

Pacific West Area (PWA) — Office Support Advisory Council Monthly Meeting MINUTES

March 24, 2016

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM

Introduction of OSAC Council Members



Meeting began at 2:05PM – adjourned 2:45pm

The last OSP conference call was January 22, 2014 led by Veronica Laird, and the topic was foreign national processing.

- **Christopher Carter:** Senior Co-Chair and Website Co-Coordinator 2010 – *Chris is at the Western Regional Center. Member at large until recently, but has been a member for about three years.*
- **Dawnetta Hauth:** Co-NACOP Technical Advisor
Dawnetta is in Burns, Oregon and a new member on both NACOP and OSAC.
- **Rebecca Sloop:** Recorder, Co-NACOP Technical Advisor
Becky has been working for USDA for 16 years and on OSAC committee for three years.
- **Anita Robles:** Information/Reference Guide Coordinator
Anita is in Parlier CA and has been with ARS for 3 years, on OSAC for 4 years.
- **Shawna Vogl:** Website Co-Coordinator
Shawna is located at the Pullman Washington location, and is at the end of third year on council.
- **Brenda Carlson:** New Member
Brenda has been with ARS for three years and is a new member of the council.

Special thanks to Vickie Lutes for her service to the Office Support Advisory Council!

2016-2017 PWA OSAC Goals

- Elect new officers

New officers elected with some vacancies: Junior co-chair and members-at-large are vacant. Chris is encouraging individuals to sign up using the membership application for these positions.

- Review, Revise as Necessary, and Sign FY 2016-2017 PWA OSAC Charter
Chris is working on sending the FY 2016-2017 PWA OSAC Charter in the month of April.

- Re-establish Quarterly PSA Conference Calls

Dr. Onwalata and Chris would like to generate new interest and get this going again.

- Update the PWA OSAC Mentor List

Website is now updated. Would like more than one person listed for each topic. Please email Chris if you are interested in volunteering for a topic. Should have knowledge and experience in the topic to volunteer.

- Create a PWA PSA/OAC/Secretary Group Email List

Chris is working on creating a designated email group and adding any missing individuals.

- Include Additional Resource Materials for PSAs and OACs on the PWA OSAC Website

Please send information to Chris on topics for the PWA OSAC website. Any pertinent or current information can be sent. Chris is also working on an animated GIF photo project that will alternate several photos within the file. He is asking individuals to send in photos that represent the various locations throughout the PWA.

- Send out Welcome Letters to All New PSAs, OACs and Secretaries and provide information about available OSAC Resources

Becky Sloop will send out based on the new hire list from Laverne this week.

- Email out all OSAC meeting minutes to targeted PWA employee groups
- Recruit Additional Members

The council members would like to encourage anyone who is interested in serving on the council to complete an application and submit it to a current member.

Information Updates

New 115 Process

See the new process policy memo- affects only those that report directly to the Area Office. No one has tried the new process yet. We are not aware yet of a reason for this additional layer of approval.

OSAC Mentor List Review

Dawnetta Hauth volunteered to serve as the mentor for ARMPS. The council would like to encourage individuals to serve roles as volunteers for various tasks. When requesting help, email all mentors on list and one will likely have time assist the caller. Please send Chris an email if you have any ideas for topics.

Suggestions from the group: Add Performance as a topic. Add Annual Reports as a topic.

Mid-Year Review Process

Information regarding the following question in PAD: “Has the employee received documented IDP progress review?” Answer from HQ – Brittany Kraus, “ It is there to document whether the IDP is addressed in the mid-year review and assure that an IDP is in place.” I want to share with everyone the answer I received from Leopold Valdez which was provided after our teleconference:

Hi Christopher,

Good morning. My apologies for not responding promptly; I was on leave last Thursday and Friday. To answer your question regarding the PAD data field “Has the employee received documented IDP progress review?,” it is referring to the employee and supervisory providing their initials and date on the IDP, thereby, documenting the accomplishment of the review. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you.

Leopold Valdez

Performance and Awards Staff
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From: Carter, Christopher - ARS
Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2016 11:29 AM
To: Valdez, Leopold - ARS <Leopold.Valdez@ARS.USDA.GOV>
Subject: Mid-Year Review Question

Good Morning Leopold:

Last week the Program Support Assistants at WRRC were reviewing the Mid-Year performance process, and we came up with a question regarding the IDPs relating to the question..."Has the employee received documented IDP progress review."(screen shot below) We are wondering about the term "documented" as there is no place on the IDP to sign for a mid-year review...how does the Agency interpret the phrase "documented IDP progress review?" I am hosting a PWA-ALL PSA teleconference this afternoon at 2:00pm (Pacific Time) and would like to clarify this with all the PSAs in PWA...Any information you can provide will be most appreciated.

Take care,

Chris

A Question about the effective date of action box was asked with regard to when this field needs to be completed.

The Answer: It is to be completed only when a Performance Plan and IDP are no longer in place. For example, when an employee has separated or does not require a plan such as in L/A appointments.

Enter all mid-year in PAD by April 30th. Actual mid-years to be completed by 03/31/2016.

New Passport Issuance Memorandum

IMPORTANT UPDATE FOLLOWING OUR MEETING...

Based on an email from Kari Deppe on March 25, 2016 – Passport Issuance Memorandums are **NO LONGER REQUIRED!**

Effective immediately please be advised that when submitting a request for issuance or renewals, a Passport Issuance Memorandum is **NO LONGER REQUIRED**. The Passport Issuance Memorandum will be prepared by Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) International Travel Section (ITS) when NCRBSC submits the package to them for processing. **Please update your travelers regarding this change. Please note that Official Passports for New and Short-term**

Employees will require the Employee/PSA to submit a copy of their most recent SF-50 along with their passport application. The FAS/ITS needs this information in order to validate an employee's employment and check limitation/Not-To-Exceed (NTE) dates before issuing the employee an official passport.

Request for Security Name Trace Exception

2014 topic – June of 2015 – the process for clearing Foreign Nationals has not been functioning. Stacey Tumbaga put together a written process that is attached to the agenda with a sample request letter (submitted by Chris). Must describe the critical need for clearing the visitors and how their absence would prevent completion of the project or result in loss of funding. RL would need to contact Jeff Hayes and discuss the specifics of each request. Once Jeff Hayes has approved the request, you will need to send a copy of the email approval from Jeff Hayes to Stacey Tumbaga and she will submit the letter to be signed by the Area office.

RPES Case Writeup Process

Alicia Finley is taking over for Janet Seals and will be taking this process over as well until Tom Shanower can hire a new assistant. Case-files are uploaded to the PWA Sharepoint site. Send Alicia an email when files are uploaded to let her know they are there. For answers to specific questions, contact Alicia. There is an instruction document – Chris will ask her to email if she has any new process information.

Question and Answer Session

Question: Are there any updates to the possibility of PSAs receiving a revised standard job description and higher grade for the PSA series?

Answer: No one is aware of any progress or action on this topic Chris will follow up on this topic with Dr. Onwulata, PWA Leadership, and the WBSC.

FOLLOW UP – APRIL 20, 2016

Everyone: Dr. Onwulata forwarded an inquiry email regarding 0303/0318 series employees receiving revised job descriptions and we received the following feedback from Helene Saylor by way of Diane Strub.

I confirmed with Diane Strub today that this is on Joon Park's agenda. I understand that he will be putting a team together to work on this. Hope that helps.

Helene Saylor
Chief, Human Resources Branch
Western Business Service Center/AFM
Agricultural Research Service/USDA
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Email: Helene.Saylor@ars.usda.gov
AFMCSP - <https://cloudapps-usda-gov.my.salesforce.com/>

Advanced Notice:

From: Onwulata, Charles - ARS
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2016 7:22 PM
To: Saylor, Helene <Helene.Saylor@ARS.USDA.GOV>; Amroliwalla, Rachel - ARS <Rachel.Amroliwalla@ARS.USDA.GOV>
Cc: Shanower, Tom <Tom.Shanower@ARS.USDA.GOV>; Hammond, Andrew <Andrew.Hammond@ARS.USDA.GOV>; Carter, Christopher - ARS <Christopher.Carter@ARS.USDA.GOV>
Subject: PSAs Receiving Standard PDs and Higher Pay?

Dear Helene and Rachel,

PWA Office Support Advisory Council members would like to know the status of the ARS leadership discussion or implementation of a standardized PD and higher GS pay for their 0300 series or PSAs.

Any updates I can pass along to them?

Charles Onwulata, PhD
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USDA Agricultural Research Service
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Mobile: 301-367-2833

Welcome New Staff!

OSAC members would like to welcome Ericka Hodge, new PSA for the Produce Safety and Microbiology Research Unit and Laura Franklin, new PSA for the Bioproducts Research Unit, both located in Albany, CA!

OSAC Group Email List

In an effort to make sure everyone is included in email communications, please forward contact information of individuals who were not included in prior emails. I have added Sharon Blanchard and Samantha Varrelman... Thank you Dawnetta Hauth for providing their contact information.

Next quarterly OSAC Conference Call – June 8, 2016 @ 2:00pm.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:45 PM