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Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee
on Civil Service, Committee on Post
Office and Civil Service, House of
Representatives

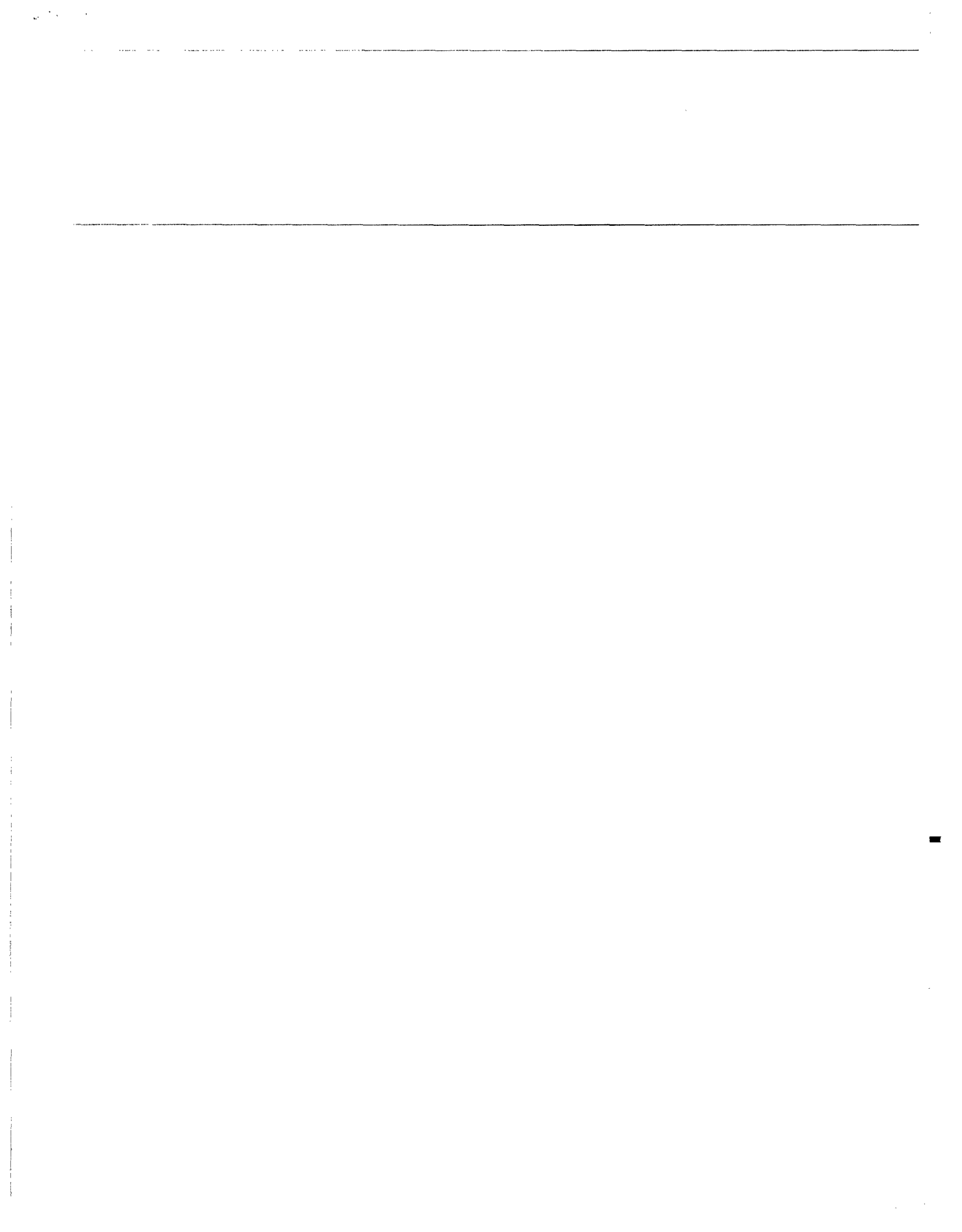
May 1992

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE

Opinions About the Federal Work Environment



146805





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**The Honorable Gerry Sikorski
Chairman, Subcommittee on Civil Service
Committee on Post Office and
Civil Service
House of Representatives**

Dear Mr. Chairman:

At your request, we have begun to examine the working relationships among career executives and political appointees. As part of our initial effort, we analyzed the results of two surveys sent to Senior Executive Service (SES) members in November 1989 and May 1991. They were identical and covered a broad spectrum of issues related to the work environment, including managerial and supervisory characteristics of career executives and political appointees. We discuss the results of both surveys in this report.

Career executives responding to our surveys reported positive or improving perceptions about many aspects of their work environment and their relations with political appointees. They also expressed less favorable views in certain areas, which may not be surprising given the tension between career executives and political appointees that may be inherent in our system of government. Although we do not have evidence to substantiate or refute their perceptions, it is nevertheless important for Congress and the executive branch to know what career SES members' perceptions are so that actions can be taken for continuous improvements.

Background

Career executives are individuals with civil service status who are appointed competitively to SES positions. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) or other appointing authorities are required to review and approve the qualifications and suitability of these executives before they are appointed. As executives who have made federal employment their careers, they provide expertise to program management and administration and are expected to be generally familiar with the history of programs and the myriad of laws and regulations that define program objectives and operating guidelines.

Political appointees include individuals appointed to noncompetitive executive level, noncareer SES, and Schedule C positions that involve formulating, advocating, and directing administration policies or a close

and confidential working relationship with a key official. Such appointees serve in key positions in the federal government to ensure that the policy goals and objectives of the administration are met.

According to Alan K. Campbell, former Director of OPM, political appointees were included in the SES with the hope of reducing the antagonism between career executives and political appointees that he stated was one of the most dysfunctional parts of the federal government.¹ In 1989, the Volcker Commission addressed this issue and made several recommendations to improve the partnership relationship among career executives and political appointees.² In testimony before the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service in April 1989, we agreed with the Commission's recommendations to strengthen the partnership among presidential appointees and career executives.³ Later that same year, we testified before your Subcommittee that political appointees needed to work with career SES members to improve their working relationships and to recognize that career SES members can make substantial contributions to the efficient operation of the government.⁴

Approach

Our objectives were to (1) analyze the views career and noncareer SES members had of their work environment, including the managerial and supervisory characteristics of career executives and political appointees, and (2) determine whether career SES members' views on their work environment had changed since 1989. To accomplish these objectives, we sent two identical questionnaires to SES members at 19 agencies and departments in November 1989 and May 1991. According to OPM, SES members at the 19 departments and agencies included in our surveys accounted for about 83 percent of the total 7,212 SES members in June 1989 and about 84 percent of the total 7,664 SES members in December 1990. For this report, we refer to this universe as governmentwide.

We sent our 1989 survey to a random sample of 1,340 career and noncareer SES members. Governmentwide, about 70 percent of the 1,340 SES members responded to this survey. However, since noncareer SES members

¹Statement of Alan K. Campbell, former Director, OPM, before the Subcommittee on Civil Service, Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, House of Representatives, April 12, 1984.

²Leadership for America, Rebuilding the Public Service, The Report of the National Commission on the Public Service, 1989, pp. 181-188.

³Report on the National Commission on the Public Service (GAO/T-GGD-89-19, Apr. 27, 1989).

⁴Political Appointees in Federal Agencies (GAO/T-GGD-90-4, Oct. 26, 1989).

accounted for only about 3 percent of the respondents and were considered too few to constitute a representative group, we did not report their responses to the 1989 survey.

We sent our 1991 survey to a random sample of 1,575 career SES members and all 482 noncareer SES members at the 19 agencies and departments covered by our survey. About 74 percent of the career SES members and about 50 percent of the noncareer SES members responded to this survey. Although the 50-percent response rate for survey results was lower than the 70-percent response rate we generally report, we discuss noncareer SES members' views to provide some insights on their perceptions about the federal work environment. For this reason, we report their responses as representative only of the 242 noncareer SES members who responded to our 1991 survey.

Career SES members' responses to both surveys can be projected to the governmentwide universe of career SES members in 1989 and in 1991. Additionally, the career SES members' responses to both surveys can be projected to the agencywide population of career SES members at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the departments of the Army, Commerce, Energy, and the Interior. We also surveyed and report career SES members' views at Education, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Housing and Urban Development (HUD). However, the response rates at these departments were insufficient to allow us to project to the agencywide population of career SES members. Thus, respondents' views at these three departments represent only the views of those responding to our survey. We selected the eight departments and agencies for separate analysis because of congressional interest and to ensure coverage of small and large as well as civil and defense organizations.

We did not verify whether the opinions of career SES members and noncareer SES respondents accurately reflected situations that existed in their organizations but accepted their views as perceptions of what they believed existed when they completed our surveys. Where governmentwide responses showed major differences, we analyzed them further to see how some views varied among career SES members at selected departments.

We completed our work in September 1991. We did our work in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. A more detailed discussion of our objectives, scope, and methodology, including our sample sizes and response rates, is included in appendix IV.

Results

SES members' responses to governmentwide surveys in 1989 and 1991 indicated that while most SES members were satisfied with many aspects of their work environment, some responses raised concerns about the work environment of these executives. Career SES members and noncareer SES respondents had similar opinions about many aspects of their work environment. However, career SES members viewed career executives and political appointees differently.

Governmentwide, there were few significant differences in the views career SES members had about their work environment in 1989 and in 1991. For example, in 1989 over 70 percent of the career SES members were very satisfied or satisfied with their duties, work challenges, coworkers' respect, job security, and the opportunities they had to have an impact on public affairs. In 1991 more than 70 percent of the career SES members were also very satisfied or satisfied with these aspects of their work environment. The most striking change in perceptions since 1989 involved salary. While only 11 percent of the career SES members in 1989 were very satisfied or satisfied with their salaries, about 78 percent were very satisfied or satisfied with their salaries in 1991. This reflects SES members' views before and after their substantial pay raise in January 1991.

Additionally, while there was a significant decrease of about 14 percent since 1989 in the number of career SES members who were dissatisfied with the public image of federal employees, many career SES members were still dissatisfied with the public image of federal employees in 1991. In 1989 about 85 percent of the career SES members were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the public image of federal employees. About 71 percent of the career SES members were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with this aspect of federal employment in 1991. The percentage of career SES members who were very satisfied or satisfied with the public image of federal employees in 1989 increased from 6.5 percent to about 11 percent in 1991. About 36 percent of the noncareer SES respondents in 1991 indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the public image of federal employees, and about 36 percent indicated that they were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied.

Career SES members and noncareer SES respondents in 1991 had similar views about many aspects of their work environment. For example, more career SES members and noncareer SES respondents wanted to have substantial influence on decisions made at the subunit level than those who believed they actually had substantial influence on subunit decisions. The decisionmaking areas included the allocation of funds, development

of new programs, division of labor, hiring of staff, and employee motivation and rewards.

Generally, few career SES members and noncareer SES respondents indicated that they had personal experience with abuses of the SES system. For example, less than 10 percent of career SES members in 1989 and in 1991 indicated that they had any personal experience with either "shelving," forced resignations, artificial reductions-in-force to remove an SES member, or arbitrary demotions. Less than 8 percent of the noncareer SES respondents indicated that they had any personal experience with these abuses of the SES system.

In both surveys, career SES members had different perceptions about career executives and political appointees. Their views were more positive toward career executives in 1989 and 1991. To illustrate the extent of differences in career SES members' perceptions, about 96 percent of the career SES members in 1989 believed that career executives made grant, contract, and loan decisions solely on the basis of merit while about 58 percent believed that political appointees did this, a difference of about 38 percent. In 1991, about 93 percent of career SES members governmentwide believed that this was true in most or all cases where career executives were concerned while 55 percent of these SES members believed that this was true in most or all cases for the political appointees—again, a 38-percent difference in the perceptions career SES members had about career executives and political appointees in this area.

Further analysis of career SES members' responses in 1991 showed that their difference in opinions about career executives and political appointees relevant to grant, contract, and loan decisions were greater than the 38-percent governmentwide difference at some departments—Commerce (49 percent), Energy (about 44 percent), and HHS (about 43 percent). Although the governmentwide difference on this issue did not change significantly from 1989 to 1991, the extent of difference in the perceptions career SES members had at some departments did change. For example, the 52-percent difference at HUD in 1989 decreased by one-half to 26 percent in 1991. This indicated a major improvement in career SES members' views toward the political appointees at HUD on this issue.

On this same issue, noncareer SES respondents in 1991 viewed career executives and political appointees similarly—about 85 percent of them believed that in most or all cases career executives made grant, contract,

and loan decisions solely on the basis of merit, and about 84 percent believed that political appointees did this.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided OPM and representatives from the eight agencies we highlighted in this report with a draft of the report for their comments. OPM provided us with written comments that summarized their concerns as well as those of the agencies. (See app. VI.)

OPM said that a majority of the agencies expressed concern that the report was based on unverified views and opinions. It said that while this fact is included on page 3 of our report, it would not be apparent in looking at other parts of the report. To help ensure that the reader understands that the information provided consists of perceptions and views of the respondents and that these have not been verified, we have added appropriate language to the introduction of each appendix that contains details of the survey responses.

OPM also had some reservations regarding specific questions in our survey and the manner in which we characterized responses in the report text. These are summarized below.

Supporting Merit Principles

OPM said that our question asking career executives whether noncareer executives "support and uphold merit principles regarding the hiring of personnel" is confusing, apparently because the question did not specify whether the decisions affected competitive or noncompetitive positions. OPM pointed out that political appointees often handle noncompetitive appointments and, therefore, are not bound by competitive hiring criteria. OPM said that since respondents did not have the option of a "no basis to judge" response, we ended up with a forced response to a vague question. OPM also pointed out that there is no empirical evidence that noncareer executives are violating merit principles when it comes to competitive hiring.

OPM did not have a complete copy of our questionnaire and, therefore, did not know that respondents had the option of a "no basis to judge" response. In total, 19.5 percent of the careerists in 1991 said they did not have a basis to say whether political appointees supported merit principles. Thus, rather than forcing a response, respondents had and used this option. Further, we do not believe this question was confusing. In designing our questionnaire, we followed standard methodological

practices, including pretesting the questionnaire with randomly selected SES members. Among other things, the purpose of pretesting is to identify and correct vague questions or those that might be confusing. Results of the pretest questionnaire did not indicate confusion with this question. In regard to OPM's comment concerning the absence of empirical data on violations of merit system principles, we clearly pointed out that we are reporting perceptions and opinions of the respondents, not empirical data.

Promotion Opportunities

OPM also took issue with our question to SES executives about their level of satisfaction with their opportunities for promotion. OPM said the question was faulty because it did not define promotion, which could mean several different things to SES respondents (i.e., either greater responsibility or increased salary). It also said that the question may not have been relevant because most SES respondents were already at the top echelons of their careers.

We disagree with OPM. None of our pretests revealed a problem with what was meant by "promotion" in this question. While a promotion might mean more responsibility to one person and more money to another, each is perceived as an advancement to one's career, which is what the question was intended to address. Further, OPM's statement that the question may not have been relevant because most SES respondents were already at the top echelons of their careers is not necessarily correct. Of the career SES respondents to this question, about 88 percent were at SES levels 3, 4, and 5. Only about 3 percent were at level 6, the top echelon. Thus, the vast majority had potential for advancement. Of the noncareer SES respondents, 82 percent were evenly distributed throughout levels 1 through 5, also having the potential for advancement. Only 18 percent of the noncareer SES respondents were at level 6.

Reporting Levels of Satisfaction for Certain Questions

OPM also questioned our description of the responses to the questions dealing with the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction regarding promotion potential, job security, and health insurance benefits. We collapsed the responses into three categories—very satisfied or satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied or dissatisfied. OPM pointed out that when the percentages of "satisfied" and "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" are totaled, they account for the majority of respondents. With this in mind, OPM questioned our characterization of these three aspects of the work environment as negative factors and cited this as a weakness in our survey methodology.

We agree with OPM that the responses to these questions did not indicate that a majority of respondents viewed them negatively. The manner in which we initially described the responses, however, has no relationship to the methodology of the survey. In our draft, we characterized the responses as negative because more respondents reported negative perceptions in these areas than in several other areas. However, we agree with OPM that the draft could have been misleading, and we revised our report accordingly.

Public Release of Our Report

Finally, OPM said that although our survey data may be helpful to agencies internally, its public release could harm the image of public service. For this reason and because of its concern about the validity of some of our questions and conclusions, OPM suggested that the report not be released. Rather, it suggested that the report be used by the requesting Subcommittee for follow-up questioning of administration officials.

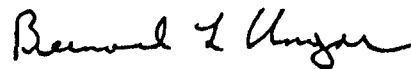
We disagree with OPM for three reasons. First, career SES members reported favorable or improving perceptions in several areas, including positive attitudes toward public service. For example, over 90 percent of both career and noncareer respondents indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the duties they perform and the challenges of their work as SES members. In addition, few career and noncareer executives said that they had personal experience with "shelving," arbitrary demotions, forced resignations, or artificial reductions-in-force to remove an SES member, which are considered abuses of the SES system. Second, while the data indicated some tension in the working relationship of career executives and political appointees, this is not new and should not come as a surprise. As pointed out on page 2, such tension has been recognized for some time, and we believe Congress and the administration need to know career SES members' perceptions. Third, we believe our methodology and questions are valid, and, as previously indicated, we modified our report where appropriate to address OPM and agency concerns about possible misinterpretations due to the way we characterized some of the responses in our draft of this report.

Detailed information on the results of our questionnaire analyses is presented in appendixes I, II, III, and V. As agreed with the Subcommittee, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days after its issue date, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier. At that time, we

will send copies to the departments and agencies that participated in this study and to other interested parties.

The major contributors to this report are listed in appendix VII. If you have any questions about this report, please contact me on (202) 275-5074.

Sincerely yours,



Bernard L. Ungar
Director, Federal Human Resource
Management Issues

Contents

Letter		1
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Appendix I		16
How Satisfied Were SES Members With Selected Factors Affecting Their Work Environment?	Positive Features	17
	Issues That Raised Concerns	18
	More Want Substantial Influence in Some Areas of Decisionmaking	19
	Abuses of the SES System	21
<hr/>		
Appendix II		23
How Did SES Members View Career Executives and Political Appointees?	To What Extent Did SES Members Believe Career Executives and Political Appointees Make Grant, Contract, and Loan Decisions Solely on the Basis of Merit?	24
	To What Extent Did SES Members Believe Career Executives and Political Appointees Support and Uphold Merit Principles When Hiring Personnel?	28
	To What Extent Did SES Members Believe Career Executives and Political Appointees See Their Jobs as Opportunities to Make Positive, Long-Term Improvements?	31
	To What Extent Did SES Members Believe the Actions of Career Executives and Political Appointees Were Motivated More by Self-Interest Than by Public Interest?	35
	To What Extent Did SES Members Believe There Were Too Many Career Executives and Political Appointees?	38
<hr/>		
Appendix III		42
How Did SES Members View the Leadership Behavior and Abilities of Career Executives and Political Appointees?	Noncareer SES Respondents Had Major Differences of Opinion About Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors in 11 of 18 Categories	43
	Supervisory Traits Where Career SES Viewed Career Executives and Political Appointees Similarly	44
	Career SES Members Had Some Differences of Opinion About Political Appointee and Career Executive Supervisors	44
	Career SES Members' Views Varied at Selected Departments	45

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Appendix IV		54
Objectives, Scope, and Methodology		
<hr/>		
Appendix V		58
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES Members' Views on the Federal Work Environment		
	Significant Differences	58
	Collapsed Response Categories	58
	I. Organizational Beliefs	59
	II. Subunit and Department Mission	61
	III. Decision Making	66
	IV. Organizational Culture	69
	V. Leadership	71
	VI. Personnel Practices	79
	VII. Future Plans	82
	VIII. Satisfaction	84
	IX. SES Objectives	87
	X. Decision to Stay in or Leave the Federal Government	93
	XI. Personal Characteristics	96
<hr/>		
Appendix VI		103
Comments From the Office of Personnel Management		
<hr/>		
Appendix VII		107
Major Contributors to This Report		
<hr/>		
Tables		
	Table I.1: Work Environment Factors With Which Most SES Members Were Satisfied (1989 and 1991)	17
	Table I.2: Work Environment Factors With Which Fewer SES Members Were Satisfied (1989 and 1991)	19
	Table I.3: Percentage of SES Members Who Perceived and Preferred to Have Substantial Influence on Subunit-Level Decisionmaking (1991)	20

Table I.4: Percentage of SES Members Who Perceived and Preferred to Have Some to Little or No Influence on Department-Level Decisionmaking (1991)	21
Table IV.1: Noncareer SES Universe Size, Responses, and Response Rates (1991)	55
Table IV.2: Career SES Universe Size, Questionnaires Mailed, Responses, and Response Rates (1991)	55
Table IV.3: Career SES Universe Size, Questionnaires Mailed, Responses, and Response Rates (1989)	56
Table IV.4: Margins of Error Rates for the 1989 and 1991 SES Surveys	57

Figures

Figure I.1: Career SES Members' Satisfaction With Their 1989 and 1991 Salaries	18
Figure II.1: Percentage of SES Members Who Believed Career Executives and Political Appointees Governmentwide Made Grant, Contract, and Loan Decisions Solely on the Basis of Merit (1991)	24
Figure II.2: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executives and Political Appointees at Selected Departments Made Grant, Contract, and Loan Decisions Solely on the Basis of Merit (1991)	26
Figure II.3: Percentage of SES Members Who Believed Career Executives and Political Appointees Governmentwide Supported and Upheld Merit Principles When Hiring Personnel (1991)	28
Figure II.4: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executives and Political Appointees at Selected Departments Supported and Upheld Merit Principles When Hiring Personnel (1991)	30
Figure II.5: Percentage of SES Members Who Believed Career Executives and Political Appointees Governmentwide Viewed Their Jobs as Opportunities to Make Positive, Long-Term Government Improvements (1991)	32
Figure II.6: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executives and Political Appointees at Selected Departments Viewed Their Jobs as Opportunities to Make Positive, Long-Term Government Improvements (1991)	33

Figure II.7: Percentage of SES Members Who Believed the Actions of Career Executives and Political Appointees Governmentwide Were Motivated More by Self-Interest Than by Public Interest (1991)	35
Figure II.8: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed the Actions of Career Executives and Political Appointees at Selected Departments Were Motivated More by Self-Interest Than by Public Interest (1991)	37
Figure II.9: Percentage of SES Members Who Believed There Were Too Many Career Executives and Political Appointees Governmentwide (1991)	38
Figure II.10: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed There Were Too Many Career Executives and Political Appointees in Selected Departments (1991)	40
Figure III.1: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors at Selected Departments Meet Employees' Development Needs (1991)	46
Figure III.2: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors at Selected Departments Ensure That Employees Realize Their Potential (1991)	47
Figure III.3: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors at Selected Departments Keep Employees Informed About Subunit Activities (1991)	49
Figure III.4: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors at Selected Departments Share Their Experience and Training (1991)	50
Figure III.5: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors at Selected Departments Provide Needed Technical Knowledge (1991)	52
Figure III.6: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors at Selected Departments Provide Sound Job-Related Advice (1991)	53

Abbreviations

DOD	Department of Defense
DOT	Department of Transportation
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
SES	Senior Executive Service
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs

How Satisfied Were SES Members With Selected Factors Affecting Their Work Environment?

Among the many issues addressed in our surveys, we asked respondents to (1) indicate the extent to which they were satisfied or dissatisfied with their position as a Senior Executive Service (SES) member and as a federal employee in general, (2) rate the amount of influence they perceived they had and preferred to have on decisionmaking at the subunit and department levels, and (3) indicate whether they had personal experience with possible abuses of the SES system. See appendix V, questions 22, 7, and 15, respectively, for SES members' responses about these aspects of their environment.

Survey results reported reflect the opinions of the universe of career SES members. On the other hand, results reported for noncareer SES respondents only apply to those 242 noncareer SES members who responded to our survey in 1991.¹ Also, we did not determine if the opinions of career SES members and noncareer SES respondents accurately reflected situations that existed at their departments but reported their views and perceptions about issues addressed in the surveys.

Most career SES members and noncareer SES respondents in 1991 seemed generally satisfied with their salaries, duties, opportunities to have an impact on public affairs, and the challenges of their position in the SES. For example, more than 90 percent of the career SES members in 1989 and 1991 were satisfied or very satisfied with their duties and the challenges of their work. About 95 percent of the noncareer SES respondents in 1991 were also very satisfied or satisfied with their duties, and slightly more than 92 percent were very satisfied or satisfied with the challenges of their work. Also, career SES members and noncareer SES respondents indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the respect they received from coworkers, opportunities to have an impact on public affairs, and opportunities to improve themselves. In addition, in general, few career SES members and noncareer SES respondents indicated that they had personal experience with abuses of the SES system, such as "shelving," forced resignations, artificial reductions-in-force to remove SES members, or arbitrary demotions.

Respondent perceptions raised concerns about some aspects of serving in an SES position and federal employment in general. For example, while there was a 14-percent decrease from 1989 to 1991 in the number of career SES members who were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the public's image of federal employees, slightly more than 71 percent were still very

¹Noncareer SES respondents accounted for only 2.7 percent of the total SES members who responded to our 1989 survey. As a result, there were too few noncareer SES respondents for us to determine how they felt about issues addressed in our 1989 survey.

**Appendix I
How Satisfied Were SES Members With
Selected Factors Affecting Their Work
Environment?**

dissatisfied or dissatisfied with this aspect of federal employment in 1991. Other areas that raised concerns included health benefits, public recognition, and opportunities for promotion.

Another area of concern involved SES members' perceived and preferred influence on decisionmaking at the subunit and department levels. Career SES members and noncareer SES respondents preferred to have more influence on subunit decisionmaking than they had on these decisions in 1991. Most career SES members and noncareer SES respondents believed that they had little or no influence on department-level decisionmaking, and many preferred to have little or no influence on these decisions.

Positive Features

To address how satisfied SES members were with their position in the SES and with federal employment in general, we listed a number of factors related to the work environment and asked respondents to indicate if they were very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with these factors. (See app. V, question 22.)

Table I.1 contains a list of work environment factors that most SES members were generally very satisfied or satisfied with in 1989 and 1991. As shown by the data in this table, career SES members' 1989 and 1991 opinions on all factors except salary were similar.

Table I.1: Work Environment Factors With Which Most SES Members Were Satisfied (1989 and 1991)

Factors	1989 Career SES members	1991	
		Career SES members	Noncareer SES respondents
Duties	92.1	90.9	96.6
Salary	11.0	77.7	85.1
Challenge of work	90.7	91.5	92.1
Chance to improve	65.3	72.0	74.7
Chance to have an impact on public affairs	73.7	72.6	83.8
Coworkers' respect	89.3	87.9	86.7
Retirement benefits	55.0	64.5	60.8
Job security	76.8	78.8	39.3

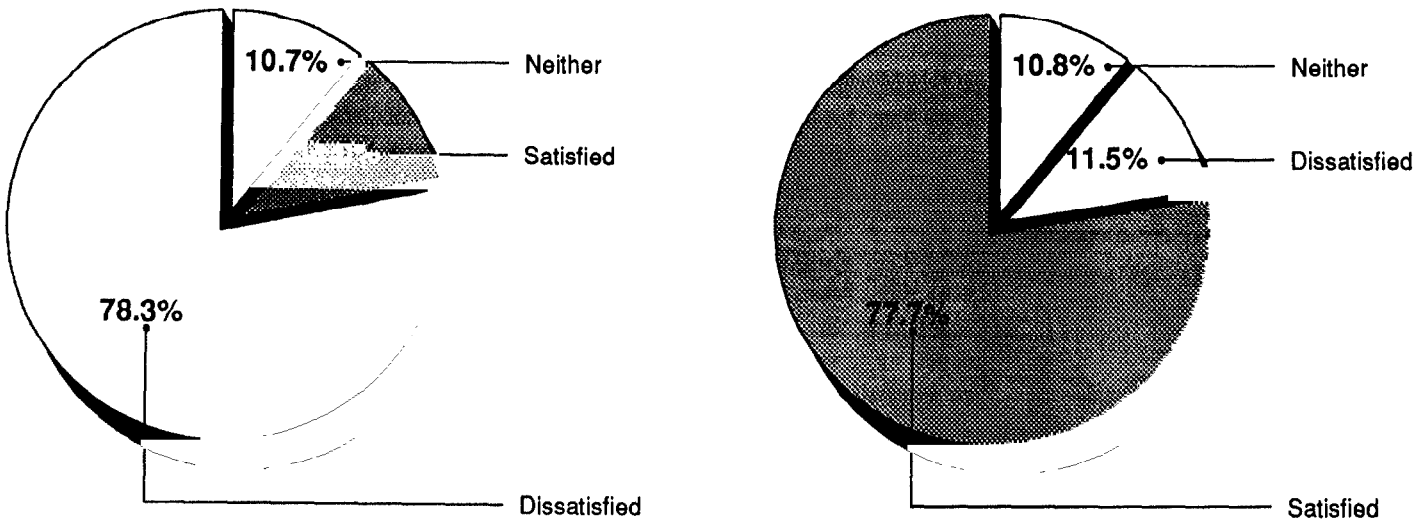
Salary

Salary was the one factor where career SES members' views changed significantly from 1989 to 1991. As shown in figure I.1, only 11 percent of the career SES members indicated in 1989 that they were satisfied with

**Appendix I
How Satisfied Were SES Members With
Selected Factors Affecting Their Work
Environment?**

their SES salaries. However, about 78 percent of the career SES members in 1991 were satisfied with their salaries.

Figure I.1: Career SES Members' Satisfaction With Their 1989 and 1991 Salaries



From another perspective, about 21 percent of the career SES members in 1989 indicated that salary was a reason to stay with the federal government. This was significantly less than the 73 percent of career SES members who indicated that salary was a reason to stay in 1991.

In 1991, about 85 percent of the noncareer SES respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their salaries. About 68 percent of the noncareer SES respondents in 1991 cited salary as a reason to stay with the federal government.

Issues That Raised Concerns

Some responses indicated that fewer SES members were very satisfied or satisfied with some aspects of their work environment. As shown in table I.2, fewer SES members said they were satisfied with their public image, health benefits, public recognition, and chance for promotion. Their responses suggest that these are areas where improvements could be made to the work environment.

Appendix I
How Satisfied Were SES Members With
Selected Factors Affecting Their Work
Environment?

Table I.2: Work Environment Factors
With Which Fewer SES Members Were
Satisfied (1989 and 1991)

Factors	1989 Career SES members	1991	
		Career SES members	Noncareer SES respondents
Public image	6.5	11.2	36.1
Health benefits	27.8	35.7	55.2
Public recognition	39.0	43.8	59.8
Chance for promotion	31.6	31.8	38.3

Fewer SES members were satisfied with the public image of federal workers than with any of the other issues addressed in this segment of the questionnaire dealing with their position in the SES and with federal employment in general.

More Want
Substantial Influence
in Some Areas of
Decisionmaking

Governmentwide, career SES members and noncareer SES respondents in 1991 preferred to have more influence on decisionmaking at their subunit dealing with some issues such as the allocation of funds, hiring of staff, and development of new programs. A majority of both career and noncareer SES respondents believed they had little or no influence on the hiring of staff and the division of labor at the department level. A majority of both groups of respondents preferred to have little or no influence on department-level decisionmaking in these areas.

For our questionnaire, we defined subunit as the work unit in the respondent's department that included the respondent and his or her subordinates and was headed by the respondent's immediate supervisor. Department was defined as an organizational unit that included all employees under a Cabinet secretary. We instructed respondents to consider the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as departments. We listed several statements concerning the types of decisions made at the subunit and department levels and asked respondents to rate the amount of influence they actually believed they had (perceived) and the amount of influence they feel they should have had (preferred) using the following scale: very substantial, substantial, moderate, some, or little or no influence. For reporting purposes, we collapsed this scale into three categories—very substantial to substantial influence, moderate influence, and some to little or no influence. (See app. V, question 7, for responses.)

**Appendix I
How Satisfied Were SES Members With
Selected Factors Affecting Their Work
Environment?**

**Subunit-Level
Decisionmaking**

As shown in table I.2, career SES members and noncareer SES respondents generally preferred to have more influence on subunit-level decisions dealing with the allocation of funds, hiring of staff, division of labor, development of new programs, and employee motivation and rewards in 1991.

Table I.3: Percentage of SES Members Who Perceived and Preferred to Have Substantial Influence on Subunit-Level Decisionmaking (1991)

	Perceived substantial influence	Preferred substantial influence
Career SES members		
Allocation of funds	49.0	79.6
Hiring of staff	63.0	80.8
Division of labor	59.1	79.5
Development of new programs	57.5	82.7
Employee motivation and rewards	58.3	82.9
Noncareer SES respondents		
Allocation of funds	52.1	75.5
Hiring of staff	61.0	77.5
Division of labor	63.6	75.8
Development of new programs	67.7	81.1
Employee motivation and rewards	56.6	78.2

Generally, between 49 and 68 percent of the career SES members and noncareer SES respondents believed they had very substantial or substantial influence on decisions in these areas in 1991. Generally, while a majority of career SES members and noncareer SES respondents believed that they had substantial or very substantial influence on decisions at the subunit level, a larger percentage of each group felt that they should have had very substantial or substantial influence on decisions involving the allocation of funds, hiring of staff, division of labor, development of new programs, and employee motivation and rewards.

Career SES members had similar views in 1989 and 1991 about decisionmaking at the subunit level. Generally, there was no significant change in the percentage of career SES members in 1991 and 1989 who believed they had substantial or very substantial influence on decisionmaking at the subunit level. Nor were there significant changes in the percentage of career SES members who preferred more influence on decisionmaking at the subunit level.

**Department-Level
Decisionmaking**

Most career SES members and noncareer SES respondents in 1991 believed they had some to little or no influence on decisionmaking at the

**Appendix I
How Satisfied Were SES Members With
Selected Factors Affecting Their Work
Environment?**

department level, and many preferred to have little or no influence on some of these decisions. We asked SES members to indicate the extent of perceived and preferred influence they believed they had on department-level decisions involving the allocation of funds, hiring of staff, division of labor, development of new programs, and employee motivation and rewards.

A summary of their responses for 1991 is presented in table I.3 below. Over 75 percent of the career SES members in 1991 believed they had some to little or no influence on any of these five areas of department-level decisionmaking. For the noncareer SES respondents, 58 percent or more felt that they had some to little or no influence on these decisions.

Table I.4: Percentage of SES Members Who Perceived and Preferred to Have Some to Little or No Influence on Department-Level Decisionmaking (1991)

Career SES members	Perceived little or no influence	Preferred little or no influence
Allocation of funds	77.0	42.5
Hiring of department staff	85.0	68.5
Division of labor	85.5	64.0
Development of new programs	76.6	45.0
Employee motivation and rewards	81.2	49.8
Noncareer SES respondents		
Allocation of funds	65.4	39.3
Hiring of department staff	70.0	54.2
Division of labor	67.9	51.1
Development of new programs	58.6	32.8
Employee motivation and rewards	72.5	45.9

Most career SES members indicated that they preferred to have some to little or no influence on decisions in the areas of hiring and the division of labor at the department level. About half, or slightly less, of the career SES members preferred to have some to little or no influence on decisions involving the development of new programs, allocation of funds, and motivating and rewarding employees at the department level.

Our questionnaire results showed that career SES members' opinions about their influence on decisionmaking at the department level in 1989 and 1991 were similar for perceived and preferred influence.

Abuses of the SES System

We listed in our questionnaire several possible abuses of the SES system—"shelving" an executive by detailing or reassigning him or her to

**Appendix I
How Satisfied Were SES Members With
Selected Factors Affecting Their Work
Environment?**

duties not of an SES nature, trying to force an SES executive to resign, arbitrarily lowering an SES executive's performance rating, artificially structuring a reduction-in-force to remove a specific SES executive, and arbitrarily demoting a career SES executive. For each of these abuses, we asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they had some personal experience with the practices. (See app. V, question 15.)

Generally, few career SES members and noncareer SES respondents indicated that they had personal experience with abuses of the SES system. In 1991, about 20 percent of the career SES members and about 5 percent of the noncareer SES respondents indicated that they had personal experience with the arbitrary lowering of an SES executive's performance rating. Less than 10 percent of the career SES members in 1991 indicated that they had personally experienced "shelving," forced resignations, artificial reductions-in-force to remove an SES member, or arbitrary demotions. Less than 8 percent of the noncareer SES respondents indicated that they had personally experienced these abuses.

**Lowering Ratings
Arbitrarily**

Of the five abuses addressed in our questionnaire, the arbitrary lowering of ratings was the most frequently cited abuse that career SES members in 1991 and 1989 indicated they had personally experienced. About 20 percent of the career SES members in 1991 indicated that they had personal experience with the practice of arbitrarily lowering an SES member's rating. More than half of this 20 percent, about 13 percent of these executives, believed that this had happened to them once; the remaining 7 percent believed it had happened to them more than once. Career SES members' responses in 1989 and 1991 were similar—23 percent indicated in 1989 that they had personal experience with the lowering of ratings.

Slightly less than 5 percent of the noncareer SES respondents in 1991 indicated that they had personal experience with the arbitrary lowering of an SES member's performance rating.

How Did SES Members View Career Executives and Political Appointees?

We asked career and noncareer SES members if they believed career executives and political appointees (1) made decisions about grants, contracts, loans, and loan guarantees solely on the basis of merit; (2) supported and upheld merit principles when hiring personnel; (3) viewed their jobs as opportunities to make positive, long-term government improvements; and (4) had more self-interest than public interest as reasons for their actions. We also asked career and noncareer SES members if they believed there were too many career executives or political appointees in their departments. The purpose of these questions was to determine how these SES members viewed career executives and political appointees. Survey results reflect the opinions of the universe of career SES members. Noncareer SES respondents' views represent only those of the noncareer SES members who responded to our survey. It should also be noted that we did not verify whether the views of career SES members and noncareer SES respondents accurately reflected the situations that existed at their departments.

The 1991 responses of noncareer SES respondents indicated that they had similar views about career executives and political appointees.¹ For example, about 84.6 percent of the noncareer SES respondents believed that career executives made contract, grant, and loan decisions solely on the basis of merit, and 84.1 percent believed that this was true in most or all cases for political appointees. However, noncareer SES respondents governmentwide were more positive toward political appointees in some instances. For example, about 77 percent of the noncareer SES respondents believed that in most or all cases career executives viewed their jobs as opportunities to make positive, long-term government improvements while about 86 percent of these respondents believed that this was true in most or all cases for political appointees.

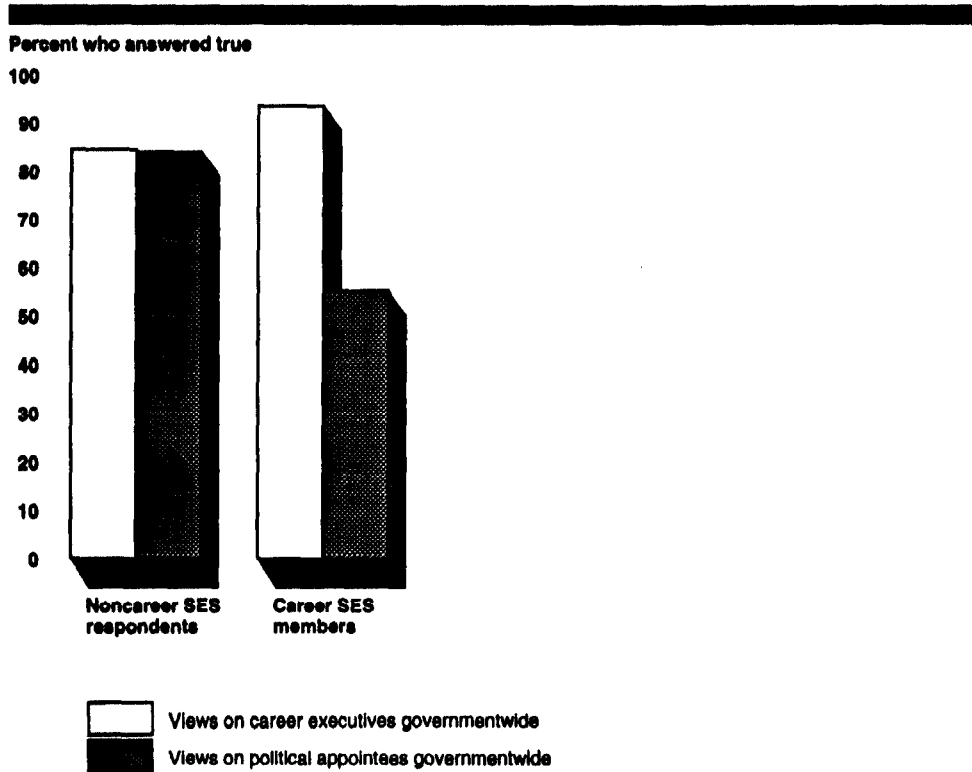
Responses to the 1989 and 1991 surveys showed that career SES members' perceptions were less positive about political appointees than they were about career executives on these issues. In addition, career SES members' perceptions varied about career executives and political appointees at the eight selected departments and agencies—Army, Commerce, Energy, Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Interior, and EPA. There were not enough noncareer SES members responding from specific departments and agencies in 1991 for us to determine how noncareer SES respondents at the selected departments and agencies may have felt.

¹Noncareer SES respondents accounted for only 2.7 percent of the total SES members who responded to our 1989 survey. As a result, there were too few noncareer SES respondents for us to determine how they felt about issues addressed in our 1989 survey.

To What Extent Did SES Members Believe Career Executives and Political Appointees Make Grant, Contract, and Loan Decisions Solely on the Basis of Merit?

Noncareer SES respondents in 1991 did not have significantly different perceptions about career executives and political appointees on this issue, as shown in figure II.1. Governmentwide, 84.6 percent of the noncareer SES respondents agreed that career executives made grant, contract, and loan decisions solely on the basis of merit, and 84.1 percent of these same respondents believed that this was true of political appointees.

Figure II.1: Percentage of SES Members Who Believed Career Executives and Political Appointees Governmentwide Made Grant, Contract, and Loan Decisions Solely on the Basis of Merit (1991)



Note: Noncareer SES respondents' views represent only the 242 noncareer SES members who responded to our 1991 survey.

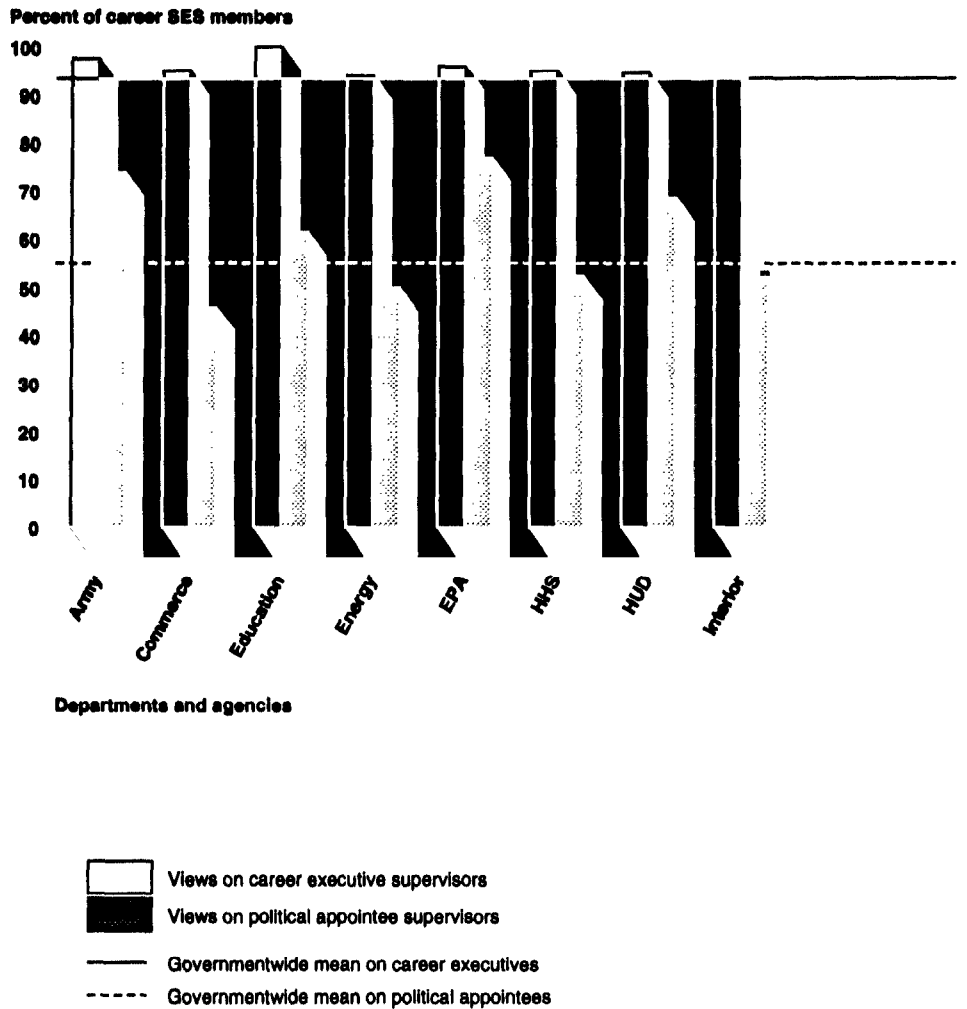
Appendix II
How Did SES Members View Career
Executives and Political Appointees?

Governmentwide, about 96 percent of the career SES members in 1989 believed that career executives made decisions about grants, contracts, and loans solely on the basis of merit compared to about 58 percent who felt that this was true of appointees. As shown in figure II.1, 93 percent of the career SES members in 1991 believed that career executives made these decisions solely on the basis of merit while 55 percent felt that this was true of appointees. In both surveys, there was about a 38-percent difference in career SES members' views of career executives and political appointees.

Figure II.2 shows the extent that career SES members' views varied among agencies on this issue.

**Appendix II
How Did SES Members View Career
Executives and Political Appointees?**

Figure II.2: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executives and Political Appointees at Selected Departments Made Grant, Contract, and Loan Decisions Solely on the Basis of Merit (1991)



Note: Response rates were insufficient to project to the agencywide population of career SES members at Education, HHS, and HUD. Respondents' views at these three departments represent only the views of those responding to our survey.

The percentage of career SES members in 1991 who believed that career executives made these decisions solely on the basis of merit ranged from 100 percent at Education to about 94 percent at Interior and Energy. In comparison, the percentage of these same respondents who believed that

this was true of political appointees ranged from 77 percent at EPA to 46 percent at Commerce.

Governmentwide, 55 percent of the career SES members surveyed in 1991 believed that political appointees made these decisions solely on the basis of merit. Compared to this mean response, four departments were below this level—Commerce (46 percent) Energy (50 percent), Interior (about 53 percent), and HHS (about 52 percent). The other four agencies exceeded this governmentwide mean—EPA with 77 percent, Army with about 74 percent, HUD with about 69 percent, and Education with about 61 percent. Three of the departments also exceeded the governmentwide mean in 1989 and 1991—Army, EPA, and Education.

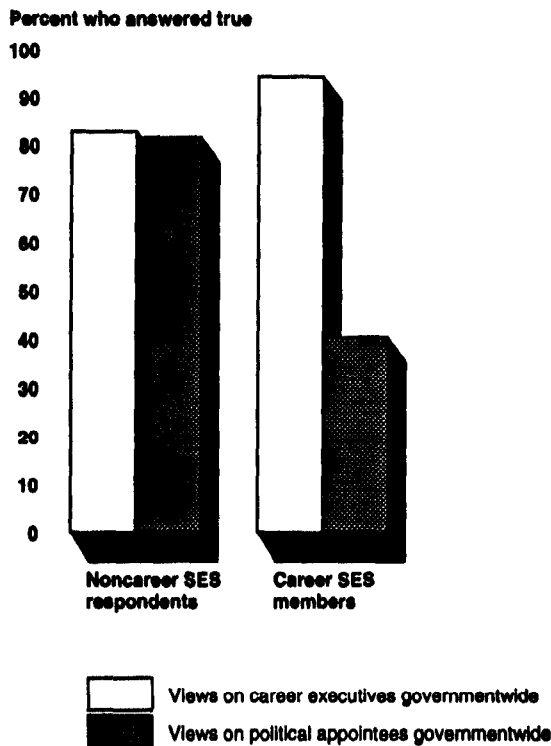
In 1991, there was a governmentwide difference of about 38 percent between the percentage of career SES members who believed that career executives made grant, contract, and loan decisions solely on the basis of merit and the percentage of those who believed that this was true of political appointees. The differences at Commerce (49 percent), Energy (about 44 percent), and HHS (about 43 percent) exceeded this difference. The differences at EPA (about 19 percent), Army (about 24 percent) and HUD (26 percent) were considerably smaller than the governmentwide difference of nearly 38 percent. The differences at Education (about 39 percent) and Interior (41 percent) were similar to the governmentwide difference of about 38 percent.

While the governmentwide difference on this issue did not change from 1989 to 1991, there were some changes at the departments. HUD and HHS had the largest increase in the percentage of career SES members who believed political appointees made grant, contract, and loan decisions solely on the basis of merit. In 1989, about 31 percent of the career respondents at HUD believed this was true of political appointees compared to about 69 percent who felt this way in 1991 about appointees at HUD. The 1989 governmentwide difference of about 52 percent at HUD in 1989 decreased to about 26 percent in 1991 due to a major increase of about 37 percent in the number of career SES members who believed that this was true of political appointees. The percentage of career SES respondents who believed that this was true of political appointees at HHS also increased—from about 41 percent in 1989 to about 52 percent in 1991.

To What Extent Did SES Members Believe Career Executives and Political Appointees Support and Uphold Merit Principles When Hiring Personnel?

In 1991, noncareer SES respondents viewed career executives and political appointees similarly on this issue, as shown in figure II.3 below. About 83 percent of the noncareer SES respondents believed that career executives supported and upheld merit principles when hiring personnel and about 81 percent believed that political appointees did this.

Figure II.3: Percentage of SES Members Who Believed Career Executives and Political Appointees Governmentwide Supported and Upheld Merit Principles When Hiring Personnel (1991)



Note: Noncareer SES respondents' views represent only the 242 noncareer SES members who responded to our 1991 survey.

**Appendix II
How Did SES Members View Career
Executives and Political Appointees?**

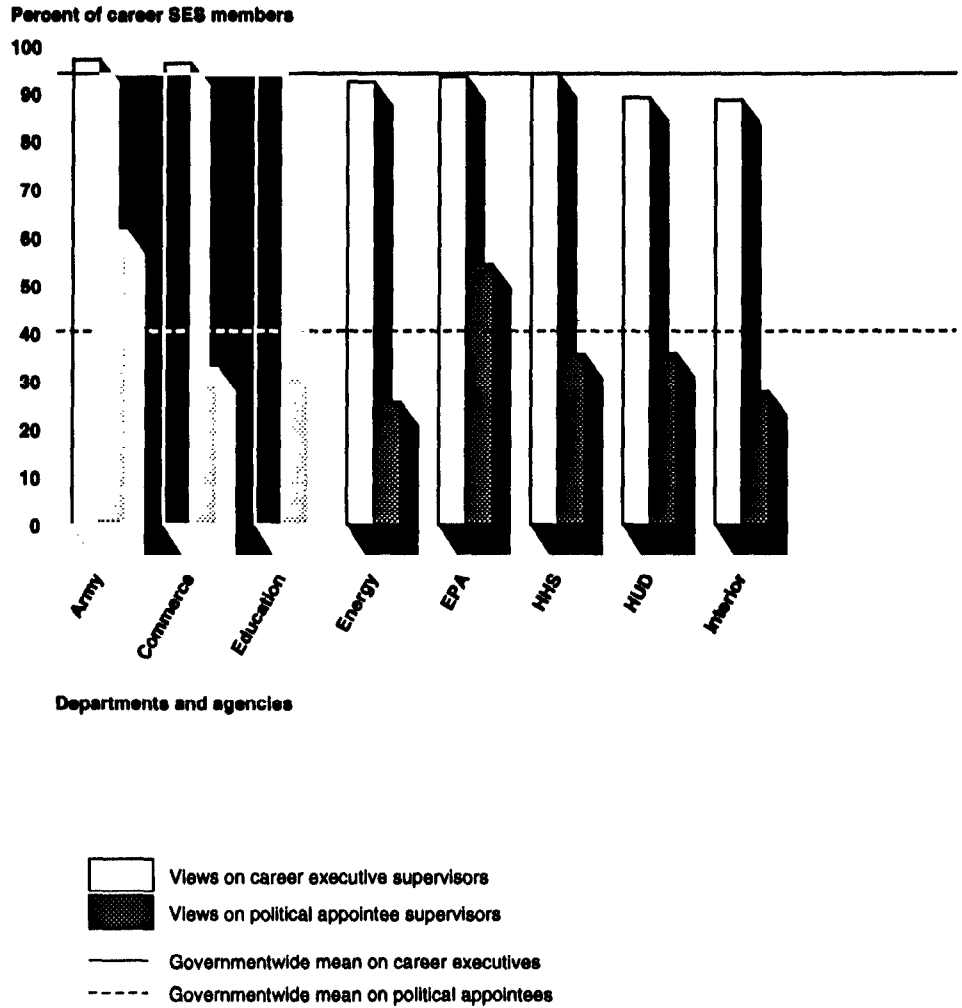
Governmentwide in 1989, about 94 percent of the career SES members surveyed believed that career executives supported and upheld merit principles when hiring personnel while 44 percent felt that this was true of political appointees. Career SES members' views on this issue did not change in 1991. As shown in figure II.3, about 94 percent of the career SES members in 1991 continued to believe that career executives upheld merit principles when hiring while slightly more than 40 percent believed that this was true of political appointees.

The data showed that the greatest governmentwide difference in career SES members' views about career executives and political appointees in 1991 involved the issue of upholding merit system principles when hiring. There was a governmentwide difference of about 54 percent in the percentage of career SES members who believed that this was true of career executives and political appointees.

In 1991, over 90 percent of the career SES members believed that career executives at each of the eight selected departments supported and upheld merit principles when hiring personnel, except at HUD and Interior, where about 89 percent believed so. Considerably fewer of these respondents believed that political appointees supported and upheld merit principles when hiring personnel, as shown in figure II.4.

**Appendix II
How Did SES Members View Career
Executives and Political Appointees?**

Figure II.4: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executives and Political Appointees at Selected Departments Supported and Upheld Merit Principles When Hiring Personnel (1991)



Note: Response rates were insufficient to project to the agencywide population of career SES members at Education, HHS, and HUD. Respondents' views at these three departments represent only the views of those responding to our survey.

About one-third or fewer of the career SES members at four departments believed this was true in most or all cases for political appointees—Commerce (about 33 percent), Education (about 31 percent), Interior (about 28 percent), and Energy (about 26 percent). The highest percentages of career SES members who believed that this was true of political appointees in their departments were at Army, where about 61

percent believed this was true, and at EPA, where about 54 percent felt this way.

Governmentwide in 1991, there was a difference of 54 percent between the percentage of career respondents who believed that career executives supported and upheld merit principles when hiring personnel and those who believed that political appointees did this. The differences at three departments—Energy (about 67 percent), Education (about 64 percent), and Commerce (about 64 percent)—exceeded the governmentwide difference by at least 10 percent.

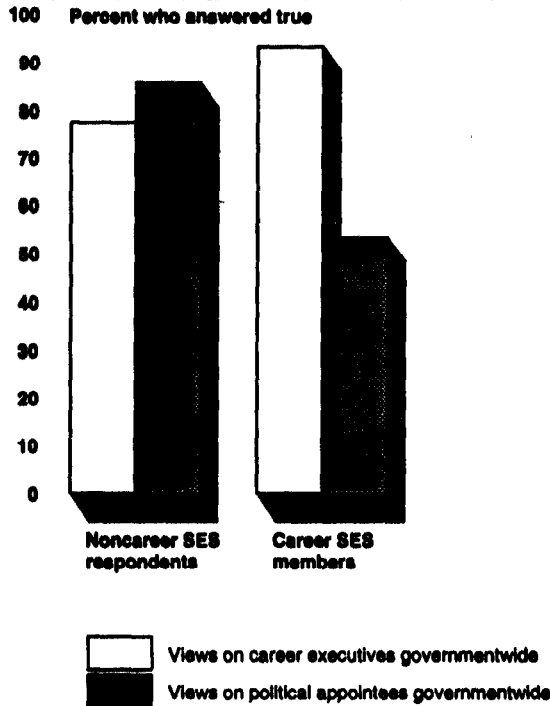
There were few changes in career SES members' responses from 1989 to 1991. In both surveys, EPA and Army had the highest percentage of career SES members who believed that political appointees in their organizations supported and upheld merit principles when hiring. In both surveys, about 36 percent or fewer of the career SES members at the remaining six departments believed this was true of political appointees at their departments.

To What Extent Did SES Members Believe Career Executives and Political Appointees See Their Jobs as Opportunities to Make Positive, Long-Term Improvements?

In 1991, about 77 percent of the noncareer SES respondents believed that career executives viewed their jobs as opportunities to make positive, long-term government improvements. About 86 percent of these respondents believed that this was true of political appointees. See figure II.5.

Appendix II
How Did SES Members View Career
Executives and Political Appointees?

Figure II.5: Percentage of SES Members Who Believed Career Executives and Political Appointees Governmentwide Viewed Their Jobs as Opportunities to Make Positive, Long-Term Government Improvements (1991)



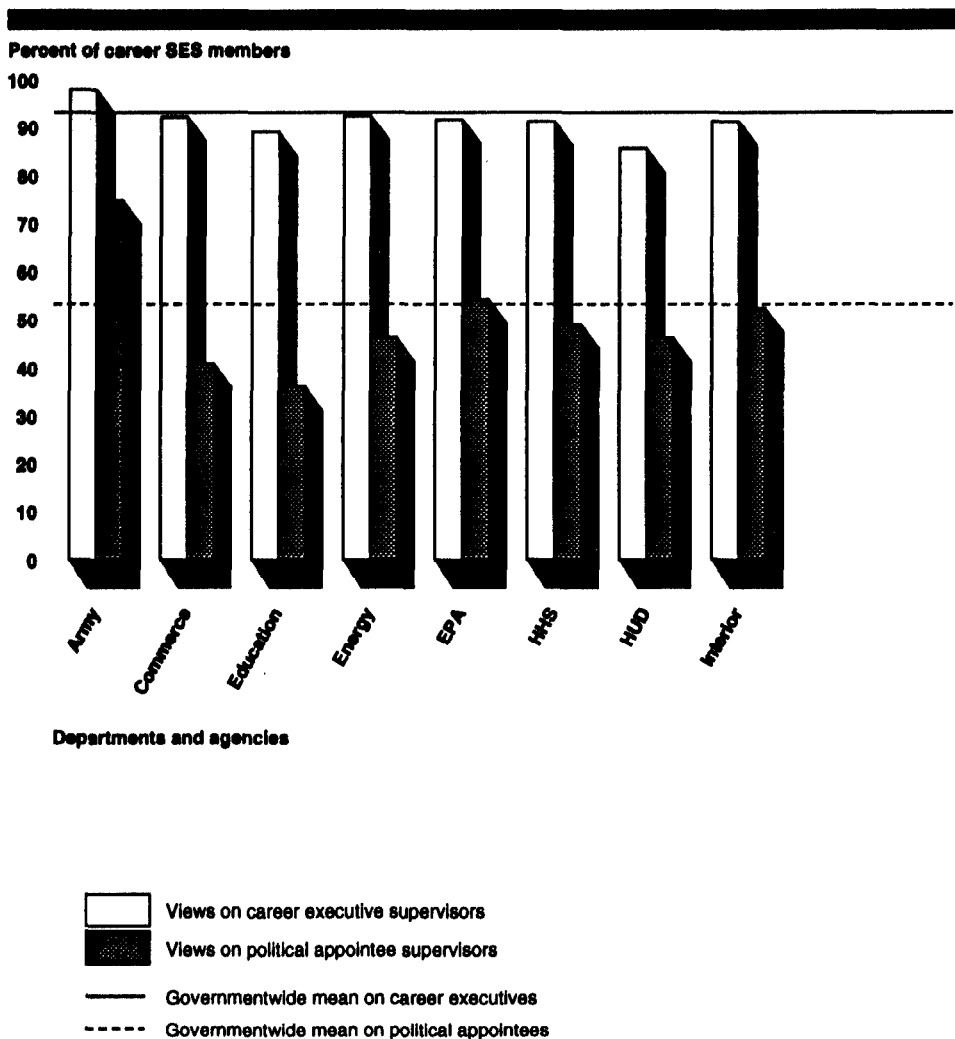
Note: Noncareer SES respondents' views represent only the 242 noncareer SES members who responded to our 1991 survey.

In 1989, about 93 percent of the career SES members believed that career executives viewed their job as opportunities to make positive, long-term government improvements, and about 54 percent felt that this was true of political appointees. There was not significant change in career SES members' governmentwide views on this issue in 1989 and 1991. As shown in figure II.5, about 93 percent of the career SES members in 1991 believed that career executives viewed their jobs as an opportunity to make positive, long-term improvements to government. Slightly more than half, or about 53 percent, of these SES members believed this was true of political appointees.

As shown in Figure II.6 below, in 1991 less than 55 percent of the career SES members at five departments believed that political appointees in their departments saw their jobs as opportunities to make positive, long-term government improvements.

Appendix II
How Did SES Members View Career
Executives and Political Appointees?

Figure II.6: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executives and Political Appointees at Selected Departments Viewed Their Jobs as Opportunities to Make Positive, Long-Term Government Improvements (1991)



Note: Response rates were insufficient to project to the agencywide population of career SES members at Education, HHS, and HUD. Respondents' views at these three departments represent only the views of those responding to our survey.

In 1991, Education had the lowest percentage (about 36 percent) of SES members who agreed that their political appointees viewed their jobs as opportunities to make positive, long-term government improvements. Commerce (about 41 percent), HUD (about 46 percent), Energy (about 46

**Appendix II
How Did SES Members View Career
Executives and Political Appointees?**

percent), and HHS (49 percent) followed. In 1989, less than half of the career respondents from Commerce, HUD, Energy, and HHS believed that political appointees viewed their jobs as opportunities to make positive, long-term government improvements. The percentage of respondents who believed that this was true of political appointees at Education decreased from about 59 percent in 1989 to about 36 percent in 1991.

Governmentwide in 1991 there was a difference of about 40 percent between the percentage of career SES members who believed that in most or all cases career executives viewed their jobs as opportunities to make positive, long-term improvements and the percentage of respondents who believed that this was true in most or all cases for political appointees. Only Army (about 23 percent) had a difference that was considerably smaller than this governmentwide difference. The largest differences were at Education (about 53 percent) and Commerce (about 51 percent).

According to several career SES members in 1989 and 1991, the short-term initiatives of some political appointees disrupted long-term strategically planned activities and competed for resources. While some career SES members felt that it may be understandable for some political appointees to focus more attention on short-term initiatives to institute changes during their short tenures in office, one stated that many appointees leave the agency before they can see the negative effects of their changes and that careerists in some instances are left to deal with the adverse effects of quick changes and to provide some continuity for long-range programs. "The competing priorities of short-term and long-term programs," according to one SES member, "ensures discouragement of both." Another respondent commented that abrupt policy changes and "new ways of doing business" are very disruptive and wasteful.

On the other hand, a noncareer SES respondent in 1991 commented that there would never be a review of outdated or outmoded policies without political appointees, who can look more objectively and logically at policies and procedures that have gained a "life of their own." This respondent felt that political appointees in this capacity serve a purpose that careerists would never undertake. Another noncareer SES respondent in 1991 commented that a mix of career and noncareer executives is not only appropriate but beneficial because the noncareer executive who brings a fresh outlook and new thinking can afford to be bold and take chances in the interest of progress while career executives provide stability. Another noncareer SES respondent in 1991 commented that

**Appendix II
How Did SES Members View Career
Executives and Political Appointees?**

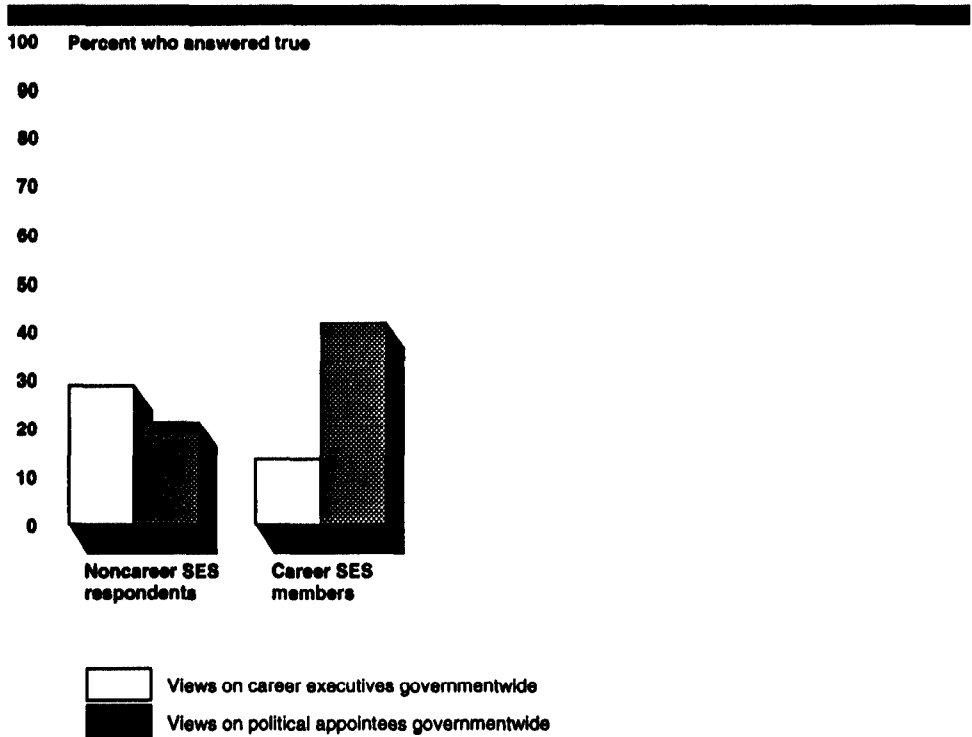
career executives treat their jobs as “entitlements” and are rarely motivated to make improvements.

**To What Extent Did
SES Members Believe
the Actions of Career
Executives and
Political Appointees
Were Motivated More
by Self-Interest Than
by Public Interest?**

There was some difference in the perceptions noncareer SES respondents had regarding whether the actions of career executives and political appointees were motivated more by self-interest than by public interest. However, this difference was small.

As shown in figure II.7 below, in 1991 about 29 percent of the noncareer SES respondents believed the actions of career executives were motivated more by self-interest than by public interest compared to about 21 percent who believed that this was true of political appointees.

Figure II.7: Percentage of SES Members Who Believed the Actions of Career Executives and Political Appointees Governmentwide Were Motivated More by Self-Interest Than by Public Interest (1991)



Note: Noncareer SES respondents' views represent only the 242 noncareer SES members who responded to our 1991 survey.

**Appendix II
How Did SES Members View Career
Executives and Political Appointees?**

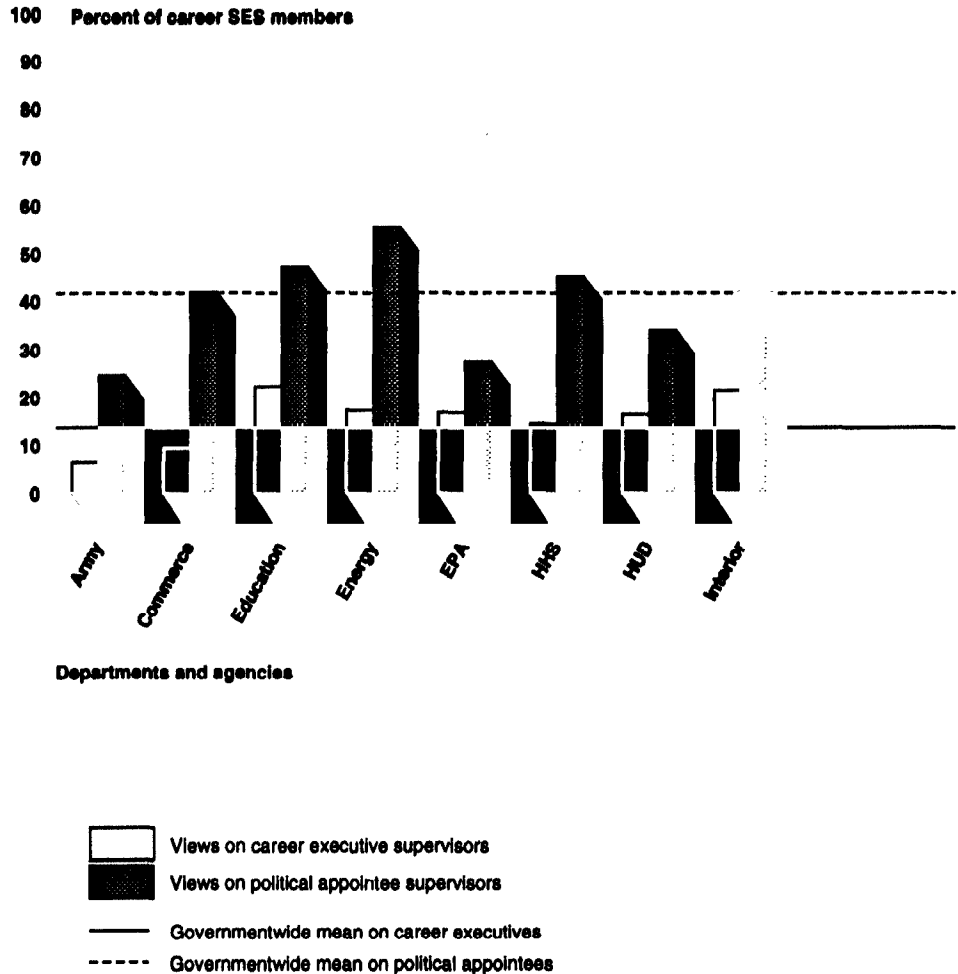
In 1991, about 42 percent of career SES members indicated that they believed that the actions of noncareer executives were motivated more by self-interest than public interest while 13.5 percent believed that this was true of career executives. This represents a governmentwide difference of about 28 percent.

In 1989, there was a similar governmentwide difference of 27 percent—the difference between about 13 and 40 percent of career SES members who believed that this was true of career executives and political appointees, respectively.

Figure II.8 shows that in 1991 Army (about 25 percent), EPA (about 27 percent), and HUD (34 percent) had the smallest percentage of responding career SES members who believed the actions of political appointees were motivated more by self-interest than public interest.

Appendix II
How Did SES Members View Career
Executives and Political Appointees?

Figure II.8: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed the Actions of Career Executives and Political Appointees at Selected Departments Were Motivated More by Self-Interest Than by Public Interest (1991)



Note: Response rates were insufficient to project to the agencywide population of career SES members at Education, HHS, and HUD. Respondents' views at these three departments represent only the views of those responding to our survey.

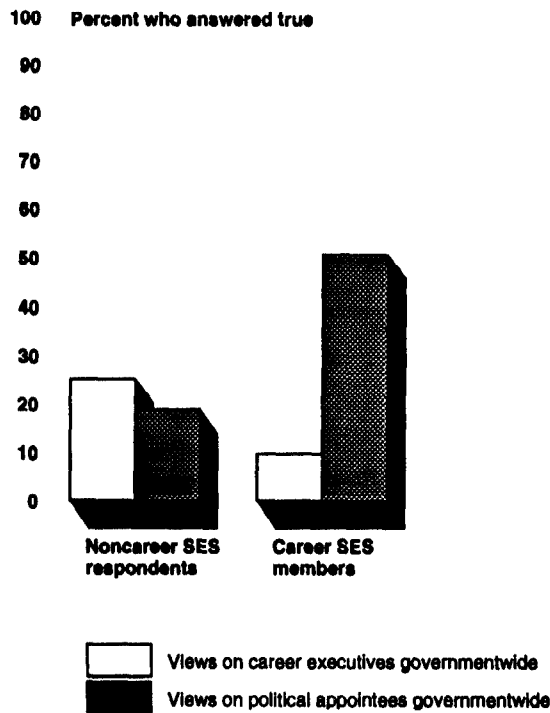
Energy (55.5 percent), Education (about 47 percent), and HHS (about 45 percent) had the highest percentages of career SES members who believed that political appointees were motivated more by self-interest than public interest. The percentages of career SES members who believed that the actions of career executives were motivated more by self-interest were considerably smaller and ranged from 6.5 percent at Army to about 22 percent at Education. In comparing 1991 and 1989 responses, we noted

that some of the same departments that exceeded the governmentwide mean response of about 40 percent in 1989 also exceeded the 42-percent governmentwide mean for 1991. Commerce, Energy, HHS, and Interior exceeded the governmentwide mean for both years.

To What Extent Did SES Members Believe There Were Too Many Career Executives and Political Appointees?

As shown in figure II.9, some noncareer SES respondents governmentwide believed that there were too many career executives and political appointees in the federal government in 1991. About 25 percent believed that this was true of career executives, and about 19 percent believed that this was true of political appointees.

Figure II.9: Percentage of SES Members Who Believed There Were Too Many Career Executives and Political Appointees Governmentwide (1991)



Note: Noncareer SES respondents' views represent only the 242 noncareer SES members who responded to our 1991 survey.

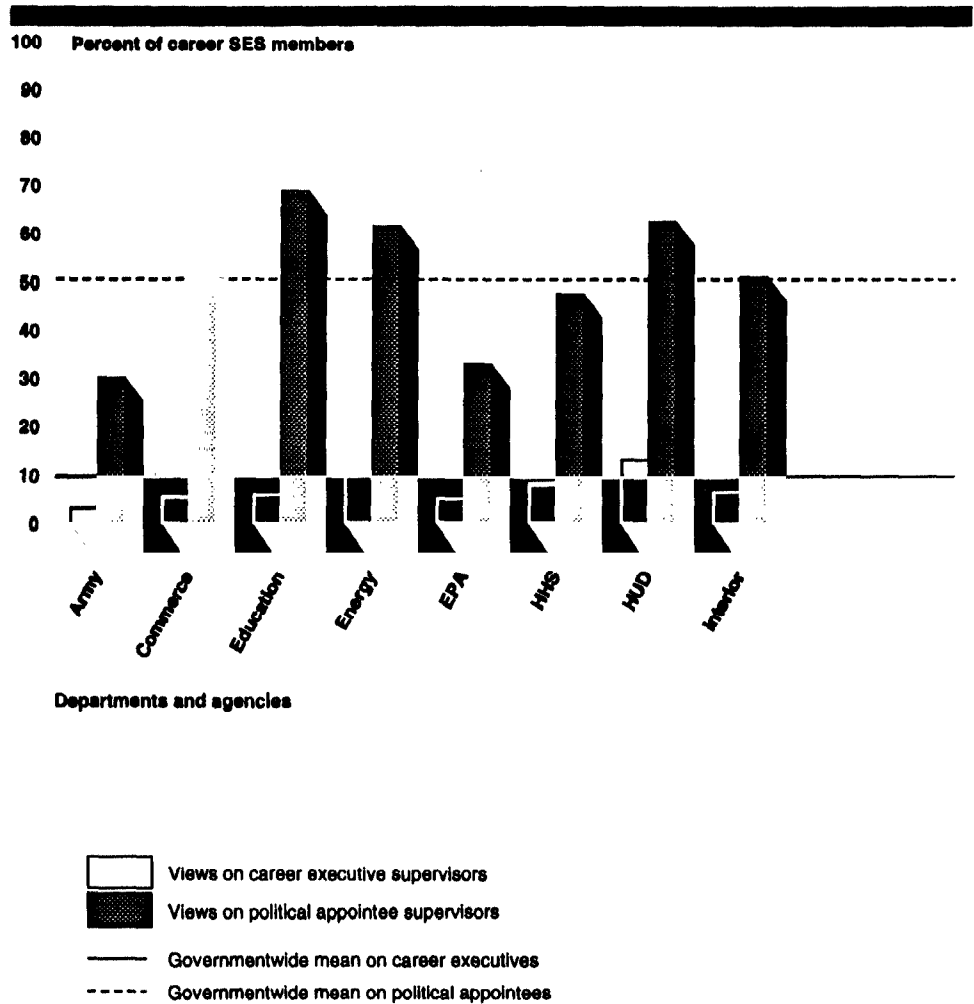
**Appendix II
How Did SES Members View Career
Executives and Political Appointees?**

In both surveys, more career SES members indicated that they believed there were too many political appointees than those who indicated there were too many career executives. Career SES members' responses to this question in both surveys were almost identical. Governmentwide in 1989, about 51 percent of the career SES members felt that there were too many political appointees while about 8 percent believed that this was true of career executives. Governmentwide in 1991, 50.5 percent of career SES members believed that there were too many political appointees compared to about 10 percent who believed that there were too many career executives.

Figure II.10 shows the extent that responding career SES members at selected departments in 1991 believed that there were too many career executives and political appointees in their departments.

**Appendix II
How Did SES Members View Career
Executives and Political Appointees?**

Figure II.10: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed There Were Too Many Career Executives and Political Appointees in Selected Departments (1991)



Note: Response rates were insufficient to project to the agencywide population of career SES members at Education, HHS, and HUD. Respondents' views at these three departments represent only the views of those responding to our survey.

In 1991, the percentage of respondents who believed that this was true of career executives ranged from 3 percent at Army to 13 percent at HUD. On the other hand, the percentage who believed that this was true of political appointees ranged from about 30 percent at Army to about 69 percent at Education.

Appendix II
How Did SES Members View Career
Executives and Political Appointees?

As shown in figure II.10, there were major differences in the perceptions career SES members had of career executives and political appointees on this issue in 1991. In 1991, the difference in opinions about whether there were too many career executives and political appointees ranged from about 27 percent at Army to about 63 percent at Education. We consider such differences to be significant.

In 1989, at least half of the responding career SES members at seven of the eight departments and agencies believed that there were too many political appointees. EPA (about 32 percent) was the only organization where considerably fewer of the respondents felt this way about their political appointees. In 1991, at least half of the career SES members at five departments believed that there were too many political appointees. Less than half of the career SES members at Army (about 30 percent), EPA (about 33 percent), and HHS (about 47 percent) believed that this was true of political appointees in their departments.

How Did SES Members View the Leadership Behavior and Abilities of Career Executives and Political Appointees?

We asked SES members to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with 18 statements about the leadership behavior and abilities of their immediate supervisors. We analyzed their responses to determine if their perceptions about career executive and political appointee supervisors were different and, if so, to what extent these perceptions varied among career and noncareer SES members governmentwide and at selected departments and agencies. We compared the responses of (1) noncareer SES members whose immediate supervisors were career executives, (2) noncareer SES members whose immediate supervisors were political appointees, (3) career SES members whose immediate supervisors were career executives, and (4) career SES members whose immediate supervisors were political appointees. To make these comparisons, we considered a difference major when the views of a respondent group regarding careerists and noncareerists differed by 9 percent or more. We did this to focus on the largest differences. It should be noted that we did not verify whether the perceptions of the career SES members and noncareer SES respondents accurately reflected situations that existed in their departments but accepted their responses as what they believed existed. (See app. V, question 9, for their responses to all 18 statements.)

There were major differences in the opinions of noncareer SES respondents in 1991 about career executive and political appointee supervisors in 11 of the 18 supervisory characteristics in our survey. Noncareer SES respondents' opinions were more positive toward their political appointee supervisors.¹

Career SES members governmentwide had major differences of opinion about career executive and politically appointed supervisors for 6 of 18 supervisory characteristics addressed in our survey. Their opinions were more positive toward career executive supervisors. Interestingly, five of these same characteristics were among the six characteristics in 1989 upon which careerists had major differences of opinion about career executive and politically appointed supervisors.

¹In this appendix, as with other parts of this report, we discuss noncareer SES members' perceptions only as a group perspective because there were too few of these respondents for us to make agency-level comparisons.

Noncareer SES Respondents Had Major Differences of Opinion About Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors in 11 of 18 Categories

Responding noncareer SES members in 1991 indicated major differences of opinion about career executive and political appointee supervisors for most of the 18 supervisory characteristics addressed in our survey. Generally, the responses were more positive toward political appointee supervisors than toward career executive supervisors.

For 11 supervisory traits, noncareer SES respondents had major differences of opinion about the ability and behavior of career executive versus political appointee supervisors. Noncareer SES member responses indicated that they believed politically appointed supervisors were more likely than career executive supervisors to

- satisfy employee needs and expectations,
- show them a lot of trust and respect,
- discuss the big picture of the subunit with them,
- provide praise and recognition,
- ensure that employees fully realize their potential,
- share their considerable experience and training,
- provide them with sound job-related advice, and
- know how to use contacts to get things done.

On the other hand, this same group of respondents believed that career executive supervisors were more likely than politically appointed supervisors to

- make decisions in the respondent's area of responsibility without consulting her or him,
- provide them with needed technical knowledge, and
- have the clout needed to get the job done.

For the remaining seven leadership characteristics, there was not a major difference in noncareer SES respondents' opinions about immediate supervisors who were career executives versus those who were political appointees. Generally, these respondents agreed that both types of these supervisors (1) allowed them to become involved in formulating the policy agenda, (2) took the views of subordinates into account when making decisions, (3) delegated authority and responsibility, (4) kept employees informed about subunit activity, (5) demanded compliance with their decisions, and (6) were capable of getting needed resources. Regarding the seventh leadership characteristic, few noncareer SES respondents indicated that they felt subjugated by either their career executive or political appointee supervisors.

Supervisory Traits Where Career SES Viewed Career Executives and Political Appointees Similarly

For most of the supervisory traits addressed in our surveys, responding career SES members had no major differences in their views about career executive and political appointee supervisors. Their responses in 1991 indicated less than a 9-percent difference in opinions about these two types of supervisors for 12 of the 18 supervisory traits addressed in our survey.

About the same percentage of career SES members with career executive supervisors as those with political appointee supervisors believed that their supervisors

- showed them trust and respect,
- took the suggestions of subordinates into account when making decisions,
- delegated authority and responsibility,
- discussed the big picture of the subunit,
- provided praise and recognition,
- knew how to use contacts to get things done,
- allowed them to become involved in the formulation of the policy agenda,
- made them feel subjugated,
- made decisions in the respondent's area without consulting him or her,
- delegated authority and responsibility to subordinates and allowed them to determine how to do their work,
- demanded compliance with his or her decisions, and
- were capable of getting the resources needed to get the job done.

Career SES Members Had Some Differences of Opinion About Political Appointee and Career Executive Supervisors

Governmentwide, career SES members in 1991 had major differences of opinion about their career executive and political appointee supervisors in 6 of the 18 supervisory characteristics addressed in our survey. Career SES members with career executive supervisors were more likely than those with political appointee supervisors to agree that their immediate supervisors

- satisfied employee needs and expectations for growth and development,
- ensured that employees fully realize their potential,
- kept employees informed about what is going on in their subunit,
- provided needed technical knowledge,
- often provided sound job-related advice, and
- often shared their considerable experience and training.

In 1989, career SES members had major differences of opinion about their career executive and political appointee supervisors for five of the six

**Appendix III
How Did SES Members View the Leadership
Behavior and Abilities of Career Executives
and Political Appointees?**

characteristics just mentioned. The exception involved their perceptions about whether immediate supervisors shared their experience and training. The difference in 1989 was not significant (7.6 percent), while there was a significant difference of 11.4 percent in 1991 responses.²

**Career SES Members'
Views Varied at
Selected Departments**

In addition to looking at career SES members' opinions governmentwide, we also looked at how their opinions varied about career executive and political appointee supervisors at departments selected for review. We could not do a similar analysis for noncareer SES respondents' perceptions because there were too few responses.

Figures III.1 through III.6 show that the different opinions career SES members had governmentwide tended to vary among SES members at selected departments and agencies. Lines representing the governmentwide means can be used to judge the extent to which the opinions of career SES members at a specific agency or department were consistent with governmentwide perceptions of career SES members.

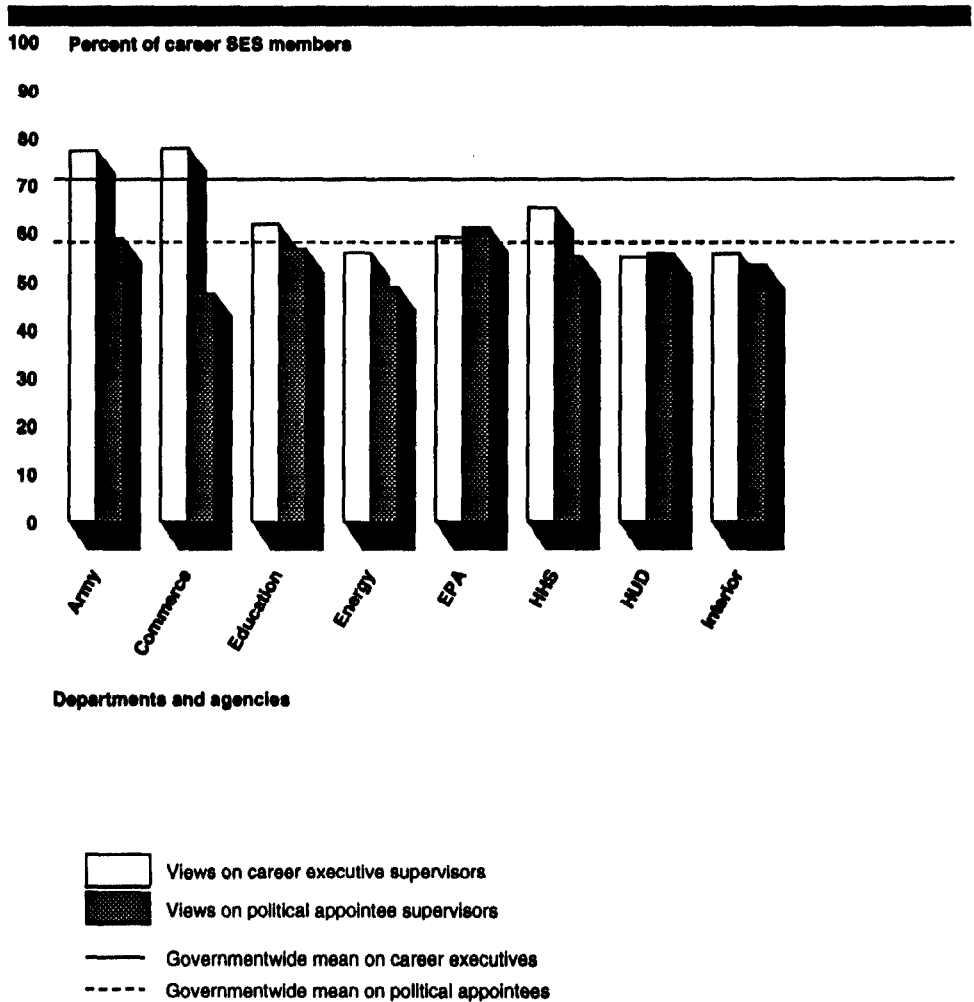
**Did Career SES Members
Believe That Career
Executive and Political
Appointee Supervisors
Meet Employee
Development Needs?**

Governmentwide in 1991 about 71 percent of the career SES members with career executive supervisors agreed that their immediate supervisors satisfy employee needs and expectations for growth and development. About 58 percent with political appointee supervisors agreed that their immediate supervisors do this. Figure III.1 shows that with the exception of Army, Commerce, and HHS in 1991, about the same percentage of career SES members with career executive supervisors and those with political appointee supervisors at each organization agreed that immediate supervisors meet employee needs and expectations for growth and development.

²When comparing 1989 and 1991 responses from career SES members, the difference must be greater than 8.7 percent for it to be considered statistically significant and not due to sampling error.

**Appendix III
How Did SES Members View the Leadership
Behavior and Abilities of Career Executives
and Political Appointees?**

Figure III.1: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors at Selected Departments Meet Employees' Development Needs (1991)



Note: Response rates were insufficient to project to the agencywide population of career SES members at Education, HHS, and HUD. Respondents' views at these three departments represent only the views of those responding to our survey.

Did Career SES Members Believe That Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors Ensure That Employees Realize Their Potential?

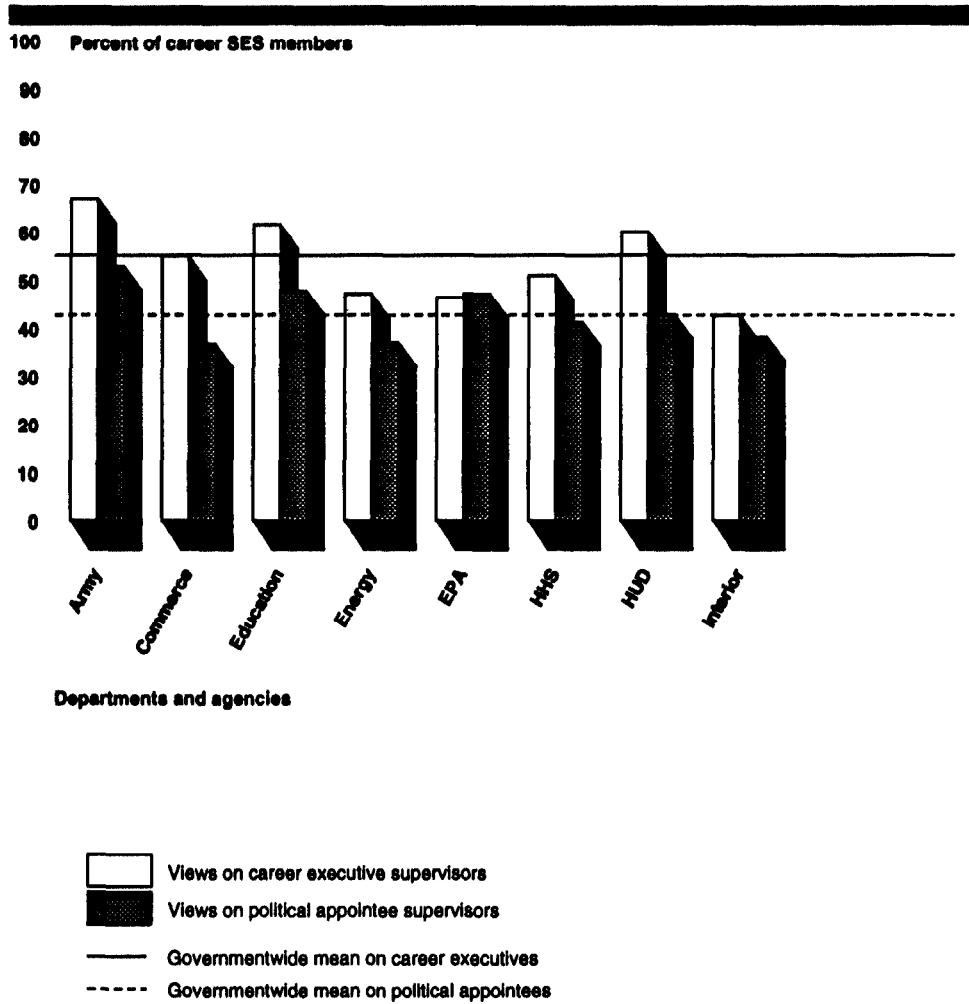
Governmentwide in 1991 about 55 percent of the career SES members with career executive supervisors agreed that their immediate supervisors ensure that employees fully realize their potential. In comparison, about 43 percent of the career SES members with politically appointed supervisors agreed that their immediate supervisors do this.

Figure III.2 shows that the larger differences in the perceptions career SES members had of career executive and political appointee supervisors were

**Appendix III
How Did SES Members View the Leadership
Behavior and Abilities of Career Executives
and Political Appointees?**

at Commerce, HUD, Education, and Army. Energy and HHS had smaller differences. There were only slight differences at EPA and Interior.

Figure III.2: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors at Selected Departments Ensure That Employees Realize Their Potential (1991)



Note: Response rates were insufficient to project to the agencywide population of career SES members at Education, HHS, and HUD. Respondents' views at these three departments represent only the views of those responding to our survey.

**Appendix III
How Did SES Members View the Leadership
Behavior and Abilities of Career Executives
and Political Appointees?**

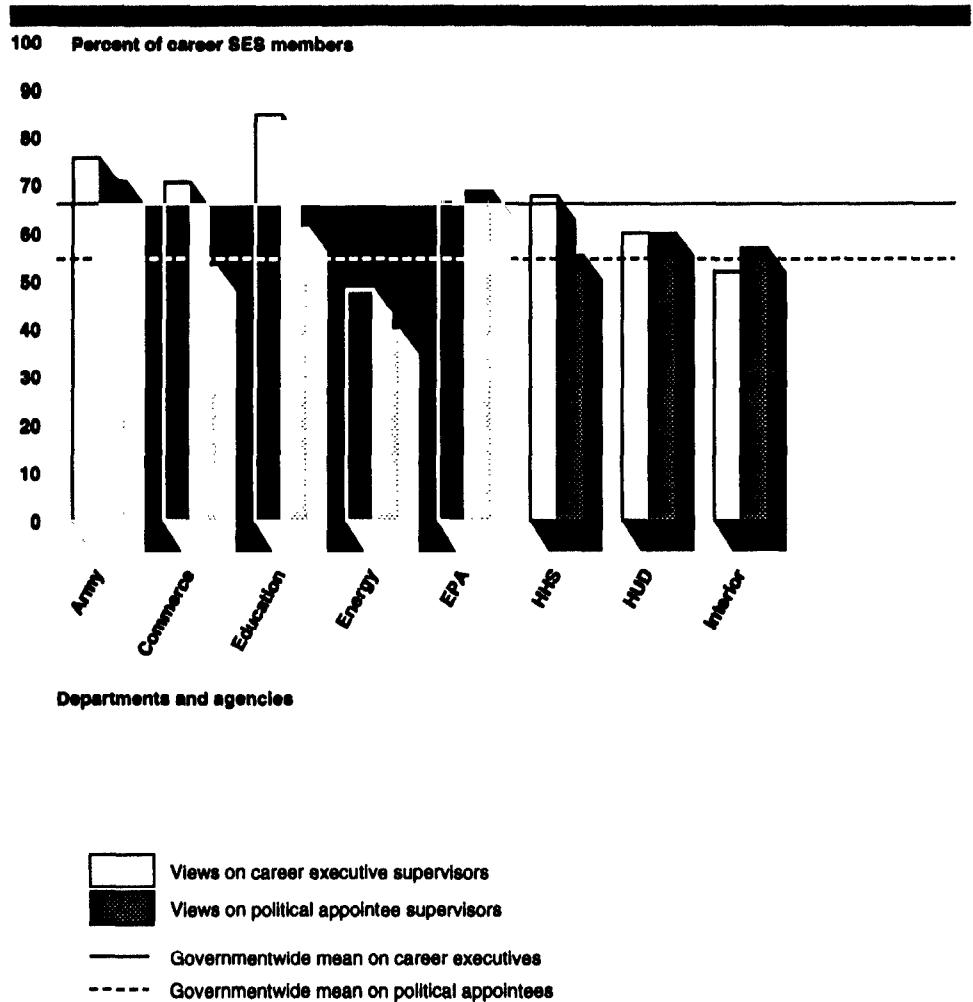
**Did Career SES Members
Believe That Career
Executive and Political
Appointee Supervisors
Keep Employees
Informed?**

In 1991, about 66 percent of the career SES members with career executive supervisors compared to 54.5 percent with politically appointed supervisors governmentwide agreed that their immediate supervisors keep employees informed about what is going on in their subunit.

The extent to which career SES members agreed with this statement was below the governmentwide level at Energy for both categories of supervisors. At HUD and EPA, there was little or no difference between those SES members with career executive supervisors and those with political appointee supervisors who agreed with the statement. The greatest differences in opinion about these two type of supervisors appeared in the responses from career SES members at Education, Commerce, and HHS.

**Appendix III
How Did SES Members View the Leadership
Behavior and Abilities of Career Executives
and Political Appointees?**

Figure III.3: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors at Selected Departments Keep Employees Informed About Subunit Activities (1991)



Note: Response rates were insufficient to project to the agencywide population of career SES members at Education, HHS, and HUD. Respondents' views at these three departments represent only the views of those responding to our survey.

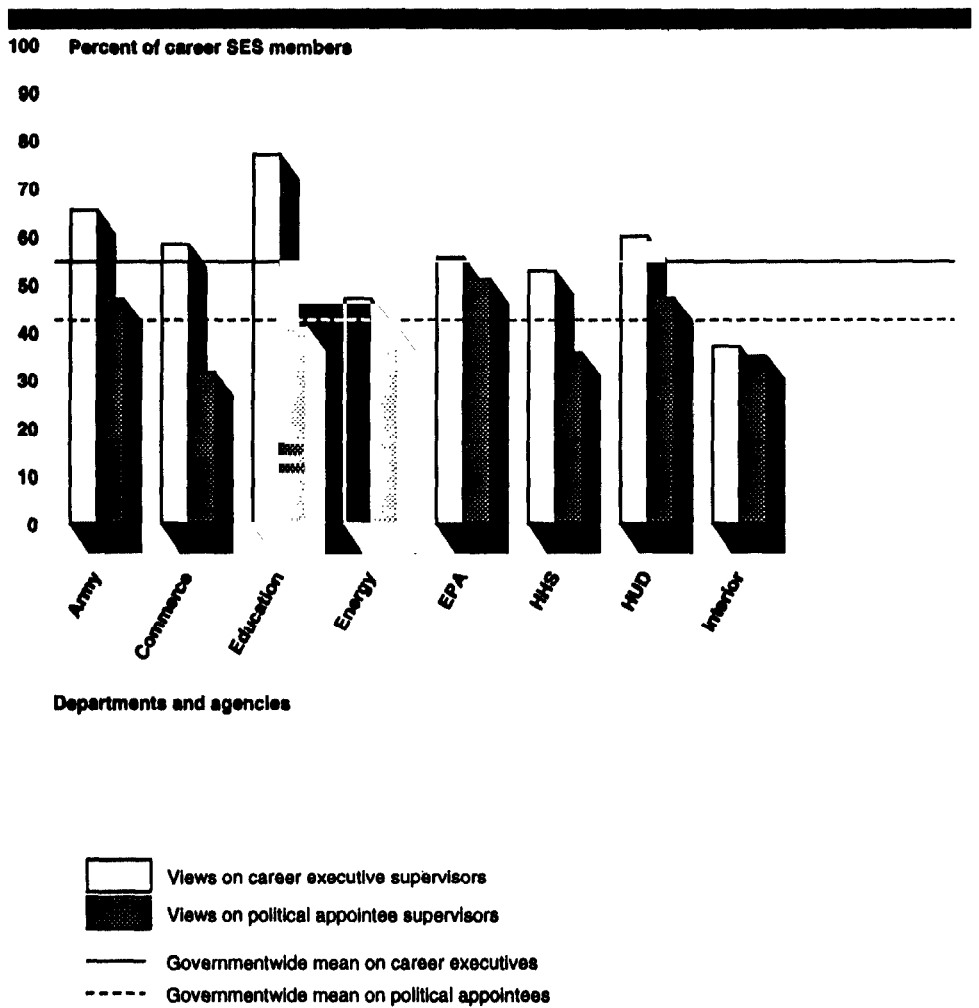
Did Career SES Members Believe That Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors Share Their Experience?

Governmentwide in 1991 about 55 percent of the career SES members with career executive supervisors agreed that their immediate supervisors share their considerable experience and training with them. In comparison, 42.5 percent of career SES members with politically appointed supervisors agreed that this was true of their immediate supervisors.

**Appendix III
How Did SES Members View the Leadership
Behavior and Abilities of Career Executives
and Political Appointees?**

Figure III.4, shows that the greatest differences in perceptions about these two types of supervisors appeared at Education, Commerce, Army, HHS, and HUD.

Figure III.4: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors at Selected Departments Share Their Experience and Training (1991)



Note: Response rates were insufficient to project to the agencywide population of career SES members at Education, HHS, and HUD. Respondents' views at these three departments represent only the views of those responding to our survey.

**Appendix III
How Did SES Members View the Leadership
Behavior and Abilities of Career Executives
and Political Appointees?**

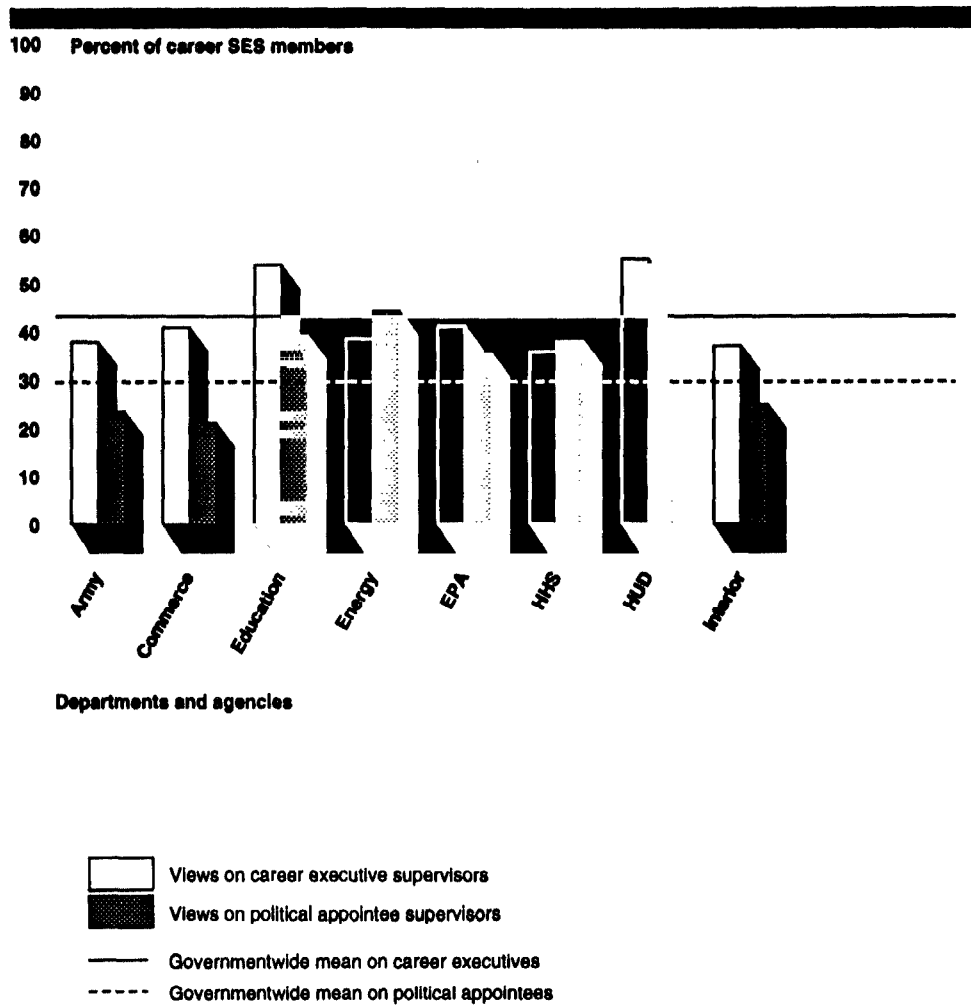
**Did Career SES Members
Believe That Career
Executive and Political
Appointee Supervisors
Provide Needed Technical
Knowledge?**

In 1991, about 43 percent of the career SES members governmentwide indicated that their immediate supervisors who were career executives provide needed technical knowledge. On the other hand, 29.5 percent of career SES members whose immediate supervisors were political appointees agreed that this was so of their supervisors. This represents a difference of about 14 percent in these SES members' opinions about career executive and political appointee supervisors.

Figure III.5 shows how career SES members' opinions about career executive and political appointees varied at selected departments and agencies. The greatest differences in favor of career executive supervisors were found in the responses from career SES members at HUD, Commerce, Army, and Education. Career SES members' opinions at Energy and HHS favored their political appointee supervisors.

**Appendix III
How Did SES Members View the Leadership
Behavior and Abilities of Career Executives
and Political Appointees?**

Figure III.5: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors at Selected Departments Provide Needed Technical Knowledge (1991)



Note: Response rates were insufficient to project to the agencywide population of career SES members at Education, HHS, and HUD. Respondents' views at these three departments represent only the views of those responding to our survey.

Did Career SES Members Believe That Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors Provide Sound Job-Related Advice?

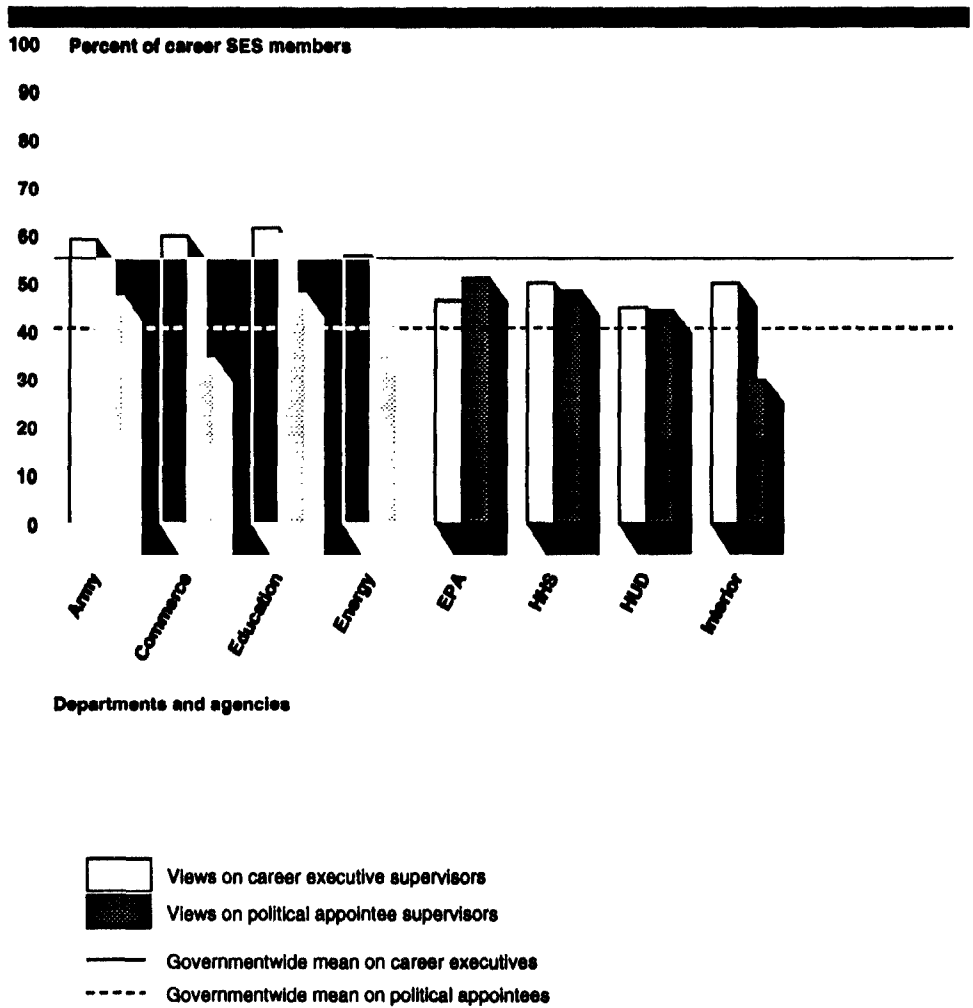
Governmentwide in 1991, about 55 percent of the career SES members with career executive supervisors agreed that their immediate supervisors provide them with sound job-related advice. This is about 14 percent more than the 41 percent of SES members with political appointee supervisors who agreed that this was so of their supervisors.

As shown in figure III.6, there were significant differences of 20 percent or more in the perceptions SES members had of these two types of

Appendix III
How Did SES Members View the Leadership
Behavior and Abilities of Career Executives
and Political Appointees?

supervisors at Commerce, Energy, and Interior. There appeared to be little or no difference in the responses about both types of supervisors at HUD, HHS, and EPA.

Figure III.6: Percentage of Career SES Members Who Believed Career Executive and Political Appointee Supervisors at Selected Departments Provide Sound Job-Related Advice (1991)



Note: Response rates were insufficient to project to the agencywide population of career SES members at Education, HHS, and HUD. Respondents' views at these three departments represent only the views of those responding to our survey.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The Chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil Service, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, asked us to examine the working relationships between career executives and political appointees. Our objectives were to (1) analyze the views career and noncareer SES members had of their work environment, including their opinions of the managerial and supervisory characteristics of career executives and political appointees, and (2) determine if career SES members' views about their work environment had changed since 1989. To accomplish these objectives, we administered and analyzed the results of two surveys that posed identical questions. We surveyed career and noncareer SES members at 19 major departments and agencies. According to OPM, as of June 1989 these departments and agencies accounted for 5,995, or about 83 percent, of the total 7,212 SES members (6,727 career and 485 noncareer) in the federal government. The same departments and agencies accounted for 6,420, or about 84 percent, of the total 7,664 SES members (6,969 career and 695 noncareer) as of December 1990. For this report, we refer to this universe as governmentwide.

In November 1989, we sent our questionnaire to a random sample of 1,340 SES members. This sample included both career and noncareer SES members as a single universe of SES members. In May 1991, we sent the same questionnaire to the total universe of 485 noncareer SES members and another random sample of 1,575 career SES members to get more current information about their views on the work environment. We selected both samples to provide for 95-percent confidence levels with 5 percent sampling error rates for responses governmentwide and for responses from SES members at eight selected departments and agencies—EPA and the departments of the Army, Commerce, Education, Energy, HHS, HUD, and the Interior. However, for three departments—Education, HHS, and HUD—the response rates were insufficient to allow us to project to the agencywide population of SES members. Thus, respondents' views at these three departments represent only the views of those responding to our survey. Tables IV.1, IV.2, and IV.3 contain summaries of the universe sizes, questionnaires mailed, responses, and response rates.

**Appendix IV
Objectives, Scope, and Methodology**

Table IV.1: Noncareer SES Universe Size, Responses, and Response Rates (1991)

Departments and agencies ^a	Universe size	Number of responses	Response rates
1. Army	6	2	33.3
2. Commerce	56	26	46.4
3. Education	17	10	58.8
4. Energy	35	16	45.7
5. EPA	15	9	60.0
6. HHS	53	26	49.1
7. HUD	21	10	47.6
8. Interior	26	13	50.0
9. Other	253	130	51.4
Total/average	482	242	50.2

^aQuestionnaires were mailed to the total universe of noncareer SES members at 19 departments and agencies. These included the eight departments we selected for agency analysis plus 11 other organizations—NASA, and the departments of the Air Force, Agriculture, Justice, Labor, Navy, State, Transportation (DOT), Treasury, Veterans Affairs (VA), and Defense (DOD).

Table IV.2: Career SES Universe Size, Questionnaires Mailed, Responses, and Response Rates (1991)

Departments and agencies ^a	Universe size	Number of questionnaires mailed	Number of responses	Response rates
1. Army	367	188	142	75.6
2. Commerce	339	179	145	81.0
3. Education	63	63	38	60.3
4. Energy	459	209	149	71.3
5. EPA	230	143	108	75.5
6. HHS	556	222	144	64.9
7. HUD	85	85	57	67.1
8. Interior	224	141	116	82.3
9. Other	3,501	345	269	78.0
Total/average	5,824	1,575	1,168	74.1

^aTo allow for agency-by-agency analysis, we selected larger samples from the eight departments and agencies listed than from the "other" departments and agencies. To provide for governmentwide coverage, the "other" category included random samples from 11 organizations—Air Force, Agriculture, Justice, Labor, NASA, Navy, State, DOT, Treasury, VA, and DOD.

Table IV.3: Career SES Universe Size, Questionnaires Mailed, Responses, and Response Rates (1989)

Departments and agencies^a	Universe size	Number of questionnaires mailed	Number of responses	Response rates
1. Army	305	170	131	77.1
2. Commerce	356	180	133	73.9
3. Education	66	55	25	45.5
4. Energy	463	200	158	79.0
5. EPA	221	140	97	69.3
6. HHS	537	200	133	66.5
7. HUD	89	70	38	54.3
8. Interior	228	140	98	70.0
9. Other	3,421	185	128	69.2
Total/average	5,686	1,340	941	70.2

^aTo allow for agency-by-agency analysis, we selected larger samples from the eight organizations listed than from the "other" departments and agencies. To provide for governmentwide coverage, the "other" category included random samples from 11 organizations—Air Force, Agriculture, Justice, Labor, NASA, Navy, State, DOT, Treasury, VA, and DOD.

We did not verify responses to determine if they accurately reflected situations that existed at departments and agencies but reported responses as views, beliefs, and perceptions of the respondents. We do not report the views and opinions of noncareer SES members for the 1989 survey because there were too few responses from noncareer SES members to provide meaningful results. Noncareer SES respondents accounted for only 2.7 percent of the entire universe of respondents to our 1989 survey. Also, we did not combine the responses of noncareer SES members with those of the career respondents who accounted for the remaining 97.3 of our sample because we felt it would "wash out" the views of the noncareer SES members and possibly misrepresent questionnaire results.

In 1991, about 50 percent of the total universe of noncareer SES members at the 19 agencies and departments responded to our survey. Generally, we report the results of surveys that have a 70-percent response rate. While the responses of the noncareer respondents cannot be generalized to the total universe of noncareer SES members, we reported them to provide some insights into how noncareer SES respondents felt about their work environment.

Due to sampling, each percentage reported has a margin of error associated with it. Listed in table IV.4 are the margins of error associated

with all governmentwide percentages reported as well as for the eight specific departments and agencies for both our 1989 and 1991 surveys.

Table IV.4: Margins of Error Rates for the 1989 and 1991 SES Surveys

Universe	1989	1991
Governmentwide	± 5.1	± 3.6
Army	± 5.7	± 5.8
Commerce	± 6.0	± 5.6
Education	± 8.2	± 0
Energy	± 5.9	± 5.9
EPA	± 6.1	± 5.8
HHS	± 6.7	± 6.4
HUD	± 7.5	± 0
Interior	± 6.2	± 5.6

Such error rates should be considered when examining the results of our surveys. To illustrate, in 1991, 90.9 percent of the career SES respondents reported that they were satisfied with the duties they performed. When projected to the universe, the actual number of SES members who believed this can range between 87.3 and 94.5 percent because the 1991 survey has a ± 3.6-percent sampling error rate for governmentwide results. Further, when comparing 1989 governmentwide responses to 1991 governmentwide responses, the difference must exceed ± 8.7 percent (the 1991 sampling error rate of ± 3.6 percent plus the 1989 sampling error rate of ± 5.1 percent) for the difference to be considered statistically significant and not attributable to sampling error.

Generally, our questionnaire gave respondents the option of indicating the extent that they agreed or disagreed with a statement, were satisfied or dissatisfied with a condition, or believed a statement was true or false. We did this to make it easier for respondents to select responses that closely reflected their views. However, we collapsed these categories of choices to facilitate analysis and reporting and denoted this in appendix V by using a "/" between the collapsed optional choices. Therefore, for example, references in our report that respondents "believed" or "agreed" that certain conditions existed were based only on the percentage of respondents who (1) indicated that questionnaire statements were true in most or all cases or (2) agreed or strongly agreed with such questionnaire statements.

Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES Members' Views on the Federal Work Environment

SES members responded to our November 1989 questionnaire during the period November 1989 to February 1990, and to our May 1991 questionnaire during the period May 1991 to August 1991. We reported their responses as views and perceptions and did not attempt to verify their views to determine if they reflected situations that existed at their departments. In reviewing the summarized results of these two surveys, it is important to understand that (1) the differences between percentages must exceed the sampling error rates associated with the percentages to be considered statistically significant and (2) we collapsed some of the response categories for better presentation of the results.

Significant Differences

The sampling error rates for career SES members' governmentwide responses to our two surveys are ± 5.1 percent for the 1989 survey and ± 3.6 percent for the 1991 survey. For this reason, the difference between career SES members' governmentwide responses in 1989 and those in 1991 must exceed ± 8.7 percent to be considered significant and not due to sampling error.

We sent our 1991 survey to the entire universe of noncareer SES members, rather than a sample, at the 19 agencies and departments surveyed. Because we surveyed the entire universe, there is no sampling error rate associated with the responses from the 242 noncareer SES members who responded to our survey.

Collapsed Response Categories

Generally, we designed our questionnaire to give respondents the option of indicating the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a statement, were satisfied or dissatisfied with a condition, or believed a statement was true or false. We did this to make it easier for respondents to select answers that closely reflected their views. However, we collapsed these categories of choices for clearer reporting and denoted them in this appendix by using a "/" between two collapsed optional choices. For example, some respondents in answering question 5 (a) elected to strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with a particular statement. We collapsed these five choices of response into three categories to facilitate analysis and discussion. The collapsed categories for this question are strongly agree/agree, neither, and strongly disagree/disagree.

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

For most questions, we excluded the "omitted" and "no basis to judge" responses from the computation of the percentage of respondents who expressed an opinion on the issue in question.

Additionally, some columns showing the percentage of responses do not always add to 100 due to rounding and incorrectly or unanswered questions.

We did not summarize the responses to questions 1 through 4 because participants were asked to indicate the (1) name of their department, (2) name of their subunit, (3) number of years with the department, and (4) number of years with the subunit.

I. Organizational Beliefs

5. Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the subunit of the department for which they work.

With respect to your own feelings about the particular subunit for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement you feel for each statement.

a. I put forth a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this subunit be successful.

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Strongly agree/agree	95.6	96.4	97.5
Neither	3.4	2.9	1.7
Strongly disagree/disagree	1.0	.7	.8

b. I talk up this subunit to my friends as a great place to work.

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Strongly agree/agree	65.5	74.8	75.6
Neither	23.3	16.6	18.2
Strongly disagree/disagree	11.1	8.6	6.2

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

c. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this subunit.

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Strongly agree/agree	18.2	27.8	25.7
Neither	21.1	20.2	26.1
Strongly disagree/disagree	60.7	52.0	48.1

d. I feel that my values and those of the subunit are very similar.

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Strongly agree/agree	77.9	78.5	78.9
Neither	15.7	14.3	12.8
Strongly disagree/disagree	6.4	7.2	8.3

e. I am proud to tell others that I'm part of this subunit.

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Strongly agree/agree	79.7	84.1	90.1
Neither	15.0	11.3	7.9
Strongly disagree/disagree	5.4	4.6	2.1

f. This subunit really motivates the very best in the way of job performance.

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Strongly agree/agree	58.3	62.0	64.0
Neither	24.5	21.8	21.5
Strongly disagree/disagree	17.1	16.2	14.5

g. I am extremely glad that I'm working in this subunit as opposed to others.

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Strongly agree/agree	70.3	76.7	77.3
Neither	21.8	16.1	16.9
Strongly disagree/disagree	8.0	7.2	5.8

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

h. I really care about the fate of this subunit.

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Strongly agree/agree	94.6	96.4	96.3
Neither	3.0	2.3	1.2
Strongly disagree/disagree	2.4	1.3	2.5

i. For me, this is one of the best of all possible subunits for which to work.

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Strongly disagree/agree	70.4	76.8	76.0
Neither	19.6	14.5	14.9
Strongly disagree/disagree	10.1	8.6	9.1

II. Subunit and Department Mission

6. Listed below are a series of statements that may be used to describe:

1. the ability of your subunit, and 2. the ability of your department to carry out its mission.

With respect to your own feelings about the particular subunit and department for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement you feel for each statement separately for 1) your subunit and 2) your department.

a. The work mission and/or goals of my subunit and department have the support of a strong public constituency.

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent
Strongly agree/ agree	63.4	66.9	63.3	69.7	70.9	81.3
Neither	18.5	19.3	20.6	17.3	18.1	12.9
Strongly agree/ disagree	18.1	13.8	16.1	13.0	11.0	5.8

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

b. My subunit and department have the ability to secure the financial resources necessary to accomplish its mission.

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent
Strongly agree/ agree	46.4	43.1	52.5	51.6	55.6	62.9
Neither	14.3	25.0	13.3	23.2	15.9	20.4
Strongly disagree/ disagree	39.3	32.0	34.1	25.1	28.5	16.7

c. My subunit and department have the ability to secure the human resources or personnel necessary to accomplish its mission.

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent
Strongly agree/ agree	37.6	37.5	46.2	45.6	56.3	63.7
Neither	18.1	28.5	15.7	28.1	13.7	21.9
Strongly disagree/ disagree	44.3	34.0	38.1	26.3	30.0	14.3

d. The employees in my subunit and department have unique technical expertise and /or training which is difficult to replace.

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent
Strongly agree/ agree	92.1	64.1	88.4	66.4	71.9	64.6
Neither	5.1	28.5	7.3	24.9	15.3	23.7
Strongly disagree/ disagree	2.7	7.4	4.4	8.7	12.8	11.7

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

e. My subunit and department provide for the "public good" of the nation.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent
Strongly agree/ agree	97.3	92.4	95.7	91.1	92.9	94.2
Neither	2.1	5.9	3.1	7.0	5.0	4.1
Strongly disagree/ disagree	.7	1.7	1.2	1.9	2.1	1.7

f. The work of this subunit and department is critical to the work of other departments/agencies in the federal government.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent
Strongly agree/ agree	76.0	76.1	73.6	74.5	75.2	81.3
Neither	16.1	18.4	19.0	19.1	14.5	13.7
Strongly disagree/ disagree	7.8	5.5	7.5	6.3	10.3	5.0

g. Other subunits and departments in the federal government need information from my subunit and department in order to perform their duties effectively.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent
Strongly agree/ agree	77.2	81.0	73.4	74.9	74.5	79.6
Neither	15.0	14.4	15.6	18.9	13.8	16.2
Strongly disagree/ disagree	7.8	4.6	11.0	6.2	11.7	4.2

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

h. The activities of this subunit and department are greatly interlinked with the activities of other subunits and departments in the federal government.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent
Strongly agree/ agree	73.3	74.6	68.3	69.0	73.9	77.6
Neither	16.3	20.1	17.9	22.7	15.8	16.6
Strongly disagree/ disagree	10.4	5.3	13.7	8.3	10.4	5.8

i. The work of this subunit and department have an impact on policy development in the federal government.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent
Strongly agree/ agree	75.6	90.8	71.2	86.1	83.8	90.4
Neither	14.4	7.2	17.0	10.3	11.2	8.3
Strongly disagree/ disagree	10.0	2.0	11.7	3.6	5.0	1.2

j. This subunit and department can successfully cope with uncertainty in terms of resources.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent
Strongly agree/ agree	47.5	36.9	51.1	43.9	60.4	56.6
Neither	18.2	30.5	20.4	32.0	18.3	23.0
Strongly disagree/ disagree	34.3	32.6	28.5	24.1	21.2	20.4

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

k. This subunit and department affect financial resources which other subunits and departments in the federal government need.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent
Strongly agree/ agree	39.1	52.2	38.6	50.3	37.8	51.3
Neither	25.4	28.9	27.8	29.4	30.9	29.6
Strongly disagree/ disagree	35.4	18.9	33.7	20.3	31.3	19.0

l. This subunit and department affect personnel resources which other subunits and departments in the federal government need.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent
Strongly agree/ agree	25.9	31.7	27.3	34.0	26.8	35.8
Neither	29.5	36.7	30.7	34.5	34.6	36.7
Strongly disagree/ disagree	44.6	31.6	42.0	31.5	38.5	27.5

m. This subunit and department maintain strong networking relationships (alliances) with other subunits and departments in government.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent	Subunit percent	Department percent
Strongly agree/ agree	74.2	62.9	74.4	65.1	75.1	67.4
Neither	14.3	27.5	13.0	24.8	14.1	24.7
Strongly disagree/ disagree	11.5	9.9	12.6	10.1	10.8	7.9

III. Decision Making

7. This question has two parts, each relating to decision-making. Part A concerns your subunit and Part B deals with your department as a whole.

Part A: Influence on Subunit Decisionmaking

Listed below are a number of statements concerning different kinds of decisions made in organizations. Using the scale provided, please rate: 1) the amount of influence you believe you actually have (perceived influence) in your subunit, and 2) the amount of influence you feel you should have (preferred influence) in your subunit when making these decisions.

a. Allocation of subunit funds

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.
Very substantial to substantial influence	53.1	79.6	49.0	79.6	52.1	75.5
Moderate influence	21.4	15.9	24.9	13.1	20.9	13.7
Some to little or no influence	25.6	4.4	26.1	7.2	26.9	10.7

b. Hiring of subunit staff

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.
Very substantial to substantial influence	69.0	85.5	63.0	80.8	61.0	77.5
Moderate influence	17.4	10.4	20.8	12.5	19.5	14.8
Some to little or no influence	13.6	4.2	16.2	6.7	19.5	7.6

c. Division of labor within the subunit

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.
Very substantial to substantial influence	66.8	83.0	59.1	79.5	63.6	75.8
Moderate influence	18.2	13.7	22.5	14.8	16.5	16.5
Some to little or no influence	15.0	3.3	18.4	5.7	19.9	7.6

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

d. Development of new programs at the subunit level

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.
Very substantial to substantial influence	62.3	83.1	57.5	82.7	67.7	81.1
Moderate influence	20.8	14.2	22.8	13.9	16.8	13.7
Some to little or no influence	16.9	2.6	19.7	3.4	15.5	5.2

e. Issues concerning employee motivation and employee rewards at subunit level

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.
Very substantial to substantial influence	57.1	87.7	58.3	82.9	56.6	78.2
Moderate influence	23.3	9.8	22.6	12.0	23.4	13.2
Some to little or no influence	19.6	2.5	19.1	5.0	20.0	8.5

**Part B: Influence on
Department
Decisionmaking**

Using the same scale, please rate your level of perceived and preferred influence in the following types of decisions made at the department level.

a. Allocation of department funds

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.
Very substantial to substantial influence	8.4	28.3	9.1	31.5	14.0	34.1
Moderate influence	15.0	27.7	13.9	26.0	20.6	26.6
Some to little or no influence	76.6	44.0	77.0	42.5	65.4	39.3

b. Hiring of department staff

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.
Very substantial to substantial influence	5.0	14.5	6.6	16.0	15.7	24.0
Moderate influence	7.3	13.3	8.5	15.5	14.3	21.8
Some to little or no influence	87.8	72.2	85.0	68.5	70.0	54.2

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

c. Division of labor within the department

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.
Very substantial to substantial influence	4.8	16.4	6.5	16.3	13.1	23.3
Moderate influence	7.9	17.4	8.0	19.4	19.0	25.6
Some to little or no influence	87.3	66.2	85.5	64.0	67.9	51.1

d. Development of new programs at the department level

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.
Very substantial to substantial influence	9.7	27.6	9.3	25.4	20.3	36.7
Moderate influence	14.9	26.2	14.1	29.6	21.1	30.6
Some to little or no influence	75.5	46.2	76.6	45.0	58.6	32.8

e. Issues concerning employee motivation and employee rewards at department level

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.	Perceived	Prefer.
Very substantial to substantial influence	5.0	21.8	8.5	24.5	16.7	32.0
Moderate influence	11.6	25.2	10.3	25.6	10.8	22.1
Some to little or no influence	83.3	53.0	81.2	49.8	72.5	45.9

IV. Organizational Culture

8. How do the following statements reflect your opinions of career executives and political appointees in your department?

a. They view their jobs as an opportunity to make positive, long term improvements to government.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee
True in most/all cases	93.4	54.4	93.1	53.2	77.4	85.5
False half of the time	5.2	27.1	6.2	30.6	17.2	10.0
False in most/all cases	1.4	18.5	.8	16.2	5.4	4.6

b. They support and uphold merit principles regarding the hiring of personnel.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee
True in most/all cases	93.9	43.9	94.1	40.4	82.6	81.4
False half of the time	5.5	31.8	5.1	37.6	13.1	14.3
False in most/all cases	.6	24.2	.9	21.9	4.2	4.3

c. They have more "self-interest" than "public-interest" as reasons for their actions.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee
True in most/all cases	12.7	39.7	13.5	41.6	28.6	21.1
False half of the time	11.9	25.7	17.9	29.1	21.0	25.8
False in most/all cases	75.4	34.6	68.7	29.2	50.4	53.0

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

d. They work hard to carry out the current Administration's initiatives and priorities.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee
True in most/all cases	89.7	90.4	91.1	89.7	59.6	97.5
False half of the time	8.9	7.6	8.3	9.8	33.3	2.1
False in most/all cases	1.4	2.0	.6	.5	7.1	.4

e. There are too many of them in government (i.e., not that many of them are needed to do the work of government).

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee
True in most/all cases	7.7	51.2	9.6	50.5	25.1	18.7
False half of the time	7.3	19.1	11.8	22.8	18.9	18.7
False in most/all cases	84.9	29.7	78.6	26.8	55.9	62.6

f. They make decisions regarding the awarding of grants and contracts and/or the making of loans or loan insurance guarantees solely on the basis of merit.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee	Career Exec.	Polit. Appointee
True in most/all cases	95.5	58.3	93.4	55.0	84.6	84.1
False half of the time	3.8	31.8	4.6	31.4	11.0	10.8
False in most/all cases	.7	9.9	2.0	13.6	4.4	5.1

V. Leadership

9. The statements below describe leadership behavior in organizations. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement as it applies to your current supervisor. (If your current supervisor's position is vacant, respond for your previous supervisor.)

A. Leadership Behavior

a. My supervisor allows me to become involved in the formulation of agenda for policy.

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	88.7	79.4	86.8	78.4	77.8	85.9
Neither	4.3	9.7	6.9	10.6	—	5.0
Strongly disagree/ disagree	7.1	11.0	6.2	10.9	22.2	9.1

b. My supervisor satisfies employees' needs and expectations for growth and development as well as the goals of this subunit.

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	72.5	55.7	71.1	57.9	55.6	68.2
Neither	17.1	27.2	16.5	20.7	5.6	15.9
Strongly disagree/ disagree	10.3	17.1	12.4	21.4	38.9	15.9

c. I feel subjugated by my supervisor.

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	11.9	8.1	11.5	17.6	5.9	9.2
Neither	14.4	19.0	16.2	12.5	23.5	16.6
Strongly disagree/ disagree	73.7	72.9	72.2	69.9	70.6	74.2

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

d. My supervisor shows me a lot of trust and respect.

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	82.8	78.2	81.8	75.2	66.7	83.6
Neither	9.2	12.3	11.8	11.0	16.7	5.5
Strongly disagree/ disagree	8.0	9.4	6.4	13.7	16.7	10.9

e. My supervisor makes decisions in my area of responsibility without consulting with me.

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	17.0	21.1	18.9	24.3	44.4	21.4
Neither	16.5	17.3	15.5	13.2	—	13.6
Strongly disagree/ disagree	66.5	61.6	65.6	62.5	55.6	65.0

f. My supervisor consults with subordinates and takes their opinions and suggestions into account when making decisions.

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	75.8	73.3	77.9	72.6	77.8	79.5
Neither	15.8	16.3	13.4	15.4	5.6	12.7
Strongly disagree/ disagree	8.4	10.4	8.7	11.9	16.7	7.7

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

g. My supervisor delegates authority and responsibility to subordinates and allows them to determine how to do their work.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	77.2	77.0	78.9	70.4	66.7	75.0
Neither	13.1	9.6	10.9	14.2	5.6	13.6
Strongly disagree/ disagree	9.7	13.4	10.2	15.3	27.8	11.4

h. My supervisor discusses the "big picture" of this subunit with me.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	76.3	70.5	71.3	68.9	55.6	72.7
Neither	12.9	12.8	15.6	11.3	16.7	11.8
Strongly disagree/ disagree	10.7	16.7	13.0	19.8	27.8	15.5

i. My supervisor provides praise and recognition to subordinates based on their performance. He/she shows appreciation for their special efforts and contributions making sure they get credit for their helpful ideas and suggestions.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	71.9	61.4	71.7	66.5	50.0	68.0
Neither	14.6	21.8	16.5	13.5	16.7	15.1
Strongly disagree/ disagree	13.6	16.9	11.8	19.9	33.3	16.9

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

J. My supervisor ensures that employees fully realize their potential.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	57.7	37.7	55.1	42.7	38.9	52.7
Neither	30.2	46.5	30.0	29.0	22.2	28.2
Strongly disagree/ disagree	12.1	15.8	14.9	28.3	38.9	19.1

k. My supervisor keeps employees informed about what is going on in this subunit.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	66.6	52.9	66.0	54.5	55.6	57.5
Neither	23.1	29.8	18.5	20.9	—	22.8
Strongly disagree/ disagree	10.2	17.3	15.5	24.6	44.4	19.6

l. My supervisor demands compliance with his/her decisions.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	71.9	83.5	71.6	79.5	72.2	78.1
Neither	21.4	12.4	19.7	15.5	22.2	17.4
Strongly disagree/ disagree	6.7	4.1	8.7	5.0	5.6	4.6

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

B. Leadership Abilities

m. My supervisor is capable of getting the resources he/she needs to get things done.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	52.3	43.1	50.8	50.1	77.8	73.2
Neither	24.1	29.3	28.4	24.4	22.2	14.1
Strongly disagree/ disagree	23.6	27.7	20.8	25.5	—	12.7

n. My supervisor often shares with me his/her considerable experience and training.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	55.2	47.6	54.6	42.5	50.0	61.4
Neither	27.5	24.9	24.8	24.8	22.2	19.1
Strongly disagree/ disagree	17.2	27.5	20.6	32.8	27.8	19.5

o. My supervisor can provide me with needed technical knowledge.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Polit. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	39.5	23.8	43.1	29.5	66.7	44.8
Neither	28.6	24.8	23.2	20.4	16.7	31.2
Strongly disagree/ disagree	31.9	51.4	33.7	50.1	16.7	24.0

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

p. My supervisor often provides me with sound job-related advice.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	58.4	40.1	55.1	40.6	33.3	55.5
Neither	21.4	22.1	20.1	26.3	16.7	20.9
Strongly disagree/ disagree	20.2	37.8	24.8	33.0	50.0	23.6

q. My supervisor really knows how to use contacts to get things done.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	64.1	58.5	59.1	63.0	55.6	71.8
Neither	25.5	30.3	28.2	21.3	27.8	14.1
Strongly disagree/ disagree	10.4	11.2	12.7	15.7	16.7	14.1

r. My supervisor has the "clout" necessary to get the job done.

	1991					
	1989 Career		Career		Noncareer	
	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.	Career Suprv.	Pollt. Suprv.
Strongly agree/agree	57.6	59.1	61.1	58.8	83.3	71.8
Neither	25.7	24.6	23.0	23.1	11.1	16.8
Strongly disagree/ disagree	16.7	16.3	15.9	18.1	5.6	11.4

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

10. Listed below are a series of statements concerning where in the subunit's structure decisions are made. (See glossary for definition of subunit). Considering the hierarchy of authority in your subunit, are the following statements true or false?

a. There can be little action taken here until my supervisor approves a decision.

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
True in most/all cases	22.1	21.6	35.4
False half of the time	20.4	25.7	25.4
False in most/all cases	57.5	52.7	39.2

b. A person who wants to make his or her own decisions would be quickly encouraged here.

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
True in most/all cases	62.3	61.3	56.4
False half of the time	21.4	22.4	24.5
False in most/all cases	16.2	16.3	19.1

c. Even small matters have to be referred to someone higher up for a final decision.

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
True in most/all cases	11.8	14.1	17.0
False half of the time	14.0	16.2	23.7
False in most/all cases	74.2	69.7	59.3

d. I have to ask my supervisor before I do almost anything.

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
True in most/all cases	6.4	7.6	7.9
False half of the time	9.7	11.2	15.1
False in most/all cases	83.9	81.3	77.0

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

11. In which of the following categories would you classify your immediate supervisor?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Career person in a career position or in a non-career appointment	75.2	76.6	7.5
Political appointee in SES; or Political appointee outside SES (e.g., Secretary, Asst. Secretary, etc.)	22.1	23.2	92.5
Other	2.7	.2	—

12. In your department, approximately how many political appointees are between you and the Secretary?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Just one	22.6	22.2	39.7
Between 2-4	53.1	54.0	49.6
5-7	7.7	7.8	3.8
8-10	1.2	1.5	3.0
More than 10	2.5	2.4	2.1
Don't know	11.9	11.9	1.7
None (written in)	.9	.2	—

13. Have you been in the same position in the same subunit for the last five years?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Yes	48.2	46.8	11.9
No	51.8	53.2	88.1

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

**14. How many different supervisors have you had in the last five years?
(CHECK ONE.)**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Just one	18.3	27.2	24.1
Between 2-4	76.2	66.4	62.1
5-7	5.2	5.4	13.8
8-10	.2	.7	—
10 plus	—	.2	—

**VI. Personnel
Practices**

15. The following statements address some possible abuses of the SES system. Please indicate for each statement a) whether you personally had such an experience, and b) whether, to your knowledge, this occurred at your department.

**a. "Shelving" an SES executive by
detailing or reassigning him/her to
duties not of an SES nature.**

Personal Experience	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Never happened to me.	94.9	91.8	92.3
Happened to me once.	3.8	6.8	6.4
Happened to me more than once.	.7	.9	.9
Happened to me several times.	.4	.2	—
Happened to me many times.	.2	.2	.4

Indirect Experience	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Never happened at my dept. to my knowledge.	20.5	17.9	29.3
Happened at my dept. once.	10.3	9.1	9.9
Happened at my dept. more than once.	26.3	23.5	19.4
Happened at my dept. several times.	16.3	19.5	10.3
Happened at my dept. many times.	5.7	8.2	4.5
No basis to judge.	20.6	20.9	24.0
No response.	.3	.9	2.5

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

b. Trying to force an SES executive to resign.

Personal Experience	1989	1991	
	Career	Career	Noncareer
Never happened to me.	96.1	94.6	94.2
Happened to me once.	2.5	4.8	5.2
Happened to me more than once.	.7	.3	—
Happened to me several times.	.6	.0	.4
Happened to me many times.	.1	.2	—

Indirect Experience	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Never happened at my dept. to my knowledge.	18.3	18.6	35.1
Happened at my dept. once.	14.0	8.6	10.3
Happened at my dept. more than once.	19.6	25.0	15.7
Happened at my dept. several times.	14.0	15.2	5.0
Happened at my dept. many times.	4.1	3.3	2.1
No basis to judge.	29.4	28.5	30.2
No response.	.7	.8	1.7

c. Arbitrarily lowering an SES executive's performance rating

Personal Experience	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Never happened to me.	76.6	79.1	95.3
Happened to me once.	13.4	13.3	3.9
Happened to me more than once.	7.0	4.7	.9
Happened to me several times.	2.8	1.6	—
Happened to me many times.	.3	1.2	—

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

Indirect Experience	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Never happened at my dept. to my knowledge.	22.7	24.5	45.9
Happened at my dept. once.	3.0	3.4	4.5
Happened at my dept. more than once.	10.2	10.2	6.6
Happened at my dept. several times.	6.8	7.1	2.9
Happened at my dept. many times.	8.5	6.6	.8
No basis to judge.	48.6	47.4	37.2
No response.	.2	.8	2.1

d. Artificially structuring a reduction-in-force in order to remove a specific SES executive.

Personal Experience	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Never happened to me.	99.5	99.3	99.1
Happened to me once.	.4	.6	.4
Happened to me more than once.	.1	.1	.4
Happened to me several times.	—	—	—
Happened to me many times.	.0	.1	—

Indirect Experience	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Never happened at my dept. to my knowledge.	41.8	43.2	55.0
Happened at my dept. once.	3.6	2.0	1.7
Happened at my dept. more than once.	5.6	6.6	3.3
Happened at my dept. several times.	1.0	2.5	.4
Happened at my dept. many times.	1.4	.4	1.2
No basis to judge.	45.9	44.6	36.8
No response.	.6	.8	1.7

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

e. Arbitrarily demoting a career SES executive.

Personal Experience	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Never happened to me.	98.8	98.8	99.1
Happened to me once.	1.0	1.1	.9
Happened to me more than once.	.1	.0	—
Happened to me several times.	—	—	—
Happened to me many times.	.0	.1	—

Indirect Experience	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Never happened at my dept. to my knowledge.	38.5	38.9	55.4
Happened at my dept. once.	4.1	3.8	2.1
Happened at my dept. more than once.	4.9	6.7	2.1
Happened at my dept. several times.	2.2	1.6	1.7
Happened at my dept. many times.	.9	1.1	1.2
No basis to judge.	48.9	46.9	36.0
No response.	.6	.9	1.7

VII. Future Plans

16. In which of the federal government's retirement systems are you enrolled?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)	90.7	91.8	26.1
Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)	7.7	7.0	69.1
Other	1.6	1.3	4.8

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

17. Are you currently eligible to retire?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Yes	22.6	27.6	8.4
No	77.4	72.4	91.6

Note: We designed a skip pattern of our questionnaire which required respondents to answer question 18 only if they indicated in question 17 that they were not currently eligible to retire.

18. Do you plan to leave the federal government before you are eligible to retire?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Definitely yes	3.2	1.5	29.5
Probably yes	10.0	7.7	35.5
Maybe	23.6	15.7	15.7
Probably no	42.0	45.6	14.3
Definitely no	21.2	29.4	5.1

19. How much longer do you think that you will work for the federal government?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Less than 1 year	7.8	9.6	9.7
Another 1 to 3 years	47.3	54.2	52.3
4 to 6 years	33.7	23.2	31.8
7 to 9 years	4.7	8.8	4.1
10 to 12 years	6.2	4.2	2.1
More than 12 years	.1	—	—
Until something better comes along	.1	—	—

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

20. In what year were you (or will you become) eligible to retire?

21. In addition to regular retirement, employees may retire sooner under certain circumstances (e.g. RIFs). This discontinued service is commonly known as "early out retirement."

Eligibility for early-out retirement is: age 50 with 20 years of service; or any age with 25 years of service. If you become eligible for early-out retirement in the next 12 months under these circumstances, and it is offered to you, how likely or unlikely is it that you would take it?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
I would not be eligible for early-out retirement in the next 12 months	48.3	40.4	83.8
Very likely	9.0	4.5	2.3
Likely	8.7	5.0	1.4
Uncertain	11.3	9.2	2.7
Unlikely	11.3	14.2	4.1
Very unlikely	11.4	26.7	5.9

VIII. Satisfaction

22. Listed below are a number of factors relating to work in the federal government and the Senior Executive Service. Considering these factors as they exist today, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each as they apply to you?

A. My Position as an SES Member

a. The work itself, the duties I perform

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very satisfied/satisfied	92.1	90.9	94.6
Neither	4.3	5.2	1.7
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	3.5	3.9	3.7

Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment

b. My salary

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very satisfied/satisfied	11.0	77.7	85.1
Neither	10.7	10.8	8.3
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	78.3	11.5	6.6

c. The challenge of my work

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very satisfied/satisfied	90.7	91.5	92.1
Neither	4.3	5.1	3.3
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	5.0	3.4	4.6

d. The opportunity to improve myself on my job

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very satisfied/satisfied	65.3	72.0	74.7
Neither	21.1	18.4	15.8
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	13.6	9.5	9.5

e. The opportunity to have an impact on public affairs

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very satisfied/satisfied	73.7	72.6	83.8
Neither	19.3	19.0	8.7
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	7.0	8.4	7.5

f. The public recognition that I receive for the work that I do

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very satisfied/satisfied	39.0	43.8	59.8
Neither	29.1	33.9	34.0
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	31.9	22.3	6.2

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

**g. The respect that I receive from
co-workers**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very satisfied/satisfied	89.3	87.9	86.7
Neither	7.4	10.2	10.4
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	3.3	1.9	2.9

h. My opportunities for promotion

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very satisfied/satisfied	31.6	31.8	38.3
Neither	33.6	43.3	43.3
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	34.8	24.9	18.3

**B. Federal Employment in
General**

**a. The public image of federal
employees**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very satisfied/satisfied	6.5	11.2	36.1
Neither	8.2	17.6	28.2
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	85.3	71.2	35.7

**b. Current federal retirement system
benefits**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very satisfied/satisfied	55.0	64.5	60.8
Neither	23.3	21.2	30.0
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	21.7	14.3	9.2

c. Current health insurance benefits

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very satisfied/satisfied	27.8	35.7	55.2
Neither	19.3	19.3	24.7
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	52.9	45.0	20.1

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

d. Job security

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very satisfied/satisfied	76.8	78.8	39.3
Neither	18.3	16.7	44.8
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	4.9	4.4	15.9

e. Quality of the current work environment

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very satisfied/satisfied	42.9	53.5	56.4
Neither	20.9	18.5	21.6
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	36.2	28.0	22.0

IX. SES Objectives

23. Please indicate for each of the following objectives: a) How important are the achievement of these objectives to you, and b) how successful your subunit has been in achieving these objectives.

a. Basing compensation, retention and tenure on executive success measured in terms of individual and organizational performance

Importance to You	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very important	45.8	45.7	50.4
Important	46.7	45.6	40.7
Neither important nor unimportant	4.2	7.1	7.6
Unimportant	3.0	1.1	.8
Very unimportant	.2	.5	.4

Your Subunit's Experience in Achieving Objective	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Successful	58.5	66.0	62.8
Neither	20.8	18.1	21.1
Unsuccessful	20.7	15.8	16.1

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

b. Assuring that senior executives are accountable and responsible for the effectiveness and productivity of employees under them

Importance to You	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very important	52.2	48.3	61.6
Important	43.9	48.0	36.7
Neither important nor unimportant	3.2	3.2	1.7
Unimportant	.7	.1	—
Very unimportant	.0	.3	—

Your Subunit's Experience in Achieving Objective	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Successful	70.9	69.6	67.3
Neither	15.9	18.0	18.4
Unsuccessful	13.2	12.4	14.3

c. Recognizing exceptional accomplishment

Importance to You	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very important	63.0	60.9	63.3
Important	33.7	34.5	30.8
Neither important nor unimportant	3.1	4.1	5.9
Unimportant	.2	.4	—
Very unimportant	.0	.1	—

Your Subunit's Experience in Achieving Objective	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Successful	65.6	66.6	69.3
Neither	16.8	18.2	20.2
Unsuccessful	17.5	15.2	10.5

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

**d. Enabling the head of a subunit to
reassign senior executives to best
accomplish its mission**

Importance to You	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very important	24.7	24.1	50.8
Important	42.6	39.7	33.9
Neither important nor unimportant	25.4	26.3	14.8
Unimportant	6.1	7.7	—
Very unimportant	1.1	2.1	.4

Your Subunit's Experience in Achieving Objective	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Successful	45.6	47.0	45.0
Neither	35.8	35.8	33.0
Unsuccessful	18.7	17.2	22.0

**e. Providing severance pay, early
retirement and placement assistance
for senior executives who are removed
from the Senior Executive Service for
non-disciplinary reasons**

Importance to You	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very important	34.8	35.2	26.9
Important	33.3	35.0	29.5
Neither important nor unimportant	21.6	21.0	31.6
Unimportant	6.1	5.5	8.1
Very unimportant	4.1	3.2	3.8

Your Subunit's Experience in Achieving Objective	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Successful	28.0	31.4	32.3
Neither	50.5	49.8	50.4
Unsuccessful	21.6	18.8	17.3

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

**f. Protecting senior executives from
arbitrary and capricious actions**

Importance to You	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very Important	73.7	77.8	42.0
Important	21.0	19.3	43.7
Neither important nor unimportant	3.6	2.2	10.5
Unimportant	1.1	.1	2.5
Very unimportant	.5	.5	1.3

Your Subunit's Experience in Achieving Objective	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Successful	63.3	68.2	72.1
Neither	16.7	14.0	19.0
Unsuccessful	20.0	17.9	8.9

**g. Ensuring that the ratio of career
executives to political appointees
allows for program continuity and
policy advocacy in the management of
public programs**

Importance to You	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very important	56.8	55.5	30.7
Important	32.8	33.5	43.3
Neither important nor unimportant	7.1	7.3	17.6
Unimportant	2.5	1.7	5.5
Very unimportant	.8	2.0	2.9

Your Subunit's Experience in Achieving Objective	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Successful	69.3	69.8	71.0
Neither	13.9	14.0	21.5
Unsuccessful	16.8	16.2	7.5

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

**h. Ensuring accountability for honest,
economical and efficient government**

Importance to You	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very important	79.0	77.5	78.6
Important	19.8	20.9	21.0
Neither important nor unimportant	.5	1.3	.4
Unimportant	.5	.3	—
Very unimportant	.1	.0	—

Your Subunit's Experience in Achieving Objective	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Successful	77.2	75.6	78.3
Neither	12.2	13.8	10.4
Unsuccessful	10.6	10.6	11.3

**i. Providing for the initial and
continuing systematic development of
highly competent senior executives**

Importance to You	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very important	63.3	62.1	61.8
Important	33.7	34.2	34.9
Neither important nor unimportant	3.0	2.7	2.1
Unimportant	.2	.7	.4
Very unimportant	—	.4	.8

Your Subunit's Experience in Achieving Objective	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Successful	58.1	61.8	61.0
Neither	21.5	19.9	22.0
Unsuccessful	20.3	18.4	17.0

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

J. Providing for an executive system which is guided by the public interest and free from improper political interference

Importance to You	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very important	77.2	79.1	52.3
Important	22.0	19.2	35.3
Neither important nor unimportant	.6	1.3	10.2
Unimportant	.1	.2	.9
Very unimportant	.1	.3	1.3

Your Subunit's Experience in Achieving Objective	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Successful	68.8	70.4	72.7
Neither	14.7	15.9	16.8
Unsuccessful	16.5	13.7	10.5

k. Providing a compensation system designed to attract and retain highly competent senior executives

Importance to You	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Very important	81.1	78.5	58.0
Important	17.1	20.1	38.7
Neither important nor unimportant	1.7	1.1	2.5
Unimportant	.1	.1	—
Very unimportant	.0	.3	.8

Your Subunit's Experience in Achieving Objective	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Successful	16.2	59.2	68.8
Neither	23.5	21.3	14.9
Unsuccessful	60.2	19.5	16.3

**X. Decision to Stay in
 or Leave the Federal
 Government**

24. For the following statements, please indicate whether each is a reason for you to stay with or leave the federal government.

a. My salary

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Reason to stay	20.9	73.3	68.1
Neither	14.8	14.8	21.0
Reason to leave	64.4	11.9	10.9

**b. My supervisor's leadership behavior
 in the department**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Reason to stay	49.8	47.6	61.3
Neither	31.9	34.5	26.1
Reason to leave	18.3	17.9	12.6

**c. The successful accomplishment of
 the general SES objectives in my
 department**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Reason to stay	34.7	42.4	45.8
Neither	59.4	53.4	51.7
Reason to leave	5.9	4.3	2.5

**d. My commitment to my department
 and the federal government**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Reason to stay	87.3	87.1	89.5
Neither	12.3	12.0	9.6
Reason to leave	.5	.9	.8

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

**e. My supervisor's experience,
knowledge and expertise**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Reason to stay	39.1	38.4	54.6
Neither	49.7	48.1	37.4
Reason to leave	11.2	13.5	8.0

**f. Opportunity to have an impact on
public affairs**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Reason to stay	82.3	78.5	92.0
Neither	16.1	19.3	6.3
Reason to leave	1.6	2.2	1.7

**g. My department's ability to ensure
the external support of a strong public
constituency**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Reason to stay	33.7	38.7	50.8
Neither	53.0	51.4	43.3
Reason to leave	13.3	9.9	5.9

**h. My department's ability to secure
the financial resources it needs to
properly function**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Reason to stay	38.0	43.2	42.4
Neither	38.1	38.4	45.8
Reason to leave	23.9	18.3	11.8

**i. Opportunity for a more interesting
position outside the federal
government**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Reason to stay	8.5	7.6	11.7
Neither	20.1	29.1	25.5
Reason to leave	71.4	63.3	62.8

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

**j. Opportunity for a higher paying job
outside the federal government**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Reason to stay	4.1	4.0	6.7
Neither	12.7	26.5	28.5
Reason to leave	83.2	69.5	64.9

**k. Greater opportunity to receive
bonuses for outstanding performance
in the private sector**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Reason to stay	3.4	3.6	3.3
Neither	26.1	31.8	41.8
Reason to leave	70.5	64.6	54.8

**l. Politicalization in the federal
government**

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Reason to stay	1.5	1.4	13.9
Neither	35.4	33.2	69.6
Reason to leave	63.1	65.4	16.5

m. Strict ethical requirements

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Reason to stay	35.1	42.4	32.5
Neither	50.8	44.0	49.4
Reason to leave	14.1	13.6	18.1

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

**XI. Personal
Characteristics**

This section asks for information about your career history and some general questions about yourself.

25. How many years have you been a federal government employee (exclude military service)?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
1 to 19 years	33.2	29.7	90.8
20 or longer	66.8	70.3	9.2

26. At what GS grade did you start in government service?

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Percent	Cumul.	Percent	Cumul.	Percent	Cumul.
GS-1	.2	.2	.6	.6	4.5	4.5
GS-2	4.4	4.6	2.7	3.3	.6	5.1
GS-3	4.9	9.5	2.9	6.2	4.5	9.6
GS-4	1.9	11.4	2.3	8.5	2.6	12.2
GS-5	15.1	26.5	21.4	29.9	5.8	17.9
GS-6	.1	26.6	.6	30.5	2.6	20.5
GS-7	20.5	47.2	21.9	52.4	11.5	32.1
GS-9	12.1	59.2	.3	52.7	.6	32.7
GS-10	.1	59.3	8.5	61.2	4.5	37.2
GS-11	8.6	67.9	1.1	62.3	.6	37.8
GS-12	6.5	74.4	11.1	73.4	10.9	48.7
GS-13	6.5	80.9	7.1	80.5	3.8	52.6
GS-14	4.9	85.9	7.7	88.2	6.4	59.0
GS-15	7.4	93.3	4.3	92.5	14.1	73.1
GS-16	1.2	94.5	6.0	98.5	21.8	94.9
GS-17	.9	95.4	.6	99.1	1.3	96.2
Other	2.6	98.0	.7	99.8	1.9	98.1
ES	2.0	100.0	.2	100.0	1.9	100.0

Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment

27. How many years have you been in an executive position in the federal government (SES, GS-16, 17, or 18 or equivalent)?

	1989 Career		1991			
	Percent	Cumul.	Career		Noncareer	
			Percent	Cumul.	Percent	Cumul.
Less than 1 year	3.1	3.1	5.3	5.3	8.3	8.3
1 to < 5 years	34.9	38.0	29.5	34.8	67.1	75.4
5 to < 10 years	29.9	67.9	28.6	63.4	15.4	90.8
10 to < 15 years	19.7	87.6	20.6	84.0	5.8	96.7
15 to < 20 years	8.8	96.4	11.0	95.0	2.9	99.6
20 to < 25 years	2.6	99.0	4.5	99.5	.4	100.0
25 to < 30 years	.9	99.9	.1	99.6	—	
30 years or longer	.1	100.0	.4	100.0	—	

28. How many years have you been in SES?

	1989 Career		1991			
	Percent	Cumul.	Career		Noncareer	
			Percent	Cumul.	Percent	Cumul.
Less than 1 year	3.3	3.3	5.7	5.7	9.2	9.2
1 to 3 years	25.7	29.0	20.3	26.0	67.1	76.3
4 to 6 years	26.1	55.2	25.3	51.4	13.7	90.0
7 to 10 years	18.3	73.5	16.2	67.6	6.3	96.3
More than 10 years	26.5	100.0	32.3	100.0	3.7	100.0

29. Which type of SES appointment do you have?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Career	100.3	99.6	1.2
Political appointee	—	.1	98.3
Other	—	.3	.4

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

30. What is your sex?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Male	93.7	92.5	77.1
Female	6.3	7.5	22.9

31. What is your race/national origin?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
White, not Hispanic	95.2	93.0	85.6
Black, not Hispanic	1.9	3.4	5.5
Hispanic	1.8	1.5	5.1
American Indian/Alaskan Native	.5	.8	.4
Asian/Pacific Islander	.5	.8	1.3
Other (Specify)	.1	.5	2.1

32. How old were you on your last birthday?

	1989 Career		1991			
			Career		Noncareer	
	Percent	Cumul.	Percent	Cumul.	Percent	Cumul.
30 or under	—	—	—	—	1.2	1.2
31 to 35	.6	.6	.1	.1	10.4	11.6
36 to 40	3.2	3.8	3.3	3.4	16.6	28.2
41 to 45	17.7	21.5	17.1	20.5	17.4	45.6
46 to 50	27.6	49.1	26.5	47.0	20.3	65.9
51 to 55	25.0	74.1	26.0	73.0	12.9	78.8
56 to 60	16.3	90.4	15.9	88.9	11.6	90.4
61 to 65	7.3	97.7	7.7	96.6	5.0	95.4
66 to 70	1.8	99.5	2.3	98.9	3.7	99.1
71 or older	.5	100.0	1.2	100.1	.8	99.9

Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment

33. What is the highest educational level or degree that you have attained?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
High school graduate or equivalent	.1	.7	1.3
Some college without a degree	2.0	1.9	7.6
Associate's Degree from a 2-year college	.3	1.0	1.3
Graduated from a 4-year college	12.1	8.0	16.9
Postgraduate study without a degree	17.4	16.1	8.5
Master's Degree	17.7	20.9	15.3
Some graduate work after the Master's Degree	14.9	16.4	8.9
Doctorate/Ph.D.	19.0	18.5	10.2
Law Degree	9.2	13.0	28.4
Medical Degree	2.5	1.9	.4
Other (Please specify)	2.8	1.6	1.3
Multiple	2.2	—	—

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

34. Which of the following occupational categories best describes the work you are currently performing in your SES position?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Accounting, budgeting, or finance	4.1	5.3	.9
Administration/management	42.8	41.2	61.7
Business and industry	2.6	2.3	5.1
Computers and information systems	4.0	4.3	.4
Engineering or architecture	13.4	13.8	.9
Investigations	2.1	2.4	.4
Law	7.1	9.2	12.3
Mathematics or statistics	2.0	1.0	—
Medical sciences	2.5	2.3	—
Personnel management/industrial relations	.9	1.3	1.3
Physical or biological sciences	6.0	6.7	.9
Social sciences	1.7	2.0	2.1
Other (Specify)	9.9	8.0	13.6
Multiple	.9	—	—

35. What is your current ES level?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
ES-1	2.0	4.1	10.8
ES-2	6.5	5.3	10.8
ES-3	11.2	14.5	20.2
ES-4	65.6	56.4	19.3
ES-5	13.9	16.9	20.6
ES-6	.8	2.9	17.9
Other	—	—	.4

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

36. Since you entered the SES, how many SES bonuses, if any, have you received?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Zero	25.6	32.2	91.3
One	22.9	17.1	7.4
Two	15.8	11.3	.4
Three	13.2	10.8	—
Four	8.2	9.8	—
Five	5.4	6.3	.4
Six	1.7	3.7	.4
Seven	2.6	1.7	—
Eight	3.1	2.1	—
Nine	.7	1.7	—
Ten	.4	2.3	—
More than ten	.5	.7	—

37. Are you presently without a supervisor?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
Yes	4.5	2.7	3.7
No	94.9	97.3	96.3
Acting supervisor	.6	—	—

38. If yes, approximately how long have you been without a supervisor?

	1989 Career	1991	
		Career	Noncareer
1 month	8.6	23.3	—
2 months	4.1	16.2	10.0
3 months	8.2	7.1	20.0
4 months	9.9	10.9	10.0
5 months	14.0	2.4	—
6 months	22.7	1.9	—
7 months or more	32.5	38.2	60.0

**Appendix V
Responses to 1989 and 1991 Surveys of SES
Members' Views on the Federal Work
Environment**

**39. Which of the following problems, if any, would you say are a consequence of turnover of top management in your department and subunit?
(CHECK YES OR NO ONLY IF YOU INDICATED A TURNOVER PROBLEM IN YOUR DEPARTMENT OR SUBUNIT.)**

Your Department	1989 Career		1991			
	Yes	No	Career		Noncareer	
			Yes	No	Yes	No
a. Frequent changes in program direction	48.6	51.4	50.8	49.2	17.5	82.5
b. Policy vacuums	57.9	42.1	49.8	50.2	30.6	69.4
c. Lack of decisions on important matters	66.8	33.2	51.1	48.9	30.3	69.7
d. Changes in the mission of the department and subunit	23.4	76.6	28.5	71.5	18.0	82.0

Your Subunit	1989 Career		1991			
	Yes	No	Career		Noncareer	
			Yes	No	Yes	No
a. Frequent changes in program direction	29.1	70.9	30.9	69.1	18.8	81.2
b. Policy vacuums	32.9	67.1	32.4	67.6	21.7	78.3
c. Lack of decisions on important matters	41.3	58.7	37.0	63.0	23.2	76.8
d. Changes in the mission of the department and subunit	16.0	84.0	23.1	76.9	15.0	85.0

Comments From the Office of Personnel Management

Note: A GAO comment supplementing those in the report text appears at the end of this appendix.



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20415

MAR 11 1992

Mr. Bernard Ungar, Director
Federal Human Resource Management Issues
General Government Division
General Accounting Office, Room 3858A
441 G Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Ungar:

The following is a summary of comments made by the Office of Personnel Management and the eight agencies which were the subjects of your report, "Senior Executive Service (SES) Members' Opinions About Federal Work Environment." Copies of the individual agency written responses are attached. We thank you for the opportunity to review the draft report and to make comments to GAO. While agency representatives and OPM agree that the relationship between career and noncareer executives is important to the effective and efficient operation of our Federal government, all have expressed reservations regarding much of the data and conclusions derived from the survey.

The concerns raised by agency representatives take two forms: 1) General reservations regarding the nature of the survey and the reliance on "opinion as perception" to draw concrete conclusions; and 2) Reservations on the structure of specific questions and the way neutral responses are categorized as "negatives."

I. GENERAL RESERVATIONS

A majority of agency representatives expressed concern that the report is based on unverified views and opinions. While this fact is included on page 2 of the transmittal letter, it would not be apparent to anyone looking solely at the report.

Secondly, the responses offered by career and noncareer executives are treated equally in the context of the overall conclusions. In the day to day operations of a Federal agency, noncareer executives, by sheer numbers, have greater opportunities for direct interaction with career executives than careerists with noncareerists. Therefore, it is likely that noncareer respondents had a much more realistic view of what existed when they completed the survey than did career respondents. As one agency noted, it is also likely that the data which reveals a more favorable view by noncareer executives of both noncareerists and careerists is the more reliable data. This difference, however, is not spelled out in the report and the distinctions, once the report is published,

**Appendix VI
Comments From the Office of Personnel
Management**

See comment 1.

will not be made. After publication, all that will be understood is that, within the Federal government, Federal executives have an unfavorable view of one another. Emphasis will be placed on the perception that career executives do not trust noncareer executives to do the right thing and lend credence to the belief that, in GAO's words, "significantly different perceptions career SES members have of career executives and political appointees could potentially lead to working relationships problems."

II. SPECIFIC RESERVATIONS

1. Personnel Decisions and Merit Principles -- The response elicited from the question asking career executives their opinions whether noncareer executives "support and uphold merit principles regarding the hiring of personnel" is confusing. This question does not specify whether the personnel decisions affect competitive or noncompetitive positions. Noncareerists or political appointees often handle noncompetitive appointments and, therefore, are not bound by competitive hiring criteria. Since respondents did not have the option of "no basis on which to make a determination," we end up with a forced response to a vague question. There remains no empirical evidence that noncareer executives are violating merit principles when it comes to competitive hiring.

2. Promotion Potential -- The agency representatives believe this question and the conclusion drawn from it are faulty in a number of respects. The question does not define "promotion" in any way and could mean several different things to SES respondents (i.e., either greater responsibility or increased salary) or may not have been relevant at all since most SES respondents were already at the top echelon of their career. Regarding opportunities for promotion, the respondents could only answer that they were satisfactory, unsatisfactory or neither. Since the response "does not apply" was unavailable to the respondents, the most logical response in this instance would be "neither." Adding this category with those in the "satisfactory" category yields a response of 75.1% for career executives in 1991. This would seem to indicate that three-quarters of career SES members are satisfied or neutral regarding the opportunity for promotion. This demonstrates the weakness in the survey methodology since GAO has characterized this response as a "negative factor" for members of the SES.

3. Job Security -- Again, characterizing the responses of noncareer executives concerning job security as a negative factor must be questioned. Noncareer executives, like all political appointees, serve at the pleasure of whichever Administration occupies the White House. There is no guarantee provided to any political appointee regarding length of service in the Federal government. On the contrary, political appointees are expected to enter and leave government service with some degree of frequency during any Administration's tenure.

**Appendix VI
Comments From the Office of Personnel
Management**

SES members again were offered only three choices for response to the inquiry on job security -- satisfied, dissatisfied or neither. Among career SES members, approximately 78% were satisfied with their job security. For noncareer executives, since the option of "does not apply" was not available, the only logical response would have been "neither." Adding these respondents to those who expressed "satisfaction" yields a response of 84.1% for noncareer executives. It is very difficult, in the view of agency representatives, to interpret this response as a "negative factor."

4. Health Insurance Benefits -- Again, GAO has characterized the response to SES members' level of satisfaction with health benefits as a "negative factor," when less than half of the career respondents expressed dissatisfaction. Approximately 55% of respondents stated they were either satisfied or neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. While a significant number expressed dissatisfaction with health benefits, this may be more attributable to the increased cost for health care for all individuals nationwide and may reflect frustration with this trend. Absent a follow-up question asking respondents to compare their health benefits with other employer-sponsored health benefit plans, it is difficult to draw the conclusion that this is a "negative factor" specific to Federal employees.

It is the strong belief of the majority of agencies which participated in this survey that while the data may be helpful to agencies internally, its public release could be used to the detriment of the image of public service and could further harm the working relationships and morale of public servants. Since there remain strong doubts among agency representatives regarding the validity of many of the questions and conclusions, we would strongly suggest that this report not be released as a public document, but rather be used by the Committee for follow-up questioning of Administration officials.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Constance Berry Newman
Director

The following is a comment on the Office of Personnel Management's March 11, 1992, letter.

GAO Comment

1. OPM said that the responses offered by career and noncareer executives are treated equally in the context of the overall conclusions. OPM suggested that noncareer SES members have greater opportunities for direct interaction with career executives than career SES members have to interact with political appointees. Therefore, OPM said it is likely that the noncareer SES respondents had a more realistic view of the work environment when they completed our questionnaire than did career SES members. OPM, in citing the view of one agency, stated that data that reveal a more favorable view by noncareer executives of both careerists and noncareerists are the more reliable information. It said this difference is not pointed out in our report and that after the report is issued emphasis will be placed on the perception that career SES members do not trust political appointees to do the right thing, lending credence to our opinion that such different perceptions could potentially lead to working relationship problems.

We intentionally treated the responses of both career and noncareer SES members equally. We have no evidence, and OPM did not provide any, to support the assertions that noncareer SES members had a more realistic view of the work environment when they completed the questionnaire or that their responses as a group are likely to be more reliable than career SES members. While it may be that noncareerists work with more careerists than careerists with noncareerists, this does not mean that career executives have less of a realistic view of their work environment. Indeed, they may have a broader perspective since career SES members generally have more experience in the SES than noncareerists. For example, about 74 percent of the career SES members responding to our 1991 survey reported having been in the SES for over 3 years, as compared to about 24 percent of the noncareer SES respondents. Nevertheless, we treated responses by both groups equally. We have, however, deleted our statement that such perceptions may create working relations problems.

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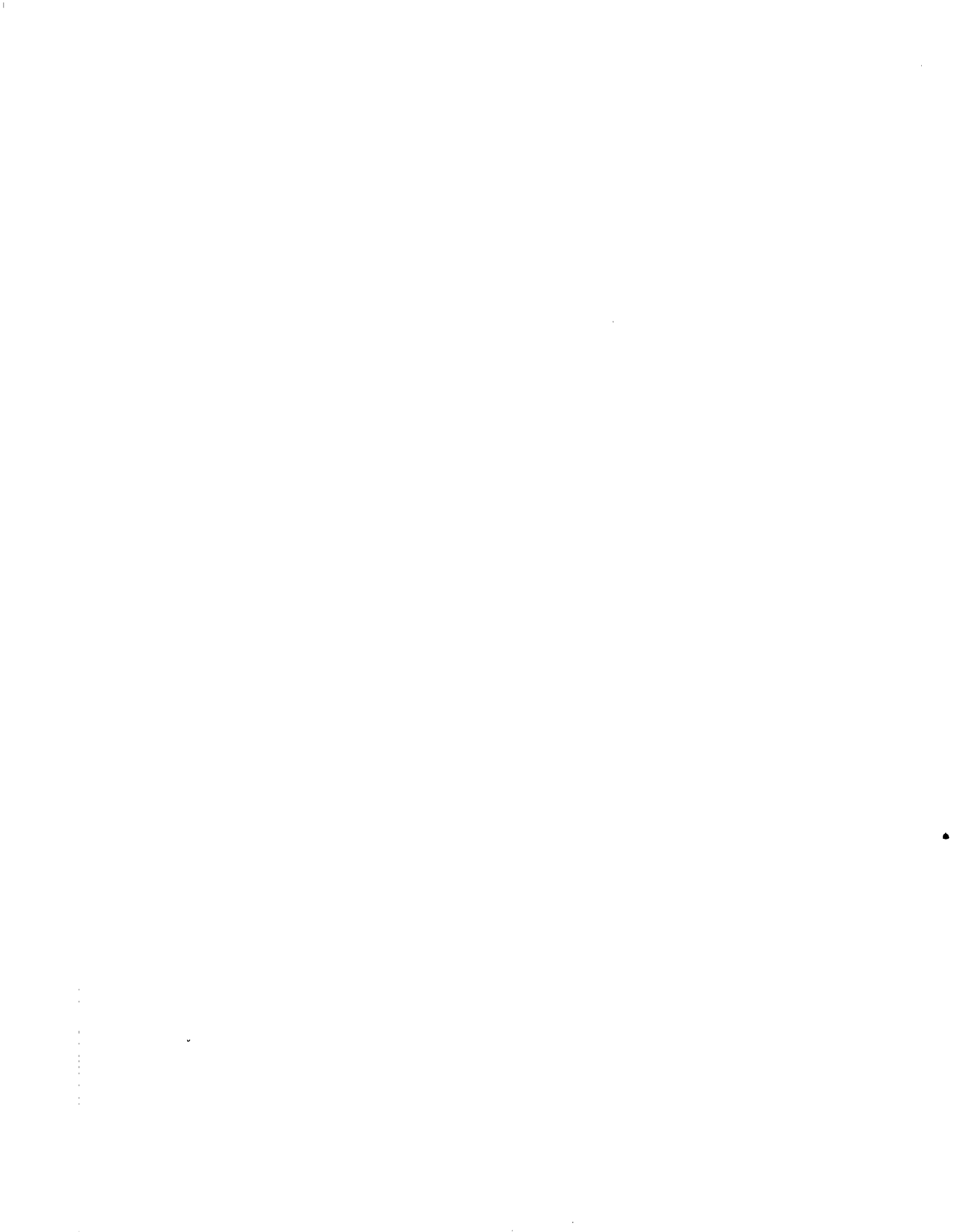
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