

*This message is going to Council for Excellence in Government senior fellows who have opted in to "Senior Fellows and Friends" and others who are working for good government. If you would prefer not to receive future messages, please ask to be taken off the mailing list.*

All,

Last Tuesday evening, a wonderful group enjoyed remarks by GAO's Chief Learning Officer, Carol Willett. Carol explained the work she has been tasked to lead: to build consensus around the importance of learning and mechanisms that will ensure that incoming people not only "get" the culture, but develop capabilities that will support their aspirations and enable them to deliver substantial value.

This renewal, or "rejuvenation of the guild," was necessitated by a multi-year hiring freeze that began around 1994. Over the past few years, Carol and others she enlisted have recruited GAO experts to serve as highly respected adjunct faculty and have collaborated on the development of curricula that target specific organizational needs. Tuesday's dinner was one where "you really had to be there," so further description won't be forthcoming, other than to say that all participants were paying maximum attention!

Speaking of the group, our photos document that all generations now alive were in the room. Everyone was engaged and no one appeared to be feeling left out. One could conclude that:

- Having an effective workforce turns on *mutual respect* above all
- Some baby boomer feds, like some young government leaders, are learning and developing untapped potential continually – their own and others'

I raise these propositions because several of us have noticed a rising focus on generational differences and recruiting and retaining youth. However, the quality of attendance by seasoned colleagues at these events tells me that government may be failing to leverage all the talent it has. When one looks at the challenges the country is facing, it's pretty clear that we need "all hands on deck."

A list of participant affiliations follows:

Department of Education  
Department of Homeland Security  
Department of Labor  
Department of Transportation  
Department of Treasury  
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation  
General Services Administration  
Government Accountability Office  
Kahler Communications  
Library of Congress  
Pacific Consulting Group  
Recent OMB retiree  
Robbins-Gioia  
SAIC  
Touchstone Consulting/SRA

U.S. Marine Corps  
Veterans Administration

Finally, Carol left us with an old Arab proverb for *understanding what you have, and what to do with them*:

They who know not, and know not that they know not are asleep. Wake them.  
They who know not and know that they know not are students. Teach them.  
They who know and know not that they know are unaware. Bestir them.  
They who know and know that they know are teachers. Tap them.

Until we meet again, best wishes.

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