

The first ever reclassification of professionals at the Lab is in progress and is expected to be implemented early in 2010. The [Scientist and Engineers Classification Project](#) <https://compensation.llnl.gov/se-classification-project.html> (**internal Lab link**) started last year with an announcement in the October 20th Newslines. The project started with recommendations from the Compensation Review Board that were released in August of last year.

After months of work by a select committee of 200-series employees charged with defining new job classification levels within the 200 series (Scientists and Engineers), the [final model](#) https://compensation.llnl.gov/docs/se-docs/SE_Classification_Final_Model_Approved.pdf (**internal Lab link**), approved by LLNS and DOE, has been released. The purpose of this reclassification project is ostensibly to provide a clearly defined career promotion path for scientists and engineers. But, if this were its true purpose, why do the [classification levels](#), IC-1 through IC-5, look much like the current [rank groups](#)?

The effect of placing all 200-series employees in these new IC levels will basically be to lock-in the current rank order. The good thing about that is no more dramatic drops in ranking from one year to the next, as some employees have experienced in the past. The bad thing is that it will likely be even more difficult to move up, too. Have you ever asked your supervisor what you have to do to move up a rank group? Were you given a “clear path” of how to do that?

There is another, more serious downside to this proposed reclassification. To explain, a little historical background is required first. The Lab used to have classification levels for scientists and engineers. In the late '70s SPSE played a prominent role in bringing about the California Public Records Act (CPRA). As UC employees, information on salaries for all public-sector employees in California became publicly available. With pay and promotion practices of Lab management open to scrutiny, discriminatory practices began to become more and more apparent, leading eventually to a number of discrimination complaints and lawsuits. Instead of correcting the discriminatory practices, Lab management simply eliminated the classification levels.

We lost a lot of things at the transition to private company management of the Lab, but arguably the most important thing we lost is access to information under the CPRA. This is why you no longer see salary data or SPSE's publication of the yearly S-curve. Since there is no longer openness and transparency in pay and promotion practices, the job reclassification process is sure to become just as arbitrary and corrupt as the ranking process has been.

We welcome your feedback and comments on this article. Please respond by sending comments to spse@spse.org, and we will publish a synopsis so there will be an open channel for comments on the S&E Classification Project other than the one picked by management.