

## MOU Signed on TIC and Language-Incentive Pay



It took about 18 months to get here, but I can now let you know that AFSA and Director General Israel Hernandez have signed a memorandum of understanding resolving two issues that were part of the fall 2005 midterm proposals from AFSA. The first proposal concerned negotiating new and clearer rules for the time-in-class policy for mandatory retirement (as detailed on the OurPlace Intranet). Sections 7 and 8 have been revised by management.

The previous policy — especially as it applied to FS-1s who had opened their window for promotion into the Senior Foreign Service and thereby created a 10-year TIC “limit” — was confusing and unclear with respect to how this TIC limit related to the single-class TIC and the so-called TIS (total time in Service). Human Resources was interpreting the Section 8 “exceptions” to TIC time as applying only to the TIC and not to the TIC limit. The MOU and new policy provide that the exceptions will apply to the TIC, the TIC limit and the TIS simultaneously. It also removes certain

ambiguities concerning TIC exceptions for the AFSA VP and representative.

Our second proposal concerned a previous policy that in order to be eligible for language-incentive pay, an officer had to be tested at FSI, even if that officer had been trained at a non-FSI facility such as Diplomatic Language Services. Further, the policy discriminated between language testing for an assignment and testing for incentive pay: DLS, using the Federal Interagency Language Roundtable Proficiency Scale, was allowed to conduct the testing in connection with an overseas assignment — but not for incentive pay.

**AFSA continues to believe that this precept requirement does not serve the needs of the Service or the needs of our officers. But we also believe that management will not revisit this issue without pressure from the officer corps.**

The MOU and new policy allow officers to be tested at DLS if they were trained there or if they were trained at FSI previously, but not if they were recently trained at FSI, in which case they must be tested there.

Our third proposal, which suggested minor changes to the precepts for eligibility for promotion into the Senior Foreign Service based on positions and skills, was never seriously entertained by management. We were promoting the radical notion that serving as a deputy chief of mission or a consul general, rather than as a senior commercial officer, should satisfy that requirement. The current policy that for promotion to the SFS, an FS-1 has to serve in an SCO assignment in any country — no matter how small in budget or personnel — may be pushing officers away from important senior positions at headquarters, positions in the Office of Domestic Operations and in large Overseas Investment Office posts as deputy senior commercial officer. AFSA continues to believe that this precept requirement does not serve the needs of the Service or the needs of our officers, but we also believe that management will not revisit this issue without pressure from the officer corps. □

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been “a delight” to find AFSA staffed with dedicated employees with years of experience and an institutional memory rare in the ever-rotating Foreign Service.

Incoming President Naland thanked the outgoing board and welcomed the new board, which includes several people from the 2005-2007 board who will continue to serve.

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to work. A meeting with Secretary Rice was scheduled for July 26. On July 21, during its first week in office, the board held an offsite retreat to work on an action agenda based on the Team AFSA slate priorities presented during the election. These priorities include: setting the right tone for dialogue with management; listening and reporting to members; securing overseas comparability pay and more resources for diplomacy; improving overseas security; influencing Foreign Service reform initiatives; defending the Foreign Service against outside critics; enhancing FS training; improving living conditions overseas; defending and expanding retiree benefits; expanding diplomatic privileges for specialists; preserving and strengthening USAID; monitoring conditions of service at non-State agencies; improving administrative accommodations for Members of Household; updating security procedures; and assuring fair and equitable standards for the assignment process.

The new president sent out his first AFSAnet President’s Update on July 19 as part of his pledge to keep members well informed of AFSA’s advocacy efforts on their behalf. Look for his updates on the AFSA Web site at [www.afsa.org](http://www.afsa.org). □