

# The NEACOP Reporter

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This is our new logo!

*See back page  
to find out how it  
came to be and  
who the creator is.....  
and the winner  
is.....*

## BAASAC + NAACOP = NEACOP

*The Northeast Area Council for Office Professionals*

***Now one unified group!***



She awakened very early on the morning of Wednesday, March 11, 2015. The hotel coffee brewed in the little machine as she looked out the window upon the already bustling lanes of the Beltway traffic below. 'No problem,' she thought, for even before she had traveled 9 hours the day earlier, a reassuring peace had settled upon her letting her know that it was going to be a great two days ahead when the meetings and merger were consummated: North Council plus South Council equals One Council.

The morning started rather slowly as busy Office Professionals found the time in their already filled days to allot a portion to this important face-to-face meeting and endeavor in order to form one Council from two very distinct groups and Areas. For, you see, the North Atlantic Area had merged with the Beltsville Area and the challenge

was how to take two Charters, two Codes, two meeting styles, two separate entities and make them 'one' in two days.

So the morning began with: "Teambuilding." Race Car Driver, Mime, Dancer, Bus Driver, Motorcycle Rider, Poetry Writer, Beautician, Horse Rider, and on and on the list went... all of these people were in the room with us this morning! Funny thing is: 'They were us!' The Office Professionals gathered in the room for this meeting were each unique. A valuable lesson is that we all have the same relative title for work, but we are each more than this title. (Thank you, Sharon Drumm and Colette Wood.)

After teambuilding, business of the morning prevailed while OP's sitting scattered throughout the large conference room listened to a two-day agenda outlined by Joanne

Murphy. An ambitious endeavor; Write/Merge Charter(s); Annual Report Presentations; 2015-2016 Goal Development & Priorities – all while just meeting one another for the first time. Silence hung in the room as the daunting tasks had just been outlined and now each person pondered the right way to start or say what she was thinking... then ...the magic happened. "Could we move our desks around so that we face one another-maybe in a circle?" After awkward juggling of the desks, a *semi-rhombus* was formed and each took her seat and then; 'set-go,' conversations started with one another and dialogue picked up until the room filled with happy sounds of engaging communication.

What more is there to say then? A fairy tale come true-The End. Well, not quite yet. *Cont'd next page.*

So, working together, utilizing newly-formed conversational patterns and styles, the two Councils and members concocted, dissected, corrected, reframed, and; ultimately, formed a New Charter and New Priorities and Goals.

But that's not all. *Fast forward* to late in the afternoon on Thursday, March 12, 2015. Here's where the 'rubber meets the road,' so to speak. The 'Doctors' were going to be providing a check-up on the Councils in order to ascertain the progress diagnosis which was reached during the last two days.

So, silence and nervousness pervaded each Council member as she awaited the arrival of the 'Doctors'---What????--'Scratch that!'...now this is really how it happened.

As the 'Doctors' walked into the conference room, a happy and cheerful buzz of engaged participants filled the room as Council members talked one to another and back and forth, so much so, that attention had to be called and drawn to the fact that our three dignitaries were now seated at the *semi-rhombus* and were awaiting the results of the last two days.

Our newly appointed Chair led the conversation in order to expound upon the accomplishments that had been made.

As the presenting of the past days of work and various questions by the guests were fielded,

it seemed as if the answers were satisfying in and of themselves and the events of the past two days had been completely successful to all who were in the room.

A peaceful silence came over the group as each one knew that this had been a job well done.

With a voice filled with sincerity and emotion she said: "Dr. Swietlik, Dr. Onwulata and Dr. McGuire, we are so pleased to be able to say that WE are ONE UNIFIED COUNCIL NOW KNOWN AS NEACOP."

Little sniffs and tears manifested from various NEACOP members as kind words and hugs were transferred from person to person.

Heading home the next morning she said a little prayer of 'thanks' for the individual beauty that resides in each person yet ultimately can forge together to form something uniquely beautiful.

*Thank you* to all of the members of the newly-formed Northeast Area Council for Office Professionals who are NEACOP.

Your hard work, dedication, volunteerism, and willingness to participate in this merger is part of the history and future not only within NEACOP but for the United States Department of Agriculture, the Agricultural Research Service, Northeast Area and for all Office Professionals both now and to come.

**Merger Meeting in Beltsville: March 11-12, 2015**



Members Left to Right: Emely Schuck, Roslyn Williams, Mary Dailey, Catherine Parsons, & 'oh & the beautiful' head of Akia Samuda next to Emely'



Members Left to Right: Roslyn Williams, Mary Dailey, Catherine Parsons, & Linda Reynolds



Members Foreground: Tiffany Fisk & Brenda Holmes  
Background: Bec Crawford & Allison Mowery

# The Charter

*We wanted to show you the Charter that propels the work of the Northeast Council for Office Professionals. Even though this will be uploaded on our website, we thought it might be helpful to show a condensed version of the Mission/Value/Vision Statements here.*

## Mission and Goal

Our Sponsor is Dr. Charles Onwulata

The mission of the Northeast Area Council for Office Professionals (NEACOP) is to work with the Area Director/Sponsor and Location management in an advisory capacity on new initiatives that impact office support professionals. The council exists to enhance improved communication, while training, mentoring, and providing recognition. NEACOP will also provide input and serve as a liaison to the NEA representative to the National Advisory Council for Office Professionals (NACOP).

This is now Brenda Holmes and Mary Dailey.

This is You!

Our goal is to ensure that the Northeast Area (NEACOP) is working to meet the program and administrative needs of the Area and the Agency by serving as role models in providing guidance for skilled office professionals through mentoring, accurate resources, training and creating an open atmosphere of trust and respect.

## Value Statement

NEACOP values and supports the research, the scientific impact in our community and the products and services produced by ARS, and will:

These are our Scientists, Technicians, in fact...all ARS Staff Members.

- Recommend and deliver positive changes
- Encourage and foster mutual support
- Disseminate resources to office professionals
- Ensure commitment to the council and the NEA Office Professionals
- Build friendships

## Vision

Our vision is that Office Support Professionals function as an integral part of the team through shared knowledge and experience, thus providing a valuable resource in support of the Area and Agency missions. We also envision that job satisfaction is heightened through improved job performance, training, positive communication and networking.

Our ultimate purpose for you!

## Email Etiquette

Don't you wish that every person who has an email account has to follow certain rules to use it? There are definite professional standards expected for email use. Here is a list of the things I contemplate when I need to make sure my email is a professional one:

- The subject line needs to convey the content and urgency of the message. "Action" "Information" are two words I use frequently at the beginning of a subject line, i.e. "Action: Add Sponsor to GovTrip" or "Information: Performance Listing"
- Make your first sentence indicate what you need. You can explain in the next sentence, such as: "An approved version of the attached memo will need to be submitted with our report on May 1." In the next sentence was an explanation of what approval we were seeking. Don't let what you need get lost in the body of the message.
- In replying to a message or forwarding a message, make sure you change the subject line if the subject has changed. Don't keep replying to an email about "Grant 2-220" if the subject has morphed into something else. It will make it impossible to find this correspondence later.
- Be as brief as possible. If I find myself using two or more sentences to explain something, I scrap the email and call the person.
- Focus on only one topic in each message. Did you ever notice that you asked a few questions in an email, but the person only answered the first one? This happens especially if you ask in paragraph form and not bulleted items.
- Be professional. Even though it is an informal communication tool, it should still be conceived through thought and organization. Ask yourself: What do I want to say? What do I intend the message to accomplish? What action or reaction am I looking for?
- Don't shout. Be mindful that writing in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS and **red** color is akin to yelling at someone. Be careful with the **bold** font for the same reason.
- Email is supposed to have a 24-hour turn-around. You may need to respond that you will get back to them in a few days, but make sure you respond.
- Punctuation and grammar are as important as if you are writing a letter. Check out the Writing Style Guide at <http://www.eia.gov/about/eiawritingstyleguide.pdf> developed by the U.S. Energy Information Administration. This guide is fantastic and includes such things as the words federal state and nation no longer need to be capitalized. It is a guide about writing style, not just punctuation and grammar. Check it out!
- Note: For ARS correspondence, please don't forget about the *ARS Correspondence Manual*.

*Submission by T. Fisk*

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**We're on the Web!**

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/Services/docs.htm?docid=22807>

**"Making an Impact Together!"**



**NEACOP Members at Merger Meeting in Beltsville, MD**

Front Row: B. Crawford, T. Fisk, A. Mowery, E. Schuck, L. Reynolds  
Back Row: M. Scheffler, A. Samuda, J. Murphy, B. Holmes

Missing: M. Dailey, G. James, C. Parsons, R. Williams

**Thanks, 'Bec'**

*We want to thank Rebecca 'Bec' Crawford for all that she does for NEACOP and everyone else. She is an extremely caring and generous person who gives of herself and time.*

NEACOP has benefitted in many ways and especially from her talent as a photographer as she has taken the time most recently to set-up and take pictures of the newly-merged NEACOP and its members.



Above: Bec and Camera

Below: Bec's Family

In addition, Bec developed and finalized the creation of a new logo for our Northeast Area Council of Office Professionals. We are extremely proud of this and her for taking the time to develop and redevelop in order to meet consensus.

We feel it reflects the great strides we've made and especially in our most recent merger of the two Councils.

Thank you, our one and only, 'Bec.'

