

Delores Martin  
Good Morning!

I bring greetings on behalf of the Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety and the entire AVSMT and in particular, Ms. Sunny Lee-Fanning, Executive Director for Quality, Integration, and Executive Services (also known as AQS).

I am delighted to join you today to celebrate the Lunar New Year. I have fond memories of my indoctrination into the rich culture of our friends from the East, totally embracing the “balanced spirit” that is the cultural backbone.

Having lived for several years in San Francisco at the Presidio, I was surrounded by the grandeur of the Golden Gate Bridge and the timeless beauty of the Japanese Tea Gardens. The Japanese Tea Gardens are the oldest Japanese gardens in the United States and sit at the base of the Presidio with the Golden Gate Bridge as its backdrop. It was founded by a wealthy architect and businessman named Makoto Hagiwara, who created the gardens’ design and searched high and low for the beautiful exotic plants, flowers, trees, and even the fish who make their home in the Koi ponds there. And – he did much of it with his own money, so intent as he to create an oasis for Japanese families who were looking for a little piece of home. As a transplanted military spouse (my family was in South Carolina on the East Coast), my young family often found solace in sharing a pot of tea and a plate of cookies with other military families who made their homes at the Presidio as well.

Now I hate to move on from this serene image of the beautiful Japanese Gardens and discuss the turmoil all of us experienced in December and January with the government shutdown, but I must.

So...the events of the past month and continued uncertainties of the recent shutdown has left most of us with increased stress levels; we are awaiting news (hopefully good news) of another looming shutdown while still trying to sort out the impact of the last one. Feelings of uncertainty and anxiety are normal and certainly understandable given the circumstances. However, as dedicated FAA employees, we are self-motivated, resilient, and focused on doing “the right thing” in the face of adversity as demonstrated by our work force during the past few months. Of course, our hope is that these past events will not restrain us from supporting the FAA mission. The flying public AND our stakeholders have come to expect consistently safe and excellent customer service from us and we will not disappoint. As you know, crises bring organizations and communities closer together as we diligently search for ways to mitigate risks and identify gaps that these circumstances create. This experience has been no different. We have become a more resilient and determined work force and the world is taking notice.

While we’re taking care of others, we must also take care of our self-development and work towards achieving our career goals. A good way to get started is to explore the possibility of securing a coach in the work place. Many of us have sought coaching as part of our individual development plans. How many of you have looked to coaching? Do you know the difference between mentoring and coaching?

Mentors are individuals who are usually trusted advisors. This is generally an informal relationship and intended to provide you with advice based on personal experience.

Coaches rely on more formal development plan so as to support you in achieving a specific personal or professional goal. In AVS, we’ve integrated coaching into our succession planning and change management efforts, as coaching plays a critical role in helping our managers and supervisors work to improve communications and collaboration with the AVS employees. We’re excited about this.

NAPA members are being offered a first-hand experience with coaching, as Sunny Lee-Fanning has recently completed a leadership coaching program and has committed to offering coaching to you. Please feel free to reach out to her directly if you’re interested.

Finally, CONGRATULATIONS on the successful start to a new Lunar New Year! It's the year of the pig, which is a symbol of wealth! Interesting tidbits about the Pig: pigs don't stand out in the crowd-they are behind-the-scenes worker bees. They are not all talk and no action. They do things! Although they are not frivolous and wasteful, they do enjoy life and some of it's little goodies. Pigs are energetic and enthusiastic—even for the work others find boring. Here's to the Year of the Pig, "Guo nian hao"(gor nee-an how)!!! Thank you.