whose relationship with their mentor progressed naturally have found this person to be helpful in providing guidance and career development assistance.

Figure 24
Percentage of Interns with Mentors:
Organized by Mentor's Management Level
N = 76



- **A number of EPA Interns responding to the survey note that the guidance and support they received from the EPA Intern program was below their expectations.**

Fifty-eight percent of EPA Interns responding to the survey (41 respondents) noted that the guidance and support provided by EIP was below their expectations. Approximately one third of Interns (34 percent, 24 respondents) noted that the guidance met their expectations. While eight percent of respondents (six Interns) believed the support was above their expectations. Focus group participants also noted that the guidance they received from the EIP was below their expectations. One Intern commented that the program office at times seems unwilling to accept that Interns are having problems and thus may not be providing Interns with the assistance and guidance they require.

Respondents identified a range of areas where guidance and assistance was insufficient. Most Interns who provided feedback on the issue noted that guidance is needed on administrative issues such as processing travel vouchers and reimbursement for other expenses. One Intern noted that the EIP often provided conflicting information on how to handle these administrative issues. Several Interns responding to the survey and participating in the focus groups also raised the importance of developing a comprehensive written guidance. Interns suggested including information on administrative issues, Intern, manager, and EIP staff roles and responsibilities, and the process for initiating basic program activities, such as rotations and centrally-funded training. Both survey and focus group participants noted that written guidance would ensure that Interns,

managers, and the EIP Office meet their defined responsibilities. The EIP has had a written guidance document in place since 1999. However, based upon the feedback received, it appears that program participants are unaware of the guidance or perhaps feel that it does not provide the full range of information Interns require.

- **Interviewees do not believe the EIP should play a significant role in providing guidance and support.**

Interviewees noted that while they did not generally receive substantial guidance or assistance from the EIP, they did not expect to receive such support. One Intern noted that the EIP office should provide support to new EPA Interns, but should not be expected to “hold your hand” throughout the two-year program. Another respondent believed that Interns should be self-motivated and should try to solve problems independently.¹³ Interviewees noted that Interns should look to their home office or other Interns, rather than to the EIP staff. A manager participating in the focus group also suggested that the Intern’s mentor was the more appropriate person to address an Intern’s problems and/or help ensure he/she is able to participate in all Intern activities.

Recommendations for Providing Guidance to Interns and Managers

- **A number of Interns recommend the development of a thorough, written guidance document. The EIP should revamp the existing Program Guidance Document.**

Interns noted that it would be very helpful to have a complete guidance document to which Interns or managers could turn with questions about a wide range of issues regarding the program. For example, several Interns noted that administrative issues such as how to process travel vouchers were frequently very confusing. Interns noted that they received inconsistent or incomplete guidance on how to process these materials or the exact materials that were necessary to process the travel information. Other Interns noted that having a guidance document clearly stating the requirements of the Intern program and Intern’s responsibilities would be helpful. Finally, several interview respondents noted that the EIP should not be looked upon as the primary source of guidance or assistance during the program. By developing a guidance document with details on where Interns should look for assistance, the sources of different types of assistance or guidance could be clarified.

The EIP has recently revised the 2002 EPA Intern Program Guidance Manual, first drafted in 1999. This manual does provide information on the general components of the program and administrative issues such as composing rotational agreements and processing travel information. Some Interns may be unaware or unfamiliar with this guidance document. However, it is possible that the guidance document may still not provide sufficiently detailed information to address Interns’ needs. To ensure that the manual provides the detailed guidance Interns require, it would be useful to convene a team of current and former Interns to evaluate and, as necessary, recommend additions to the manual. The evaluation team recommends that EIP circulate this document to all current EPA

¹³As noted in the methodology, interview participants may be more self-motivated and outgoing than the average EPA Intern. These interview responses may reflect this difference.

Interns. Given the need to continually update EIP guidance, the EIP may consider moving the guidance to an online, indexed file.

- **While the EIP should continue to encourage offices to assign Interns mentors at the beginning of their EIP experience, the EIP should encourage Interns to seek out a mentor who can best meet their career development needs. The EIP should also help to identify SES managers to serve as additional mentors.**

While the consensus among Interns is that mentors are very helpful in their career development, it appears that the most effective mentors are those with whom Interns build relationships over time, rather than mentors who are assigned. When EPA Interns first enter the Office, the Office could assign an initial mentor and guide. An appropriate mentor may be the Intern's supervisor or a former EPA Intern. However, ultimately, supervisors should work closely with the Intern to identify an appropriate mentor, based on their interests, career plan, and the level of assistance the Intern requires. Interns' responses have demonstrated that mentors can be in a wide range of positions. Therefore, based on the organization of the Office, a supervisor, coworker, or SES manager can serve as an effective mentor. To encourage the "natural" development of a mentor, the EIP should inform managers of the results of the evaluation and should provide guidance on how to seek out an appropriate mentor.

The workgroup also believes it is important for EPA Interns to have a senior level manager. In addition to a coworker or direct supervisor who can provide Interns assistance on a day-to-day basis, SES managers can help Interns develop broader, more long-term career goals. Because Interns and their direct supervisors may have difficulty identifying an appropriate SES candidate, the EIP should work with senior level staff within OHROS and throughout the Agency to identify appropriate SES mentors.

- **To support the EIP goal of recruiting and hiring people with disabilities, the EIP program needs to work with the appropriate AA/RAships to ensure Interns with disabilities have the resources they require.**

Both Interns and manager raised the issue of providing resources for Interns with disabilities. While the EIP is not responsible for supplying the funding for such resources and tools, the EIP is actively recruiting candidates with disabilities, and thus the Program should help Interns and managers locate resources through the appropriate channels. Before Interns begin their position, the EIP could contact all Interns with disabilities and discuss what resources they require. Once EIP understands the type of assistance these Interns need, EIP could begin researching how persons with disabilities should get access to the tools they require. The Program could make this information available to Interns and managers and could add appropriate guidance to the guidance manual. The Program could also be prepared to assist Interns and managers track down the resources they require when stakeholders are having difficulty doing so. While the lack of appropriate resources does not appear to be isolated to staff within the EPA Intern Program, it is important that the EIP be proactive in confronting this deficiency.

V. AFTER THE PROGRAM

While the EPA Intern Program is only a two year program, it is designed to train qualified candidates to fulfill gaps in the workforce outlined in the Agency's Workforce Development Strategy, jump-start Interns' careers and develop their potential for advancement at EPA. Since the program was launched in 1998, it is not possible to determine if the Program has been effective at training a cadre of EPA leaders. The period through which we can track the Interns is not long enough for them to have risen to key leadership position. However, the workgroup sought to answer:

- What are the skills and strengths of EIP graduates and how do these compare to Agency employees at a similar level?
- After graduating from the program, are EPA Interns staying at the Agency? Why or why not? How does this compare to other groups of employees, like the Outstanding Scholars or PMIs?

The following section presents the findings from interviews and surveys of the EPA Interns and managers as well as recommendations for how the EIP can better train and retain the next generation of EPA leaders.

A. The Value of the EPA Intern Program

EPA Interns receive significant career development support from the EIP, their home office, and rotational offices. With this assistance, the EIP hopes to train and prepare EPA Interns to be the next generation of EPA leaders. The evaluation team examined whether managers and Interns believe the program does train individuals and prepare them for a career at the Agency and whether stakeholders believe the EIP provides sufficient value to merit its continuation.

Value of the EIP Findings

- **Managers generally believe that EPA Interns are better qualified than other employees who have been at the Agency for a similar period of time.**

The evaluation team asked managers to rate the skills and abilities of recent graduates of the EPA Intern Program with employees who are at approximately the same level. In general, managers believed the EPA Interns were "Somewhat Better" or "Much Better" at a wide range of skills and abilities than other comparable employees. Managers rated former EPA Interns better at 14 of the 16 skills the evaluation team asked managers to assess. Detailed results are presented in Appendix C.

- **Interns whom the evaluation team interviewed believed the EIP prepared them well for work at the Agency and all said they would recommend the EIP to a friend.**

Five of the six former Interns participating in phone interviews noted that they were better prepared as a result of the EIP. Most of these Interns cited the rotations as an opportunity that

standard employees do not have. These rotations helped Interns to learn about the Agency, focus in on areas of interest, and grow into more well-rounded employees.

All ten current and former EPA Interns noted they would recommend a friend join the Program. Interns cited the unique opportunities Interns are offered, the ability to be introduced to the Agency, and the ability to work towards the EPA's mission as key reasons why they would recommend the EIP.

- **The Intern managers interviewed support the Program and its continuation.**

Managers the evaluation team interviewed noted that the EIP helps to successfully train the next generation of EPA leaders. One focus group participant pointed out that the EIP program is intended to groom well-rounded EPA employees who will be the Agency's future leaders. Another indicated that the rotations enabled the Program to realize this goal and to graduate well-rounded EPA employees. One manager noted during an interview that comments and recommendations for improvements are simply thoughts on how to improve upon an excellent program. Managers did note that the Program could use more funding and additional support from EPA's leadership. However, one manager noted that while she supports the program, she did have difficulty with one Intern she hired. Two of the five managers interviewed also noted that the program should work to recruit and hire more diverse candidates.

B. Retaining EPA Interns

A key goal of the EPA Intern Program is retaining Interns to build the next generation of leaders at EPA. As a result, it is important to examine whether Interns are remaining at the Agency, and what factors might be encouraging them to do so. Similarly, the evaluation team examined reasons that might influence Interns to leave EPA. Understanding these factors can help identify ways to raise retention rates among EPA Interns.

EPA Intern Retention Findings

- **Most Interns believe they will stay with the Agency for at least several years beyond their EPA Intern experience. Of the former Interns surveyed, most have remained in their original home office.**

Over half (38 respondents) of the Interns surveyed plan to stay at the Agency for more than six years. Only about one quarter (15 respondents) of EPA Interns plan to leave the Agency within three years. Figure 25 presents Interns' responses in more detail.

Most Interns who have completed the program have remained in their home office. Of those Interns who have left their home office, 60 percent (nine respondents) have moved because of a desire to work in another office at the Agency. Very few Interns have moved offices because of negative experiences in their home office or because Full Time Employment (FTE) was not available. However, home offices are required to guarantee an FTE in the home office at the end of the two-year EIP experience. As a result, no Intern should be forced to leave their home office because an FTE is unavailable. Interns' responses are illustrated in Figure 26.

Figure 25
How Long Do You Plan To Stay with EPA?
N = 76

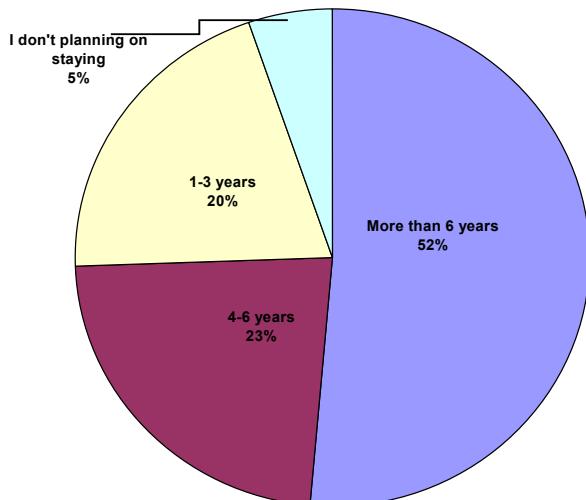
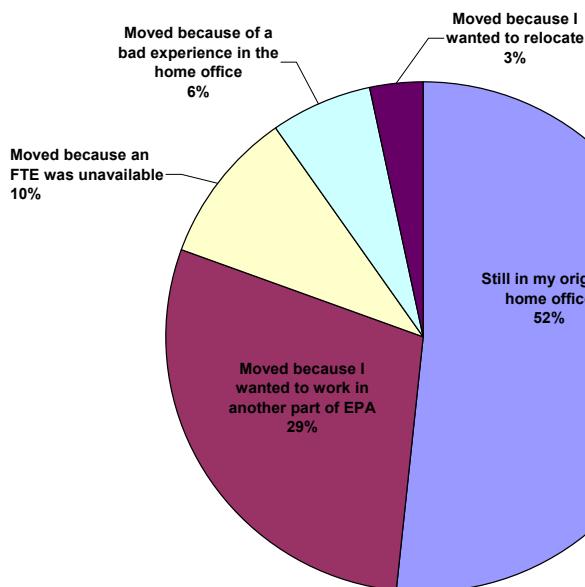
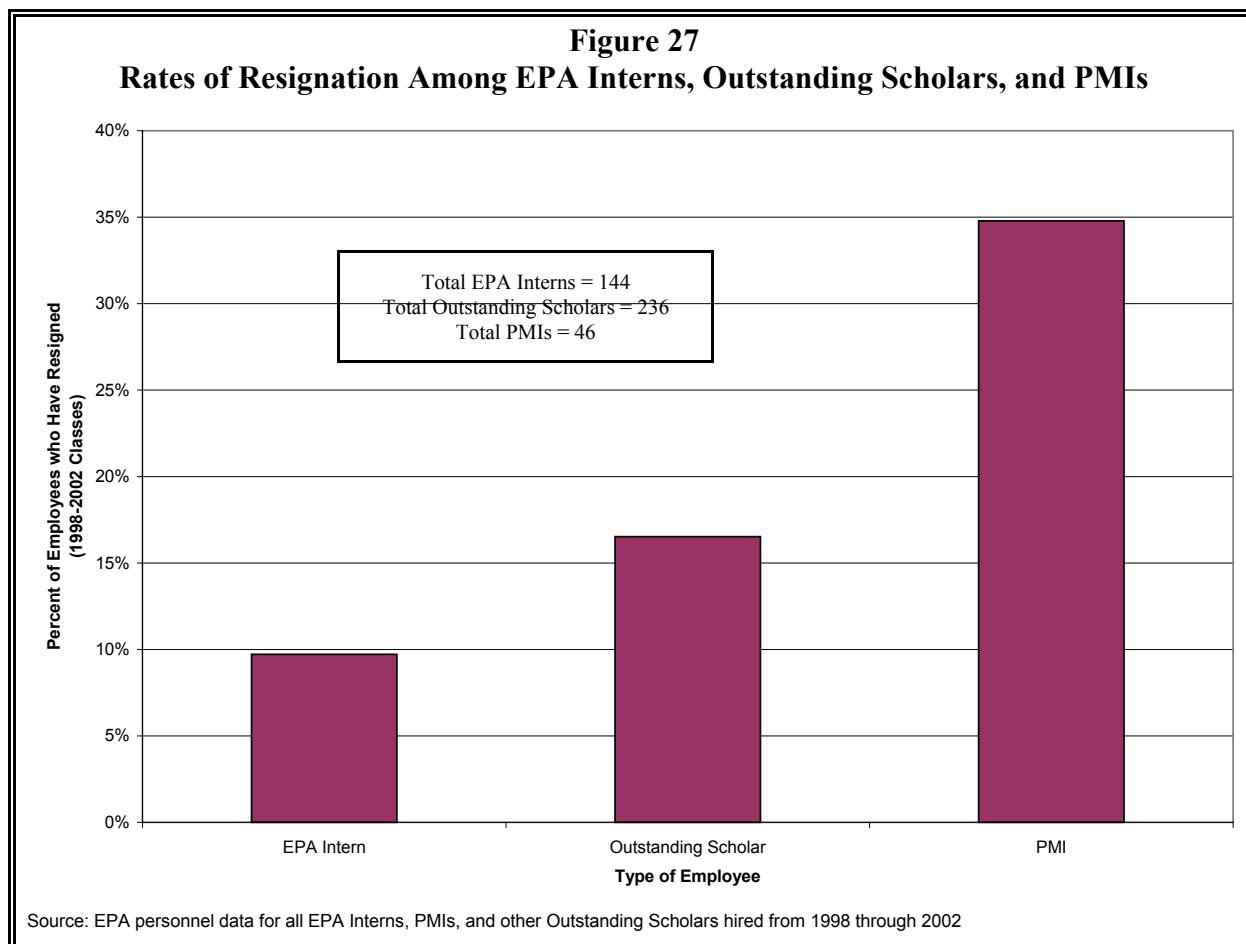


Figure 26
Former EPA Interns' Relationship with Home Office
N = 31



- The rate of resignation among EPA Interns is much lower than for employees in similar career development programs.**

Using demographic data for all EPA Interns, Outstanding Scholars (who are not EPA Interns), and Presidential Management Interns (PMIs) hired between 1998 and 2002, the evaluation team was able to compare the number of employees in each group who have resigned from the Agency. While five years is not likely a sufficient amount of time to view any long term trends regarding retention rates, it does provide some evidence that EPA Interns may be more likely to remain with the Agency than employees in other comparable programs. The percentage of the total hires of each group who have resigned is presented in Figure 27.



- EPA Interns do not identify a single overwhelming factor that would encourage them to leave or remain at the Agency.**

A relatively equal number of respondents selected several different options for why they would choose to stay with the Agency. For example, about 80 percent of Interns noted that challenging work (60 respondents), federal benefits (59 respondents), and a supportive management environment (56 respondents) would encourage them to remain at the Agency. Similarly, about 30 percent of Interns selected three potential factors that would influence them to leave the Agency, a

desire to explore other careers (27 respondents), a desire to work in another area of government (24 respondents), and personal reasons (23 respondents). Interestingly, only 11 Interns noted three or more factors that might encourage them to leave the Agency. Nearly all Interns, 70 of the 76 respondents, noted three or more reasons why they would choose to stay with the Agency. These responses may suggest that Interns who choose to leave the Agency would do so with a very specific goal in mind. Many positive factors that would encourage Interns to stay are likely to be interrelated (e.g., supportive managers and a supportive work environment). Figures 28 and 29 these responses in more detail.

In the focus groups, several Interns stated that they had been misled as to the post EIP opportunities available to them. One Intern was told that his/her post-EIP position would have GS-13 promotion potential and another that he/she would be placed in DC. Neither of these Interns' preferences were accommodated and they felt that they should have some recourse with EPA to rectify the situation. Other Interns felt that the job of securing the position promised to them fell on their shoulders with little or no support from EIP. Such disappointments may encourage Interns to depart EPA after finishing the internship.

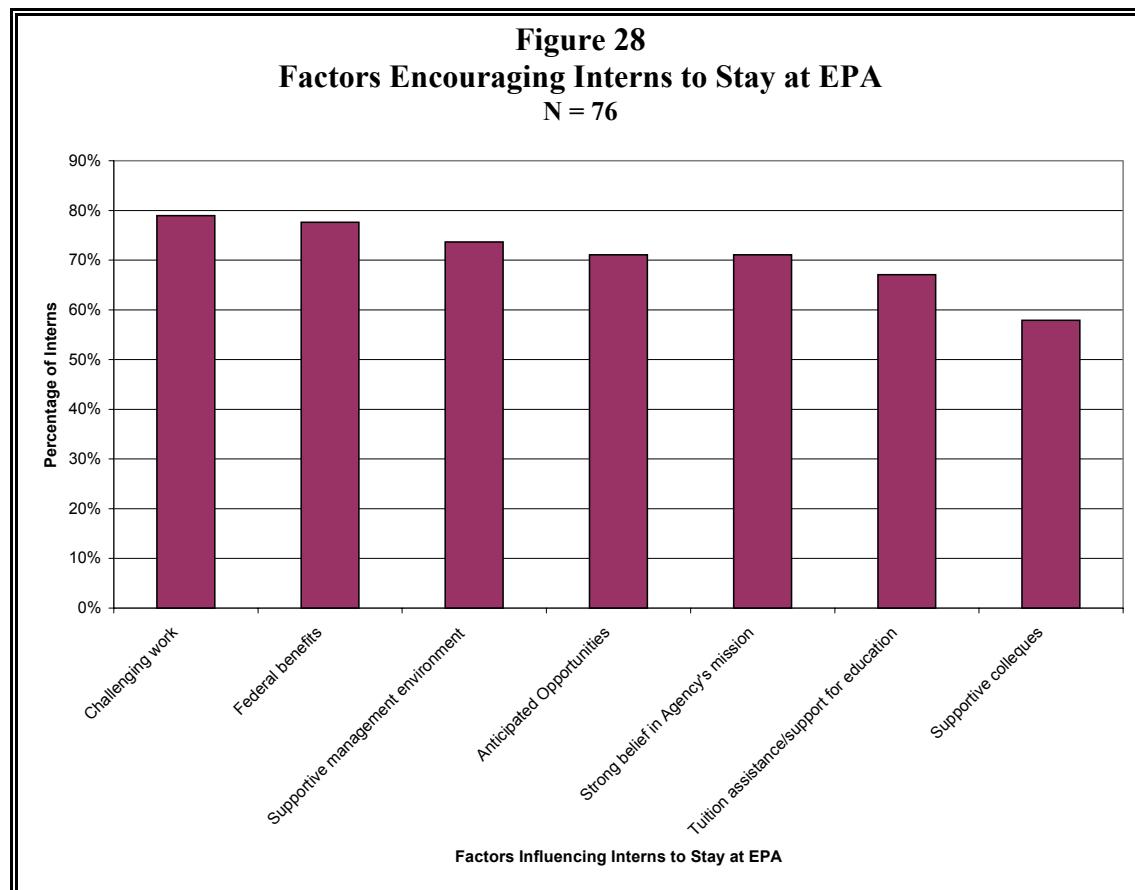
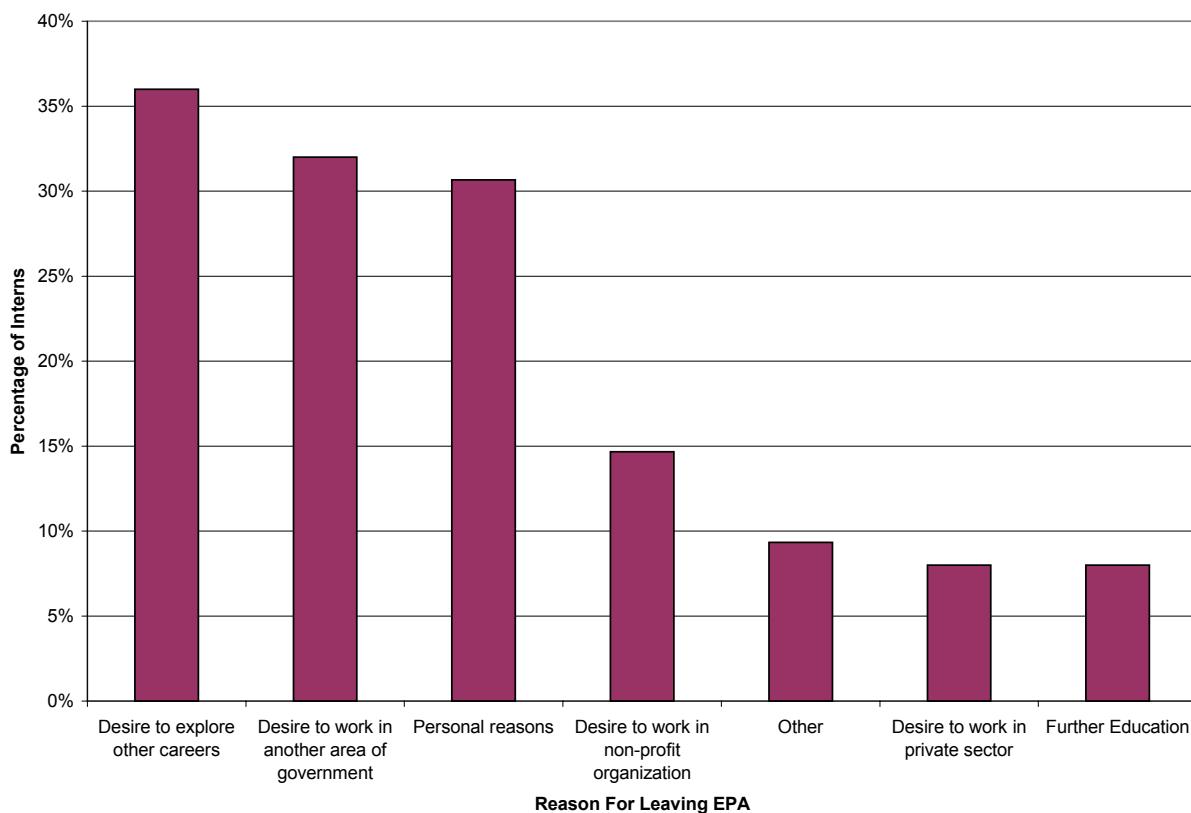


Figure 29
Factors that Might Influence Interns to Leave EPA
N = 75



EPA Intern Retention Conclusions and Recommendations

- **In general, EPA Interns seem to have a high rate of retention as compared to other similar new hires. There is not a clear recommendation for how the EIP can encourage more Interns to remain at the Agency.**

Retention rates for the EPA Interns are quite high as compared to parallel groups of employees. That said, reducing the resignation rate should always be a goal of the program. Responses do not indicate that there is a single dominant reason why Interns might choose to leave. Overall satisfaction with their position seems to be the primary reason Interns choose to remain at EPA. Therefore, responding to other recommendations raised throughout the report is the best course of action for the EIP. By ensuring Interns are receiving the resources, career development assistance, and guidance and support they require, the EIP can improve Interns' overall satisfaction, and as a result, their retention rate.

- **The EIP should clarify their guidance to Interns by noting that, in a very few cases, FTEs may not be available in their home office at the conclusion of the EIP experience.**

According to the October 2002 EPA Intern Program Guidance Manual, EPA Interns are guaranteed an FTE in their home office at the conclusion of the two-year EIP. However, 10 percent of the former EPA Interns who responded to the survey noted that they left their home office because an FTE was not available. While this represents a very small percentage of the respondents (only three Interns), the guidance suggests that no Intern should have difficulty securing an FTE in his or her home office. Before AA/RAships are allowed to hire Interns, the EIP should make clear that, by hiring an Intern, the division is expected to make an FTE available to that Intern at the conclusion of the two-year program. The EIP could also consider revoking an AA/RAship's funding for an Intern the following year if an FTE is not available.

Even if these recommendations are implemented, the EIP will not likely have full control over whether an FTE is made available to an Intern. Therefore, the EIP should inform EPA Intern candidates that in a very small number of cases, FTEs have not been available. This guidance would warn Interns of this possibility and could encourage them to work more proactively with their managers and home office to ensure an FTE will be available for them at the conclusion of the program.

VI. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conducting the evaluation, the workgroup wanted to answer three main questions.

- Is the EIP meeting its identified goals and objectives?
- What is the level of satisfaction among participants?
- Are there lessons learned or recommendations for improving the program?

The workgroup's key findings for each question are described in the following.

A. *Is the EIP meeting its identified goals and objectives?*

The EIP seeks to recruit high potential employees to become the next generation of EPA leaders and also strives to recruit a pool of diverse, highly-quality candidates drawn from a variety of academic disciplines. The evaluation indicates that the EIP is succeeding on both fronts.

- EPA Interns are more ethnically diverse than PMIs, the other recent Outstanding Scholar hires, and the rest of the Agency workforce.
- The EPA Interns include a higher percentage of employees with disabilities and veterans than either the PMIs or Outstanding Scholars hired outside of the EIP.
- Overall, the EIP hires a more highly educated workforce than the Agency hires through general Outstanding Scholar hires.
- Managers believe that the EPA Intern Program attracts higher quality candidates than standard entry-level employees.
- The rate of resignation among EPA Interns is much lower than for employees in similar career development programs.
- Some interviewees did indicate that they were not seeing as diverse a pool of candidates as they would like.

B. *What is the level of satisfaction among participants?*

Both the survey, interviews, and feedback from the program offices indicate that Interns and managers alike support and endorse the program.

- Managers generally believe that EPA Interns are better qualified than other employees who have been at the Agency for a similar period of time.
- Each Intern responded in the affirmative when asked if he/she would recommend the program to a friend/peer.

- Each manager interviewed indicated a willingness and interest in continuing with the program.
- Overall, participants in the focus groups were less satisfied with the program than those who participated in the interviews or the overall survey responses. In particular, focus group participants were dissatisfied with the level of support they receive from EIP—particularly in regard to the development of a detailed written guidance document and with the provision of resources for Interns with disabilities. Focus group participants also were on the whole less satisfied with the quality of their rotational assignments.

C. Are there lessons learned or recommendations for improving the program?

While there was a high level of satisfaction indicating the value of the EIP to both Interns and Managers, both groups identified a number of potential improvements that could be made.

Recruiting, Application, and Hiring

- EIP should encourage the Interns' future supervisors to participate in the interview conference.
- Participating offices should also clearly articulate the position that is available and the responsibilities and tasks associated with that position.
- The EIP should provide some additional guidance, explanations, and updates on the selection and placement process.

During the Intern Program

- Work with Interns and managers to identify opportunities to offer training that meet specific needs, particularly at the Closing Conference.
- Work harder to ensure that Interns with disabilities have the resources they require in their home offices, during rotations, and at the class conferences.
- Provide additional guidance to help Interns identify their own rotations. For example, Interns suggest that the EIP develop a database where Interns can enter information about positive or negative rotation experiences. This information would be useful for other Interns as they try to identify assignments. Others recommend developing a website or database where managers could post rotation opportunities that are available to EPA Interns.
- Encourage supervisors to work closely with Interns to ensure that appropriate and effective mentors are assigned to them.

Appendix A

Scoping Data Collection

Workgroup Members

Brian Twillman, Office of Water

Carlton Eley, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation

Claire Milam, Office of Administration and Resources Management

Edna Rodriguez, Office of Administration and Resources Management

Eduardo Rodela, Office of Administration and Resources Management, Team Leader

Jennifer Morris, Region 7

Michael Mason, Office of Water

Mike Mascia, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation

Steve Smith, Office of Research and Development

Wendy Hopkins Lubbe, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Work Assignment Manager

Email Survey Questions

1. Given the time and money allocated to this evaluation we can not examine everything, however we hope to focus on the most important aspects of the program. If you were going to conduct an evaluation of the EPA Intern program, which one or two areas would you focus on?
2. Why are these areas important?

Notes From Interns Classes of 1998-1999 Focus Group
(October 8, 2002, 9:00 AM)

Participants

- Eduardo Rodela, EPA Institute
- Ken Wright, EPA Institute
- Claire Milam, EPA Institute
- Eight former EIP interns

Purpose of the Evaluation

- The goals of these focus groups is to help identify areas on which the EIP evaluation should focus.
 - EPA will use the responses to answer what the evaluation should focus on and why.
 - Participants are being asked to think about various phases of EIP (i.e., recruiting, hiring) and the goals of the program and then to discuss and prioritize these phases and goals. This discussion will answer what pieces of the program should be examined and will characterize their level of importance.
 - Other questions the focus groups will answer are:
 - Are there phases missing?
 - Are there overarching topic areas that should be addressed other than expectations, diversity, disabilities, and resources?
- The second step in conducting the evaluation will focus on data collection and could include surveys, more interviews, and an examination of differences in EIP and non-EIP personnel (e.g., do retention rates differ?).
 - The second stage will focus on the program's three goals:
 - Recruit a group of high potential diverse employees to be the next generation of EPA leaders.
 - Clearly link to other aspects of the Agency's Workforce Development Strategy.
 - Help jump-start interns' careers and develop their potential for advancement at EPA.
 - The evaluation will not *necessarily* focus on the budget of EIP. However, if focus group participants discuss resources, this will be an area that the second stage of the evaluation will focus on.
 - Upper level management may also reconsider the budget depending on the results of the evaluation.

Ground Rules

- EPA introduced four ground rules for the focus group discussions:
 - Open and honest
 - No debate about comments or responses
 - Confidentiality

- No side conversations
- Focus group participants volunteered two additional ground rules:
 - Be respectful of other participants
 - Stay positive-- assume all participants have the best intentions for the program

Rating the Phases

- Each participant was given four stickers to rate phases in terms of the order of importance (i.e., the phases the evaluation should examine). Participants could put up to two stickers on any one phase.
- Participants rated the seven evaluation phases as follows:
 1. Recruitment (5)
 2. Selection and Placement (4)
 3. Class Conferences (0)
 4. Developmental Rotation (6)
 5. Integration (3)
 6. Ongoing Program Support (9)
 7. After the Closing Conference (5)
- Performance evaluation was suggested as an additional phase that should be examined. Participants decided this could be integrated into phase 6, ongoing program support.

Recruitment

- During the recruitment process EPA should make clear what interns can expect from the program.
- This is a major problem-- managers and interns have different expectations. Interns expectations should be managed during recruitment and hiring. The expectations of managers should be clarified so managers understand their responsibilities for rotations, integration, and ongoing program support.
- Diversity in the recruitment selection provides greater stability (e.g., some older and some younger interns).
- Interns with disabilities have specific needs that must be provided. Some interns with disabilities weren't provided with the resources they needed and could not do their job.

Selection and Placement

- There is frequently not a lot of thought between the intern's qualities and goals and their placement office. Some interns seemed really misplaced.
- For some interns, their interests did not mesh with what the office does. One intern is leaving EPA because she could not find where her interests fit.
- A more transparent selection process of how interns get placed would be helpful.
- It is important to find the nexus between what the interns enjoy and how this fits with the office.

- Personnel offices often do the interview and selection of interns, not the eventual supervisors and managers.
- Some offices provide more support than others. Again, consistency in how interns are placed is important.

Developmental Rotations

- Some managers do not think that interns should go on rotations.
- Some interns saw their managers change entirely when they were in the program. The new manager thought of the intern as a free person and felt no responsibility to allow rotations. EIP program managers could not force this manager to allow rotations.
- Some branches are resistant to letting interns explore and experience what they are interested in. It is good to let interns focus on the skills they have and activities they enjoy.
- Interns with disabilities may be limited in their rotations because some offices may not have the resources they need.

Ongoing Program Support

- Managers need to be managed and held accountable. There has to be some way to say that if managers take on an intern, they must live up to promises of the program.
- Intern supervisors should be interviewed and selected to ensure that they can manage interns and make a commitment to nurturing and supporting the intern.
 - How do managers choose to be involved in EIP? Do they need to agree to support the goals of the intern program?
 - How does EIP determine whether managers are going to be supportive of interns?
- Some managers look at interns as simply a free person for two years.
- Some interns didn't have a supervisor and were simply an intern of the entire office. There was no one to answer to directly.
- Some offices don't support the responsibilities interns have with EIP.
- Coming from a Regional background, ongoing program support has been nonexistent in the Region.
- There is a disconnect between what HQ recommends and what Regions want to do-- a lack of understanding between Regional and HQ managers.
- Even in HQ, some interns were left on their own.
- The EIP office currently just seems to put together guidance and expectations for managers, but there is a disjoint between the guidance and practice.
- EIP should train managers in ongoing program support and how to manage interns.
- Consistency in mentoring and all aspects of the program is important. All interns should have a mentor.
 - What percentage of interns have formal mentors?
 - The manager/identified mentor may not have time to be a formal mentor.
 - It is difficult to identify a mentor when new to the Agency. It would be helpful if EIP programmed this a bit more.

- EIP should survey program managers to determine if they would be interested in being a mentor and give this list to the interns.
- It would be helpful to have a network of interns to provide guidance to new interns to build a sense of culture and community.
- The goal of raising future leaders is misleading. Some interns have had administrative jobs (e.g., filing).
- If the goal of the program is to provide offices with a warm body, this is being met. However, if the goal is to develop future managers, interns should be exposed to different experiences and should be trained.
- Flexibility in training is good, but it should be balanced with what skills interns need to learn to be successful. Structured and formal training of core competencies is important.
 - Allowing interns complete freedom in their training and development can be problematic if an intern has never had a job and has no idea what work they want to do. Interns frequently need more help figuring out if they are in the right office and evaluating what they would like to do, particularly if they are right out of school.
- If interns come into the program already aware of what they are interested in and know what they want to focus on, they can search out appropriate rotations and find well-fitting jobs. However, if interns don't know what they want to focus on, this is much more difficult.
 - Interns could benefit from some sort of job placement tool. At the beginning of the program, interns took a self-assessment test. This should be reviewed and retaken further into the program to reassess which office would best match interests and skills.
 - The entire Agency is without career planning tools. This should be offered for the whole Agency, not just the interns.
- There should be a checklist to make sure that all interns receive performance evaluations.
 - Some supervisors saw the importance of program review. One home base supervisor got feedback from all rotational supervisors to use in performance evaluation.
 - Some interns did not get promoted on time because they didn't have a performance evaluation on file.
- Other interns that had performance evaluations didn't get promoted on time because their manager didn't want to.

After the Closing Conference

- At the end of the two years, interns were not placed, as they were told they would be. Instead, they had to search out positions and interview.
 - When joining the intern program, you are told that at the end of the two years you have the opportunity to select where you want to be placed. This is not true. Interns go through the entire program with false expectations about their future.
 - There should be a clear communication of what interns should expect. It is very stressful to expect to have a job and then suddenly find out that is untrue.
 - For two years, interns think they have a choice about where they will eventually end up and this is untrue.
- After you are done with the program, you are on your own.

- When the program ends, interns feel very insecure about their jobs and there is a high level of anxiety.
- Interns should be told exactly what they need to do in order to get promoted to higher GS-levels.
 - Inconsistency in promotions can be attributed to the particular EPA offices. Some offices require specific experience for promotions. Interns should have been informed of this so that they could plan accordingly.
 - EIP needs someone who can work with interns and tell them the requirements for certain promotions, for example, if you want to work in this office, you need this level of experience to reach your promotion potential. Interns aren't provided with information on specific career tracks.
- Interns were told that their promotion potential was a GS-13. However, program managers and even HR staff were not aware of this potential. Interns often have to really fight for what they were promised.
- It would be interesting to see what interns think EIP staff should do (i.e., what their responsibilities should be and what services they should provide).
- The EIP office needs two to three more staff people to take calls from interns and support and guide them. This would be useful to both interns and managers. The EIP staff do not have enough time to play this role.
 - EIP needs to hire people that can deal exclusively with administrative/structural work so that there are others who can devote time to ongoing support.
- EIP shouldn't focus on travel and recruitment. Ongoing program support is more important.
- A lot of weight falls on former interns to help support and guide the upcoming classes.

Other Lessons

- Exit interviews are very important.
- The evaluation should focus on what was good and helpful so that the evaluation could provide recommendations for program managers and interns.

Notes From Interns Classes of 2000-2001 Focus Group (October 9, 2002, 9:00 AM)

Participants

- Eduardo Rodela, EPA Institute
- Claire Milam, EPA Institute
- Nine interns

Purpose of the Evaluation

- The first step is to help EPA focus the EIP evaluation.
 - EPA wants to examine the phases (e.g., recruiting, ongoing support) of the program and find out what are the most important.
 - This stage of the evaluation will answer the questions what should we focus on and why.
- During the second stage EPA will get some more details on the phases of particular importance.

Ground Rules

- EPA introduced four ground rules for the focus group discussions:
 - Open and honest
 - Confidential
 - No debate (i.e., no right or wrong)
 - No sidebar conversations
 - Assume positive intent
- The interns did not believe that they needed to include "respect" as a ground rule as the interns all knew each other and respect is already a given.

Rating the Phases

- Each participant was given four stickers to rate phases in terms of the order of importance. Participants could put up to two stickers on any one phase.
- Participants rated the seven evaluation phases as follows:
 1. Recruitment (4)
 2. Selection and Placement (1)
 3. Class Conferences (0)
 4. Developmental Rotation (4)
 5. Organization Integration (13)
 6. Ongoing Program Support (8)
 7. After the Closing Conference (6)

- Budget should also be a phase because budget is an integral part of the program.
 - EPA noted that resources is one of the topical areas that comes into play in all phases and is integral to all.
 - One intern believed that the best way to examine the EIP would be to look at the topical areas and then at the phases through the lens of the topical areas. After discussion, it was agreed that they would evaluate the phases and raise topical issues as appropriate.
 - Resources should be better defined and should be broken into budget for the interns (e.g., training, rotations) and budget for the program managers (e.g., number of FTE allocated).
 - The important aspects of resources are: budget, staff, training, recruitment, and rotations.
 - Rotations were frozen for some interns because of lack of budget. However, this wasn't just the result of too little funding allocated for rotations, but overall budgetary constraints.

Selection and Placement

- Interns are sometimes not placed in jobs that are aligned with their skills.
- Offices should hire people who have the skills they need.
- Recruiters select the intern, rather than managers so there may not be a connection with the direct supervisor.
- Supervisors should look at interns' resumes and place the person in the part of the office where they are best suited.
- Pushing the intern from one place to another does not help their learning curve.
- One intern who was hired by their supervisor and was promised all of these things (e.g., mentoring, training, job experiences). However, when she arrived she simply sat in her office without any work.
- Sometimes supervisors don't know what interns are good at.
- Home base offices may not be educated on the program. Therefore, they may not understand what interns are capable of and as a result don't give them substantive work.

Developmental Rotation

- The home office may not understand that interns are expected to go on rotations.

Organization Integration

- There is a lack of consistency in interns' experiences.
- Some interns really did not have experiences and substantive projects that will build their career.
- The program is just being used to hire a person, but the managers don't buy-in to the program.
 - There is a lack of consistent expectations of managers.

- Managers and team leaders aren't participating in training. It would be helpful if managers took part in general sessions, meetings, and/or orientation so that they can be trained and understand the program.
- Some managers don't have time to learn about the program, so others in the office, such as team leaders, could be trained.
- There are some cases where a manager may understand the EIP, but if he leaves, no one in the office is knowledgeable.
- One office lost five interns due to poor management but continues to be assigned new interns.
- The program lacks strength and a clear set of procedures and requirements. The EIP staff must be able to go to program managers and say, "This is what you have to do for the interns."
 - The intern program has no standard operating procedure. The intern program is supposed to have certain standards and interns are supposed to be trained in a certain way. However, the guidance is so vague that it is not employed and can't be enforced.
 - Standard operating procedures would serve as the teeth to enforce the program. If supervisors aren't doing what they are instructed to do, interns could use the standard operating procedures to identify what is required.
 - EIP has had draft guidance for a long time that reads more as a propaganda piece. The document isn't solid and includes only recommendations.
 - The guidance should be turned into standard operating procedures that can be made "the law" of the program. This would guide managers and tell them what they must do. There must also be consequences for not following the procedures.
- Interns need an advocate and a partner. Currently, there is no recourse for problems.
 - All the responsibility falls on the intern. Interns are told that they should continue to network to get what they need.
 - In one case, it took an Intern with a disability six months to get the equipment she required to do her job. Her manager told her to go home and come back once a week to check-in. This intern did not have someone that she could turn to help her get the support she needed.
 - When interns have gone back to the intern program managers to tell them their problems, it is as if the intern program is in denial.
- There should be more communication between the program manager and the intern program staff. For example, there are some situations in the home office (e.g., a termination) that could have been resolved through better communication with the intern program staff.
- The intern program management also needs to be held accountable for the success of the program. The number of interns is viewed as the measure of success, even if the program is dysfunctional.

Ongoing Program Support

- If an office does something for an intern it is because they have chosen to do so, not because they are required.

- Interns are promised a lot of resources from the program and from their managers. Managers are responsible for training and professional development. However, there is no accountability for whether this is provided.
- The only expectations of the office is to provide training. Interns should not have to fight for this training.
- Every intern should have a mentor.
 - Mentoring doesn't work. Sometimes interns can identify someone in their chain of command that can serve as a mentor, but most of the time you cannot.
 - One office requires staff members to serve as mentors at some point in their career. This office has a website where you can enter your interests and you are paired up with an appropriate mentor.
- Five of the nine interns had performance evaluations.
 - One of the interns had to file a grievance with the Civil Rights Office to get an evaluation. The intern could not get promoted until they underwent an evaluation.
 - One intern keeps asking to have an evaluation, but it has not been scheduled.
- Interns are given no ranking and have less rights than normal employees-- they were not allowed to join the union and were excluded from the space selection process during an office move.

After the Closing Conference

- The home base office does not always take on interns after the program is over.
 - Interns sign a form when they enter the program which identifies the home office. This is the office that is supposed to have to hire the intern at the completion of the program.
 - Some offices don't have an FTE once the rotation is over.
 - Some supervisors did not offer to help interns find a job so the interns had to go to all the different offices and interview for a position.
 - Interns are continually told that they must network and meet people and hope to get picked up by some office. There is no one to support the interns and help them get a job.
 - The EIP office was in total denial that interns were not being placed and couldn't provide the interns with any help.
- When there is a disconnect between agreements interns sign and what they are provided, there is no recourse.
 - One intern signed on for a position with GS-13 promotion potential. However, the position created was then a GS-12.
 - Another intern signed for a job in D.C. but then was given a job in North Carolina.
- Some interns have been denied promotion for no particular reason.
- Interns should be provided with administrative training to understand how to handle these type of issues, read contracts, etc.
- There has to be a lot more support and communication. Communication between EIP programs, managers, and supervisors is important.

Lessons For the Evaluation

- It is important that the information from the evaluation be shared with all intern managers and program coordinators in the regions.
 - Interns have already given a lot of information on how to improve the program and it doesn't seem as though this information has filtered through.
 - Other classes of interns have given suggestions and recommendations and this information does not seem to have gotten to the right people and has not made any impact on the program.
 - EPA noted that this information will be presented to program managers and all other stakeholders. EPA stressed that there will be an audience for this effort.
- The evaluation should examine the program's budget and why it has suddenly disappeared.
- It would be interesting to do a survey of interns to see how many got an FTE after the program and if they got a promotion in a timely manner.
- The evaluation should find some interns who are really well-adjusted to learn from their experiences.

Notes From EPA Intern Managers Focus Group (October 9, 2002, 1:30 PM)

Participants

- Eduardo Rodela, EPA Institute
- Claire Milam, EPA Institute
- Five EPA managers

Role of Participating Managers

- Home office manager and a manager for several rotational interns.
- Home office manager who recruited the intern.
- Home office manager for two interns who did not participate in selection.
- Home office manager for several interns.
- Part of the home office who served as a manager for short periods of time.

Purpose of the Evaluation

- The first step in the evaluation is to understand where the evaluation should focus and why.
 - Because the program is so large, the evaluation and resources must be narrowed.
 - The focus group will be used to examine the phases and how the four overarching topics mesh with the phases.

Ground Rules

- EPA introduced four ground rules for the focus group discussions:
 - Open and honest
 - Confidential
 - No debate
 - No side conversations
 - Assume positive intent
- The participants added an additional ground rule: keep the discussion on track.

Rating the Phases

- Each participant was given four stickers to rate phases in terms of the order of importance. Participants could put up to two stickers on any one phase.
- Participants rated the seven evaluation phases as follows:
 1. Recruitment (3)
 2. Selection and Placement (4)
 3. Class Conferences (0)
 4. Developmental Rotation (6)
 5. Organization Integration (4)

6. Ongoing Program Support (2)
7. After the Closing Conference (1)

Selection and Placement

- Sometimes the Agency slips in the selection and placement of candidates.
- In many cases, the people interviewing intern candidates were not the supervisors.
- The right people need to be making the selections as they are making decisions on behalf of a host of managers and supervisors.
- Offices want to bring interns in, but don't want to bring in someone else's (i.e., the recruiter's) idea of who is an exceptional candidate.
- One benefit of selectors is that they are not looking for specific skills-- they are looking for an overall good person that can move between different offices, is an out-of-the-box thinker, is a good writer, has internet skills, and is forward-thinking.
- Open and honest recruitment is important to make sure that the Agency hires interns that will be a good fit.
- It is very important to build a well-rounded workforce with different views (i.e., not so enforcement or media focused). It is beneficial to get people who can look at things from a variety of perspectives.
- In some cases, offices shoot themselves in the foot by hiring candidates that don't fit well.
- One problem with the people that are being hired is that they are motivated and want to keep moving so they likely won't stay with the Agency. Another manager noted that the Agency should accept this.
- Sometimes during the recruitment process you come across candidates who are really bright, but slightly brash. While they might not be considered because of their attitude, these kind of people are often very effective.
- Interns often have unrealistic expectations about the job. For example, during one interview an intern was discussing her desire to work for the Administrator. She had no idea this was an unrealistic expectation.
- All of the interns are such overachievers-- where is the college student with the 3.2 GPA who would love to work in public service? These are probably the best candidates for long-term staff members.
 - These candidates are probably being automatically sifted out in initial paperwork stages.
 - Some real overachievers might just not be a good match for the program.
 - Maybe there could be two piles during the recruiting-- one for very bright candidates and one for less bright people who would make good candidates.
- The Agency has too many 13's and 15's. It would be useful to hire more 7's, 9's, and 11's.
- The Agency needs to be aware of what offices can offer interns to ensure that there will be a good job fit.
- Sometimes offices get interns that seem misplaced or didn't have the skill sets that the office's needed. It was difficult to understand how placement was determined.
- Offices sometimes don't have a specific job they are trying to fill with an intern; there is no assignment waiting.

- More structure in selection could be helpful. For example, if offices want an intern, they could write up a job description that the interns could review. This would ensure a better fit between interns and positions.

Developmental Rotation

- Developmental rotations are the essence of the program-- this is where the interns grow.
- There are two important factors with the rotational assignments-- good supervisors and good projects.
 - Home office managers are concerned about ensuring that rotational managers will take care of the intern when they are sent off on their rotations. Home office managers have to network to determine if there will be someone to care for the intern in the office where they are being sent.
 - Home office managers could have benefitted from help from EIP staff to find people in other offices willing to manage interns during their rotations.
 - It would be helpful if there was a way to disseminate information on new projects coming in where intern help could be used so that home office managers can find good opportunities for interns.
- When one manager sat down with the intern at the beginning of the program to discuss their plan for the next two years, most interns didn't think big enough and needed to be pushed to consider their options (e.g., working outside EPA at Congress or NGOs). These were challenging conversations.
- Interns can benefit from working outside of the Agency and to understand how EPA is viewed.
- Rotational supervisors are tempted to try to keep the interns longer than the rotation is designed to last.
- Rotational assignments of two months seem too short to really learn the culture of the office and get some useful work done. Could they be extended to six months?
- Interns should stay at the home office for nine months before starting their rotations, rather than six.

Ongoing Program Support

- There is a reality gap. Incoming intern's expectations are too high. Sometimes even at their boss's level they wouldn't have the experiences they are expecting. Where do these expectations come from?
- Some interns don't get the experiences they expect and then become disgruntled. Interns need to have good mentors and supervisors who can guide them and be honest with them about their expectations.
- Interns need to be given enough responsibility so that they will stay with the Agency.
- There are expectations for how managers are supposed to handle their interns, but no real requirements.
- Mentoring is necessary for the interns to excel, however, it is difficult to find people to mentor interns.

- Managers want to be able to return the passion and excitement expressed by their interns.
- Offices and program managers should be aware that it takes a lot of time and resources to manage an intern-- it is a big commitment. Some interns need a lot of hand holding.
- Some managers expect interns to be entrepreneurial because they are too busy to assign them specific tasks. In other words, the intern is sometimes expected to go around the office and find their own work. This works really well with some people, but others have a hard time adjusting.
- It is helpful for managers to get some training to understand how to manage their interns.
 - Training on Generation Xers might be particularly useful.
- The Agency is not providing disabled interns the resources they need. Instead, the program is simply checking-off the box for hiring candidates with disabled. Managers need to be trained on how to work with people with disabilities and provide them the resources they need.
 - It is a challenge for managers to make sure Interns with disabilities are provided for and to understand what they need to work effectively.
- The resources are inadequate to manage the program.
- EIP staff are not able to handle all of the interns, particularly those people who aren't settling in well.
- Having only two years in the program is very difficult because interns are constantly going out to rotations and then coming back to the home office for short periods-- seems as though they are being yanked around.

After the Closing Conference

- Managers don't really agree with the stated goal of the program to recruit interns who can be the next generation of EPA leaders (noted on a poster at the focus group).
 - If retention is the goal then this is a key factor that should be examined.
 - What is an acceptable number of interns retained or rate of retention?
- It would be interesting to look at retention and see how many interns are still in the program. This might provide information on whether future leaders are being developed.
 - What are the retention numbers like? Is the Agency keeping good people? Or are we losing them because we aren't doing the right things?
- Interns leave the Agency because they are movers and are always looking for bigger and better things. It is a common mindset of this generation.
 - There is nothing the Agency can do to keep these people around for more than five years.
- Managers should adapt to this new mindset; they should change their management style so that they can handle interns who move in and out of the Agency.
- Retention of interns does not matter-- the goal should be to help the interns learn and grow. If interns don't stay with EPA it is O.K.
- The program should be expanded to ensure we can hold on to the right number of interns.
- A lot of resources are already spent on recruitment and selection and this wouldn't have to be expanded if we hired more people.

Other Lessons

- Sometimes managers don't hear about the experiences of other managers and interns. These lessons would be helpful.
- We should ask the interns whether the program was anything like their expectations.

List of Senior Manager, Key Program Staff, and Team Vegas Interviewees

Senior Managers

1. Rafael De Leon
Office Director, Office of Human Resources and Organizational Services (OHROS)
2. Dave O'Connor
Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Administration and Resource Management (OARM)
3. Bill Rice
Deputy Regional Administrator, EPA Region 7
4. Kerry Weiss
Director, EPA Institute for Individual and Organizational Excellence
5. Morris Winn
Assistant Administrator, Office of Administration and Resource Management (OARM)

Key Program Staff

1. Gwen James
EPA Intern Program Staff
2. Jamie Langlie
Manager, EPA Intern Program

Team Vegas Staff

1. Alfredo Torres
Human Resources Specialist

Senior Manager Interview Guide

1. What has been your experience and involvement with the EPA Intern Program?
 - a. What decisions do you have to make pertaining to the program?
2. What do you see as the value of the EPA Intern program?
 - a. What expectations do you have about the program?
 - b. How should EPA be changed as a result of the EPA Intern Program?
3. What do you feel are the greatest strengths of the program (e.g., what does it do well)?
4. What areas within the program need improvement (e.g., what does it not do well)?
5. What are the most important/critical issues on the horizon for the program?
6. What are the most critical issues that the workgroup should focus on during the evaluation?
7. What type of information would you like to have about the program that you currently lack?
8. How will you use the information provided by the evaluation to help you make decisions regarding the EPA Intern Program?
9. What comments or suggestions would you like to make about the EPA Intern Program or the evaluation that we have not discussed during our meeting?

Key Program Staff Interview Guide

1. What has been your experience and involvement with the EPA Intern Program?
 - a. How long have you been involved with the program?
 - b. What type of work do you or did you do related to the program?
2. What do you see as the value of the EPA Intern program?

The evaluation team is looking at the Program in several stages: Recruitment, Selection and Placement, Class Conference, Developmental Rotation, Organization Integration, Ongoing Program Support, After the Closing Conference. Please answer questions three through five with these specific stages in mind.

3. What do you feel are the greatest strengths of the program (e.g., what does it do well)?
4. What areas within the program need improvement (e.g., what does it not do well)?
5. What are the most important/critical issues on the horizon for each of these areas? What areas will need the most attention as the program moves into its sixth year?
6. What issues, concerns, or questions do or did interns most often bring to your attention?
7. Do you or did you have the tools and resources necessary to respond to interns' questions or concerns?
8. Would you recommend any specific changes be made to the EPA Intern Program?
9. What comments or suggestions would you like to make about the EPA Intern Program or the evaluation that we have not discussed during our meeting?

Team Vegas Staff Interview Guide

Recruitment

- Does Team Vegas play a role in recruitment for the EPA Intern Program? (Assist with recruiting materials, etc.)

Announcement

- How does the process work?
- What role does Team Vegas play in the announcement process?
- How has this role changed/evolved since 1998?
- Is there anyway that the Agency could improve on the current process?

Selection for Interviews

- How is it determined who is eligible to attend the Interview Process?
 - What hiring authorities are currently available to EPA Intern Program?
 - How can each authority be used and which years was it available (1998-2003)?
 - What role does TEAM Vegas play in determining who is eligible to attend the Interview process?
 - How has this role changes/evolved since in 1998?

Selection for Job Offers

- After the interviews, what guidance does Team Vegas provided on the selection of interns to homebase managers?
 - Could this process be improved in some way?
- What was the process for making offers for each Intern Class?
 - 1998
 - 1999
 - 2000
 - 2001
 - 2002
 - 2003

Overall Opinions

- The staff on Team Vega have worked on the EPA Intern Program for five years. Given your vast experience with the Program, what recommendations would you make to improve the hiring process?
- Will you be willing to review or draft evaluation report and provided us with information on the feasibility of some of our recommendations?

Appendix B

Evaluation Data Collection

Interview Questions for Current EPA Interns

As you know, the EPA Institute is conducting an evaluation of the EPA Intern Program (the Program), to assess how well the Program is meeting its goals and objectives and to recommend possible improvements. Working with its contractor, Industrial Economics, Inc. (IEc), the evaluation team is collecting historical data on the Program and recently distributed a survey to Interns and managers involved in the Program. To supplement the information gained from the data collection and surveys, the evaluation team is also conducting a number of more detailed interviews with individuals familiar with the Program. As a current Intern in the Program, your views and experiences will help provide needed background and detail to clarify the points raised in the surveys.

Please review the questions below prior to our meeting. As with the survey we previously distributed, your responses to these questions will be handled confidentially and all results will be presented anonymously.

1. How did you first hear about the EPA Intern Program? What made you want to apply? Was the Program well publicized at your school?
2. How did the application and interview process compare with those associated with other jobs to which you have applied? Did the schedule of the application and interview process coincide with those of other jobs? Were you kept informed throughout the process?
3. How long after your interview did you receive an offer from the EPA Intern Program? How many offers did you receive?
4. Does your home office assignment match your skills and interests well? Please explain. Has your view about the suitability of your home office assignment changed over your time in the Program?
5. What types of assignments or do you typically work on in your home office?
6. Do you have a mentor? Do you work with the person with whom you interviewed?
7. Thus far, has your experience in your home office matched your expectations? Please explain.
8. In what ways does your experience differ from someone who might have been hired full time by your Office, and not as part of the Program?
9. How important do you think the Orientation Conference and the field studies have been to your overall experience and development?

10. How many rotations have you completed thus far? Overall, how important have the rotations been to your experience as an Intern? Have your rotations met your expectations? Have you had sufficient time to conduct meaningful work during your rotations? What were the most valuable elements of your rotations?
11. How much help or guidance have you received in choosing rotations? Has this level of support matched your expectations? Your needs? How might this process be improved?
12. Do you think that your home office and rotation assignments have supported your development of a set of skills or provided complementary experiences?
13. What do you see as the role of the Intern Program office? If you have experienced any difficulties during your time as an Intern, has the Intern Program Office helped resolve them? What other support have you received or do you need? Please explain.
14. What type of career development support do you need or want? Thus far, have you received it?
15. If a friend asked you if he should apply for the EPA Intern Program, what would you say?
16. Please provide us with any additional thoughts you might have about the Program or suggestions for improving it.

Interview Questions for Former EPA Interns

As you know, the EPA Institute is conducting an evaluation of the EPA Intern Program (the Program), to assess how well the Program is meeting its goals and objectives and to recommend possible improvements. Working with its contractor, Industrial Economics, Inc. (IEc), the evaluation team is collecting historical data on the Program and recently distributed a survey to Interns and managers involved in the Program. To supplement the information gained from the data collection and surveys, the evaluation team is also conducting a number of more detailed interviews with individuals familiar with the Program. As a former Intern in the Program, your views and experiences will help provide needed background and detail to clarify the points raised in the surveys.

1. Please review the questions below prior to our meeting. As with the survey we previously distributed, your responses to these questions will be handled confidentially and all results will be presented anonymously.
2. How did you first hear about the EPA Intern Program? What made you want to apply? Was the Program well publicized at your school?
3. How did the application and interview process compare with those associated with other jobs to which you have applied? Did the schedule of the application and interview process coincide with those of other jobs? Were you kept informed throughout the process?
4. How long after your interview did you receive an offer from the EPA Intern Program? How many offers did you receive?
5. Did your home office assignment match your skills and interests well? Please explain.
6. Did your view about the suitability of your home office assignment change over the course of your time in the Program?
7. What types of assignments and tasks did you typically work on in your home office?
8. Did you have a mentor? Did you work with the person with whom you interviewed?
9. Did your experience in your home office match your expectations? Please explain.
10. In what ways did your experience differ from someone who might have been hired full time by your Office, and not as part of the Program?
11. How important do you think the Orientation Conference, Closing Conference, and the field studies were to your overall experience and development?

12. How many rotations did you do? Overall, how important were the rotations to your experience as an Intern? Did they meet your expectations? Did you have sufficient time to conduct meaningful work during your rotations? What were the most valuable elements of your rotations?
13. How much help or guidance did you receive in choosing rotations? Did this level of support match your expectations? Your needs? How might this process be improved?
14. Do you think that your home office and rotation assignments supported your development of a set of skills or provided complementary experiences?
15. What did you see as the role of the Intern Program office? If you experienced any difficulties during your time as an Intern, did the Intern Program Office help resolve them? What other support did you receive or need? Please explain.
16. What type of career development support did you want or need while you were an Intern? Did you receive it? Since leaving the Program, can you identify other skills, techniques, or tools that the Program should provide?
17. Did your experience prepare you for work at the Agency? Do you think your participation in the Program has made you a better EPA employee than if you had just started with your home office? Please explain.
18. If a friend asked you if he should apply for the EPA Intern Program, what would you say?
19. Please provide us with any additional thoughts you might have about the Program or suggestions for improving it.

Interview Questions for EPA Intern Managers

As you know, the EPA Institute is conducting an evaluation of the EPA Intern Program (the Program), to assess how well the Program is meeting its goals and objectives and to recommend possible changes to help improve it. Working with its contractor, Industrial Economics, Inc. (IEc), the evaluation team is collecting historical data on the Program and recently distributed a survey to Interns and managers involved in the Program. To supplement the information gained from the data collection and surveys, the evaluation team is also conducting a number of more detailed interviews with individuals familiar with the Program. Since you have participated in the Program, your views and experiences will help provide needed background and detail to clarify the points raised in the surveys.

Please review the questions below prior to our meeting. As with the survey we previously distributed, your responses to these questions will be handled confidentially and all results will be presented anonymously.

1. Why did you first decide to participate in the Intern Program? Please explain.
2. Have you noticed a difference in the quality of applicant you see through the Intern program as opposed to those who might be hired through a different process? If so, in what ways?
3. How involved were you in the recruiting and screening of your Interns? Did you interview the Interns who came to work for your Office?
4. If you have ever served as a rotation manager, how involved were you in selecting interns who rotated through your office?
5. Were you well informed about the selection process of home office interns? Did you have the opportunity to make offers to your top choice(s)? What suggestions would you have for improving the process?
6. What are your primary responsibilities as manager of an EPA Intern? How do these differ from your responsibilities to other employees?
7. If you have ever served as a rotation manager, what were your primary responsibilities as a rotational manager? Do these responsibilities differ from your responsibilities as a home office manager?
8. Who was responsible for overseeing the Intern's activities in your Office? Did you help Interns you managed find a mentor?
9. What type of guidance did you receive from the Intern Program about your responsibilities?

10. If you have ever served as a rotation manager, what type of guidance did you receive about responsibilities as a rotational manager?
11. If the Intern experienced problems with home office assignments or finding a suitable rotation, where did they typically turn for assistance?
12. Do you think that the average stay in the home office is long enough to allow Interns to do substantive work? Could the schedule of the home office and rotational assignments be improved?
13. What, in your view, is the value of the rotation process for Interns? From the point of view of a home office manager, what are the drawbacks and benefits (for your office and/or the Intern) associated with the rotations? If you can comment as a rotational manager, what are the drawbacks and benefits associated with having an intern for a rotation?
14. EPA Interns receive significant career development assistance during their two years in the Program (e.g., rotations, training, class conferences). What impact do you think this has on the quality of their work and their ability and/or desire to become Agency leaders?
15. Have your expectations with regard to the Program been met? Please explain. Do you plan to continue to participate in the Program? Why or why not?

List of EPA Intern and Manager Interviewees

Current EPA Interns

Amanda Babcock, Office of Environmental Information
Kawana Cohen, Region 1
Jason Daniels, Region 7
Sharon Vazquez, Office of the Chief Financial Officer

Former EPA Interns

Dave Erickson, Region 7
Robert Johnston, Office of Environmental Information
Jee Kim, Region 2
Juan Parra, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response
Treda Smith, Office of Administration and Resource Management and Office of Water
Jason Swift, Region 5

EPA Intern Managers

Leticia Fish, Region 9
Mark Hague, Region 7
Joyce Kelly, Region 10
Tony Maciorowski, Office of Water
Barbara Pabotoy, Office of Air and Radiation
Renee Wynn, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response

Survey of Past and Current EPA Interns

This survey is being given to all of the past and current Interns as part of an evaluation of the EPA Intern Program. This survey is part of an evaluation being conducted by the EPA Institute to understand how well the program is working and to recommend changes. Please answer all of the questions. If any question on the survey is unclear, please feel free to call Abby Campbell at Industrial Economics, Inc, at 617-354-0074 for clarification. Thank you for your help.

16. Where did you first hear about the EPA Intern Program?

- EPA'S EZHIRE WEBSITE
- OPM'S USAJOBS WEBSITE
- ADVERTISEMENT IN A PERIODICAL
- THE PRESIDENT'S WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (FLYER/JOB FAIR)
- SCHOOL CAREER OFFICE
- PROFESSOR OR ACADEMIC ADVISOR
- JOB FAIR OR CAREER CONFERENCE
- PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION
- EPA INTERN PROGRAM FLYER
- EPA "EMPLOYEE MATTERS" NEWSLETTER
- CURRENT OR FORMER INTERN
- OTHER EPA EMPLOYEE

Other _____

What could be done to improve the recruitment process?

17. Why did you apply for the EPA Intern Program? (Please check all that apply)

- INTEREST IN WORKING AT EPA
- INTEREST IN WORKING IN PUBLIC SERVICE
- INTEREST IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
- APPEAL OF THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Other _____

18. Were you interviewed by your home office supervisor during the EIP interview conference?

YES
 NO

- 3a. If no, who conducted the interview?

HR STAFF PERSON
 MANAGER FROM THE AA OR RASHIP, BUT NOT FROM HOME OFFICE
 ANOTHER MANAGER FROM YOUR HOME OFFICE

Other _____

19. As you started your home office assignment, you likely had some expectations about the EPA Intern Program, such as the skills you might gain or the career development assistance you might receive. Please list three key expectations you had about the EPA Intern Program as you started your home office assignment:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

- 4a. We also want to understand what sources shaped those expectations. How important were the following information sources in shaping your expectations about the EPA Intern Program? (If a source had no impact on your expectations, please check “Not Important”).

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
EPA’S EZHIRE WEBSITE	_____	_____	_____	_____
OPM’S USAJOBS WEBSITE	_____	_____	_____	_____
SCHOOL CAREER OFFICE	_____	_____	_____	_____
CAREER FAIR INFORMATION	_____	_____	_____	_____
EIP MATERIALS	_____	_____	_____	_____
EPA “EMPLOYEE MATTERS” NEWSLETTER	_____	_____	_____	_____
CURRENT OR FORMER INTERNS	_____	_____	_____	_____
OTHER EPA EMPLOYEE	_____	_____	_____	_____
INTERVIEW PROCESS	_____	_____	_____	_____
EIP STAFF PRESENTATIONS	_____	_____	_____	_____
EIP ORIENTATION	_____	_____	_____	_____
INITIAL DISCUSSION WITH SUPERVISOR	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

20. To help us understand whether your home office placement fit well with your background and skills, please indicate with a check which of the following statements are true. (Please check all that apply).

- HOME OFFICE POSITION WAS IN MY FIELD OF STUDY
- RESPONSIBILITIES WERE CONSISTENT WITH MY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
- HOME OFFICE WAS IN A PROGRAMMATIC AREA WHERE I WAS INTERESTED IN WORKING
- PLACEMENT WAS NOT A GOOD FIT

What could be done to improve the placement process?

21. What knowledge or skills did you gain from the EIP Orientation Conference? (Please check all that apply).

- OVERVIEW OF EPA INTERN PROGRAM
- OVERVIEW OF EPA'S CULTURE
- OVERVIEW OF WORK/PROGRAMS AT EPA
- CAREER DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE
- TOOLS FOR TEAM BUILDING
- TOOLS FOR ROTATION PLANNING
- TOOLS FOR PRODUCING INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS (IDP)
- OPPORTUNITY FOR NETWORKING
- OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE CONTACTS FOR ROTATIONS
- OPPORTUNITY TO MEET OTHER INTERNS
- N/A, I DIDN'T GAIN ANY KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS

Other _____

6a. What three aspects were the most valuable? (Please choose options from the list above).

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

6b. How would you rate the length of the EIP Orientation Conference?

- TOO SHORT
- RIGHT LENGTH
- TOO LONG

6c. How would you rate the value of the EIP Orientation Conference?

- NOT VALUABLE
- SOMEWHAT VALUABLE
- VERY VALUABLE
- EXTREMELY VALUABLE

22. What knowledge or skills did you gain from the EIP Field Studies? (Please check all that apply).

- IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORK OF THE AGENCY
- UNDERSTANDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL CLEAN-UP EFFORTS
- COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/OUTREACH EXPERIENCE
- UNDERSTANDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUES
- UNDERSTANDING OF COMPLIANCE AND PREVENTION EFFORTS
- SCIENTIFIC SKILLS
- MONITORING SKILLS
- RESEARCH SKILLS
- COMMUNICATION SKILLS (e.g., WRITING, INTER-PERSONAL)
- COMPUTER SKILLS
- PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS
- PROJECT PLANNING EXPERIENCE
- LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE
- ABILITY TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY
- ABILITY TO WORK AS PART OF A TEAM
- OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER INTERNS
- MOTIVATION
- ATTENTION TO DETAIL
- N/A, I DIDN'T GAIN ANY KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS
- N/A, I HAVEN'T PARTICIPATED IN THE FIELD STUDY YET

Other _____

7a. What three aspects were the most valuable? (Please choose options from the list above).

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

7b. How would you rate the length of the EIP Field Studies?

- TOO SHORT
- RIGHT LENGTH
- TOO LONG
- NOT APPLICABLE

7c. How would you rate the value of the EIP Field Studies?

- NOT VALUABLE
- SOMEWHAT VALUABLE
- VERY VALUABLE
- EXTREMELY VALUABLE
- NOT APPLICABLE

23. What skills or knowledge did gain through your home office assignments? (Please check all that apply).

- IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORK OF THE AGENCY
- SUBSTANTIVE UNDERSTANDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
- SCIENTIFIC SKILLS
- MONITORING SKILLS
- RESEARCH SKILLS
- COMMUNICATION SKILLS (e.g., WRITING, INTER-PERSONAL)
- COMPUTER SKILLS
- PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS
- PROJECT PLANNING EXPERIENCE
- LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE
- ABILITY TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY
- ABILITY TO WORK AS PART OF TEAM
- ABILITY TO TAKE ON INCREASING RESPONSIBILITY IN HOME OFFICE
- MOTIVATION
- ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Other _____

8a. What three aspects were the most valuable? (Please choose options from the list above).

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

24. What skills or knowledge did you gain through your rotational assignments? (Please check all that apply).

- IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE OF ANOTHER EPA OFFICE
- INTEREST IN OTHER AREAS OF WORK/OTHER EPA OFFICES
- EXPOSURE TO VARIED PERSPECTIVES OR VIEWS
- SCIENTIFIC SKILLS
- MONITORING SKILLS
- RESEARCH SKILLS
- COMMUNICATION SKILLS (e.g., WRITING, INTER-PERSONAL)
- COMPUTER SKILLS
- PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS
- PROJECT PLANNING EXPERIENCE
- LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE
- ABILITY TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY
- ABILITY TO WORK AS PART OF TEAM
- OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS
- MOTIVATION
- ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Other _____

9a. What three aspects were the most valuable? (Please choose options from the list above).

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

9b. In general, how would you rate the length of your rotational assignments?

- TOO SHORT
- RIGHT LENGTH
- TOO LONG

9c. In general, how would you rate the value of your rotational assignments?

- NOT VALUABLE
- SOMEWHAT VALUABLE
- VERY VALUABLE
- EXTREMELY VALUABLE

25. Do you feel you went on, or will have the opportunity to go on, the right number of rotations?

TOO FEW
 RIGHT AMOUNT
 TOO MANY

- 10a. How many rotations have you completed?

26. The following question lists a series of statements relating to EPA Intern rotational assignments and columns for up to eight rotations. Under each of the appropriate rotation columns, please indicate whether each statement is true, false, or not applicable (T, F, N/A). If you have not completed a rotation or if there are more columns than are appropriate, please just leave the spaces blank.

	Rotations							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
THIS WAS MY HQ/REGIONAL ROTATION RESPONSIBILITIES MET OR EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
CONSISTENT WITH SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
VALUABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
VALUABLE CAREER DEVELOPMENT	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

In the future, what can the EPA Intern Program do to ensure a good rotational experience for interns?

27. How did you generally locate your rotations?

- POSITION WAS ADVERTISED
- ASSISTANCE FROM HOME OFFICE MANAGER
- ASSISTANCE FROM MENTOR
- SOUGHT OUT POSITION BASED ON MY OWN INTEREST
- N/A, I HAVE NOT YET LOCATED MY FIRST ROTATION

Other _____

28. What resources do you or did you find helpful for guidance and support on various aspects of your EIP experience? (If you relied on multiple sources, please indicate all that apply).

	EIP Staff or Written Guidance	Home Office Manager	Mentor	Other Interns	No Helpful Sources	Not Applicable
GUIDANCE ON ADMIN ISSUES (e.g., TRAVEL VOUCHERS)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
QUESTIONS/CONCERNS ABOUT HOME OFFICE DUTIES	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
QUESTIONS/CONCERNS ABOUT HOME OFFICE MANAGER	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
SUPPORT FOR EIP REQUIREMENTS (e.g., ROTATIONS, TRAINING, CONFERENCES)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
GETTING RESOURCES FOR INTERNS WITH DISABILITIES	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
CAREER DEVELOPMENT	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
GUIDANCE SELECTING ROTATIONS	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
SUPPORT DURING ROTATION	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ASSISTANCE LOCATING A MENTOR	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ASSISTANCE IN LOCATING A PERMANENT POSITION	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Are there any specific resources or support you need(ed) but are not available?

29. Did your EPA intern experience include the following?

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND EIP CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS	_____	_____	_____
TRAINING FUNDED BY EIP	_____	_____	_____
TRAINING FUNDED BY HOME OFFICE	_____	_____	_____
AT LEAST FOUR, TWO TO FOUR MONTH ROTATIONS	_____	_____	_____
TIMELY PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS FROM HOME OFFICE MANAGER	_____	_____	_____
AN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)	_____	_____	_____
MENTOR	_____	_____	_____
OFFER OF A PERMANENT POSITION IN YOUR HOME OFFICE	_____	_____	_____

30. If you have/had a mentor, what level is/was your mentor(s)? (If you have/had more than one mentor, please check all that apply).

_____	COWORKER OR PROJECT LEADER
_____	TEAM LEADER
_____	FIRST LINE SUPERVISOR
_____	MANAGER
_____	SENIOR MANAGER (SES)
_____	N/A, I DID/DO NOT HAVE A MENTOR

Other _____

31. What knowledge or skills did you gain from the closing conference? (Please check all that apply).

_____	ENHANCED MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS
_____	ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES
_____	PROBLEM SOLVING TECHNIQUES
_____	CAREER PLANNING/MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES
_____	N/A, I HAVE NOT YET ATTENDED THE CLOSING CONFERENCE

Other _____

16a. What two aspects were the most valuable? (Please choose options from the list on the previous page).

1)

2)

16b. In general, how would you rate the length of the closing conference?

- TOO SHORT
 RIGHT LENGTH
 TOO LONG

16c. In general, how would you rate the value of the closing conference?

- NOT VALUABLE
 SOMEWHAT VALUABLE
 VERY VALUABLE
 EXTREMELY VALUABLE

32. Did, or thus far is, the EPA Intern Program meet(ing) your expectations?

	Below Expectations	Met Expectations	Exceeded Expectations	Not Applicable
OPPORTUNITIES/ASSIGNMENTS IN HOME OFFICE	_____	_____	_____	_____
RESPONSIBILITIES DURING ROTATIONS	_____	_____	_____	_____
TRAINING RECEIVED	_____	_____	_____	_____
OTHER CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES	_____	_____	_____	_____
GUIDANCE/SUPPORT FROM HOME OFFICE SUPERVISOR(S)	_____	_____	_____	_____
GUIDANCE/SUPPORT FROM ROTATIONAL SUPERVISOR(S)	_____	_____	_____	_____
GUIDANCE/SUPPORT FROM EIP PROGRAM	_____	_____	_____	_____
GUIDANCE/SUPPORT FROM MENTOR PLACEMENT AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE EPA INTERN PROGRAM	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

33. If you have completed the EPA Intern Program, what is your relationship with your home office? (If you have left your original home office, please indicate the primary reason for your move).

- STILL IN MY ORIGINAL HOME OFFICE
- MOVED BECAUSE I WANTED TO WORK IN ANOTHER PART OF EPA
- MOVED BECAUSE OF A BAD EXPERIENCE IN THE HOME OFFICE
- MOVED BECAUSE I WANTED TO RELOCATE
- MOVED BECAUSE AN FTE WAS UNAVAILABLE
- MOVED FOR PERSONAL REASONS
- N/A, I HAVE NOT YET COMPLETED MY EXPERIENCE

Other _____

34. How long do you hope to stay with the Agency beyond your time in the EPA Intern Program?

- I DON'T PLAN ON STAYING AT EPA BEYOND THE EPA INTERN PROGRAM
- 1-3 YEARS
- 4-6 YEARS
- MORE THAN 6 YEARS

35. What would be the primary factors that would influence you to leave the Agency? (Please indicate the primary reason).

- DESIRE TO EXPLORE OTHER CAREERS
- DESIRE TO WORK IN ANOTHER AREA OF GOVERNMENT
- DESIRE TO WORK IN PRIVATE SECTOR
- DESIRE TO WORK IN NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
- PERSONAL REASONS
- N/A, I DON'T PLAN ON LEAVING THE AGENCY

Other _____

36. What factors might influence your decision to stay with the Agency? (Please check all that apply).

- CHALLENGING WORK
- ANTICIPATED OPPORTUNITIES
- TUITION ASSISTANCE/SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION
- STRONG BELIEF IN AGENCY'S MISSION
- FEDERAL BENEFITS (FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULE, HEALTH INSURANCE)
- SUPPORTIVE MANAGEMENT ENVIRONMENT
- SUPPORTIVE COLLEAGUES
- NO FACTORS WOULD INFLUENCE ME TO STAY WITH THE AGENCY

Other _____

37. Please indicate your intern class:

- 1998
- 1999
- 2000
- 2001
- 2002

38. Please indicate who funded your EPA Intern Program experience?

- CENTRALLY FUNDED
- FUNDED BY HOME OFFICE
- I DON'T KNOW

39. Please indicate your home office:

- HEADQUARTERS
- REGION

40. **Optional:** If you'd like, please note your specific home office assignment and/or your name:

Office _____
Name _____

When you have completed the survey, please return it to our contractor, Industrial Economics, Inc. You can fax your survey to Abby Campbell at Industrial Economics, Inc. at 617-354-0463, or you can mail it to:

Abby Campbell
Industrial Economics, Inc.
2067 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140

Thank you again for your participation!

Survey of EPA Intern Program Home Office Managers

This survey is being given to all who have served as home office managers for staff hired under the EPA Intern Program. This survey is part of an evaluation being conducted by the EPA Institute to understand how well the program is working and to recommend changes. Please answer all of the questions. If any question on the survey is unclear, please feel free to call Abby Campbell at Industrial Economics, Inc, at 617-354-0074 for clarification. Thank you for your help.

41. Where did you first hear about the EPA Intern Program?

- HRO/PMO
- AA/RA/ARA COMMUNICATIONS
- EPA'S EZHIRE WEBSITE
- OPM'S USAJOBS WEBSITE
- EPA "EMPLOYEE MATTERS" NEWSLETTER
- OTHER EPA EMPLOYEE

Other _____

42. Why did you decide to participate in the program? (Please check all that apply)

- EASE OF HIRING PROCESS
- FUNDING ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY EPA INTERN PROGRAM
- POSITIVE FEEDBACK ABOUT SKILLS OF EPA INTERNS
- REQUESTED BY UPPER LEVEL MANAGEMENT

Other _____

43. Did you interview your Intern at the EIP Interview Conference or at any other time prior to selection?

	Intern 1	Intern 2	Intern 3	Intern 4	Intern 5	Intern 6
YES	____	____	____	____	____	____
NO	____	____	____	____	____	____

5a. If you did not conduct the interview, who generally did?

- HR STAFF PERSON
 MANAGER FROM THE AA OR RASHIP, BUT NOT FROM HOME OFFICE
 ANOTHER MANAGER FROM YOUR OFFICE

Other _____

44. Did you find the introductory orientation session for the interview process to be a helpful resources?

- YES
 NO
 I DID NOT ATTEND THE ORIENTATION SESSION

45. Please respond to the following regarding your experience with the interview process.

	Agree	About Right	Agree	TIMING (BEGINS TOO LATE)	LOGISTICS (CONFUSING)
TIMING (BEGINS TOO EARLY)	_____	_____	_____	TIMING (BEGINS TOO LATE)	LOGISTICS (CONFUSING)
LOGISTICS (CLEAR)	_____	_____	_____	EFFORT EXPENDED (SIGNIFICANT)	# OF CANDIDATES (TOO MANY)
EFFORT EXPENDED (LITTLE)	_____	_____	_____	EFFORT EXPENDED (SIGNIFICANT)	# OF CANDIDATES (TOO MANY)
# OF CANDIDATES (TOO FEW)	_____	_____	_____	EFFORT EXPENDED (SIGNIFICANT)	# OF CANDIDATES (TOO MANY)

Other _____ Other _____

46. How does the EPA Intern Program selection process compare with the selection of other entry-level employees?

	Better Than Standard Process	The Same As Standard Process	Worse Than Standard Process
SCREENING OF CANDIDATES	_____	_____	_____
INTERVIEW PROCESS	_____	_____	_____
SELECTION PROCESS	_____	_____	_____
QUALITY OF HIRES	_____	_____	_____

47. What, if any, skills or qualifications do you feel are missing from the pool of EPA Intern candidates? (Please check all that apply)

- SUBSTANTIVE UNDERSTANDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
- SCIENTIFIC SKILLS
- MONITORING SKILLS
- RESEARCH SKILLS
- COMMUNICATION SKILLS (e.g., WRITING, INTER-PERSONAL)
- COMPUTER SKILLS
- PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS
- ABILITY TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY
- ABILITY TO WORK AS PART OF A TEAM
- MOTIVATION
- ATTENTION TO DETAIL
- DIVERSITY
- NO QUALIFICATIONS ARE MISSING

Other _____

48. Which of the following were important to you in choosing an Intern for your office or for a rotation? (Please check all that apply)

- CANDIDATES EXPRESSED INTEREST EPA/ENVIRONMENTAL WORK
- CANDIDATES EXPRESSED INTEREST IN MY OFFICE
- EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE WELL MATCHED WITH NEEDS
- CANDIDATE'S GENERAL SKILLS (e.g., COMMUNICATION SKILLS)
- I DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE SELECTION PROCESS

Other _____

49. At the beginning of their EPA Intern experience, how do the skills and performance of incoming EPA Interns compare to those of other entry-level employees performing similar tasks?

	Much Better	Somewhat Better	About Equal	Not as Strong
UNDERSTANDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES				
SCIENTIFIC SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
MONITORING SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
RESEARCH SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
COMMUNICATION SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
COMPUTER SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
ABILITY TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY	_____	_____	_____	_____
ABILITY TO WORK AS PART OF A TEAM	_____	_____	_____	_____
MOTIVATION	_____	_____	_____	_____
ATTENTION TO DETAIL	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

50. In general, what skills do you believe Interns gained on their rotational assignments?
(Please check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE OF ANOTHER EPA OFFICE
<input type="checkbox"/>	INTEREST IN OTHER AREAS OF WORK/OTHER EPA OFFICES
<input type="checkbox"/>	EXPOSURE TO VARIED PERSPECTIVES OR VIEWS
<input type="checkbox"/>	SCIENTIFIC SKILLS
<input type="checkbox"/>	MONITORING SKILLS
<input type="checkbox"/>	RESEARCH SKILLS
<input type="checkbox"/>	COMMUNICATION SKILLS (e.g., WRITING, INTER-PERSONAL)
<input type="checkbox"/>	COMPUTER SKILLS
<input type="checkbox"/>	PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS
<input type="checkbox"/>	PROJECT PLANNING EXPERIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/>	LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/>	ABILITY TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY
<input type="checkbox"/>	ABILITY TO WORK AS PART OF TEAM
<input type="checkbox"/>	MOTIVATION
<input type="checkbox"/>	ATTENTION TO DETAIL
<input type="checkbox"/>	PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Other _____

51. While managing EPA Interns, what level of assistance did you provide?

	More than Other Employees	Same as Other Employees	Less than Other Employees	Not Applicable
DEVELOP PERFORMANCE STANDARDS	_____	_____	_____	_____
CAREER DEVELOPMENT	_____	_____	_____	_____
GUIDANCE/IDP	_____	_____	_____	_____
ALLOCATE TRAINING DOLLARS	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

If the level of guidance or assistance you provided interns and other entry level employees was different, please explain why.

52. Did you assist Interns you managed in any of the following areas? (Please check all that apply)

- ASSISTED IN LOCATING ROTATIONS
- ASSISTED IN LOCATING A MENTOR
- ASSISTED IN LOCATING PERMANENT PLACEMENT
- I DID NOT PROVIDE ASSISTANCE IN ANY OF THESE AREAS

53. What resources do you or did you find helpful for guidance and support in addressing specific concerns about managing your Interns? (If you relied on multiple sources, please check all that apply).

	EIP Staff / Written Guidance	PMO/ HRO	Other EIP Managers	HR Staff / Team Vegas	No Helpful Sources	Not Applicable
PROBLEMS WITH INTERN PERFORMANCE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
QUESTION ABOUT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY (e.g., TRAINING)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
GETTING RESOURCES FOR INTERNS WITH DISABILITIES	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ASSISTANCE IN LOCATING ROTATIONS	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ASSISTANCE IN LOCATING A MENTOR	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ASSISTANCE IN LOCATING A PERMANENT POSITION	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Are there any specific resources or support you need(ed) but are not available?

54. Overall, did/are the EPA Interns you have managed meet(ing) your expectations about their performance?

	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Below Expectations	Not Applicable
UNDERSTANDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES				
SCIENTIFIC SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
MONITORING SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
RESEARCH SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
COMMUNICATION SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
COMPUTER SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
ABILITY TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY	_____	_____	_____	_____
ABILITY TO WORK AS PART OF A TEAM	_____	_____	_____	_____
MOTIVATION	_____	_____	_____	_____
ATTENTION TO DETAIL	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Please list three key expectations you had about the performance of your EPA Interns:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

55. After completing their EPA Intern experience, how do the skills and performance of former Interns compare to those of other EPA employees performing similar tasks who have been with the Agency for the same length of time?

	Much Better	Somewhat Better	About Equal	Not as Strong
UNDERSTANDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES				
SCIENTIFIC SKILLS	—	—	—	—
MONITORING SKILLS	—	—	—	—
LEADERSHIP SKILLS	—	—	—	—
RESEARCH SKILLS	—	—	—	—
COMMUNICATION SKILLS	—	—	—	—
COMPUTER SKILLS	—	—	—	—
PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS	—	—	—	—
PROJECT PLANNING SKILLS	—	—	—	—
LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE	—	—	—	—
ABILITY TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY	—	—	—	—
ABILITY TO WORK AS PART OF A TEAM	—	—	—	—
ABILITY TO TAKE ON INCREASING RESPONSIBILITY IN HOME OFFICE	—	—	—	—
MOTIVATION	—	—	—	—
ATTENTION TO DETAIL	—	—	—	—
SUITABILITY FOR LONG TERM ADVANCEMENT	—	—	—	—
Other _____	—	—	—	—

56. Have the Interns you managed remained at the Agency after their EPA Intern experience?

	Intern 1	Intern 2	Intern 3	Intern 4	Intern 5	Intern 6
YES, STILL IN THE HOME OFFICE	—	—	—	—	—	—
NO, MOVED BECAUSE WANTED TO WORK IN ANOTHER PART OF EPA	—	—	—	—	—	—
NO, MOVED BECAUSE WANTED TO RELOCATE TO ANOTHER EPA LOCATION	—	—	—	—	—	—
NO, MOVED BECAUSE AN FTE WAS UNAVAILABLE	—	—	—	—	—	—
NO, LEFT AGENCY FOR PERSONAL REASONS	—	—	—	—	—	—
N/A, INTERN I MANAGE IS STILL IN THE EPA INTERN PROGRAM	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other _____	—	—	—	—	—	—

17. What, if any, reservations would you have about continuing to participate in the EPA Intern Program? (Please check all that apply)

- TOO TIME CONSUMING
- LOGISTICALLY DIFFICULT
- POOR PERFORMANCE FROM AN INTERN
- AN INTERN I MANAGED DID NOT SPEND ENOUGH TIME IN MY OFFICE
- N/A, I HAVE NO RESERVATIONS

Other _____

18. How long have you participated in the EPA Intern Program?

- 1 Year
- 2 Years
- 3 Years
- MORE THAN 3 YEARS

19. How many EPA Interns have you managed? (Please note the number of interns you have managed under each scenario).

- Home Office Manager (Intern Centrally Funded)
- Home Office Manager (Intern Funded by Home Office)
- Rotational Manager

20. Please indicate the office for which you work:

- HEADQUARTERS
- REGION

21. **Optional:** If you'd like, please note your specific office and/or your name:

Office: _____
Name: _____

When you have completed the survey, please return it to our contractor, Industrial Economics, Inc. You can fax your survey to Abby Campbell at Industrial Economics, Inc. at 617-354-0463, or you can mail it to:

Abby Campbell
Industrial Economics, Inc.
2067 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140

Thank you again for your participation!

Appendix C

Additional Figures

How Do the Skills of New EPA Interns Compare to Those of Other Entry-Level Employees?

Percentage of Respondents (Number of Respondents)

Skill or Qualification	Better than Other Employees	Equal to Other Employees	Not as Strong as Other Employees
Ability to Work as Part of a Team (N = 28)	43% (12)	43% (12)	14% (4)
Ability to Work Independently (N = 28)	54% (15)	32% (9)	14% (4)
Attention to Detail (N = 28)	36% (10)	57% (16)	7% (2)
Communication Skills (N = 28)	50% (14)	32% (9)	18% (5)
Computer Skills (N = 28)	54% (15)	43% (12)	4% (1)
Monitoring Skills (N = 22)	27% (6)	64% (14)	9% (2)
Motivation (N = 28)	61% (17)	32% (9)	7% (2)
Problem Solving Skills (N = 28)	46% (13)	43% (12)	11% (3)
Research Skills (N = 25)	44% (11)	48% (12)	8% (2)
Scientific Skills (N = 24)	42% (10)	42% (10)	17% (4)
Understanding of Environmental Issues (N = 28)	32% (9)	57% (16)	11% (3)

Source: EPA Intern Managers survey responses.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

How Do the Skills of EPA Interns Who Have Completed the Program Compare with Similar Employees?

Percentage of Respondents (Number of Respondents)

Skill or Qualification	Better than Other Employees	Equal to Other Employees	Not as Strong as Other Employees
Ability to take on increasing responsibility in home office (N = 28)	61% (17)	29% (8)	11% (3)
Ability to Work as Part of a Team (N = 30)	50% (15)	33% (10)	17% (5)
Ability to Work Independently (N = 30)	57% (17)	30% (9)	13% (4)
Attention to Detail (N = 29)	45% (13)	41% (12)	14% (4)
Communication Skills (N = 29)	62% (18)	24% (7)	14% (4)
Computer Skills (N = 28)	61% (17)	29% (8)	11% (3)
Leadership Experience (N = 26)	62% (16)	27% (7)	12% (3)
Leadership Skills (N = 32)	56% (18)	28% (9)	16% (5)
Monitoring Skills (N = 21)	24% (5)	62% (13)	14% (3)
Motivation (N = 30)	63% (19)	27% (8)	10% (3)
Problem Solving Skills (N = 29)	59% (17)	28% (8)	14% (4)
Project Planning Skills (N = 29)	55% (16)	31% (9)	14% (4)
Research Skills (N = 29)	46% (13)	43% (12)	11% (4)
Scientific Skills (N = 25)	28% (7)	52% (13)	20% (5)
Suitability for Long Term Advancement (N = 29)	55% (16)	31% (9)	14% (4)
Understanding of Environmental Issues (N = 30)	60% (18)	23% (7)	17% (5)

Source: EPA Intern Managers survey responses.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.