

## MEMO

**To:** State Library Commission  
**From:** Karen Strege  
**Re:** Mediation with NRIS staff and director & performance evaluation process  
**Date:** April 19, 2000

This is an update on the process on agreements made between the NRIS director, staff, and me during the February 25 mediation meeting.

It is important for the Commission to know that I arranged this mediation session when it became clear that the relationship between the NRIS director and staff was not good. This mediation did not directly address the plan and the proposed reorganization. I took this step because I thought that a frank and direct exchange of opinions could help repair the relationship. I view the session's outcomes as mixed. On one hand, the agreements are helpful and staff and Jim shared their perceptions and views in a direct and productive manner. On the other hand, both Jim and some members of the staff were not satisfied that they discussed all the issues.

The agreements were as follows:

### 1. Job descriptions

Agreements: Jim and Karen will see that each person get a copy of their job description. Pam will send him or her to Karen, to see if they match those she has; when Karen okays them, they will be sent out to each employee.

Outcome: Completed

### 2. Performance evaluations

Agreements: Performance evaluations will be developed ASAP. Karen will see that the performance evaluation process is in place by June 1; meanwhile, employees should, with their coordinators: (A) examine their work plans, (B) write down questions and suggestions for changes.

Outcome: I scheduled a training for managers on March 23 but cancelled because I wanted to meet with NRIS staff before the start of my vacation. I rescheduled the training for April 24. At this training, I will present a proposed process; we will refine this proposal and agree on a process for use agency-wide. Managers will brief staff on the

process and then begin to evaluate staff members individually. I will work with each manager to ensure that they give performance evaluations a very high priority and follow through to see that they complete them in a timely manner.

The proposed process is very interactive. It requires that the staff member and supervisor work together to agree upon a work plan and to evaluate the employee according to the work plan's objectives. The process also includes soliciting information from a staff member's peers and/or clients. The evaluation of supervisors will also include assessments by their employees.

### 3. Funding problems

Agreement: At the next possible staff meeting, Karen and Jim will explain the funding situation, and share information on all those areas; in the interim, employees are urged to communicate their specific concerns to Karen and Jim via e-mail.

Outcome: Jim explained the overall NRIS funding structure to NRIS staff. Kris and I met with staff to explain the end of year fiscal situation. Staff felt that these updates were helpful, and I agreed to present updates when new information is available.

### 4. Communication problems

Agreement: For all staff meetings, we will set an agenda, post it early, be sure tasks which have been delegated and accepted are noted, and an opportunity to report the follow-up on those times is given.

Outcome: Staff has met a few times since the mediation but only recently has staff resumed a "normal" staff meeting schedule due to proposed plan, reorganization, and Jim's resignation. These agreements have been partially met but as staff meetings resume, staff and managers must commit to ensuring that this agreement is implemented.