



# Goddard Engineers, Scientists and Technicians Association (GESTA) IFPTE Local 29

GESTA Meeting with the  
GSFC Center Director  
May 24, 2017



# To: Chris Scolese our GSFC Center Director



On behalf of the Goddard Engineers, Scientists & Technicians Association (GESTA), IFPTE Local 29; the GESTA Executive Council (EC) members; and myself, we are grateful for the efforts you have made towards improvements in the Center and working relationships with GESTA. In particular the invitation to Labor to address all of GSFC's Supervisor's in December 2015 was a great idea and deeply valuable to Labor. Much more work needs to be done; however, and we must continue to strive for improvement in all that we do for NASA and our working relationships.

It is also particularly noteworthy that the Goddard Information and Collaboration Center (GIC<sup>2</sup>) has won the 2016 Large Federal Library of the Year award. This example, shows a great success story whereby GESTA helped in keeping a value institution at Goddard open, and Management invested resources to improve it. It is satisfying to learn that use of the library materials and the facility is increasing and that also that Management has obtained a archivist to document and to retain valuable information and artifacts of Goddard's rich history.

The GESTA Executive Council and I look forward toward continuing in building a strong and healthy working relationship with you and GSFC Management for the mutual benefit of our NASA mission, our employees, and the American people. GESTA is deeply committed to our Bargaining Unit Employees (BUE's) and to the NASA mission. I have said that Management and Labor more often than not share the same goals, but our paths toward achieving those goals are different. The art of diplomacy and negotiation often means that neither side gets everything that they want, but that everyone gets what they can live with. I believe that the compromise solution is often the best solution for all parties involved.

It is my sincerest hope that Management and Labor can continue to work together for the mutual benefit of NASA and for all of our employees, i.e., rank and file employees and Managers alike, in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration.

Best Regards,

*Anel Flores*, President GESTA IFPTE Local 29

NASA GSFC Mail code 220.9  
8800 Greenbelt Road  
Greenbelt, MD 20771, U.S.A.  
Tel: (301) 286-7841 (office)



## What is the Impact of Administration's Budget on Goddard?



The President's Budget no longer supports the formal Office of Education, the Orbiting Carbon Observatory-3 (OCO-3), Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, ocean Ecosystem (PACE), Climate Absolute Radiance and Refractivity Observatory Pathfinder (CLARREO PF), and the Radiation Budget Instrument (RBI); hence, what will be the impacts of these changes and cuts on the GSFC workforce?

GESTA is concerned that that our Earth Scientists and those studying Climate Science are being unfairly and perhaps illegally targeted for removal from Federal Service. How is the Center addressing this concern?

How will the Center address the reduction in Earth Science funding and how will that impact our Scientists?



# Proactive Training of the Next Generation of Civil Servant Scientists, Engineers and Technicians



We are losing civil servant expertise as more technical work is being done by contractors, which wasn't the case 20 or 30 years ago. Contractors may change companies every ~5 years, whereas civil servants can work for GSFC for 20+ years. Many of the civil servants with years of experience and knowledge have been retiring, and most of them have not been replaced, so GSFC is losing institutional knowledge on the civil servant side. Contractor expertise is still there, but without some civil servants with the necessary technical expertise, then the technical oversights may suffer as civil servant task monitors are no longer in a position to evaluate and make decisions beneficial to the government and they have to rely almost exclusively on the contractors' expertise.

When we do have new scientists, engineers, or technicians, coming either via the Pathways/Co-op programs or college recruits, they are not given any adequate training, but they must either "sink or swim". The lack of funding for adequate training is often cited by managers – it appears that in the current environment, projects are not willing to assign additional funding for civil servant training. They would agree to fund the actual work they want to get done, but would not allow the engineering, scientific or technical trainees to use the WBS that the senior engineers (which maybe a contractor) can use.

## **Proposed Remedy:**

The decision to find funding for civil servant trainees has to be done at the higher management level, e.g., on the center-wide or directorate-wide levels, because Branch heads and project managers are more concerned with the "here and now" of accomplishing their particular projects/missions to be able to think long-term issues such as the sustained viability of the center's civil servant expertise.



# NASA GSFC Exigency Process



GSFC Exigency Process is inconsistent with the rest of NASA. GSFC is not doing a good job of using and managing annual leave. Agency audit findings:

- GSFC accounted for 70% of NASA's restored leave.
- GSFC accounted for 45% of all leave forfeited at NASA at the end of the year.

Process seems to lose focus on the fact that committed employees are working to support flight project needs and schedules which demand skill sets to meet mission goals.

Employees sacrifice the use of earned leave at the current time for use at a later time for the project benefit. Removal of the project from this fundamental reason why employees have excessive leave at the end of the year seems to miss the point as to why excess leave accrues in the first place. Furthermore, suggesting that employees consider donating the benefit of earned leave is insulting; the employee sacrifices the use of earned leave to support project commitments. Our hard working employees need to be the primary recipient of a well deserved time off for relaxation and unwinding. The true scope of labor use required by flight projects should really point to a lack of successful management of resources and schedule to meet original project commitments. This is not an individual employee problem.

## **Proposed Remedy:**

- Projects need to schedule milestones better with sufficient and adequate schedule reserves.
- GESTA is willing to help in participating a committee to resolve this matter.



# Retirement Buyouts



GESTA requests that Center Management inform its Supervisors and Managers that employee buyouts are based on work requirements and they are not to be abused as a means of getting rid of employees Managers don't like.

Additionally, GESTA recommends the use of buyouts should the current Administration continue to require the reduction of the NASA Workforce, provided it is done in a reasonable and thoughtful way.

**Rationale:** Employees have informed GESTA that certain Managers have abused the retirement buyout into pressuring them to retire.

## **Proposed Remedy:**

- GESTA Strongly recommends that GSFC Management inform its Supervisors and Managers that employee buyouts are to based on work requirements and they are not to be abused as a means of getting rid of employees Managers don't like or to pressure employees into retiring. Buyouts are strictly voluntary and Supervisors and Managers may not force employees to retire.



# Deaf Employees Request View of Interpreter during Webcasts



For follow-up, we would like to know what if any progress has been made in this area?

Our Deaf employees request that the GSFC TV studio add a small video, such as an insert, of the sign language interpreter for speakers during webcast presentations and videos. This method of presenting an interpreter may save money instead of using closed captioning.

**Rationale:** It also allows our deaf employees to view the live or recorded webcast in their offices or while they telework off-site instead of having to go to another building for the event/presentation with an interpreter.

## **Proposed Remedy:**

- GESTA Strongly recommends that GSFC seek to include the addition of a small video, such as an insert, of the interpreter for speakers during webcast presentations and videos.



# Name Women and Minorities on Goddard Awards



For follow-up, we would like to know what if any progress has been made in this area?

**Unnamed Diversity Awards** –Although, Goddard has Diversity awards they aren't named after women or minorities, and it appears that Goddard awards are named after white males only. Although, there have been women and minorities who have had successful careers at Goddard no Goddard award is named after them. It's long overdue that Goddard name some of its awards after women and minorities, which will help in demonstrating its principles of diversity and inclusion.

## **Proposed Remedy:**

- GESTA strongly recommends that Management name of it's awards after prominent women and minority employees.
- Specifically, GESTA strongly recommends that Goddard name one of its Diversity awards after Dr. Mario Acuna, a former Goddard Senior Astrophysicist, who was a major pioneer in the field of planetary magnetism.



# GESTA Contact Information



## ➤ GESTA

- **Office:** Building 23, Room N209. **Conference room:** building 23, room W135
- **Mailing Address:**  
 GESTA, IFPTE Local 29  
 NASA Goddard Space Flight Center  
 Building 23, Mail Code 220.9  
 8800 Greenbelt Road  
 Greenbelt, MD 20771
- **Phone:** 301-286-2066 (with voice mail); **Fax:** 301-286-0312
- **Website:** [www.GESTA-Goddard.org](http://www.GESTA-Goddard.org)

Name	Position	Phone	Email
Anel Flores	President	6-7841	Anel.Flores@nasa.gov
Walter Flournoy	Executive Vice President	6-3775	Walter.T.Flournoy@nasa.gov
Stephen Leete	Secretary	6-9093	Stephen.Leete@nasa.gov
Edwin Fung	Treasurer	6-7347	Edwin.H.Fung@nasa.gov
Frank Kirchman	Area-Vice President	6-1218	Frank.J.Kirchman@nasa.gov
Alvin Boutte	Area-Vice President	6-2128	Alvin.J.Boutte@nasa.gov
Tryshanda Moton	Area-Vice President	6-6849	Tryshanda.T.Moton@nasa.gov
David R. Williams	Area-Vice President	6-1258	David.R.Williams@nasa.gov
Vacant	Area-Vice President	TBD	TBD