

WM2013 Conference Panel Report

PANEL SESSION 62: Graduating Students and New Engineers - Their Wants and Needs

Co-Chairs: **Robert Berry**, *Foxfire Scientific, Inc. (United Kingdom)*
Leonel Lagos, *Florida International University*

Panel Reporter: **Leonel Lagos**, *Florida International University*

Panelists:

1. **Desi Crouther**, *Director, Office of Human Capital, US DOE-EM*
2. **Susan Salter**, *Chief, Outreach and Recruitment, US NRC*
3. **Ximena Prugue**, *DOE Fellow, Florida International University*

At this year's Waste Management Symposia (WM2013), students, young professionals, government and industry had the opportunity to share their views and exchange ideas and concerns about employment opportunities for students and young professionals, career paths, and the workplace environment. This forum provided a great opportunity for our young colleagues to understand the future waste management employment landscape and challenges of this industry. About 30 people attended this session that focused on an open dialog between graduating students and industry/government leaders. The audience asked questions at the end of each speaker's presentation and at the end of the panel session.

Summary of Presentations

Desi Crouther, of DOE-EM's Human Capital Office explained that the challenges facing his organization include an aging workforce, continued growth in mission work, and the various new internships and career opportunities for students and young engineers. DOE-EM is addressing this challenge through the Office of Personnel Management Pathways Program that was initiated to recruit and retain EM employees. Mr. Crouther described federal programs such as the Interns Program, Recent Graduate Program, and the Presidential Management Fellows Program that is available to students. Mr. Crouther also provided a list of about 10 federal agencies that have internship opportunities for young engineers and students. He also provided advice on steps students should take to obtain internships and employment opportunities. He mentioned resources such as USAJOBS, and advised students to build their resumes while in college and increase/maintain business and professional contacts by attending conferences.

Susan Salter, of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Outreach and Recruitment Office presented the various NRC programs available for young professionals and NRC employee advancement and training programs. Ms. Salter also reported that the average age of NRC employees is 49 year old which is a little lower than average age at DOE, reported by Mr. Crouther to be 51 years old. Ms. Salter also reported on a survey conducted among young professionals and university students asking for their wants and needs regarding the work place and future employers.

Ximena Prugue, DOE Fellow at Florida International University, provided the audience with the student's perspective on the type of job environments desired by generation "Y." Miss Prugue gave a spirited presentation describing Y Gen perspectives on the workforce and the

WM2013 Conference Panel Report

workplace. Miss Prugue's presentation engaged the entire audience and resulted in the largest amount of questions and exchange of ideas between the panel and the audience.