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United States General Accounting Office
To the Comptroller General

GAO

March 1987

Women's Advisory Council 1986 Annual Report



REFERENCE

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1985/86

WOMEN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 1986

GENERAL COUNSELING OFFICE
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ABBREVIATIONS

OAAP	Office of Affirmative Action Plans
OIE	Office of Internal Evaluation
WAC	Women's Advisory Council

TABLES

1.1: Women's Advisory Council Members

1.2: Women's Advisory Council Award Recipients

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FOREWORD

Women's Advisory Council representatives from each GAO division and office enthusiastically work with top managers, other employee councils, and GAO staff to advance the interests of women in the agency. This report describes the major work of the Women's Advisory Council during fiscal year 1986. Copies of memoranda and publications issued during the year are cited in the text and are included in appendices. The Council's Executive Committee thanks all those who contributed to the efforts of the Council during the year.

Christine M. Kopocis
President

Carolyn R. Kirby
Executive Vice-President

Mary Y. Martin
Vice-President for Communications

Clarita A. Mrena
Vice-President for Communications

Sarah J. Brady
Secretary

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Women's Advisory Council (WAC) was established in 1975 as a temporary assistant committee to the Federal Women's Program. In 1976, it was officially sanctioned by the Comptroller General as a permanent council to address the interests of women in GAO.

According to its bylaws, WAC's overall goals are to

- advance the interests of women in GAO;
- provide a representative forum for discussing and publicizing women's issues and problems;
- advise and assist the Comptroller General, the Federal Women's Program Coordinator, the Director of the Civil Rights Office, and the Director of Personnel on GAO policies and programs that specifically concern or might affect women in GAO.

The Career Development, Personnel, and Special Projects Committees carried out most of the Council's work during fiscal year 1986. An Executive Committee made up of the Council's elected officers participated in Council projects and met with GAO officials to discuss various matters throughout the year. Committee members are shown in table 1.1. WAC fiscal year 1986 award recipients are shown in table 1.2.

Table 1.1: Women's Advisory Council Members
Fiscal Year 1986

Executive Committee

Christine M. Kopocis	OGC	President
Carolyn R. Kirby	RCED	Executive Vice President
Mary Y. Martin	WRO	Vice President for Communications
Clarita A. Mrena	HRD	Vice President for Communications
Sarah J. Brady	NSIAD	Secretary

Career Development
Committee

Marsha L. Boals	AFMD	
Teruni Chanmugam	GGD	
Delores A. Cohen	NSIAD	Co-chair
Peggy L. Frank	RCED	
JoAnn T. Geoghan	NSIAD	
Mary Y. Martin	WRO	
LaRhonda Parker	Combined small offices	Co-chair
Sandy A. Seay	RCED	
Lillian M. Whren	AFMD	

Personnel Committee

Sarah J. Brady	NSIAD	
Cynthia C. Heckmann	GS&C	Chair
Frances C. Shannon	PERS	
Laura L. Talbott	WRO	
Shirley E. Todd	NSIAD	

Special Projects
Committee

Susan M. Bean	IMTEC	
Jackie Council	GS&C	
Claudia J. Fletcher	IMTEC	
Elise Garrett	GGD	
Carolyn R. Kirby	RCED	
Mary Y. Martin	WRO	
Clarita A. Mrena	HRD	
Mehrzaad Nadji	RCED	
Suzanne Priftis	HRD	
Susan A. Sacco	GGD	Chair
Cindy L. Walford	PEMD	
Candy Thompson	HRD	

Member at Large

Barbara M. Harley	PEMD	
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Table 1.2:

Women's Advisory Council
Fiscal Year 1986 Award Recipients

Distinguished Achievement Award

Susan A. Sacco

Outstanding Achievement Award

Sarah J. Brady

Special Recognition:

Jackie Council
Claudia J. Fletcher
Cynthia C. Heckmann
Carolyn R. Kirby
Christine M. Kopocis
Mary Y. Martin
Clarita A. Mrena
Cynthia Walford

CHAPTER 2

CAREER DEVELOPMENT/EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

During fiscal year 1986, the Women's Advisory Council worked on career development and other employment issues. The Council

- began to evaluate the job assignment process in GAO,
- monitored the progress of the proposal to increase the credit hour ceiling,
- encouraged and monitored GAO's new policy on part-time employment, and
- followed the progress of GAO's most recent participant in the Federal Executive Women's Leadership Program.

JOB ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

The Council began studying what factors GAO management considers when it assigns staff to jobs, how final staffing decisions are reached, and whether jobs assigned to women provide the same career development opportunities as those assigned to men.

The Office of Affirmative Action Plans (OAAP) is also reviewing the job assignment process. The Council will work closely with OAAP to help ensure equal career opportunities for GAO men and women.

INCREASE IN CREDIT HOURS

The Council continued to monitor the proposal to increase the credit hour ceiling from 10 to 24 hours. After meeting with the Assistant Comptroller General for Operations, WAC was asked to coordinate with the Career Level Council and monitor the Office of Internal Evaluation's (OIE) maxi-flex time study. OIE has drafted a report presenting the study's results. WAC will review the report once it is published.

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

WAC continued to monitor part-time employment opportunities at GAO. This year, in response to the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, GAO management issued a memorandum encouraging full-time employees interested in working fewer than 80 hours a pay period to convert to part-time employment. WAC discussed this issue with GAO management and prepared a response to the draft of GAO's proposed policy on part-time employment. (See app. II.)

The Council continues to endorse an increase in part-time employment opportunities in GAO. WAC believes that part-time employment benefits the Agency, as well as the staff, and is prepared to help management implement this policy should it be adopted.

EXECUTIVE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Aletha Brown, a GAO employee who completed the Federal Executive Women's Leadership Program in January 1986, spoke to the Council about her progress in GAO since that time. WAC has endorsed GAO's participation in this program because it has given women various leadership experiences to enhance their career development. In February, the program was replaced by the Executive Program for Mid-Level Employees, open to both men and women. GAO did not participate in the new program this year.

CHAPTER 3

PERSONNEL ISSUES

The Women's Advisory Council's principal responsibilities in the personnel area are to

- review GAO's affirmative action plans and goals and related activities, such as merit selection and recruitment;
- advise the Personnel Appeals Board and attend its monthly meetings; and
- monitor personnel rules and review proposed revisions in major personnel directives.

This year, WAC reviewed GAO's new affirmative action goal-setting process; followed the activities of the recently established OAAP; commented on the proposed revisions to GAO Order 2351.1, "Reduction-in-Force"; and assisted in the selection of Personnel Appeals Board members. WAC is now evaluating the results of GAO's fiscal year 1986 merit selection process.

GAO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN

The fiscal year 1986 Affirmative Action Plan was distributed in January 1986. As stated by the Comptroller General in the plan's cover memorandum, the methodology for setting affirmative action goals and the emphasis on responsibility and accountability represent a significant departure from past efforts.

The plan was not released for comment to various GAO employee groups before it was adopted, unlike what was done in previous years. WAC, however, did review the final version thoroughly and met twice with the Director of OAAP to discuss the plan's implementation and evaluation. WAC also met with Clifford Alexander and Associates to discuss the plan's development.

WAC supports the plan's overall concept and is pleased with the emphasis on accountability. The Council intends to follow both the goal-setting process and its results over the coming months.

REDUCTION-IN-FORCE

WAC reviewed and submitted comments on the proposed changes to the GAO Order 2351.1, "Reduction-in-Force". (See app. II.) The Council is particularly concerned about the order's potential impact on women in GAO. As written, the order could place women

at a distinct disadvantage and weakens GAO's commitment to affirmative action. Its sole emphasis on seniority in the decision-making process, without consideration of performance, is particularly troublesome. WAC also expressed concern about the proposed order's narrow definition of competitive levels, its limitations on the employee's right to appeal, and the discretion it would give the Agency in determining whether to redress unjustified actions. The final order mandates that GAO redress all unjustified actions.

The Council continues to believe that women will be adversely affected should a reduction-in-force be implemented according to this order.

GAO PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

WAC attended Appeals Board meetings throughout fiscal year 1986. As a member of the Board's candidate-screening panel, a WAC representative assisted in filling three Board vacancies.

OTHER WORK UNDER WAY

The Council is evaluating GAO's progress in hiring and promoting women over the past few years. It is collecting data on the results of the

- hiring actions taken during the fiscal year 1986 hiring freeze,
- fiscal year 1986 merit selection promotions, and
- fall 1986 recruitment efforts.

WAC will be comparing GAO's current employee profile, in terms of the proportion of women at each grade level, with employee profiles from past years to evaluate GAO's progress in attracting and advancing women.

The Council also plans to examine the attrition rate for women at headquarters. The Federal Women's Program has found that women assigned to GAO regional offices leave GAO at a higher rate than men assigned to the regions.¹ WAC would like to determine if a similar situation exists in headquarters.

¹Women Evaluators Leave Regions at Higher Rate than Men, GAO Federal Women's Program, November 1985.

CHAPTER 4

SPECIAL PROJECTS

This year, the Women's Advisory Council worked on the following special projects:

- promoting the establishment of a child care facility and information referral service;
- compiling a maternity/paternity benefits brochure;
- working with other employee councils to coordinate efforts related to asbestos removal in the GAO Building, and
- publishing a newsletter.

CHILD CARE

In 1986, WAC continued to promote the establishment of a child care facility for pre-school-age children of GAO employees. (See app. II.) Child care has been a high priority issue for WAC since 1978. WAC's longtime interest in and support for a facility and the positive results of a 1983 agencywide survey assessing employees' child care needs led to the appointment of a GAO Child Care Task Force by Comptroller General Bowsher in the spring of 1985. After studying alternative child care systems and benefits for GAO, the task force recommended that GAO provide a child care information referral service for its headquarters employees and that GAO management be responsive to employees who want to organize an employee-sponsored child care center in or near the GAO Building. Both recommendations were endorsed by the Comptroller General.

WAC fully supported the task force's recommendations and promoted the establishment of a child care facility by helping to organize the initial meetings of the GAO Child Care Center Development Board and by providing publicity to the Board. In the summer of 1986, WAC formally endorsed the Board's efforts.

In the fall of 1986, the Board presented a proposal to GAO management for a parent owned and operated child care facility to serve the needs of GAO's working parents in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. WAC believes that the child care center would be beneficial to the agency by providing a child care alternative for the staff. WAC will continue to monitor the progress of the implementation of the child care information referral service. This service should begin operating some time in 1987, provided funds are available.

MATERNITY/PATERNITY BENEFITS

Before GAO's maternity leave policy was changed in 1982, it did not guarantee a minimum amount of maternity leave for female employees. It also made no provision for a male employee to take leave for the birth of his child or for an employee to take leave to care for a newly adopted child. In 1982, GAO revised its Leave of Absence Order. The new order guarantees a maximum of 6 months' leave without pay to both male and female employees when they become either natural or adoptive parents. WAC enthusiastically supports the current policy but believes that many employees might not be cognizant of their leave options. To help employees understand GAO's Leave of Absence Order, the Council published the pamphlet "Maternity & Paternity Benefits for GAO Employees" (See app. I) in March 1986 and distributed it to all employees. The pamphlet concisely explains leave procedures and policies for new mothers and fathers. Copies can be obtained from Distribution Services, room 4026, GAO Building.

ASBESTOS REMOVAL PROGRAM

Over the past several years, WAC has been concerned about the potential effects of asbestos removal on the health of GAO employees working in the headquarters building. In 1985, WAC suggested that officials from the Office of Security and Safety make a more concerted effort to educate GAO employees about the asbestos removal process. In July 1986, the Council arranged a meeting with representatives of five other employee councils to discuss the possibility of a coordinated approach on the asbestos situation. In August, the Comptroller General established an employees advisory panel to the asbestos management program. The panel, which has been chartered, represents all GAO employees and reports directly to the Assistant Comptroller General for Operations.

The panel has both a proactive and a reactive role in assisting management with the asbestos situation. The group has reviewed documents and correspondence relating to the asbestos removal program and has identified what information needs to be communicated to employees. The panel will also help disseminate information and educate employees. WAC hopes that the efforts of management and the panel will help alleviate employees' concerns about asbestos removal in the GAO Building.

WAC NEWSLETTER

The Council published its newsletter, WAC Update, in March and September 1986, and distributed copies to all GAO employees in the Washington metropolitan area. (See app. III.) This year's newsletters contained articles describing WAC's involvement in many issues affecting women in GAO, including child care, maternity/paternity benefits, part-time employment, asbestos

removal, the Health Advocacy Program and efforts to secure a fitness facility, security awareness, and the GAO Technical Library's publication lists on women's issues and child care.

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX I

PUBLICATIONS/NOTICES ISSUED

GAO

United States General Accounting Office

Women's Advisory Council

March 1986

**Maternity & Paternity
Benefits for GAO
Employees**

APPENDIX II

APPENDIX II

MEMORANDA ISSUED

Memorandum

To: Assistant Comptroller General for Human Resources--
Gregory J. Ahart

Thru: President, Women's Advisory Council--Christine M. Kopocis

From: Chair, Pay for Performance Ad Hoc Committee--Teruni Chanmugam

Subject: Pay For Performance

In general, the Women's Advisory Council, WAC, supports the principles of pay for performance (PFP). Ideally, implementation would reward high performance and allow all fully successful performers to fare financially as well or better than under the present system.

The three design models described in the PFP paper would impact the fate of women in GAO to different degrees. WAC believes that of the three models, the modified PMRS is the least discriminatory towards women. Under the Broadband model, for example, the responsibilities of Band I (where the majority of women would be placed) is not defined sufficiently. Also the pay ceiling for Band I is limited to GS-12, step 4, compared to the other two bands whose ceilings reach a step 10. Moreover, the transition from the General Schedule to pay bands and the movement between pay bands is not a smooth one. All these factors surrounding the broadband model would adversely affect women.

If GAO moves towards any of the three PFP design models, WAC suggests that certain guarantees should be in place prior to implementation. These guarantees, in effect, would facilitate affirmative action goals. These steps include:

- validation of the appraisal system to eliminate any potential bias on certain employee groups because BARS will directly drive all pay decisions
- evaluation of the type of assignments women above a GS-14 receive and other criteria that may influence performance ratings
- consideration of the make-up of the Management Review Panel to allow fair representation of all groups since managers are not assessed on the basis of their commitment to affirmative action goals
- elimination of restrictions on employees' appeal rights regarding pay for performance decisions (particularly PAC I)

Memorandum

TO : Personnel Management Specialist - Mark E. Colville

FROM : Women's Advisory Council President - *Christine M. Kopocis*
Chris M. Kopocis

SUBJECT: WAC Response to Draft GAO Order 2351.1, Reduction-In-Force

The Women's Advisory Council has reviewed the draft GAO Order 2351.1, "Reduction-in-Force" and is concerned about the impact that implementation of the proposed order would have on women at GAO. In general, we believe that women will be at a distinct disadvantage in a RIF under the order as it is presently written and that the agency's commitment to affirmative action will be severely weakened. Our specific concerns are discussed below.

Retention Standing

RIF decisions made solely on the basis of seniority will have a major negative affect on women, most of whom have entered the agency within the past ten years and have little, at best, or no military service to add to their creditable Federal service. Disregarding performance as a factor in making RIF decisions is inherently unfair to all employees--not just women. However, it is the women of the agency who will bear the brunt of this decision to discount appraisals and rely solely on seniority.

Performance appraisals have been the driving force for all staff, but women in particular, in their efforts to excel and to be rewarded through promotions. Staff should be able to count on good performance to retain their jobs, and to motivate them to strive for excellence. Further, under this order, women (and men) who have moved quickly through the promotion process as a result of their good performance will be hurt far greater than those who have progressed at a slower pace through the system. Because "fast trackers" generally have less time in grade than their counterparts, they would be more vulnerable in a RIF and less likely to retain their positions.

Finally, the provisions for breaking a tie in retention standing within a competitive level--GAO service date--place women at a considerable disadvantage. Statistically, women have fewer years of service at GAO. This is especially true for many of the women hired to fill upper management positions. Over the past several years, many of the promotions for women have been for women coming from outside the agency. Under this order, these folks will sustain the greatest number of downgradings and separations.

We believe that GAO should follow the lead of the Executive Branch and use performance appraisals as a key determinant in the computation of retention standings. While we recognize the obstacles and limitations in using performance data to determine retention standings, given the variances in appraisal systems currently in use at GAO and the results of the GS-12 study which demonstrated variations among affirmative action groups, we believe GAO should pursue the use of performance appraisals in any RIF planning efforts.

Competitive Levels

The definition of competitive levels used in this draft order is extremely narrow. It restricts a competitive level to a single classification series and a single grade. Such a narrow interpretation of competitive levels places employees in support/staff offices and positions, but who are working in evaluator related series, in considerable jeopardy during a RIF because they would not be placed in a competitive level where they would have reasonable opportunities for reassignment. This causes us concern as many of these staff/administrative positions are held by women who have progressed up the career ladder from clerical positions and are representative of GAO's commitment to affirmative action. We believe that the definition of competitive levels needs to be reevaluated.

Other

Several other areas in the draft order cause us concern, though this concern is not confined to the rights of women only.

Assignment Rights

The draft order discusses rights and prohibitions concerning vacant positions. We wonder how such vacant positions would play out. Are these positions that had staff years assigned and were previously encumbered before the RIF began? Who will decide what "vacant" positions will be filled? Furthermore, we question how GAO can offer an "other than full-time position"--i.e., part-time position--to a full-time person and vice versa, given GAO's lack of a definitive policy on part-time positions. The reality is that GAO has defined part-time employment by the person not the position. Generally, employees move temporarily to part-time and return to full-time at a later date. The position is not part-time, but the person encumbering it may be part-time. Thus, how can GAO determine vacant "other than full-time positions" and then offer these positions during a RIF? We believe that this section should be deleted from the draft order.

Appeals/Corrective Action

The new order appears to narrow appeal rights in that it exempts employees in the same competitive level from appealing a reassignment. Only those downgraded, separated or furloughed may appeal. In addition, there are no grounds for appeal cited such as "excessive restriction of competitive level." We prefer the appeals language of the 1980 order and recommend it be substituted in this revised order.

Finally, the draft order reads that if GAO finds that an action was unjustified or unwarranted, GAO may choose to restore the employee's grade or pay rate to that previously held. We believe that if GAO determines that such an action occurred, the agency is obligated to redress the wrong. We recommend that the language of this section be revised from "may choose to restore" to "will restore . . ."

WAC appreciates the opportunity to comment on this proposed order that will have a major impact on its constituency. We trust our comments will be given due consideration. Should you wish to discuss our views and recommendations, please feel free to call.

Memorandum

Date: August 14, 1986

To: Chief, Policy and Executive Personnel Branch
- Ann DiBella

From: Women's Advisory Council President -
Christine M. Kopocis

Subject: WAC Response to Draft GAO Order 2340.1, Part-Time Employment Program

The Women's Advisory Council has reviewed the draft GAO Order 2430.1, Part-Time Employment Program and is pleased to inform you that we are in general accordance with the order. Our specific comments are discussed below.

Policy

The wording in the Order should include individuals who simply wish to work part-time as well as those unable to work full-time. Given that the Heads of Divisions and Offices are responsible for the review and approve/disapprove the process, criteria should be set up as to what constitutes "unable to work full time" to ensure a more unified application of the Order.

References

The Order should reference GAO Order 2351.1, Reduction in force.

Program Limitations and Implementation

If management requires part-time employees to convert to a full-time schedule a ninety day notice period should be given to accommodate for the change in schedule.

Pay, Classification, and Benefits

In a reduction in force, an employee who is working a part-time schedule should be given the opportunity to return to full-time status before being considered in the reduction in force. Employees in designated part-time positions would be in a separate competitive level from full-time employees.

Part-time employees covered by the Competitive Selection Program should be allowed to compete for any promotion opportunities. If selected for the position, the employee would have to convert to full-time status unless the selecting official determines that the position can be filled on a part-time basis. This would be consistent with the system for evaluators.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this draft order and trust that our comments will be given due consideration. For further information on the Council's view, please contact JoAnn Geoghan on 235-1313 or me on 275-4466.

Memorandum

Date: September 9, 1986

To: Co-chairs, Child Care Center Board--Diana
Olmstead and Susan Bean

From: President, Women's Advisory Council--
Christine M. Kopocis *Christine M. Kopocis*

Subject: Endorsement of Board's efforts to establish a
cooperative child care center for GAO employees.

The Women's Advisory Council wholeheartedly endorses your efforts to establish a child care facility in or near GAO! We are pleased with the progress the Board has made since its inception in January 1986 exploring alternative proposals and lining up technical and financial advisors.

The Women's Advisory Council has pursued the idea of child care for pre-school age children of GAO's working parents for several years. A 1983 survey of Washington-area staff conducted by PSDP revealed a sizeable interest in placing children in such a facility. In response to these encouraging survey results, Mr. Bowsher appointed a GAO Child Care Task Force in 1985 to examine various ways that the agency could support child care needs of its employees. The task force made two recommendations: (1) that the agency set up an employee information and referral service for locating child care services and (2) that GAO management support a parent/employee-sponsored child care facility. GAO management as well as the Women's Advisory Council endorsed both recommendations.

Although the Council helped lead the way towards subsequent establishment of a GAO Working Parents Group and the Child Care Center Board to implement the task force's second recommendation, the Board has done the lion's share of work needed to make this center a reality in the near future. We commend you for your hard work and offer our continued assistance and support. We sincerely believe that such a facility, in combination with an information and referral service, and GAO's current policies for maternity/paternity leave, flexible work schedules, and part-time employment will make GAO an ideal place for working parents to be. Good luck with your efforts!

APPENDIX III

APPENDIX III

WOMEN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL
NEWSLETTER



update

The GAO Women's Advisory Council Newsletter

FY 1986 WOMEN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL OFFICERS

President: Chris Kopocis, OGC

Executive Vice President: Carolyn Kirby,
RCED

Vice President for Communications:

Mary Martin, WRO
Clarita Mrena, HRD
(shared responsibilities)

Secretary: Sarah Brady, NSIAD

FY 1986 WOMEN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

AFMD - Marsha Boals
Lillian Whren

GGD - Teruni Chanmugam
LaBrenda Dean
Elise Garrett
Susan Sacco

GS&C - Jackie Council
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Claudia Fletcher

NSIAD - Delores Cohen
Joann Geoghan
Sarah Brady
Shirley Todd

OGC - Chris Kopocis
Phyllis Hill

PEMD - Barbara Harley
Cynthia Siegel

PERS - Hazel Cook
Frankie Lovell

RCED - Peggy Frank
Carolyn Kirby
Mehrzaad Nadji
Sandy Seay

WRO - Mary Martin
Laura Talbott

COMBINED - LaRhonda Parker
OFFICES Lisa Evans

WAC COMMITTEES FOR FY 1986

The FY 1986 Women's Advisory Council, at its first meeting in November 1985, identified issues that it plans to address in the upcoming year. Three standing committees will address the following issues:

- Personnel Committee: monitoring Personnel Appeals Board (PAB) activities; Attrition; Affirmative Action initiatives; and PSDP issues
- Special Projects Committee: promoting establishment of child care facility and information referral service; publishing WAC newsletter; compiling maternity leave benefits brochure; maintaining and updating women's reading file and child care file in Technical Library; monitoring sexual harassment briefings and workshops, asbestos problem, and HAP program
- Career Development and Merit Systems Committee: monitoring part-time employment issue; awards program; promotions process; pay for performance; training; job assignments; and and co-op and upward mobility programs.

If you have any questions about these issues, please contact one of the officers or your division/office representatives.

CHILD CARE TASK FORCE BRIEFS CG--
ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

On November 18, 1985, the GAO Child Care Task Force briefed Mr. Bowsher on its analysis of agency options for responding to the staff's child care needs. The task force looked at the cost, legal, and logistical aspects of the use of cash vouchers; an information referral service; an agency-run on-site facility; and an employee-run on-site facility. Experiences at other federal agencies were also reviewed.

The task force found that a Child Care Information Referral Service would help GAO parents select affordable and quality child care. They recommended that GAO management contract with a Washington, D.C. area service which would provide a professional counselor to assist employees in locating child care in the Washington metro area. Mr. Bowsher enthusiastically accepted this recommendation and directed that efforts begin immediately to set up this service. Since similar services are available in other major U.S. cities, Mr. Bowsher asked the task force to help identify potential contractors to serve GAO's regional office employees.

Regarding on-site child care for GAO working parents, the task force found that existing centers at other federal organizations (such as the Department of Transportation, the U.S. Senate, and the National Institutes of Health) are employee-run operations, as opposed to agency-run facilities. With employee-run operations, agency employees form a non-profit "cooperative" corporation; serve on its Board of Directors; hire professional day-care staff; oversee policies and program direction; and elicit financial support for continued operation through tuition, grants, fund-raising, and agency contributions.

The task force recommended that GAO management support any effort by parents to organize a cooperative child care facility by providing subsidized space, utilities and maintenance at a minimum. Although expressing some concerns about the near-term suitability of the GAO building for a child care facility, Mr. Bowsher endorsed the idea of GAO working parents creating their own facility.

WAC appreciates the fine work accomplished by the GAO Child Care Task Force, comprised of Barbara Sauter (Personnel), Donna Brown (NSIAD-WAC liaison), and Tom Jones and Carla Washington (OOHD). Our efforts in FY 1986 will be towards promoting implementation of their recommendations.

WAC SEEKS FORMATION OF WORKING PARENTS
GROUP FOR CHILD CARE

When WAC learned from the GAO Child Care Task Force that opening a child care facility at or near the GAO building would depend on employees' initiative, we decided that our top priority in FY 1986 would be to help a working parents group organize.

Our first task was to sponsor 3 lunchtime seminars in November 1985 for GAO headquarters staff regarding the need for employee action and to learn about how other federal employees established parent-run cooperative child care centers. Speakers from the Senate Day Care Center; the Department of Transportation's "DOT TOTS"; the Crystal City (Federal) Working Parents Group; and the Reston Children's Center provided attendees with information on the "how-to's" as well as an exciting glimpse of the benefits of such a facility. At the seminars, approximately 40 employees signed up to be part of a GAO Working Parents Group.

WAC helped organize a meeting for the Working Parents Group which was held on January 15, 1986. If you missed the meeting and wish to participate in the group, call Bob Levin at 275-4964 or Linda Garcia at 275-5591.

YWCA OFFERS CHILD CARE NEAR THE GAO BUILDING

In August 1985, the National Capital Area YWCA opened the doors of its Child Care Development Center at 624 Ninth Street, NW, only 4 blocks from the GAO building. Geared to the needs of parents working downtown, the Center's hours are 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. initially, with plans to expand to 8:00 p.m. The Center--serving 65 children between the ages of 2 and 5-- offers a high quality developmental early childhood program; swimming lessons and field trips; and breakfast and an afternoon snack. The cost is \$75/week for full-time care and \$20/day for part-time care.

The Center also offers "occasional care", which provides a short-term substitute for parents whose regular child care provider is absent. Pre-registration is required and 24 hours notice should be given to the staff.

For more information on the Center's services, call Joy Bivens, the Director, at 638-2100.

FEDERAL WOMEN'S PROGRAM (FWP) ISSUES STUDY ON ATTRITION

A recent study by GAO's Federal Women's Program (FWP) managers found that between 1980 and 1984, female evaluators left GAO regional offices at a higher rate than their male colleagues. Additionally, women represented a higher percentage of the attritions than they represented in the regional evaluator work force.

Over the period included in the study, female evaluators, particularly those above the GS-11 level, left the regional offices at a higher rate than men--an average 9 percent attrition rate for women, compared to 5 percent for men. Women made up about 25 percent of the regional evaluator work force during that period and comprised about 40 percent of the attritions.

The study also revealed that GAO does not have a consistent method to monitor the reasons why employees leave the agency--a fact which imposed limits on the scope of the study. Based on the study's findings, the FWP has made three recommendations to GAO management:

- Implement a more formalized, complete, and accurate method of tracking attrition,
- place greater emphasis on determining and monitoring why staff leave, and
- develop standards on desirable attrition rates.

The study's recommendations will be evaluated by the Office of Organization and Human Development (OOHD), which is responsible for gathering and maintaining information on GAO attrition.

For more information on this study, contact FWP Manager Linda Gainer on 275-6388.

MATERNITY BENEFITS BROCHURE TO BE PUBLISHED

WAC has compiled a brochure which details maternity benefits for GAO employees. The document has been reviewed by the WAC Officers and Personnel and will be published soon. For further information, call Claudia Fletcher on 275-3174.

**RECENT BOOKS OF INTEREST IN THE GAO
TECHNICAL LIBRARY**

The following is a list of some of the books dealing with women's issues which were recently received in the Technical Library. The Library staff would also like to remind those interested that the recent bibliography, Women in the Workplace: The 1980's and Beyond, is back in print and available to GAO staff and the general public.

Blotnick, Srully. Otherwise Engaged: The Private Lives of Successful Career Women. New York, N.Y.: Facts on File, 1985. HD6095.B58

Bowe, Frank. Disabled Women in America. Washington, D.C.: The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, 1984. HD6057.5U5B68

Bureau of National Affairs. Pay Equity and Comparable Worth. Washington, D.C.: The Bureau, 1984. HD6061.2.U6P3

Chavkin, Wendy. Double Exposure: Women's Health Hazards on the Job and at Home. New York, N.Y.: Monthly Review Press, 1984. RA564.85.D68

Corea, Gena. The Mother Machine: Reproductive Technologies From Artificial Insemination to Artificial Wombs. New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1985. QP251.C67

Faver, Catherine A. Women in Transition. New York, N.Y.: Praeger, 1984. HD1420.F34

Johansen, Elaine. Comparable Worth: The Myth and the Movement. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984. HD6061.2.U6J65

Reskin, Barbara F. Sex Segregation in the Workplace. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1984. HD6060.5.U5S475

Scott, Hilda. Working Your Way to the Bottom: The Feminization of Poverty. Boston, Mass.: Pandora Press, 1984. HD6060.S36

Sivard, Ruth Leger. Women...: A World Survey. Washington, D.C.: World Priorities, 1985. RefHQ1154.S58

Smith, Mike. A Development Program for Women in Management. Aldershot, Eng.: Gower, 1984. HF5500.2.D48

Steiner, Gilbert Yale. Constitutional Inequality: The Political Fortunes of the Equal Rights Amendment. Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1985. HQ1426.S73

United States Commission on Civil Rights. Comparable Worth: Issue for the 80's. Washington, D.C.: The Commission, 1984. HD6060.5.U5C65

Williams, Robert E. A Closer Look at Comparable Worth. Washington, D.C.: National Foundation for the Study of Equal Employment Policy, 1984. HD6061.2.U6W55

Employees are encouraged to visit the Library to examine other books of interest as well as relevant journal articles and materials kept in the WAC Vertical File. If anyone is interested in contributing magazine and journal articles, pamphlets, or other materials to the WAC vertical file, contact Elise Garrett on 275-5995.

**ARTICLES ON CHILD CARE AVAILABLE IN
TECHNICAL LIBRARY**

The February 1986 issue of Management World magazine offers two articles on child care and the needs of working parents. The articles, entitled "Working Solutions for Working Parents" and "Babysitting--Good for Business", can be found in the library's Day Care Collection.

If anyone is interested in contributing magazine or journal articles, pamphlets, or other materials on child care to the day

care collection, contact Guy Wilson of the library staff on 275-0656.

OSS OFFERS ASSAULT PREVENTION TIPS

The prevention of physical and sexual assaults has been discussed in numerous magazine articles. Preventative measures and self-defense techniques have been delineated in these publications.

GAO's Office of Security and Safety (OSS) offers the following assault prevention tips:

--Be alert! Know your surroundings. If in an unfamiliar area, be aware of anyone in front of or behind you.

--Don't take shortcuts through parks, tunnels, parking lots, or alleys, especially if you are alone at night.

--Use the "buddy system" when walking. Being with another person substantially reduces your risk of attack.

--Carry as little cash as possible. Never "flash" cash.

--Don't carry a shoulder bag or purse loosely or dangle it over an arm or fingertips.

--Don't use travel time on public transportation to catch a few winks. If your stop is located in a remote area, try to have a friend, family member, or neighbor meet you there.

--When possible, walk facing traffic. Walk in the middle of the sidewalk, away from parked cars, doorways, or bushes.

--When parking at night, select a spot that is well-lighted. Use "park and lock" parking lots if possible. Always check the interior of your vehicle before entering.

--Lock the doors of your home while you are inside. Install a peep-hole with a wide view. Check the identification of all repair, delivery, and sales persons before allowing them entrance. Don't let strangers in to use the telephone; make the calls for them.

--If you live in an apartment building, try not to go to the laundry room or trash room alone. If you are female and live alone, it is wise to list only your initial and last name on the mailbox and in the telephone directory.

--Remember one thing: DO NOT FIGHT FOR YOUR PROPERTY. IT CAN BE REPLACED; YOUR LIFE CANNOT.

For more information on safety and security tips, contact OSS.

WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH "HAP"?

The good news is that the H.A.P. (Health Advocacy Program) pilot program is now an official GAO program. This means the program has been authorized to become a permanent GAO program, providing wellness education, aerobics classes, exercise facilities, and organized support groups to a gradually expanding number of GAO employees.

The bad news is that HAP, like most other government programs, will be affected by the budget cuts of the Gramm-Rudman Act. In the interim, HAP will continue to operate as in the pilot phase and will expand to invite only a limited number of new participants.



The GAO Women's Advisory Council Newsletter

WAC OBSERVES TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY

This past spring the Women's Advisory Council (WAC) observed its 10-year anniversary. The Council was formally established in 1975 and received official sanction from the Comptroller General in 1976. During the past 10 years, numerous issues have been addressed by the Council. Although most of these issues pertained to advancing the interests of women, several of them--including asbestos removal, credit hour expansion, affirmative action, and pay for performance--concern all employees. The most prominent issues over the years have been child care, maternity leave, and part-time employment.

Child Care

Child care has been a high-priority issue for the council for several years. Since 1978, the Council has taken a strong leadership position in advocating a creative child care program for the pre-school age children of GAO working parents. In response to a questionnaire distributed by the Council in its Fall 1981 newsletter, GAO headquarters employees indicated a serious interest in a GAO-sponsored day care center. In 1983, the Council successfully persuaded Assistant Comptroller General for Human Resources Gregory Ahart to have the Personnel Systems Development Project conduct a formal agency-wide survey assessing employees' child care needs. The positive response to the 1983 survey and WAC's continued interest and support for child care resulted in the appointment of a GAO Child Care Task Force by Comptroller General Bowsher in the Spring of 1985.

The task force studied alternative child care systems or benefits for GAO and recommended that:

--GAO provide a child care information referral service by contracting with an area service, and

--GAO management be responsive to employees who want to organize their own employee-sponsored child care center at or near GAO.

Both recommendations were endorsed by the Comptroller General. WAC fully supports these recommendations and has promoted their implementation by helping to organize meetings of a child care center development board and by providing publicity for the board. In addition, WAC President Chris Kopocis recently sent a memorandum to the board endorsing their efforts. The Council believes that the child care center will become a reality in the not too distant future.

Maternity Leave

For several years, the Council felt strongly that GAO's policy on leave of absence should prescribe a minimum, guaranteed amount of maternity leave for those employees who request it. Additionally, WAC was concerned that the policy assumed infant and child care to be the mother's responsibility and made no provisions for fathers or adoptive parents who wished to take leave.

In commenting on a draft of GAO's Leave of Absence Order in 1981 and 1982, WAC strongly advocated the establishment of a minimum, guaranteed amount of leave without pay for maternity reasons. Although this suggestion was opposed initially, it was eventually incorporated into the revised 1982 order. Now, GAO guarantees 6 months leave without pay to mothers and fathers of infants as well as to adoptive parents. WAC enthusiastically supported this change in policy as a precedent for other Federal agencies to establish similar non-discriminatory maternity/paternity leave policies.

Even though GAO has a progressive and flexible maternity/paternity leave policy, WAC believed that the rights and options available to employees were not well-known or easily understood. So, in March 1986 the Council published a handy "question-and-answer" brochure explaining GAO's leave procedures and policies for new mothers and fathers.

Part-Time Employment

Part-time employment provides an efficient way of meeting GAO's commitments to Congress as well as enhanced job satisfaction for employees. WAC believes that part-time employment opportunities can and should be expanded in GAO and has endorsed the Federal Women's Program Managers' 1984 report on increasing part-time opportunities for all interested GAO staff.

In 1983, WAC contributed considerably to developing a questionnaire used by Personnel in conducting the first formal review of GAO's part-time policies since issuance of the order in 1980. The review was conducted as a result of concern voiced by the Council that division directors and regional managers were not actively pursuing GAO's part-time employment policies.

Management is now actively working toward expansion of part-time employment opportunities as a means of reducing expenditures in this time of budget austerity. In a March 1986 memo, former Assistant Comptroller General for Operations Frank Fee encouraged supervisors to be liberal in approving part-time employment requests when such employment would not seriously interfere with the ongoing work of the office. Further, in July a new draft order on part-time em-

ployment was circulated, and the Council commented on its content. WAC will continue to monitor the implementation and impact of part-time employment.

UPDATE ON GAO CHILD CARE CENTER DEVELOPMENT BOARD

The GAO Child Care Center Development Board, established by headquarters employees in January 1986, will soon present a proposal to GAO management for a parent-owned and operated child care facility to serve the needs of GAO's working parents in Washington, D.C. In addition, the center would be incorporated as a non-profit entity and, once established, will be largely self-supporting through collection of tuition fees and by holding fund-raising events.

The proposal of the Board, co-chaired by Diana Olmstead and Susan Bean of IMTEC, will contain three alternatives for the child care center--(1) an "on-site" facility in the GAO headquarters building, (2) a "near-site" facility in commercially leased space in the GAO neighborhood, and (3) a "consortium" facility shared with another federal entity, such as the House of Representatives. The proposal will present estimated costs for setting up and operating the center. These costs include renovation, furniture, equipment, books, toys, hiring of professional staff, and consultant fees.

Pending management's response to the proposal, GAO staff can directly assist the Board by volunteering for committee work. You needn't be a parent to volunteer! Contact Diana (275-5636) or Susan (275-8019) for more information.

**EMPLOYEES ADVISORY PANEL FORMED
ON ASBESTOS REMOVAL**

In response to GAO employees' concerns about asbestos removal in the headquarters building, the Comptroller General has established an employees advisory panel to the asbestos management program. Members of the panel were selected from various employees groups, including WAC. Once chartered, the panel will represent all GAO employees. The group will report directly to Assistant Comptroller General for Operations Tim McCormick.

According to an official in Mr. McCormick's office, the panel will have both a pro-active and reactive role in assisting management with the asbestos situation. The group will review all documents and correspondence relating to the asbestos removal program and identify what information needs to be communicated to GAO employees. The panel will also help to disseminate pertinent information and educate employees. Further details about the panel are scheduled to appear in an October issue of the Management News.

The asbestos removal program has been a concern of WAC's for the past few years. In early 1985, WAC met with representatives from the Office of Security and Safety (OSS) and subsequently wrote a memo to OSS suggesting that GAO make a more concerted effort to educate its employees about asbestos in their work environment. More recently, in July 1986 WAC arranged a meeting with representatives of 5 other employees councils to discuss the possibility of a coordinated approach on the asbestos situation. Hopefully, the efforts of management and the advisory panel will help alleviate GAO employees' concerns about asbestos removal.

**WAC AND OSS CO-SPONSOR SECURITY
AWARENESS PRESENTATION**

In June, WAC and OSS co-sponsored a security and safety awareness presentation. The guest speaker was retired Lt. Jim Bullock, formerly with the Memphis Police Department. The theme for his presentation was "Self Defense with a Smile," and the information and techniques given were for both men and women. The presentation was originally designed for women between the ages of 18 and 65. However, Lt. Bullock stated that experience has shown that the threat of crime and the fear that it produces is common to every man, woman, and child in this country.

The presentation was fast-moving, action-packed, and addressed one of the most important issues of today. The lieutenant's message was designed to not only help teach individuals how to react in the event of an attack but also focused on changing people's attitudes toward a criminal act. Lt. Bullock asked that we not be afraid to enjoy life and emphasized the need for people to regain control of their lives and communities from the criminal element.

Lt. Bullock placed great emphasis on not letting some "low-life-hoodlum" rob us of our rights. Rather, the lieutenant believes that common sense and a positive attitude will help put the criminal on the defensive and could prevent a person from becoming a victim of a crime. Lt. Bullock's book, Looking Forward to Being Attacked, is available for loan from OSS. If interested, call Jackie Council on 275-4700.

WAC WISHES MR. FEE WELL

On behalf of the entire council, WAC President Chris Kopocis wished former Assistant Comptroller General for Operations Frank Fee well in his future

endeavors upon his resignation from GAO in August. In a letter to Mr. Fee, Chris thanked him and his staff for the assistance given to the Council during the past four years. The letter further stated:

"Your personal attention and responsiveness to the issues which are important to the Council have contributed to the changing role of women in GAO. Specifically, your endorsement of part-time work schedules, a day care referral service, and a GAO child care center has helped these projects become a part of our future."

AD-HOC COMMITTEE FORMED TO SECURE FITNESS FACILITY

An ad-hoc committee has been formed to secure a fitness facility for GAO employees. The committee consists of employees from different divisions and representatives of all GAO employees organizations, including WAC.

The group is being coordinated by the Health Advocacy Program (H.A.P.) and the GAO Employees Association. Members are presently gathering specific facts and information and will be formulating a proposal to submit to the Assistant Comptroller General for Human Resources.

Mehrzad Nadji is WAC's representative on the committee.

FY 1987 WAC ELECTIONS

Seven GAO divisions and large offices and the combined small offices will elect new WAC representatives to serve 2-year terms beginning in FY 1987. The following will elect representatives:

RCED (4 positions)
AFMD (2)
GGD (2)

NSIAD (2)
OGC (2)
PEMD (2)
WRO (2)
COMBINED OFFICES (1)

All GAO professional and administrative employees--both women and men at all grade levels--are eligible to be representatives to the Council. Representatives are required to attend monthly meetings and to participate on WAC committees. Elections will be held in the applicable divisions and offices during October.

Employees interested in obtaining more information about WAC should contact one of their division or office representatives, listed below.

Current Women's Advisory Council Members

AFMD - Marsha Boals
Lillian Whren

GGD - Elise Garrett
Susan Sacco

GS&C - Jackie Council
Cynthia Heckmann

HRD - Clarita Mrena
Suzanne Priftis

IMTEC - Susan Bean
Claudia Fletcher

NSIAD - Delores Cohen
Joann Geoghan
Sarah Brady
Shirley Todd

OGC - Chris Kopocis

PEMD - Barbara Harley
Cynthia Siegel

PERS - Hazel Cook
Frankie Lovell

RCED - Peggy Frank
Carolyn Kirby
Mehrzaad Nadji
Sandy Seay

WRO - Mary Martin
Laura Talbott

COMBINED
OFFICES - LaRhonda Parker

SPEAKERS AT WAC MEETINGS
AND OPEN SEMINARS

APPENDIX IV

APPENDIX IV

<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Date</u>
Judy England-Joseph	Part-time Employment in GAO	01/15/86
Linda Gainer and Marge Armen	Sexual Harassment in GAO	02/19/86
Lowell Dodge	GAO's Fiscal Year 1986 Affirmative Action Plan	03/16/86
Francis Fee and Gregory Ahart	Personnel Issues in GAO	05/14/86
Lt. Jim Bullard	Self-Protection for Women and Men	06/11/86
Dana Balibrera	"The Promotable Woman: What Makes the Difference"	06/18/86
Diana Olmstead	GAO Child Care Center	07/16/86
Aletha Brown	Federal Executive Women's Leadership Program	08/20/86
Patricia Manthe and Cher Gideon	Job Sharing in GAO	09/17/86



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