Appendix E

Interview Excerpts

(in order of presentation)
## Interview Excerpts (in order of presentation)

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[end of tape side 1]

NASA1: It really should at least beep at you.

NAE: The courtesy at least would be a beep. Three criteria, you were saying that show or are indicators of success of the strategic planning process.

#$IND-SUCCESS

NASA1: Yeah. Overall, I think the most important criteria is whether or not it helps the Agency make the right decisions. Now that's a little hard to measure. But, you know, ultimately I really do think that's the most difficult to measure, but in the long term, I mean, you could certainly measure that if you look at, you know...I mean, there are lots of examples of organizations that got it wrong. That, you woke up ten years later and realized they were pursuing the wrong objectives. Or in our context, you know, in the corporate context that would be objectives that weren't sustainable in the marketplace, or don't return investments or profit to the shareholders. In our case it's an issue really of public support. And, also, achievement of national objectives, you know. I mean, keeping in mind that just about everything that we do folds back - and the plan talks about this briefly - folds back to some bigger national purpose, you know. Economic, education, national security, or something like that. So there's a degree that our planning targets help that, versus hindering that. You know, now that's a little purer with the Department of Defense. If we do get bombed, then the plan maybe to keep us from getting bombed wasn't so good, you know. In our case because we're engaged in research and development, it can be a little harder to predict. And at one level, you know, if you push that too far, you pretty quickly come up against the fundamental fact that with research and development you're not...you can't always predict the outcome that you want. You know...the whole serendipity aspect of science. You
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scientist or engineer, that you're not
going to understand what it is that we
do. And we've got to find ways
to... even though we are going to lay out
incredibly technical accomplishments
that we want to do... we've got to be
able to explain them in terminology.
And I think it's important because,
you know, we've got to be able to
communicate to ourselves, and not
everybody that works in this Agency is
a scientist or engineer. I'm not.
Now, I'm often accused of being an
engineer, and I don't dispel most
people of that, because...

NAE: So do you take offense to that?  

NASA4: Well, because the thing is
there's instant credibility if they
think you're an engineer, so I
certainly, when people say to me,
"You're an engineer, so you'll
understand this." I just nod

#-A-READABLE
[laughter]. But, at the same time, we
have an awful lot of our workforce
that is not necessarily technical, and
that's very important. But the
broader audience we're trying to
communicate with is a group of
individuals that, again, they've got
their own issues, and they see issues
that they think this country should be

$-A-PLANPHIL
dealing with. And they don't
necessarily on first blush see that
this Agency is making a contribution
to improving their life. And I think
if we can spend much, you know, do a
better job about having people
understand that while we do researchin
and from space, that the research that
we do in and from space is gonna
change their life on Earth every
single day, and that's what we've
gotta tell people. And then people
will not just be excited because we're
sending another shuttle up, they're g
onna to be excited that we're going to
the international space station to
bring back a bunch of experiments that
we just did, and that maybe embedded
in that set of experiments we just
brought back could be the cure for
cancer. That's what we want to make
them understand.

NAE: As opposed to just watching them
launch, or listening to what's
happening once the shuttle is in
space. What are the experiments that
are being conducted?

#-A-PLANPHIL
NASA4: Right, and we need to still do
a better job of that. And we need to
do a better job, you know, that they
you know, they're all working on areas that are...that contribute similarly. So, to the degree that strategic plans can be used as a way to demonstrate to the Congress that, yes we are working with other agencies, and that we know about these kinds of things, that's a good thing. And that obviously requires coordination. Congress would ultimately just be tickled pink if that turned into joint planning processes, which makes some sense. And, you know, frankly, I mean, like for us in a lot of cases like that we already have joint planning processes. You know, I mean, there's been a research for, since at least the first Bush administration. In fact, that's where it started. So, for about ten years...and they do a lot of coordination, and, you know, well, that's an area of science we really need to explore, and well gosh, NASA has this expertise to bring to bear, and you know, the Forest Service has this expertise to bear. But you know, but that really isn't taking place at the level of, you know, the Agency's strategic plan. So, what's kind of envisioned is this process over the next couple of years where, as the agencies get better and better about doing their own strategic plans, there will be more of an opportunity to sort of link those. And what NASA did this year, for that is for the first time we displayed in our strategic plan other agencies that we do work with, and the areas in which we work with them, and we displayed that by our strategic goals and objectives, rather than by programs. So, we said, well, if you look at NASA's strategic goals, here are other agencies that we work with, or there is some common goals.

NAE: So, you've already written it in there.

#-OTH-AGENCY
NASA: Correct. But, you know, the vision is the next step of that would be, you know, you would list their goals and our goals and see where the overlaps are, and then, you know, you have, you make sure those working groups have joint plans or

$-DR-CONGRESS
something. I mean, you know, there's some hesitation among the agencies about how that whole might process might work...on one hand, because of the fear that Congress will ultimately use it to pick and choose who to fund

#-OTH-AGENCY
in various areas. But I think also from the standpoint of doing good
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NASA1: Exactly. So that, that all has
1460
an impact on the three parts of
1461
planning...and at this point I've
1462
forgotten what the question was. 1463

NAE: We're looking at the indicators of
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a successful process. 1466

NASA1: Oh, that's right. So from that
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standpoint, it's a little hard to
1469
measure some of those, some of those
1470

$-IND-SUCCESS
indicators. The other indicators that 1471 -$
I look at, though, for our plan itself 1472 |
1472
is how effectively it communicates. 1473 |
That's both with the outside and with
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the inside, because ultimately you're
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#-WHY PLAN
trying to use...an organization is
1476 #- |
trying to use its strategic plan to
1477 |
drive the efforts of its workforce,
1478 |
the degree to which they understand
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it, and understand their role in it
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have an impact on the degree to which
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they're helping row in the right
1482 |
direction instead of backwards. And
1483 |
if they don't pick it up, can't read
1484 |
it, find it offensive, or in any other
1485 |
way find it difficult to absorb the
1486 |
message, then you're not achieving one
1487 |
of your criteria. And that's equally
1488 |
true on the outside of the
1489 |
organization, where you're trying to
1490 |
let everybody else know, you know, why
1491 |
we're doing this and what our purpose
1492 |
is, and why it might be meaningful to
1493 |

$-A-READABLE
them. So one criteria is the degree
1494 -# -% |
to which people do read it, and the
1495 |
degree to which they can read it. As
1496 -$

a result of that for this last cycle,
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I mean, that was something that we
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just spend a huge amount of time and
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energy focusing on, and that was how
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readable is it - and particularly
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because that's such astruggle for a
1502 |
research and development
1503 |
organization...techno-speak.
1504 |

NAE: How did you judge how readable it
1506 |
was?
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NASA1: Well, we used a variety of
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techniques. One of the techniques
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that we used was wherever possible to
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not...we had the actual text authored
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by somebody other than...somebody who
1513 |
wasn't close to what we were writing
1514 |
about. So in fact a lot of the
1515 |
writing was actually done in our
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office, where...so what we required
1517 |
the enterprises to provide us with
1518 |
what wound up being our secondary
1519 |
sources, so that we could read what
1520 |
you'd given us, think we got the
1521 |
conclusion, and then put in our own
1522 |
words what we thought we had heard.
1523 |
Which, because a lot of times, if, you
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Coded Version of NASA12

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employee.

NAE: Is that done on a calendar year? Fiscal year? Anniversary date?

NASA12: It's kind of a strange...well, if you have an employee who comes in the middle of the cycle, you have to start it with them when they come in. The actual appraisal period - it runs with a strange set of dates - I don't know why, but it runs from July 1st of a year to the end of June of the next year.

NAE: An accounting year.

NASA12: It's an accounting year basically.

NAE: But everybody is appraised at the same time.

NASA12: Yes, in fact, we used to have a distinction between when our General Schedule employees were evaluated and when our supervisors were. And now we've caught that up, and the GS employees are evaluated on the same time scale as the SES employees, the Senior Executives. So, the other thing that I like about this form is this. We used to have pages and pages before we went to sort of this sort of streamlined form. We used to also have pages and pages where for the GS employees you could write down not only critical elements, but other kind of duties. And many of those other elements became sort of very pedestrian in what they were. This form now requires us to only list what we call basically critical job elements. And so these have to be significant things that the employee is going to do during the year. The other thing I like about it is we've added this column here...and you can see it says, "Strategic Plan."

NAE: Yes, it caught my eye.

NASA12: And what it says there is that the supervisor is at least...it says in the text here that at least one strategic plan or the organization's operating plan and goals.

NAE: That's pretty powerful.

NASA12: It is pretty powerful. And yet at the same time, it's not an easy thing to do. And I can tell you that as I've come up here and only been in this organization not quite a year, this was not done with a lot of rigor when I first came up here. It was
really easy for me to do down with my in a program office because my scientists felt a direct linkage; because they could easily go into the NASA Strategic Plan and find a section that says, "I work on this," and point right to it. A little harder when you're here in a key functional office that I am, that people say, "Well, I'm not sure that I support that." So it's been an interesting exercise here working with these people, and particularly the idea that I'm working with my senior staff all the way down to secretaries to say I've got to do this, and I've got to do this for every employee. And so it's been kind of interesting. But, I don't think it's hard, because as soon as you talk about the idea that again we have to work with key external stakeholders - be them the Congress, the White House, the general public - everybody can have a linkage to one of those; that's not hard to do. And certainly things like Matt's responsibilities, where he is doing things like developing a strategic plan, very easy to find the linkage. But we have to do that for every employee. So I think that's a really nice aspect of our form - that at least helps us to get at this issue we've been talking about, you know, the relationship between the organizational, training of the individual needs, and the overall accomplishment of the Agency's goals. So that's the first thing that I think helps you get in that mindset that you've got to create that connection. Then you see at the bottom we have the section that I was talking about where there's a whole section there that is actually the training and development. And again, I like it that it's linked here. We used to have another form that we had to fill out related to training, and what I like is, it's all here in a snapshot. Because, again, in developing these with the employees, these could be, you know, you wanna have them be a little bit stretched. And therefore sometimes to have them be stretch goals, you mutually have to agree that you're going to take that on, but you need X, Y, and Z skills to accomplish that. And we're going to send you to training opportunities, conferences, you know, other kinds of computer classes - whatever it is - to be able to perform your function. So I like it that we list those right here, and then we're putting down the timeframe. I look at this as a contract between myself and my employee, which means I'm also saying, "OK, I'm going to
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we usually do is a combination of both. In a lot of, I mean, in a lot of those kinds of things are things that we try to think of not from the standpoint of producing a given document, but from the processes that would make the Agency stronger. You know, even if we never produced another strategic plan, NASA is a better institution to the degree that it learns how to look outside at those things that it doesn't control, think about them, and predict the future, and understand the degree at which they'll impact you, know. And then the example I love of that is, you know, the state of the government of Russia. It's something NASA has no control over, and not a lot of internal expertise on...but has a fundamental huge impact on a major program as an agency right now - the International Space Station...doing it so cooperatively with the Russians. And, you know, to the degree that there's a possibility that things might change in Russia, and even change so radically that it might affect the Russian's relationship with the U.S., that would have some pretty grave implications on our planning. [laughter].

NAE: Absolutely.

#EXTASSESS

NASA1: Yeah, exactly. So, as, you know, as a practice and a behavior and a tool set that the Agency needs to be doing in general to strengthen the Agency, you know, our office has responsibility to shepherd that. You know, similarly, you know, in an environment with lots of resources, the Agency would be doing not just static planning, but we'd be doing contingency planning. And that's very related to the issue of external assessment, because classically what you would tend to do...well, it's not the only criteria, but you take an external assessment and, OK well, Russia can go one of three ways. OK, well here's our static plan based on one assumption, well gee now if you alter that assumption, what would be our alternative plans?

NAE: You would have your contingencies.

NASA1: Exactly. You know, NASA doesn't...NASA tends to do contingency planning very narrowly in the context of a very specific program when it's really clear that there might be a specific need. And that's what you would expect in an organization that's pretty resource tight, is that takes
NASA3: Yeah, yeah. Well, I think that...we probably haven't been as good at letting...well, I guess it's been fairly top-down in terms of, you know, here's what we want to achieve and, you know, keep driving to the next level down. In this latest iteration we tried to take more into account more of the bubbling up from the bottoms up of innovation and so forth, and allowing for sort of unfettered innovation, and let those things go where they might be. So, we're trying let...I guess what I'm trying to say is that we both want to give employees an outlet in terms of contributing to the goals and setting some challenging but important targets that are important to the nation. But also to recognize that there are some things that are going on that are important, but are very difficult to tie necessarily to one of those things...but to give them some cover, give them the ability to, you know, to continue some of that work as well. So, it's a balance, you know. We try to recognize that...that at least some percentage of the work we want to be able to, you know...just to bubble up from the bottoms up, and if it's good work then let's just let it go and see what happens.

NAE: So that creates a link between the...you know, Jane Employee and planning?

NASA3: Yeah, I mean, I think...

NAE: I'm trying to be gender-sensitive here.

#-EXTRASSESS

NASA3: Yeah, right. And we try in our annual assessments as well to look at everything that's going on as best we can. It's hard and it's a lot to do, but to look at everything that's going on and try to just...to show where it links and how it links, and so forth. And I think that helps as well.

NAE: What I'm looking at in this dissertation is the link between strategic planning and organizational learning. And I'm not asking us to try to answer that question...I can't do that.

NASA3: Right, yeah.

NAE: But do you think from your perspective of what you've observed that an organization such as NASA can learn?
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$-DR-CONGRESS $-DR-BUDGET

in the government? Because I mean, 438 $-S$
ultimately, regardless of whatever our 439 |
strategic plan says, if Congress sends 440 |
us a budget this year that says, you 441 |
know, screw all that human space 442 |
flight stuff, you know, stop and 443 |
desist, and you know, go invest in ant 444 |
#-DR-GPRA
farms, that's what we have to do. Now, 445 $-S$
that's why GPRA contemplates very 446 |

$-DR-CONGRESS
heavily the relationship between 447 $-S$
Congress and the Agency, and, in fact, 448 |
requires by law that when we're doing 449 |
our strategic plan that we do it in 450 |
consultation with the Congress. And 451 $-S$
it's also consist r eally with what 452 |
always on, where the Administration 453 |
and the Executive Branch lays out that 454 |
well, gee this is what we think, and 455 |
Congress kind of comes in and, you 456 |
know, agrees or disagrees. But so 457 $-S$
that there is a concern that even 458 |
independent of a congressional aspect, 459 |

$-DR-BUDGET
that because of a preeminence of the 460 $-S$
budget process, that the strategic 461 |
planning process would not just be 462 |
secondary to the budget process and, 463 |
you know, the real decisions would get 464 |

$-SP-PROCESS
made in that short-term context. And 465 $-S$
that's part of thereason that NASA 466 |
went to the trouble of defining a 467 |
strategic management system, so that 468 |
we could specifically define the 469 |

$-DR-BUDGET
relationship between strategic 470 $-S$
planning and our budget planning, and 471 |
that's sort of that red book 472 |
really is trying to do, and t o 473 |
explain the way, you know, the one is 474 |
stretching out the far-off horizon, 475 |
and the budget is coming in and 476 |

#-DR-ADMINIS
filling in the short terms. You know, 477 $-S$-
one of the issues I certainly have 478 |
been monitoring now, you know, when 479 |
you get a new Administration, you have 480 |
a potential for some real shifts. If 481 $-S$
I were an agency, you know, let's say 482 |
OSHA, for example, I mean, I 483 |
would...it would appear that this 484 |
Administration will probably have some 485 |
very different views about how OSHA 486 |
should operate and what it's 487 |
objectives should be. And those are of 488 |
the nature that they could certainly 489 |

$-DR-ADMINIS
impact OSHA's strategic plan. What 490 $-S$
NASA does tends to be less 491 |
political...less partisan, I mean, the 492 |
difference between what Democrats and 493 |
Republicans may think about what NASA 494 |
should be doing is usually pretty 495 |
minimal. In fact the, you know, the 496 |
big policy questions and planning 497 |
questions for NASA don't, you know, 
the battles don't tend to fall out 
according to partisan lines...which is nice, because one of the things that means is that we've got a new 

president, but he probably isn't going to radically change our direction. And so it probably won't require changes to our strategic plan. 

NAE: But it could change your administrator. 

#-DR-ADMINIS

NASA1: Absolutely; that is true. And over time, you know, then that certainly has an impact to change the strategic plan. And...this was also some discussion in the Federal community, because the authors of the law just happened to write it so that the first...the second iteration of strategic plans were authored last year. And some folks woke up a year ago and realized that might be stupid for some agencies. There is some concern...they didn't want those plans to be done in the context of a presidential campaign. But more than that, I think there was a concern that, you know, somebody would have to redo it completely. In all...in a number of the other agencies, strategic planners came back and said, "Well, no, you know, actually that's really good timing, because you've got a baseline then to give the new Administration, and say well, you know, this is the current plan" from which they can learn. And frankly, by the time you get a new Cabinet Secretary or Agency Head and they, you know, figure out where the bathrooms are, and, you know, have their horribly, you know, fire hose experience about learning the Federal budget process and all of that...you know, about the time they might be formulating any sorts of new visions is about the time when we have to start a new planning cycle anyway, in about a year from now. 

NAE: Do you work with the planners of any other agencies at all? 

#-OTHAGENCY

NASA1: Yes, actually. Because GPRA is a new law and is being implemented government-wide, I and a lot of the other agency folks are very interested in keeping in touch with the other agency planners. 

NAE: Who brings you all together? 

NASA1: A couple of vehicles, but the most prominent of that, of those, is
user-friendly to the public. A lot
emphasis on, you know, plain language, which I think is an incredible
cal for this agency to try to
discuss the incredibly technical
things that we do in language that can
be understood by a very broad audience. And that is a serious
challenge. And also be able to have
the document, you know, as they go
through the document, understand how
the pieces fit together. We also
wanted to do a better job in this report - and I think we've done it
as planned - to show how we rely on

#-DR-BUDGET
others to get our work done. We
talked earlier about the kind of
pressure NASA's had on its budget.
Our budget has not increased, but then
looking at the budget for the agencies for fiscal 2000 and 2002, our budget
1hancing in there, where a lot of
other agencies have actually declined. So we should feel really good about
that. But there's been a lot of
pressure put on us to say, you know, “Explain to us how what you're doing
is the things that NASA ought to be
doing.” You know, what we ought to be
doing with the NASA civil servants.
“Why can't you be relying on industry
to do this? Why can't you be relying on foreign partners to do this? Why
can't you be relying on other
government agencies?” So another
significant section of the document
this year, which I think is a
tremendous addition, is to have
significant sections that talk about
that...to talk about the partnerships we
have with other individuals. And it
was the first time we've had nearly a
detailed chart particularly related to
interagency cooperation, where we work
with other Federal agencies, and we
actually got that detail, so we
actually link it. And the work that
we do with those agencies to specific
Enterprise goals and objectives...that I
think is a fundamental part of the
document. That section has gotten, I
think, a lot of attention on the
outside. And I don't see a lot of
other agencies doing that with nearly
the rigor we have. And I would
challenge them that they probably
should, because that's the only way
we're going to make sure that we
aren't duplicating work. If I was a
member of Congress or if I was a
member of the General Accounting
Office, I'd maybe change that and make
sure that's got to be in everybody's
plan, because I think that's a great
way to, you know, sort of pull out
where the duplication is, and also
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$-DR-CONGRESS $-DR-BUDGET
in the government? Because, I mean, ultimately, regardless of whatever our strategic plan says, if Congress sends us a budget this year that says, you know, screw all that human space flight stuff, you know, stop and desist, and you know, go invest in ant farms, that's what we have to do. Now, that's why GPRA contemplates very little in the relationship between Congress and the Agency, and, in fact, requires by law that when we're doing our strategic plan that we do it in consultation with the Congress. And it's also consistent with what always on, where the Administration and the Executive Branch lays out that well, gee, this is what we think, and Congress kind of comes in and, you know, agrees or disagrees. But so that there is a concern that even independent of a congressional aspect, that because of a preeminence of the budget process, that the strategic planning process would not just be secondary to the budget process and, you know, the real decisions would get made in that short-term context. And that's part of the reason that NASA went to the trouble of defining a strategic management system, so that we could specifically define the relationship between strategic planning and our budget planning, and that's what a lot of that red book is all about, really is trying to do, and to explain the way, you know, the one is stretching out the far-off horizon, and the budget is coming in and filling in the short terms. You know, one of the issues I certainly have been monitoring now, you know, when you get a new Administration, you have a potential for some real shifts. If I were an agency, you know, let's say OSHA, for example, I mean, I would...it would appear that this Administration will probably have some very different views about how OSHA should operate and what it's objectives should be. And those are of the nature that they could certainly impact OSHA's strategic plan. What NASA does tends to be less political...less partisan, I mean, the difference between what Democrats and Republicans may think about what NASA should be doing is usually pretty minimal. In fact the, you know, big policy questions and planning
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NAE: So, you actually do think about links as you discuss this with everybody. 458 459 460

NAS3: Yeah, yeah. So, you know, I mean, I've never taken a survey, but I think it's...I know all our programs can easily articulate how they contribute, and, you know, down to some level within the programs you'd find that. 462 463 464 465 466 467 468

NAE: What drives the content of that Agency plan? They do this every three years. 470 471 472

NAS3: That's correct. 474

NAE: They have a cycle. But what drives not the format, but the content of that thing? 476 477 478

#-DR-GOLDIN

NAS3: Well, the content is driven by...by the Administrator, number one. 480 481 -

I mean, he has a vision for what he wants this Agency to do. And I think you'll see that reflected in the strategic plan. And then...and then 482 483 484 -#

$-INTRIVER

strategic plan. And then...and then 485 -#-$ beyond the Administrator, you see it driven by the Enterprise Associate Administrators, because each of them then take that vision and try to make it real within the context of their Enterprises. And then, you know...and I think, you know, then I work closely with the AA and the Centers to bring that vision to life, and to construct a...a framework that really captures that from the top down. 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 -$

NAE: What about...I guess, factors from the outside. Like budget? Congress? 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506

The Administration? You've got a new Administration coming in. How credible...it's not a challenging question, but how credible is the plan given the fact that there's a new Administration and the Congress is split 50-50? 507 508 -#

#-EXTIVRIVER

NAS3: Yeah, well the question is...or the answer is I don't know necessarily right now. I would say that...and I can only speak...I feel most comfortable speaking to our part of the plan...but I think what we have done is capture the need - the national needs - independent of political party or anything else. This is systemically what's required, and so you can...within that you can prioritize, and say, well OK...I guess what I would say is we have never heard back that, "Why, you guys have it all wrong." I mean, basically 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522
NASAI: 1935-1944

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whole having to get them there thing 1910
creates some problems, 'cause you 1911
either make them go and then they're 1912
surly, or you don't make them go and 1913
they don't show up [laughter]. And on 1914
top of that... 1915

NAE: Not a lot of choices. 1917

#-A-DISTPLAN
NASAI: Yeah, exactly. And in most 1919 -#
cases it's not like you can get the 1920 |
whole Center workforce in the 1921 |
auditorium, anyway. So, you're still 1922 |
just reaching a subset, you know, so I 1923 |
don't know. And it automatically 1924 |
becomes an officious dog-and-pony, 1925 |
'cause you don't have the intimacy of 1926 |
a training classroom, and the freedom 1927 |
to necessarily to, you know, have 1928 |
heart-to-hearts or anything. So, 1929 |
that's one of the options we're 1930 |
looking at. And I may be running out 1931 -#
of things that we're doing, unless I'm 1932

#-A-DISTPLAN
not thinking of things. I mean, you 1933 -#
know, for us number one is getting it 1934 |

$-GOLDINROLE
in everybody's hands. And I will also 1935 -#-$
say that the current Administrator 1936 |
provides a lot of leadership in that 1937 |
respect, and, I mean, to this day 1938 |
there's no training class that he 1939 |
speaks to where he doesn't ask them, 1940 |
"Raise your hand if you've read this 1941 |
NASA strategic plan." And if there 1942 |
are hands that don't go up, he is not 1943 |
kind. I mean, he's very definitive 1944 |
about... 1945 -$

NAE: They haven't learned yet that 1947
everybody's supposed to raise their 1948
hand? 1949

#-EMPCONNECT
NASAI: Yeah, well [laughter]...the 1951 -#
trainers know, you know. So, he's 1952 |
very definitive about...which is good, 1953 |
I mean, because not all managers 1954 |
ar...automatically get the 1955 |
connection, and understand, you know, 1956 |
the role of having employees 1957 |
understand how their job fits into the 1958 |
bigger context. And, you know, I 1959 |
think it's been pretty well proven 1960 |
that pays some dividends. 1961 -#

NAE: Why do you think he is so bent - 1963
that's not the right word - but, why 1964
is he so much into making sure every 1965
employee understands their role in the 1966
whole process? 1967

#-GOLDINROLE
NASAI: I think, you know, as a manager 1969 -#
he is very much a change agent type of 1970
manager. I mean, sort of 1971 |
inherently...always kind of has been. 1972 |
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when I was...when the planning process 582
really got kicked off, I was sort of 583
in a different role. I was in the 584
role of making sure that we...had 585
developed an appropriate Enterprise 586
plan, and at that particular time - 587
and again it's changed rather 588
dramatically, and that was one of the 589
challenges of producing this plan we 590
just did on time - was that the Office 591
of Life and Microgravity Research was 592
a partner with the Office of Space 593
Science and the Human Exploration and 594
Development of Space Enterprise. And 595
so we were really the scientific arm 596
of that Enterprise with sort of the...I 597
always like to say that the Code M 598
needed to remember that they were 599
predominantly the bus and the hotel, 600
and that we provided...we did the 601
research. And so, we were very much 602
making sure that we had developed an 603
Enterprise strategic plan that was 604
consistent with the kind of direction 605
that the Office of Policy and Plans 606
gives the Enterprises related to their 607
plans, and making sure that we had 608
articulated goals and objectives which 609
were appropriate for inclusion in an 610

#-NASAIMPRES
Agency plan. And obviously the...some 611 -#
of the most visible stuff that we did 612
as NASA, obviously, is the astronauts. 613 |
I mean again, when people think about 614 |
NASA, they often don't think about 615 |
what we do necessarily in health 616 |
research they might think about Mars, 617 |
but I think the first thing usually on 618 |
the tip of everybody's tongue is, "Oh, 619 |
that's right, they run that shuttle 620 |
and they send that shuttle into 621 |
space." And we thought it was 622 |
appropriate on our side of the 623 |
Enterprise to make sure that we 624 |
stressed about the fact that when we 625 |
send astronauts to space we're not 626 |
sending them just to, you know, take a 627 |
nice ride on a very expensive piece of 628 |
equipment, but that they're going into 629 |
research, to conduct scientific 630 |
experiments and also, often, to be 631 |
scientific...to participate in 632 |
scientific experiments themselves, 633 |
because obviously the effects that the 634 |
astronauts experience in space, even 635 |
on short duration shuttle missions, is 636 |
a very important data point going into 637 |
our international space station 638 |
program. So, I was on sort of the 639 -#
receiving end, making sure that we 640 |
were appropriately packaging an 641 |
Enterprise plan. And, we were always 642 |
a little bit behind the power curve, 643 |
because it was challenging in that 644 |
Enterprise and hence today why it's 645 |
split up, which I'm not convinced is a 646 |
totally good idea, because the Office 647 |
of Biological and Physical Research 648
Strategic Planning and Organizational Learning at NASA

NASA3: 1129-1142

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current environment where we really 1111|
need folks to work together and not to 1112 |
overlap too much and not to duplicate 1113 |
too much, how do you get these very 1114 |
different cultures at times and with 1115 |
competing interests working together. 1116 |
I think that's...so that's one of 1117 |

$-PET-WRKSHP

challenges we have. Now...I mean, 1118 |-$
what I've observed is that, and I 1119 |
think that's why these workshops work 1120 |
very well, because if you can get 1121 |
people out of their Centers and out of 1122 |
that "can do" attitude, overcomes all 1123 |
that other stuff, and you end up with, 1124 |
you know, some really good product. 1125 |
So that's I think a real positive 1126 |
thing. But it does...those 1127 |-$
integration issues are difficult, you 1128 |
know, to manage. And it is a, I think 1129 |
to a certain extent, the NASA culture 1130 |
can be very...somewhat insular, in 1131 |
that because it is a science and 1132 |
engineering type of organization that, 1133 |
you know, the value of communication 1134 |
isn't necessarily seen as being as 1135 |
important as it is. And I think 1136 |
there's a lot folks who think that, 1137 |
you know, they're the best in world, 1138 |
and so why do I need to talk to 1139 |
anybody about that? I mean, it's sort 1140 |
of assumed right to do wh at we do 1141 |
kinds of thing. So that's hurt us at 1142 |
times. So, I guess those are the 1143 |
things that stand out, from a cultural 1144 |
perspective. 1145 |

NAE: What does that do to the planning 1147 |
process...the effect of the culture on 1148 |
planning? 1149 |

#-CULTURE-E

NASA3: Well, it's...I think within our 1151 |$
Enterprise we've got a very, you know, 1152 |
diffused technology development type 1153 |
organization, where you've got a lot 1154 |
of technical experts. I mean, you 1155 |
know, most folks think of, you know, 1156 |
"I do what I do," and so the planning 1157 |
is almost, you know, kind of operates 1158 |
above it, and I'm going to keep doing 1159 |
what I'm doing. So that's been a 1160 |
problem sometimes, because it's hard 1161 |
to get the linkage in at times. But, 1162 |
on the other hand I think the, you 1163 |
know, this...in setting some 1164 |
significant goals, I mean, you can 1165 |
kind of engage that "can do" attitude 1166 |
in that, and try to challenge people 1167 |
to think about how they can actually 1168 |
enable those things to happen. 1169 |$

NAE: Is that how the process then 1171 |
pushes back into the culture, by 1172 |
demonstrating that attitude and 1173 |
getting people involved? I'm trying 1174 |
to show a push both ways, I guess is 1175 |
what I'm looking at. 1176 |
answer. Now, NASA, I think pursued that... I mean, NASA as an organization sort of has a commitment to management issues and trying to do good management, and so forth. And it was within that context that NASA entered into the whole ISO thing. I do also think, though I mean, the prime motivator for doing it probably had more to do with the fact that there are a lot organizations that are ISO certified. Some of those organizations are our contractors. This appeared to be something that, well, you know, if they're doing it, maybe NASA should be doing it.

NAE: In general, you think of ISO of being in the commercial world anyhow, as opposed to government agencies.

NASA13: Correct. ISO also was a follow-on to our effort in the mid-90s at quality management. I mean, we spent a couple of years where we had a quality management program, and NASA has given out continual improvement awards for quality management to our contractors for years, the George M. Lowe trophy. So I also do think that part of the Agency's venturing into the quality management program was viewed as a way for us to help put pressure on our contractors. You know, in the same way that GM is pretty... GM uses ISO to help make sure that their suppliers are good suppliers.

NAE: Because if you're ISO certified, they know the parts are good, and can be brought in without a lot of auditing and things like that.

NASA13: Exactly, exactly. And again I think there was a feeling for NASA that rather than just imposing that as a requirement on our contractors, that we needed to practice what we preached.

NAE: That makes sense.

NASA13: So I think that's part of it. Now, we're, you know, despite... you know, the question of why we actually did it may be a little bit different than the question of what we're doing with it. And what we're doing with it is trying to make sure that our processes and procedures are consistent and sensible, and also to improve knowledge capture. I mean, because something I think that a lot of organizations are pretty bad at. You've got all these great people, but, you know, a huge amount of the assets of the organization are resident in those employees' brains,
linkage...helps to find that linkage 2754 |
between what they do and the overall 2755 |
Agency's objectives. So, that's been 2756 |
§-C-WHYPLAN

good. At the Center level, what we've 2757
-#-$
done is essentially we've tried to 2758
provide a little bit more leadership 2759
for the Center folks, who are kind of 2760
off on their own, to a certain degree, 2761
as the Agency was, you know, hassling 2762
with GPRA implementation in the big 2763
picture. And that's been very 2764
existing, because on one hand a lot of 2765
the Center folks went off and did 2766
wonderful stuff on their 2767
own...developed extensive performance 2768
measures that they used just 2769
internally to their Center, did a lot 2770
of sort of goals and objective 2771
thinking. Some did some good work 2772
from a strategic tactics issue, you 2773
know, relative to their community and 2774
their locations, and, you know, what 2775
their future should be, and we've 2776

#-A-JOBDESC-OUTREACH

reached out to the Center folks. I've 2777
reached out to the Center folks, and 2778
we had a...we convened the first 2779
conference we've ever had with all the 2780
folks last year. And they've 2781
all...first I went out and visited 2782
to the, all, and...there's been a change 2783
there in that I think they're all a 2784
lot happier, because I was real clear 2785
about...where we had the flexibility, 2786
I didn't want to just have people here 2787
at headquarters go into a smoky room, 2788
make up the answer and shove it down 2789
the Center's throats. And that's 2790
always a tendency in an organization 2791
like this. And the diligent effort to 2792
reach out to them, to listen to them, 2793
to include them, to provide 2794
facilitation opportunities for them, 2795
maybe they've all been rosy-cheeked 2796
and glowing from that. And we're 2797
pleased we now have implementation 2798
plans from all our Centers. A lot of 2799
them are outstanding. And we're doing 2800
a lot stuff to ensure participation 2801
from that level - better participation 2802
in the kinds of planning stuff that 2803
happens here. So, I think they're 2804
all...I think maybe they're a little 2805
less cynical, feeling a little less 2806
abused. You know, we rolled back some 2807
of the imposed requirements on them, 2808
too, that we didn't necessarily need. 2809
As far as the Enterprise planning 2810
folks, I don't know if I'd track a lot 2811
of changes. I mean, they're just as 2812
overworked now as they were two years 2813

#-IN-ENTERPR

go. I think there's been some 2814
learning, and...in fact, I know 2815
there's been some learning, and they 2816
also come up with some...we've had 2817
some real sparks of innovation on the 2818

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Government Performance and Results 192 |
Act. 193 -$

NAE: GPRA.

#-DR-GPRA
NASA: GPRA. And that law basically 197 -$
lays out that indeed all agencies 198 |
will, on an at least three-year basis, 199 |
produce an agency strategic plan. And 200 |
it outlines...In fact in the law 201 |
outlines some fairly specific content 202 |
that we must have in that, including 203 |
agency vision, goals, and objectives. 204 -$

#-DR-PUBLIC
We need to talk also about 205 -$
relationships with customers which, 206 |
obviously, I think, as a government 207 |
an agency one of our key customers has 208 |
got to be the American public...and so 209 |

$-DR-GPRA
we must work with them. The other 210 -$-
piece that GPRA also lays out is the 211 |
requirements for doing an annual plan, 212 |
and an annual performance report. 213 |
Now, my office here is responsible for 214 |
the strategic planning part of that 215 |
requirement. But then we work closely 216 |
with the Office of the Chief Financial 217 |
Officer here at NASA to fulfill our 218 |
obligations on the performance 219 |

$-CROSS-CUTS
planning and reporting piece. And 220 -$-
this office has a very significant 221 |
role, because as an agency we've 222 |
chosen as part of our own strategic 223 |
management system, to identify a 224 |
cross-cutting process that we call 225 |
“manage strategically.” It's 226 |
really...I'd like to think of it...it's 227 |
sort of all the functional 228 |
responsibilities that go into being a 229 |
good government agency, and making 230 |
sure that we are effectively utilizing 231 |
fiscal human and physical resources 232 |
effectively. And, you know, really 233 |
that the taxpayers should have sort of 234 |
confidence in us. So I'm also...I'm 235 |
what's called the steward of that 236 |
“manage strategically” process, 237 |
because I have to work closely with 238 |
ten other functional offices here 239 |
at NASA Headquarters, where we report 240 |
on a variety of things that we're 241 |
doing that we think fall under that 242 |

$-CODES ROLE
cross-cutting process. So that has 243 -$
at actually been one of the things that 244 |
I've really put a lot of emphasis on 245 |
since coming here last year is really 246 |
trying to develop effective 247 |
relationships with those functional 248 |

#-EXT-DRIVER
offices. And it's very important, 249 -$
because when you take a look at not 250 |
only the direction that coming from 251 |
the new Administration to us, but also 252 |
members of Congress and the General 253 |
Strategic Planning and Organizational Learning at NASA

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Accounting Office, greater emphasis is being placed on government reform and ensuring that government agencies address management challenges. So I think we play a key role because as the office that's responsible not only for long-range strategic planning, but really the some guidance related to how we manage internally; I think we do play a key role in that. So we have worked very hard over the last year to really improve the relationships that we have with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer. So we feel it's a real hand-in-glove relationship we have with them. So together we make sure the Agency is complying with all the requirements of GPRA. So that's our main...you know, that's the main thing that gives us our requirements.

NAE: I would think you would have a hand-in-glove relationship with the CFO, because of a lot of it has to do with the budgetary issues and how that comes against your performance measures, appropriations from Congress...

#A-PERFPLAN

NASA4: Well, absolutely. In fact, it's kind of...it's actually quite a challenge to apply the idea of having annual performance measures to what we do. You know, if you take a look at our long-range strategic plan, we lay out fairly aggressive goals for ourselves for many years in the future.

NAE: About twenty-five of those.

#A-PERFPLAN

NASA4: Twenty-five of those, that's right. And, because of the nature of the work we do, sometimes at the end of a year all we have accomplished is that we have a small output along the way of accomplishing a major activity. You think about the fact that we have a probe on its way right now to Saturn; it's going to take nine years to get to Saturn. It's a little hard to determine what have you accomplished. Now obviously the idea that the probe is still effectively on route to Saturn, we have to talk about that; and that's a real challenge. So I think we've really been struggling, as I believe other R&D agencies have to be...what are the appropriate measures we can put. And the extent to which GPRA is saying, "What have you accomplished for me lately?" meaning this last year, that's a real challenge to apply that kind of...
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Interview with NASA8: April 10, 2001

Note: The interview was not tape-recorded. The following simply is a composite of field notes taken during the interview.

The respondent is on detail from the Marshall Space Flight Center Advanced Programs Office. He is the lead for Strategic Planning and Performance Planning, which is one of the hottest buttons today.

The respondent currently is involved in the rewrite of the strategic plan - taking out Code U information from the Human Exploration and Development of Space (HEDS) plan. He did not have a role in developing the Agency's 2000

#-A-EMPI1NT
plan. He stated that all of NASA put in suggestions to the Agency's vision. Employees were solicited for information, thereby using a ground-up approach to develop a vision that included the interests of all employee stakeholders.

#-EMP-WRT2NL
The respondent described the process of correcting the new HEDS plan to reflect the Agency's plan. The strategic planning process documented for ISO is followed. The respondent described a working group that consists of the leads of each program, education and outreach offices, and the Chief Engineer. There is an executive board for HEDS that is comprised of the various Directors and Deputy AAs. The Executive Board provides inputs to the plan, which will undergo weeks of revision. Comments made about the draft plan will be reviewed by the working group. Decisions then will be made about the disposition of each comment - that is, whether the comment should be incorporated. The next circle of reviewers will be the representatives from the various Centers - those involved in Code Z work at all Centers who will provide comments, and suggest incorporations and revisions. The draft document then will be sent to tech writers, who will pull parts of the Agency plan into the HEDS plan. A web version also will be developed.

The HEDS education plan already is published. An R&T plan is in the future, but it currently is on hold.

#-EMP-WRT2NL
A poster insert of the front cover might be included in the HEDS plan. A great deal of storytelling is done using
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necessarily do that all myself, but 133 |
I'm the person who's responsible. 134 -#

NAE: So you're not one of the primary 136
authors of the section. 137

#-ERG-WRTPLAN
NASA3: That's correct. And basically we 139 -#
get the...we get the format from them 140 |
and then we...essentially then we 141 |
draft...we put our strategy 142 |
information, our strategic planning 143 |
information within that format. And 144 |
that's more or less...and then there's 145 |
negotiation back and forth between the 146 |
Code X [Code Z] folks and our 147 |
Enterprise in terms of how...how we're 148 |
going to articulate our goals and 149 |
objectives, and so forth. 150 -#

NAE: Is that format pretty cut and dry 152 |
that you can just plug into it? Or 153 |
what kind of leeway do they give you 154 |
on that formatting? 155

#-A-SPQUIDNC
NASA3: It's pretty rigid for the most 157 -#
part. We did have somewhat of a 158 |
change in format between the last 159 |
strategic plan and this one, but not 160 |
an enormous change. But...but some 161 |
change. And it's...you know, they 162 |
need to get consistency across the 163 |
Agency, so they're pretty...they try 164 |
to hold the format to 165 |
pretty...strictly...because there's 166 |
not a whole lot leeway. 167 -#

NAE: Right. One of the things I 169 |
noticed between the two different 170 |
plans, I think it was '98 and 2000 or 171 |
'97 and 2000...the 2000 plan has a 172 |
significant number of graphics added 173 |
to it 174

NASA3: That's correct. 176

NAE: Graphics and color. What do you 178 |
think that lends to the value of the 179 |
plan? 180

#-A-LAYOUT
NASA3: Well...yeah, I guess at one 182 -#
level is doesn't necessarily add 183 |
anything to the content or to 184 |
the...what's contained in the plan. I 185 |
think the...well, in fact I know, the 186 |
intent behind it is a couple fold. 187 |
One is, since the plan is an 188 |
opportunity to communicate to the 189 |
American public, and so forth...that 190 |
is, this is what the Agency's going to 191 |
do, adding some production value to 192 |
it, making it more accessible, more 193 |
visually interesting, hopefully, 194 |
creates more of a desire to read the 195 |
plan, to actually see what's in it, 196 |
and so forth. So, that's part of the 197 |
NASA3: 182-201 (continued)

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value, is just to make it something 198 |
that's just more interesting to pick 199 |
up, to look at, to, you know, to see 200 |
what's in there. 201 -$

NAE: Kind of like the marketing value, 203
so to speak. 204

#-CONSISTENT

NASA3: So there's some marketing value 206 -$
to it. That's correct. The 207 |
other... the other rationale is that at 208 |
the Enterprise level, I think we have 209 |
tended to go towards higher production 210 |
value products, and so, the other 211 |
thing that Code X [Code Z] wants to do 212 |
is to get some consistency between 213 |
their strategic plan and the 214 |

$-LINEAGE

Enterprise strategic plans. And so, 215 -$|
if someone were to pick up the full 216 |
say, you could sort of... you could see 217 |
the family lineage between the 218 |
strategic plans. And so, they're 219 |
trying to set at least a marker for 220 |
kind of the production value and then 221 |
the look and feel, and so forth. 222 -$$

NAE: OK, so the whole set would be 224
Agency plan, the Enterprise plans, the 225
Center plans? 226

#-LINEAGE

NASA3: Right. Then the Centers have 228 -$
implementation plans that then would 229 |
be responsive to the Agency and 230 |
Enterprise plans. 231 -$

NAE: Are there plans for the 233
cross-cutting processes? 234

#-CROSS-CUTS

NASA3: There's... I'm not sure where we 236 -$
stand on that. Well, actually I do. 237 |
Yes, they are... they have produced 238 |
plans. They have not... those plans, 239 |
however, I don't believe have been 240 |
necessarily released as, you know, 241 |
kind of public documents. Not 242 |
that you... if someone was interested, 243 |
you could certainly get access to 244 |
them, but they haven't been something 245 |
that, you know, we've, I guess, taken 246 |
the effort to use them as public 247 |
outreach tools, because they're more 248 |
detailed and more, you know, 249 |
internal... how do we work together 250 |
kind of stuff. 251 -$

NAE: How about the... again, let me go 253
back to the Agency plan... you said you 254
had the formatting as guidance for 255
putting in your parts of it. Did you 256
get any other training or guidance 257
besides the formatting? I guess I'm 258
interested in the communication 259 |
between what Matt's group is doing and 260
the Enterprise. 261
Interview with NASA6: April 4, 2001

NAE: All right, let's start with your position if you don't mind. Tell me a little bit about your position.

NASA6: Okay

NAE: What you do, what your responsibilities are and then we'll go from there.

And I'm engaged in helping the Associate Administrator communicate the plan and other aspects of what the Enterprise is doing to the outside world. Especially a lot of time preparing presentations and materials, speeches for him. And then I have a number of other things that I do as a staff person to the AA, I'm kind of like a bullet in a gun... he just points and shoots me and I'll do [laughter].

NAE: That's a neat way to describe that. Let's back up to the Agency level plan first.

NASA6: Sure.

NAE: And the last one that was done was the 2000 plan.

NASA6: Uh huh...

NAE: Were you here at that time that was done?

NASA6: Yes.

NAE: What was your role in helping with that plan?

NASA6: In helping with that plan, I essentially wrote the section of the plan that deals with the Earth Science Enterprise. And then worked with Matt to review the whole document to make sure that the pieces played together a that with the Enterprises...several Enterprises were saying were consistent with one another, and so on.

NAE: What kind of guidance did you get Code 2 or from Matt for doing your section? 

NASA6: He gave us a length requirement. He gave us requirement that said we need to include in there our Enterprise mission and goals. He said that we needed to include some examples of expected Enterprise accomplishments fo
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the period in question, and that he wanted us to provide some illustrative graphics that communicate the value of what we do in a pictorial sense and the roles that the several NASA Centers that are involved in the enterprise would play in implementing our goals.

NAE: What other Centers are aligned with you?

NASA6: Principally Goddard Space Flight Center is the one that does most of the earth science work, but we also have work done at JPL, at Langley, at Stennis and a small, some focused work on a small level at Dryden and Marshall.

NAE: Okay

NASA6: And a little bit of Ames, but Goddard is probably 80%.

NAE: That's your primary Center.

NASA6: Right.

NAE: The guidance that Matt gave you, was that in writing or was it...how was that...how was that guidance given to you?

NASA6: We communicated via email. He has these...these strategic planning contacts at the Enterprises and the Centers on an email distribution list and he sent us most of our information that way.

NAE: Did he, Matt, or the Code, anybody in the Code have kind of a conference meeting or a meeting all at one time with all the contacts from the enterprises? Or was it all done electronically?

NASA6: We had I believe, if I remember right, we had one meeting all together and then we had, the bulk of the communications have been over e-mail.

NAE: Okay. And then you said you had a chance to review the entire document.

NASA6: Yes.

NAE: What were your thoughts about how it was organized?

NASA6: I thought it was organized fairly well. I think in going from the previous version to this one, Matt instituted several improvements to make the document more readable, to make it cleaner and to reduce, and to reduce the amount of text essentially and to go with bullet points and illustrative diagrams as we try to communicate as...
NASA1: 1494-1504

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NASA1: Exactly. So that, that all has 1460
an impact on the three parts of 1461
planning...and at this point I've 1462
forgotten what the question was. 1463

NAE: We're looking at the indicators of 1465
a successful process. 1466

NASA1: Oh, that's right. So from that 1468
standpoint, it's a little hard to 1469
measure some of those, some of those 1470

$-IND-SUCCESS
indicators. The other indicators that 1471 1472
I look at, though, for our plan itself 1473 1474
is how effectively it communicates. 1475
That's both with the outside and with 1476
the inside, because ultimately you're 1477

$-WHY_PLAN
trying to use...an organization is 1478 1479
trying to use its strategic plan to 1480 1481
drive the efforts of its workforce, 1482 1483
the degree to which they understand 1484 1485
it, and understand their role in it 1486 1487
has an impact on the degree to which 1488 1489
they're helping row in the right 1490 1491
direction instead of backwards. And 1492 1493
if they don't pick it up, can't read 1494 1495
it, find it offensive, or in any other 1496 1497
way find it difficult to absorb the 1498 1499
message, then you're not achieving one 1500 1501
of your criteria. And that's equally 1502 1503
true on the outside of the 1504 1505
organization, where you're trying to 1506 1507
let everybody else know, you know, why 1508 1509
we're doing this and what our purpose 1510 1511
is, and why it might be meaningful to 1512 1513

$-A-READABLE
them. So one criteria is the degree 1514 1515
to which people do read it, and the 1516 1517
degree to which they can read it. As 1518 1519
a result of that for this last cycle, 1520 1521
I mean, that was something that we 1522 1523
just spend a huge amount of time and 1524 1525
energy focusing on, and that was how 1526 1527
readable is it - and particularly 1528 1529
because that's such a struggle for a 1530 1531
research and development 1532 1533
organization...techno-speak. 1534

NAE: How did you judge how readable it 1535
was? 1536

NASA1: Well, we used a variety of 1537 1538
techniques. One of the techniques 1539 1540
that we used was wherever possible to 1541 1542
not...we had the actual text authored 1543 1544
by somebody other than...somebody who 1545 1546
wasn't close to what we were writing 1547 1548
about. So in fact a lot of the 1549 1550
writing was actually done in our 1551 1552
office, where...so what we required 1553 1554
the enterprises to provide us with 1555 1556
what wound up being our secondary 1557 1558
sources, so that we could read what 1559 1560
they'd given us, think we got the 1561 1562
conclusion, and then put in our own 1563 1564
words what we thought we had heard. 1565 1566
Which, because a lot of times, if you 1567 1568
NASA 4: 921-933

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start with that documentation. I think that's very important. Obviously there's a lot of personality issues, I think, that go in with working it, but from the standpoint of having a documented procedure in terms of how we actually are going to go about producing this document, I think we've got a really good thing that somebody else could pick up and do. So just a final point is, I was a real stickler in light of the fact that we thought this was a process that we had under ISO, and therefore it was also subject to our own process for preparing the strategic plan...was submit to both

internal and external audit. I was a pretty hard driver on making sure that we had clear objective evidence that we had considered these comments from all these Codes, that we had dispositioned them, we had effectively dealt with conflicting comments, 'cause you can imagine when you're getting comments of that magnitude, one person's going to say, "Put this in," and the other person's going to say, "Take it out." So we really had to work through that. So I think my kind of devil-in-the-detail kind of oversight is probably helpful, and Matt might say I drove him crazy with that sometimes, but I wanted to make sure that later...we went back and we had a real serious consideration of those comments, and we didn't throw anything out lightly.

NAE: One of the things that attracted me about choosing NASA as the place I wanted to investigate for strategic planning was the maturity of the process. And the more I've learned about it, it's clear between the Red Book and the ISO procedure written out...and as you said if you needed to pull Matt out, the process would continue as it were.

NASA4: Yeah, we...you know, NASA, having come from the DoD, and I worked with the DoD for eleven years before coming to NASA. I'm very impressed with how really far ahead NASA was in this regard. I mean, NASA was doing the idea of doing strategic planning long before it was really required. And so, by the time it became required, I think we had it pretty well honed. I mean, there's always areas for improvement, but I think we did it pretty well. In fact, it's interesting, as Matt interfaces with people from other agencies, and we've
called the Administrator's Correspondence Unit, which is responsible for administering that process for anything, you know, up to a certain degree, though the originating offices have a lot of responsibility. But the point I was going to get at is we actually put the strategic plan through that process, which was an interesting choice, because we wouldn't have necessarily have had to do that. I mean, you know, the Agency makes up its own rules. But we chose to do that...and what we do is every direct report to the Administrator - every one of our Associate Administrators here - has to sign on the concurrence sheet. And then the Administrator himself signs the strategic plan. So, that is the process that we use toward the end to ensure that, you know, we haven't mixed things, that everybody agrees down to the word and the comma and the period. And while it's a little burdensome and it's certainly a pain in the butt, I've become a big fan of that process, because what I've found is, you know, I can work with the planning leads, or I can work with staff people in the offices, and we can all sort of think we know, but until the day comes that the official in charge knows that he's going to sign this, and once he's signed this, that's it. He can't come back and complain and say, "Oh, but that isn't the way I wanted it to be." You know, it's "speak now or forever hold your peace." What tends to happen at that point is the offices are very serious about reviewing it, and they're very serious about the advice they give to their AA, and when that signature occurs, you've got a good...the bureaucracy has done its job well.

NASI: How long does that process take?

NASI: It takes forever. It takes forever. It's a huge, burdensome process. And what our office has to do is, what happens is as it hits each office - and we send it out to everybody at the same time, you know - what starts to come back is changes. It would be better if it was better that way, and better this way, and so what our office winds up doing is this huge deliberative decision-making version control process, because, you know, so-and-so may think it should be this way...well so-and-so may also be proposing a change in that area, and so the role of our office is to...
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NAE: Well, the beauty of a semi-structured interview, actually, is the fact that even though I have a guide that I look at, an interview can take any direction that's important to me. And that's why I make notes here, because a lot of times I will follow these, and I can make a link back to my bullets. So, I'm not being driven by what's here. 1294

NASA4: That's fine; that's fine. 1296

NAE: I'm interested in just a comment about to what extent do you believe that the strategic plan - the 2000 plan, the most recent one - has driven the culture of the Agency? 1302

#-A-LAYOUT  #-A-FEEDBACK

NASA4: I think it's helped a lot, because, again, it has the potential. And again, it probably does this way because of how attractive it is, I would argue [laughter] people are reading it. People on the outside want to copies of it. And so what ends up happening is then people start to say, "Well, it's not that thing we have to do for GPRA. We do it because we want to do it, and we do it because it's very important way for the Agency to communicate about what we do." And so, therefore, I think people are starting to say, "Wow, this is a really good document." And there's people out there who said, "Oh, wow, I never really understood what NASA did. This is amazing. I mean, I had this view that you all, OK, well we know you send that shuttle up, and now you're building this international space station thing, and that thing's in trouble, by the way, and that's what they know," so as opposed to the idea that, "Oh, gosh, I had no idea that you guys are this involved in global climate change. That you guys are this involved in health research. This is, you know, this is great." So, I really feel that people are starting to think more that way. And, you know, it would be nice if we were more proactive ourselves with our advocacy, but if we end up sort of falling into the idea that people are starting to say, "Wow, I didn't know you guys did this much." You really need to talk more about it, then that's good overall for the Agency. And we will learn that indeed we can take incredibly technical things that we do and communicate about them. 1346

#-A-READABLE

I think sometimes we think that there's a barrier that, you know, kind of can't get beyond our own techno-speak, and that unless you're a
NASDA4: 1054-1064, 1068-1074

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organization put on making this 1031
document something that was not only 1032
visually attractive, but something 1033
that the common person could read 1034

$-A-EMPREACT
through and work its way through. I 1035
think it's reassuring when I've run 1036
into people in the agency here, and 1037
even...I mean, NASA employees, and, I 1038
mean, one would hope that every NASA 1039
employee has read the strategic plan... 1040

NAE: According to Mr. Goldin, they're 1042
supposed to have done that. 1043

#-GOLDINROLE
NASA4: Well, in fact, any time you're 1045
in a training session with Mr. Goldin 1046
and he asks, you definitely put your 1047

$-A-EMPREACT
hand up and say you've read it. But, 1048
the point of the matter is that every 1049
employee should read it, but, if it's 1050
not even an approachable document for 1051
our own employees, how in the heck we 1052
think it's approachable for anybody on 1053

$-IND-SUCCESS
the outside. So, I have heard 1054
comments from NASA employees here in 1055
the building, and at a variety of 1056
levels...you know, secretaries and 1057
scientists and engineers...saying, "You 1058
know, this is a phenomenal document. 1059
And this is a document feeling...not 1060
only have I read, but I feel others 1061
could read and finally understand what 1062
it is that we are about." That's good 1063
feedback. 1064

NAE: That's a good measure. 1066

NASA4: It sure is. It's a better 1068
measure than any other one I could 1069
think of. If people who normally 1070
might not have read it might have been 1071
turned off by it are saying, "I read 1072
this and I got excited about it," 1073
that's really all we need to say. 1074

$-A-EMPREACT
NAE: Do you think people in the 1076
Centers, you know, being out there in 1077
the field, have the same outlook on 1078
the plan? 1079

NASA4: I think they do. But it's 1081
something where we can still could do 1082

$-EXTDRIVER
a better job. In fact, Matt has kind 1083
of as we've gotten the plan done, and 1084
we hope to move onto maybe other 1085
things in the planning area and not 1086
have to produce it for another 1087
three years...although I told him with 1088
the likelihood of the change of 1089
Administration and probably the change 1090
of Administrator here leading us. It 1091
may be very optimistic on his part to 1092
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is deeply engaged in one of those things. It's call ISO-9000, 2883 |
9001...whatever. You know, and part of what the ISO advocates would say is 2885 |
that, that's precisely what they're trying to overcome. I mean, that's 2887 |
why to force you to document elaborately every single possible 2889 |
procedure, and alter it every time you learn anything about how it could be 2891 |
done better...and they would argue that when the truck hits Fred or Fred moves on to a better job, you've got all that documentation. And, you know, I mean, there's a good point to 2896 - 
be made there. You know, and I would also argue, you know, similarly, you know, NASA learned a lot between the two iterations of this process document, the Strategic Management Handbook. And, I would argue...you could make a credible argument that the organization itself learned because we changed the rules and re-documented, and documented the new rules, you know. Now, it's possible that everybody who knows the skeletons and, you know, how we got there left, and it came time to rewrite it, I suppose you could see those mistakes re-replicated. But that's not overly likely, given the number of people involved and given that...

NASI: And given the status of where you are right now.

NASAI: Exactly. And given that it was all documented. So, that might tend to argue that the ISO people are right, and that documentation is a good way to overcome that. Now, of course, another way to overcome that is teaching, you know, to the degree that the people who leave have taught the people that stay behind. That's a true way of organizational learning. You know, to what degree does that happen...I don't know, that's kind of hard to, you know...the fewer, the more understaffed an organization is, the less time everybody has to teach, for one thing. On top of that, our whole hiring and intake system is totally weird and bizarre, 'cause we spent five years not hiring anybody, and now we're just sort of trickling people in, so we tend to shuffle people around. You know, if you've an orderly intake and hiring and promotion and succession planning system in place as an organization, then I would argue that an organization's capacity to learn is...
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much greater, 'cause you've got that 2948
whole order, you know. 2949

NAE: Then the knowledge is filed... 2951

#-OL-DISCUSS
NASA1: Exactly, that's right. But, you know, we're dealing with an
organization with no succession 2953
planning effort in place, at all. 2954
Though I think there's grumblings to
try to begin one. You know, no
structured intake; no structured
career advancement systems, really,
because all of that got set aside when
the priority became to hit a magic
target in downsizing. So, you know, I
think through those vehicles an
organization can learn, but, you know,
I had a...I may become a little more

#-OL-DISCUSS

because when I was an undergraduate at Purdue University, I was first Student Body Vice President; then after that, Student Body President. I was actually involved in the Student Government the four years I was there. And this is a huge issue for student governments...because, you know, I'll never forget, I think, as a freshman senior, I met with the Vice President for Student Services, who promptly announced that he had been that job for twelve years, and that he had seen, you know, twelve years worth of student leaders come and go. And, to the degree that...you know, student governments these days do a lot of things...but to the degree that one of the things they do try to do is try to keep the things...try to rumble in the political equation to represent the voice of the interests of students as opposed to the interests of alumni, or the athletic teams, or, you know, the building fund or the state legislature, or the other constituencies in a university. You know, they're very much undermined by the fact that they're the short-timers automatically. So, when I was Student Body President, that was one of things I really focused on, and I tried to do a lot to institutionalize, to think in terms of institutional memory, and I institutionalizing things. And, you know, in that context, I mean, I don't think I'd been graduated more than a year, and, you know, it was all gone; all gone. You just, you know...so, can an organization learn where you have, you know, a 100% turnover every, you know, two years or so, I don't think...you know, not very effectively. And, you know, all the procedural manuals in
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learn is through their culture, which, 3079
I mean, may be just another way of 3080
saying teaching. But, it's a more 3081
informal, more tenuous sort of quality 3082
and that may actually be one of 3083
the strongest ones of organizational 3084
learning. And in that standpoint, 3085
organizations absolutely can learn, 3086
and, in fact, I would argue the big 3087
challenge is getting organizations to 3088
unlearn things that their culture has 3089
learned that are, that a re 3090
potentially detrimental. 3091

NAE: Is this also true at NASA? 3093

#-OL-DISCUSS $-CULTURE

NASA1: Absolutely, I mean, I think 3095
that part of what the Administrator 3096
has spent his nine years focusing very 3097
heavily on, and that is trying to get 3098
the culture to change in a whole set 3099
of arenas...you know, to not think 3100
bureaucratically, and to be 3101
risk-taking, and to understand our 3102
role vis-a-vis the commercial aspects, 3103
you know, that if there's anything 3104
that anybody in the commercial world 3105
can do, we don't want to do it - we 3106
want to be their customer, you know. 3107
You know, a lot of kind of cultural 3108
arrangements there...and I will say I think 3109
he's been pretty effective in changing 3110
the culture. So, you know, and nine 3111
years is a long time, and, you know, 3112
I'd say it took at least four of those 3113
years to get across some of those 3114
cultural kinds of changes. And, you know, that 3115
may also tell us something about 3116
organizational learning, 'cause I'd 3117
argue that way that happened was 3118
really through force of leadership and 3119
personality from the top. I mean, 3120
almost through sheer will power...you 3121
know, if you say it enough, and, you 3122
know, say it emphatically enough... 3123

NAE: It eventually will sink in? 3125

#-OL-DISCUSS

NASA1: Yeah, yeah. Well, and I think, 3127
too, if...also if the experience is 3128
too rewarding, you know, I mean 3129
organizations probably have their 3130
Pavlovian aspects, just like dogs. And 3131
that's where some of the negative 3132
message is learned, you know; once an 3133
organization learns that you don't 3134
take that news up to the top, that's a 3135
pretty hard lesson to unlearn. 3136

NAE: Yes, it is. 3138

#-LEADERSHIP

NASA1: And, you know, I think 3140
that...And there again it takes force 3141
of leadership, and it also takes 3142
seeing the behavior modeled and 3143
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these things happen. So, I look at it 1439
as something we have to do. We've got 1440
to find a way to, you know, to get 1441
folks together. And that's the one 1442
comment I have gotten from external 1443
folks that have attended, is that it 1444
is unique in terms of really being a 1445
reinforcing function on the 1446
organization's strategy. 1447
It really... it does that, and...in a 1448
refreshing way. I mean, it 1449
actually...not as just lip service, 1450
but folks are spending a couple days 1451
working really hard to think about how 1452
we're doing. And so I've gotten a lot 1453
of positive feedback, you know, based 1454
on that. So I think...so, yes, it 1455
does; it definitely takes resource to 1456
pull it off, but I think it's worth 1457
it. 1458

NAE: To what extent do you think the 1460
Agency has that same level of 1461
commitment? 1462

#-A-COMMIT
NASA3: I think that across the Agency, 1464
I think you'll find that folks are 1465
absolutely committed to the things 1466
that they...whether it's this 1467
Enterprise or another Enterprise. I 1468
mean, I think commitment is something 1469
that runs through the Agency, and I 1470
think that's because of the...some of 1471
the budget problems and things like 1472
that we've had in the past few years. 1473
It think that's caused a lot of stress 1474

$-CULTURE
on a lot of folks, because I think 1475
people put in such a level of personal 1476
commitment to things that, you know, 1477
when stress is added to the system it 1478
becomes very difficult to deal with. 1479
When you see something you're putting 1480
a lot of yourself into all of a sudden 1481
get washed away, it's difficult. So I 1482
think the issue...the challenge in 1483
NASA is capturing that commitment and 1484
focusing the commitment. But I think 1485
commitment is just a part of the 1486
culture. People want to be committed 1487
to something big. 1488

NAE: What would be your suggestion for 1490
how the Agency can capture that 1491
commitment? 1492

#-COMMIT
NASA3: Well, you know the... I guess a 1494
couple things. One is, I think at the 1495
Agency level we do need to find ways 1496
to reinforce the direction we're 1497
heading as an Agency to maintain 1498
consistency behind that, because I 1499

$-CULTURE
think that's a big piece. And to find 1500
a way, I think, to [pause]...well, 1501
this is a conversation I've had with 1502
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[laughter]. And so we made the case 842 -#-$
that in light of the number of 843
comments that are coming in, and the 844
fact then that because a lot of the 845
document is really...comes from inputs 846
from the Enterprises...we can't 847
disposition all the comments without a 848
lot of significant interaction back 849
with key functional offices and the 850
Enterprises who have prepared major 851
portions of the document. So we got 852
an exception to have that on-line. 853
But, to do that then, we had to make 854
sure we had electronically a very 855
elaborate disposition system which 856
then we could go through and when we 857
were finally done with the document, 858
that actually becomes a part of the 859
official which is kept down in the 860
office that normally does these 861
things. So I was here to really help 862
with that process, and to make sure - 863
and since I'm kind of a stickler for 864
detail - I was a good person to come 865
in at that time, 'cause I made sure 866
that we had dotted all the "i's" and 867
+

#-DR-ISO90000

crossed the "t's." And, you may or 868 -#-$
may not know it but we are 869
registered...we're one of the few 870
government agencies that is registered 871
to ISO 9000. 872 -#

NAE: Yes, I was impressed to learn 874
that.

875

#-DR-ISO90000

NASA4: And, the Agency strategic 877 -#
planning process...we actually have 878
documented under a procedure that is 879
controlled by ISO.

880 -#

NAE: In fact, I've asked Matt to give 882
me a copy of it that I can read.

883

NASA4: It's an improved one. I've 885
had to improve it since I got here, 886
because I was not here at the early 887
stages of ISO in Code Z. I was down 888
in Code U. I've been since the 889
beginning of ISO here at Headquarters, 890
+

#-MTGFORUMS

I've been a member of our Leadership 891 -#
Council, that has looked at how to 892
proceed with that. And I had to fix 893 -#
the document here in Code Z, and was 894

#-DR-ISO90000

able to do so. And we have it now...it 895 -#
is very well documented, and the kinds 896
of approaches that Matt used and the 897
kind of really objective evidencethat 898
+

$-KNOWXFER

we have under ISO, it is so good now 899 -$-
that, you know, if Matt won the 900
lottery tomorrow and called me on 901
Monday and said he's not coming back, 902
I could turn that process over to 903
somebody else, and they could probably 904
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start with that documentation. It's important. Obviously there's a lot of personality issues, I think that goes in with working it, but from the standpoint of having a documented procedure in terms of how we actually are going to go about producing this document, I think we've got a really good thing that somebody else could pick up and do. So just a final point is, I was a real stickler in light of the fact that we had a process that we had under ISO, and therefore it was also subject to our own process for preparing the strategic plan. Was submit to both internal and external audit. I was a pretty hard driver on making sure that we had clear objective evidence that we had considered these comments from all these Codes, that we dispositioned them, we had effectively dealt with conflicting comments, 'cause you can imagine when you're getting comments of that magnitude, one person's going to say, "Put this in," and the other person's going to say, "Take it out." So we really had to work through that. So I think my oversight is probably helpful, and Matt might say I drove him crazy with that sometimes, but I wanted to make sure that later we went back and we had real serious consideration of those comments, and we didn't throw anything out lightly.

NAE: One of the things that attracted me about choosing NASA as the place I wanted to investigate for strategic planning was the maturity of the process. And the more I've learned about, it's clear between the Red Book and the ISO procedure written out...and as you said if you needed to pull Matt out, the process would continue as it were.

NASA4: Yeah, we...you know, NASA, having come from the DoD, and I worked with the DoD for eleven years before coming to NASA. I'm very impressed with how really far ahead NASA was in this regard. I mean, NASA was doing the idea of doing strategic planning long before it was really required. And so, by the time it became required, I think we had it pretty well honed. I mean, there's always areas for improvement, but I think we do it pretty well. In fact, it's interesting, as Matt interfaces with people from other agencies, and we've
is deeply engaged in one of those things. Its call ISO-9000, 9001...whatever. You know, and part of what the ISO advocates would say is that, that's precisely what they're trying to overcome. I mean, that's why to force you to document elaborately every single possible procedure, and alter it every time you learn anything about how it could be done better...and they would argue that when the truck hits Fred or Fred moves on to a better job, you've got all that documentation. And, you know, I mean, there's a good point to be made there. You know, and I would also argue, you know, similarly, you know, NASA learned a lot between two iterations of this process, the Strategic Management Handbook. And, I would argue...you could make a credible argument that the organization itself learned because we changed the rules and re-documented, and documented the new rules, you know. Now, it's possible that if everybody who knows the skeletons and, you know, how we got there left, and it came time to rewrite it, I suppose you could see those mistakes re-replicated. But that's not overly likely, given the number of people involved and given that...

NIA: And given the status of where you are right now.

NIA: Exactly. And given that it was all documented. So, that might tend to argue that the ISO people are right, and that documentation is a good way to overcome that. Now, of course, another way to overcome that is teaching, you know, to the degree that the people who have leave taught the people that stay behind. That's a true way of organizational learning. You know, to what degree does that happen...I don't know, that's kind of hard to, you know...the fewer, the more understaffed an organization is, the less time everybody has to teach, for one thing. On top of that, our whole hiring and intake system is totally weird and bizarre, 'cause we spent five years not hiring anybody, and now we're just sort of trickling people in, so we tend to shuffle people around. You know, if you've an orderly intake and hiring and promotion and succession planning system in place as an organization, then I would argue that an organization's capacity to learn is
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NASAl: 1919-1931

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whole having to get them there thing 1910
creates some problems, 'cause you 1911
either make them go and then they're 1912
sure, or you don't make them go and 1913
they don't show up [laughter]. And on 1914
top of that... 1915

NAE: Not a lot of choices. 1917

#-A-DISTPLAN
NASAl: Yeah, exactly. And in most 1919 -#
cases it's not like you can get the 1920
whole Center workforce in the 1921
auditorium, anyway. So, you're still 1922
just reaching a subset, you know, so I 1923
don't know. And it automatically 1924
becomes an officious dog-and-pony, 1925
'cause you don't have the intimacy of 1926
a training classroom, and the freedom 1927
to necessarily to, you know, have 1928
heart-to-hearts or anything. So, 1929
that's one of the options we're 1930
looking at. And I may be running out 1931 -#
of things that we're doing, unless I'm 1932

#-A-DISTPLAN
not thinking of things. I mean, you 1933 -#
know, for us number one is getting it 1934

$-GOLDINROLE
in everybody's hands. And I will also 1935 -#$
say that the current Administrator 1936
provides a lot of leadership in that 1937
respect, and, I mean, to this day 1938
there's no training class that he 1939
speaks to where he doesn't ask them, 1940
"Raise your hand if you've read this 1941
NASA strategic plan." And if there 1942
are hands that don't go up, he is not 1943
kind. I mean, he's very definitive 1944
about... 1945 -$

NAE: They haven't learned yet that 1947
everybody's supposed to raise their 1948
hand? 1949

#-EMPCONNECT
NASAl: Yeah, well [laughter]...the 1951 -#
trainers know, you know. So, he's 1952
very definitive about...which is good, 1953
I mean, because not all managers 1954
are...automatically get the 1955
connection, and understand, you know, 1956
the role of having employees 1957
understand how their job fits into the 1958
bigger context. And, you know, I 1959
think it's been pretty well proven 1960
that pays some dividends. 1961 -$

NAE: Why do you think he is so bent - 1963
that's not the right word - but, why 1964
is he so much into making sure every 1965
employee understands their role in the 1966
whole process? 1967

#-GOLDINROLE
NASAl: I think, you know, as a manager 1969 -#
he is very much a change agent type of 1970
manager. I mean, sort of 1971
inherently...always kind of has been. 1972
NASAl: 1816-1826

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training folks about, you know, 1781
wanting to look at, you know, better 1782
ways of doing that. 1783

NAE: Do you go out to any those 1785
yourself? 1786

#-A-DISTPLAN

NASAl: Yeah, I do, actually. And the 1788
thing that's tough about that is, you 1789
know, thirty people at a time is not a 1790
very efficient way to reach a 1791
workforce of 20,000. 1792

NAE: Do you do the division...it 1794
doesn't equate... 1795

#-A-DISTPLAN $-LEARN_EX

NASAl: No, no, it really doesn't. It really doesn't. But, I also have to say, I think it is "the" best learning modality for those employees, based on...well, for a couple of reasons. I mean, I'm pretty convinced...I work very hard when I do it to establish up-front a certain level of credibility in that, you know, I'm not just another suit from Headquarters there to give them a bunch of bullshit. And, you know, I'm not even sure I can tell you how I do it, but I guess, you know, what I do is I let a certain amount of my natural cynicism come through. So that, you know, and to call a spade a spade, and not, you know, wax and wane about the emperor's beautiful cloak. And, I do just enough of that, that it does then seem to buy enough credibility, then they can listen to the stuff that I do have to say that is real. And that's pretty important in a workforce, you know, which is probably any government workforce, you know, where they've had, you know, TQM jammed down their throats, and you know, wave after wave...

NAE: Reengineering... 1828

#-DR-ADMINIS

NASAl: That's right, and every time we get a new president, he's got some new mantra, and, you know, that's where we are again, you know. Well, this one doesn't seem to notice that he's borrowing from his predecessor's mantras, in a few cases...[laughter], in a management sense, you know. I mean, they've just put some stuff out about reform and downsizing, and flattening hierarchies. It's like, "Been there, done that the last eight years...[laughter]. We understand you're new to town, but, you know..."
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NASA5: No, other than maybe 1157
mentioning...I think I mentioned the 1158
"faster, better, cheaper" philosophy, 1159
and we didn't specifically touch on 1160
the more recent mission failures that 1161
had occurred. But that is one 1162
activity that has gone on over the 1163
last year so, kind of looking at, 1164
well, what happened with those 1165
missions that did fail, and what does 1166
that mean for us in terms of lessons. 1167
And I guess the link I make to the 1168
strategic plan is obviously anything 1169
we do in NASA, no matter which 1170
Enterprise it is, has some, you know, 1171
some long-term goal that we're trying 1172
to achieve in a particular project. So 1173
how we conduct those projects 1174
obviously has an impact on how 1175
successful we are in the end. So one 1176
of the things that occurred in the 1177
Agency over the last year or so, was 1178
an actual task team was put together 1179
under the purview of the Chief 1180
Engineer, and took a look at those 1181
failures and kind of what went into 1182
those failures...not for purposes of 1183
examining those failures for 1184
failure-sake, but what lessons are in 1185
those failures that we can then apply 1186
to any other management of a program 1187
or project that takes place. So we 1188
did have...we did participate as a 1189
task team member in the aspect of the 1190
studies that dealt with dealing with 1191
people and development of the 1192
workforce. So out of the results of 1193
that study, we will be providing more 1194
emphasis on program / project 1195
management training and what goes into 1196
making a successful program / project 1197
manager, and how can we also deal with 1198
sort of the fact that, you know, not 1199
everyone has time to go in the 1200
classroom for all of their training 1201
any longer, and how can we deliver 1202
lessons learned or have knowledge 1203
sharing go on within the Agency. And 1204
so over the last year we did have 1205
conversations with management in terms 1206
of here are some things that from a 1207
training and development standpoint we 1208
could develop and deliver, if you all 1209
feel it will be valuable. So, some of 1210
the implementation activities that 1211
we're working on relate to developing 1212
some simulations so folks can sort of 1213
fail in a safe environment, doing more 1214
automated training so folks can do it 1215
at their desk, and that kind of thing. 1216
And this relates back to sort of, you 1217
know, learning how to manage a project 1218
and balance that, you know, resources, 1219
cost, schedule kind of thing. So 1220
that's probably the...you know, we 1221
touched on it in general, but just to 1222
give you sort of the context of what's 1223
gone on over the last year. I thought 1224
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linear and very structured process.  1568
And I think the conclusion I've come  1569
to is that the, you know, it's a more  1570
dynamic, a more living kind of thing.  1571
That you really have to find a way to  1572
make it more organic, make it have  1573
meaning in the folks who are going to  1574
being implementing this. That is, you  1575
know...and that's why over the last  1576
year or two all the things...I've been  1577
less concerned with the strategic  1578
planning process as a formal process,  1579
and more engaged in it as a  1580
communication process. So, you know,  1581
we put newsletters out. We do this  1582
conference. You know, anything that  1583
gets people engaged in talking about  1584
it. And I'll sort out the words and,  1585
you know, the planning and all that  1586
stuff later. I mean, I just...it's  1587
finding a way to create that  1588
engagement; to create that sense of  1589
commitment and so forth. I think  1590
that's a really important thing behind  1591
all of this. So that's kind of where  1592
I've been for the last, you know,  1593
probably year or year and a half, is  1594
trying to work that end of it.  1595

NAE: OK, great. Anything else you want  1597
to add?  1598

NASA3: Good luck. Give me a copy of  1600
your thesis when you're done.  1601
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really think that 's a bad word...you 2235 |
shouldn't be using that word, you 2236 |
should be using this word. And to the 2237 |
degree that we can on more 2238 |
facilitation rather than more edict on 2239 |
that stuff, , is the degree to which I 2240 |
got to then have the experience of 2241 |
trying to justify to the outside 2242 |
world why the same things I was urging 2243 |
internally were not implemented. And 2244 |
that's stupid. That's not, I mean, so 2245 |
part of what I've learned there is, 2246 |
you know, respecting and working with 2247 |
the people that are close to the line 2248 |
is, of course, very important. But, 2249 |
there is a real need for leadership. 2250 |
And, you know, an organization needs 2251 |
to hear the...well more than just 2252 |
needing to hear...if I know what the 2253 |
Hill was going to be asking us, it's 2254 |
my job to ensure that we don't have to 2255 |
answer, you know, that we don't have 2256 |
to answer some question to which we 2257 |
have no good defense. And if that 2258 |
means that I have to order that it be 2259 |
done, then that's what I need to do. 2260 |
So, you know, and that's probably an 2261 |
overstatement, but, I mean, I've 2262 |
already indicated a number of people 2263 |
that for our next go-round, but the 2264 |
guidance that our office will be 2265 |
issuing will be more...will be 2266 |
more...they'll have a lot less 2267 |
flexibility than they had this time 2268 |
around. 2269-

NASA: What's their reaction to that? 2271 |
Now, you said you've already put that 2272 |
out? 2273

NASAI: Well, I hadn't put it out in a 2275 |
form in which I got...you know, that 2276 |
was open to lots of direct feedback. 2277 |
And, you know, I mean, nobody ever 2278 |
likes that. Everybody always sort of 2279 |
wants to be left alone. And so I'm 2280 |
sure ultimately that's their reaction. 2281

🚫-LN-DIRECTR

But, you know, I guess part of my 2282-
learning process has been that, you 2283 |
know, even if I'm gonna have hell to 2284 |
pay...there's enough times that I've 2285 |
blinked and then paid for it, that it 2286 |
teaches you not to blink. And, and 2287 |
that works as long as you're, you know, 2288 |
principled, and, you know, you've got 2289 |
a good rule set, and you're not being 2290 |
capricious, and, you know, you lay it 2291 |
all out up front. I think, I think 2292 |
for us part of what will really help 2293 |
that is, and, you know, I have really 2294 |
struggled to reach out to other folks 2295 |
in that they're involved in making 2296 |

🚫-A-SPGUDIC

those kinds of decisions...but I will 2297-
also tell you in a number of 2298 |
circumstances, you know, when I've 2299 |
called people together, and have 2300 |
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really think that 's a bad word...you
shouldn't be using that word, you
should be using this word. And to the
degree that we can on more
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#-IN-DIRECTCR
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$-A-SPGUINDC
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called people together, and have
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- $RET-WKSHP$ -

current environment where we really need folks to work together and not to overlap too much and not to duplicate too much, how do you get these very different cultures at times and with competing interests working together. I think that's...so that's one of the challenges we have. Now...I mean, what I've observed is that, and I think that's why these workshops work very well, because if you can get people out of their Centers and out of that "can do" attitude, overcomes all that other stuff, and you end up with, you know, some really good product. So that's I think a real positive thing. But it does...those integration issues are difficult, you know, to manage. And it is a, I think to a certain extent, the NASA culture can be very...somewhat insular, in that because it is a science and engineering type of organization that, you know, the value of communication isn't necessarily seen as being as important as it is. And I think there's a lot folks who think that, you know, they're the best in world, and so why do I need to talk to anybody about that? I mean, it's sort of assumed right to do what we do kind of thing. So that's hurt us at times. So, I guess those are the things that stand out, from a cultural perspective.

$AE: What does that do to the planning process...the effect of the culture on planning?$

$AE: What does that do to the planning process...the effect of the culture on planning?$

NASA3: Well, it's...I think within our Enterprise we've got a very, you know, diffused technology development type organization, where you've got a lot of technical experts. I mean, you know, most folks think of, you know, "I do what I do," and so the planning is almost, you know, kind of operates above it, and I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing. So that's been a problem sometimes, because it's hard to get the linkage in at times. But, on the other hand I think the, you know, this...in setting some significant goals, I mean, you can kind of engage that "can do" attitude in that, and try to challenge people to think about how they can actually enable those things to happen.

$AE: Is that how the process then pushes back into the culture, by demonstrating that attitude and getting people involved? I'm trying to show a push both ways, I guess is what I'm looking at.
an activity related to this leadership model, and some, you know, feedback a
essment instruments, and that kind of thing. So, you know, it becomes a
two-way street. NASA being
decentralized as it is, you tend not to really, you know, force and push
gressively. But what you try to do
is kind of, you know, market to the Centers and their management...sort of
here's, you know, the study that
happened, and now let's use this when
appropriate, you know, to be sure that
we make sure we're following what the leadership model is for NASA, and that
kind of thing.

NAE: Which then molds part of the consistency that you were talking about.

NASA5: Yes.

NAE: You can't be at every presentation, every course, every workshop. One interesting term that I've heard since I've been doing the interviews, is that NASA is a culture of retreats.

NASA5: OK [laughter].

NAE: And it seems that there are a number of those at various levels to be able to get people to understand the types of things that are going on. It's...quite a system; it really is, quite a system. OK. If I were to ask you, this is the 2000 plan, nd you told me a little bit about your input and helping to develop this plan...if the people in the Policy and Plans office then said to you, "OK, you go out and make sure that people are linked with this thing in some way," could you then define what that is, and what your activities are...different from what you've already got. Would you do specific strategic planning training, or what do you do?

NASA5: OK. Well, typically what we have done is embed training about this in the activities related to the leadership model and business acumen. In fact, one of the things that's going on right now, is as a result of the development of the leadership model, there were a few areas where we identified, well maybe there does need to be more development or more opportunities for development in specific areas. One of those was working internationally; the other was in business acumen, or what we're ultimately going to probably call another development activity that we're developing is business
education. In fact, Matt has been fairly closely involved with the development of that new program that we're going to be providing. We're working with one of the business schools. A component of that is strategic planning, and Matt sort of being the director of the activities up there in addition to Beth, is really working closely with us in the kind of content that should be provided in that kind of program. So that's one of the major activities we have ongoing right now.

NAE: OK. I'm just trying to put all the pieces together here. This is amazing. How would you describe the effect...again, and your group gets out to the, everybody here, with all of the training at various levels...what do you think the effect of that strategic plan is on the culture, on the everyday employee? Do they know about it? How does the everyday employee learn about it? Culturally?

NASA5: Yeah. Typically a lot of the individual employee's level of knowledge about the strategic plan, as you probably have seen in the other interviews that you've done, I presume...you can correct that if this is not right...is, you know, the Enterprises will work with specific contact points at the Centers, who then will develop activities from there. One of the things we've probably not done at a corporate level - although I know a couple of years back we developed a plan with Code Z, I think there was some change of leadership and that kind of thing sometimes happens in these arenas - there was a plan developed for sort of a rollout of strategic planning activity, and what we might do as a separate activity, if that was of interest at the time. And there was a decision not to approach things that way then. So what we've pretty much been zeroing in on, as far as the training and development is concerned, is make sure we embed it in the leadership model and any of the associated training activities there.

NAE: For example, the program management course.

NASA5: Exactly; right, right. Now as far as what the Centers are doing, if they're doing separate activities in this regard, it would tend to be, you know, either focus groups or large activities related to groups of the population to just educate them on the strategic plan in general. Those have
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different levels, depending on your role. 477

NAE: And you break that down. 480

NASA5: You break that down. So that's what you see, is really in this booklet here, is for the various levels, you know, what does it mean to lead and manage others at a specific level. And it gets more detailed there. Certainly it was determined that, you know, a knowledge of business skill and ability is required, working internationally is required, managing information is necessary, personal effectiveness, and then some discipline in your technical or functional role kind of thing. And certainly under "business acumen" is where knowledge of thinking strategically and strategic planning is required as well. 499

NAE: And there is training and different kinds of activities that rolls out in the implementation of this model. 504

NASA5: As a result of this, exactly. 506

NAE: Wow, can I get a copy of this? 508

NASA5: Yes, that's why I got this, so you could take it with you. 511

NAE: Excuse while I sit here in awe... 514

NASA5: [laughter] So what we have done since the development of this model, is obviously we did already have some training and development activities in place before this model was developed, but what we've been in the process of doing now is really, u know, analyzing our training and development activities against the model to be sure things are aligned...which then, you know, relates back to one of the things that our management had identified as a human capital issue, which is leadership development. So here's, you know, one of our implementation activities related to that. 532

NAE: How long did something like this take? 535

NASA5: It took about a year, in terms of sort of the analysis and data crunching and that kind of thing. And it was a whole series of interviews. In fact, I don't know if we mentioned sort of...yeah, I think this is just the model itself, so it does... 543