



# NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL-INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Office of Corporate Communications

nga.mil | 571-557-5400 | publicaffairs@nga.mil | FB: NatlGEOINTAgency | @NGA\_GEOINT

**Remarks as prepared for  
Dr. Stacey Dixon  
Deputy Director, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency  
Women in Defense Keynote Address  
9 a.m. ET, August 8, 2019  
Bloomberg Government, 1101 K Street NW, #500  
Washington, DC**

---

Thank you all for being here today.

I want to add my personal congratulations to the HORIZONS award winners.

That's a very impressive accomplishment, and I hope to see some of you at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency -- my agency -- in the coming years.

I'm delighted to be here, to discuss some ways to "fuel the 51%" and insure that we fully leverage all the talents that women can bring to the Defense community.

Let me start by telling you a story.

See if it sounds familiar to you.

I joined NGA as Deputy Director just last month.

Before that, I was the Director of IARPA, the Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity.

One of my responsibilities as Director was to represent IARPA at a high-level video conference.

I connected to the video conference, and spoke to the person at the other end.

"Hi, this is Stacey Dixon from IARPA."

There was a bit of a pause.

Then they looked out at me from my video screen and said, "Will your Director be joining us?"

It was my turn to pause.

Then I said, "I'm the Director."

Anyone else here had an experience like that?

How did it make you feel?

Hang onto your answer.

I'm going to keep my remarks short this morning, then keep most of the time open for questions.



# NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL-INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## Office of Corporate Communications

nga.mil | 571-557-5400 | publicaffairs@nga.mil | FB: NatlGEOINTAgency | @NGA\_GEOINT

When you're surrounded by people who seem to question whether you're the right person for your position, you yourself sometimes begin to question whether you're the right person for the position.

It's called Impostor Syndrome.

I'm sure you know about it.

It's defined as "the persistent inability to believe that one's success is deserved or has been legitimately achieved as a result of one's own efforts."

Joyce Roché, an African American woman who rose to become Vice President of Avon, wrote a book about her experiences.<sup>1</sup>

She said, "The Impostor Syndrome doesn't allow any success to go unpunished."

Studies show that women and underrepresented minorities suffer disproportionately from Impostor Syndrome.<sup>2</sup>

And why not?

It would happen to anyone who was placed in an unfamiliar environment, without a ready-made network to help them become successful.

Does the lack of such a network affect women?

It absolutely does.

Studies conducted by Hewlett Packard show that men apply for jobs when they only meet 60% of the qualifications, but women apply for jobs only when they meet close to 100% of the qualifications<sup>3</sup>.

You know why men are much more willing than women to apply for jobs when they aren't fully qualified?

It's not that they're more confident that they can rise up and meet the challenge.

Studies show that lack of confidence is actually the least cited reason for deciding not to apply for a job you don't feel you're qualified for.

One way of looking at this is that women may not be as experienced at seeing how our skills and experiences are relevant.

So what can we do to overcome this barrier?

First, work within your organization structure to ensure that there are opportunities for women, and other underrepresented minorities, to build networks and establish visibility.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Empress Has No Clothes: Conquering Self-Doubt to Embrace Success.

<sup>2</sup> "Overcoming Impostor Syndrome," ADBMB Today, December 2015

<sup>3</sup> "Why Women Don't Apply for Jobs Unless They're 100% Qualified," Harvard Business Review, August 15, 2014.



# NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL-INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## Office of Corporate Communications

nga.mil | 571-557-5400 | publicaffairs@nga.mil | FB: NatlGEOINTAgency | @NGA\_GEOINT

For those of you who aren't familiar with my agency, NGA delivers world class geospatial intelligence that provides decision advantage to policy makers, warfighters, and intelligence professionals.

We gather geospatial intelligence from sensors -- not only cameras that collect visible images, but sensors that collect human made and natural phenomena through infrared, spectral, magnetic, gravitational and other data.

Said differently, we provide the content and context that allows the nation to know the truth, see beyond the horizon, and act before events dictate.

Because we need to know the earth and understand the world, we also need a strong focus on diversity and inclusion -- not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it benefits the Agency.

To understand the world, we need intelligence professionals with diverse perspectives that come from varied backgrounds.

By adding cultural context to our global data, we're able to bring static information to life, and create more effective and reliable products.

Goal Number 1 in our NGA Strategy 2025 is to "Inspire and Grow our World-Class Workforce," and we've incorporated diversity and inclusion into that goal.

So, how are we doing with our diversity goal?

Frankly, as an agency, we have a way to go in this area.

At NGA, we aren't leveraging the 51%.

We're leveraging the 32%.

Our female workforce population is currently 32% of the total population, and has been for at least the past six years.

It's an issue that the agency is working hard to address.

Our new Director, Admiral Bob Sharp, is personally committed to improving the agency's diversity profile.

We've made some significant strides.

For example, four of the seven most senior executives -- NGA's Executive Committee -- are female.

We've also ramped up our women and minority recruiting efforts.

It's a challenge -- we're competing with well-recognized companies like Amazon and Google for data analysts, on a federal government salary scale.

To strengthen our recruiting, we're leveraging our workforce by working with employee volunteers who are attracting and recruiting female and minority college students from across the country into our intern program.

They're also dedicated to identifying needs and advocating for underrepresented groups within our agency.

At NGA, these volunteers are members of our Special Emphasis Program Councils.



# NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL-INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## Office of Corporate Communications

nga.mil | 571-557-5400 | publicaffairs@nga.mil | FB: NatlGEOINTAgency | @NGA\_GEOINT

We call them SEP Councils.

There are more than 400 volunteer NGA employees on our SEP Councils.

In addition to our Federal Women's Program Council, we have an:

American Indian Council, Asian Pacific American Council, Black Advisory Council, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Council, Hispanic Advisory Council, NGA Pride Council, People with Disabilities Council, and Veterans' Council.

These SEP Councils a great networking opportunity for our employees.

Their motto is, "You don't have to be one to join one."

For example, you don't have to be a woman to be on the Federal Women's Program Council, you just have to be interested in advancing employment opportunities and advancement for women.<sup>4</sup>

Our SEP Councils provide women and under-represented minorities with the opportunity to network, and have been responsible for several important diversity initiatives.

In 2017, the Women's Council published "A Study of Gender Barriers Facing Women's Careers at NGA."

- The study made extensive recommendations in areas such as career progression, harassment and discrimination, work life balance, and institutional culture, among others.
- Significant work is still needed address these findings, and the current leadership of the FWPC has made this a priority for next year.

In 2018 and 2019, the Women's Council joined with other SEP Councils in reviewing promotion packets for members.

- While statistics for 2019 are still being tabulated, the results of the 2018 initiative showed positive trends.
- 27% percent of the individuals whose packages were reviewed got promoted.

The Federal Women's Program Council also sponsors Lean-in Circles at NGA as part of their women's mentorship initiative.

In 2020, the Council plans to place an increased emphasis on mentoring and shadowing, and help members find opportunities with new mentors, to help drive NGA women forward at all levels.

These are the kinds of initiatives NGA is pursuing.

One of the reasons I accepted the Deputy Director role at NGA is that I plan on working along with the rest of our senior management to boost our diversity profile, and ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment for all of our employees.

Those are just some ways that we can work within our organizations to ensure that there are opportunities for women.

---

<sup>4</sup> The FWPC currently has two active male senior champions.



# NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL-INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## Office of Corporate Communications

nga.mil | 571-557-5400 | publicaffairs@nga.mil | FB: NatlGEOINTAgency | @NGA\_GEOINT

I'd welcome your thoughts on others.

Now let's talk about what you and I can do to individually build our own networks.

We need to network with everyone, but we can start with other women.

Women can often be other women's toughest critics.

Studies show that, in male dominated settings, women are likely to worry about their own standing, so they're reluctant to advocate for other women.<sup>5</sup>

It's a fear that "only one of us can make it."

This is less of an issue under a female CEO, but it's one we need to be aware of.

We need to help each other.

We need women to support women.

On the other hand, we also need to be each other's best mentors, including pointing out things we can improve on.

We need to be supportive but honest with each other.

I call it P3: Positive Peer Pressure.

Build a network of people that you trust.

Share candid feedback.

Help each other stretch.

Let's be our own allies – and allies to those who need our help.

When you're at any organization, especially your own, look around the table – see who's at the table, and who isn't.

Help attract, recruit, develop, and promote people who aren't at the table.

If the room is visibly absent of diversity, then there are barriers present.

Remove those barriers.

Get to the point where you don't have to look around the table any more.

Here's the most important thing: When you're in the room, be in the room.

---

<sup>5</sup> "Female Tokens in High-Prestige Work Groups: Catalysts or Inhibitors of Group Diversification," Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, September 2011



# NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL-INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Office of Corporate Communications

nga.mil | 571-557-5400 | publicaffairs@nga.mil | FB: NatlGEOINTAgency | @NGA\_GEOINT

You're part of the solution. You're part of what you haven't been part of before.

Be excellent.

Let them know what you have to offer.

Echo coworkers who you don't feel are being listened to.

Be confident that you're not an impostor.

Because you're not!

You're a very valuable and unique contributor to your organization.

Now, let's open this up for questions.

Thank you!

###