



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

GESTA Meeting with the  
GSFC Center Director  
November 29, 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. 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 valueable 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. On another good note GESTA's relationship with the GSFC Labor Relations Office has been steady improving, which has been key in resolving many issues. 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 may be 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)



## Parking in Buildings 12, 23, and 36 has Gotten Much Worse



Due to the construction between buildings 22 and 23 the parking in buildings 12, 22 and 23 has substantially worsened. Also, a considerable number of parking spaces are reserved, which doesn't help the situation. Given that added spaces are lost by front entrances to 22 and 23, that makes it difficult to return to one's office any time between 9:30 AM and 11 AM, or between 1 PM and 3 PM. That makes offsite meetings or luncheons difficult.

Due to full parking spaces in the Building 23 & 36 parking lots, many Building 23 & 36 employees have to park in the parking lot just south of Building 7. However, that parking lot is at a higher elevation than the Building 23 parking lot, with a grassy gradient separating the "top" parking lot and Building 23. After rainy days the gradient becomes muddy and slippery, and negotiating the gradient in either direction may be hazardous, leading to falls. Previously there are a set of steps between the Building 23 parking leading upward to Building 16 & 16W, but due to demolitions of those 2 buildings that set of steps is closed.

### **Proposed Remedy:**

- Is it possible to increase the number of parking spaces for building 12, 23 and 36, even after this latest construction?
- Can the number of reserved parking spaces be reduced to an absolutely necessary number while the construction is ongoing?
- GSFC should consider more than one taxi or bus after the construction is completed, because they will likely be needed by employees.
- Can the dirt path located at the building 23 parking and facing building 7 be modified with steps to prevent employees from slipping or falling on the dirt path?



## General Questions (1 of 2)



- 1) We have been getting reports from employees that the background checks are getting more intrusive, but GESTA received no notice for such changes. Is there any particular reason why the background checks have become more intrusive? For example, there were questions on one's finances and other areas where privacy concerns are raised. Also, they want to know how many kids you have, and their names as well. An investigator wanted to see an employee in person to go over the eQIP questions/answers. That session lasted about an hour and a half.
- 2) Employees have also reported changes to the credit release form, but why wasn't GESTA informed of these changes, in particular regarding medical information?
- 3) Employees have reported that most or all positions/PDs are undergoing a risk update and some updates end with a different risk rating than expected. What is this all about and what does a different risk rating mean, and how does it impact our employees?



## General Questions (2 of 2)



- 4) GESTA and employees want the center to make clear announcements about demolition, about health concerns people may have. For example, is there asbestos in the buildings? Was it fully removed? Is the dust dangerous? Should people with compromised immune systems, or respiratory issues, take any special precautions? What is the timeline? Etc. This is particularly important in the demolition of buildings 16 Brick and 16 W.
- 5) Can the employee suggestion program be reinstated to allow employees to submit comments and suggestions for improvement (i.e., outside of the lessons learned system)? Does anyone know why the employee suggestion program was stopped?

With the influx of retirements in the next 5 years or so; the Center needs to develop a strategy for getting coaching for retirees, and plans for institutional knowledge capture.

## **Proposed Remedy:**

- The NASA and GSFC needs to develop a strategy for getting coaching for retirees, and plans for institutional knowledge capture due to the expected workforce changes over the next 5 to 10 years.



# 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.



# 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 W131
- **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