

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Year 2001 was a building year for ARS National Advisory Council for Office Support Professionals (NACOSP). Several members rotated off and new members took their place. We have a lot of "new blood" on the council which means we will be working on many new projects. The main focus remains--to maintain excellence in program development, career enhancement, and employee dedication to the mission of ARS.

NACOSP projects which extend year to year include: the Home Page, Newsletter, Updates to the Quick Reference Guide, Quarterly Teleconferences, and responses to specific requests of the Agency. The NACOSP HomePage (<http://www.ars.usda.gov/afm/nsac/>) has been under major construction this past year. We have new people working on the web page and it will continue to provide helpful information to assist all Office Support Professionals in their performing their day-to-day tasks.

The following report includes the activities, past accomplishments, and current and future goals of the National Council and of ARS Organizational Councils as well.

**Members of the 2001-2002 Council were:**

PRUNELLA BRASHICH, NAA  
BARBIE BALLENGEE, PWA  
CLARICE FLEMING, AFM  
KATHY ARAGON, NPA  
CATHY LONABERGER, OA  
LINDA NEUENHAHN, NPS  
JANNETTE SHUFORD-REEVES, NAL  
KATHY TOWNSON, BA  
RHEA FRYAR, SPA  
TONI WALLS, HRD  
BRENDA AYSSENNE, MSA  
SABRINA WHITLEY-FERRELL, SAA  
LORI WILSON-VOSS, MWA

**Former members of the NSAC/NACOSP are:**

MARIA ARCHER, NAL  
KAY CARR, SAA  
CARMELA CARRICK, NPS  
JOYCE CRAIG, AFM  
PHYLLIS DAVIS, NAA  
TAMMY DURFEE, PWA  
JANET FERST, OA  
LIBBY FOUSE, PWA  
NADINE HIERS, BA  
MARCIA JENKINS, MWA  
OLGA LEE, NPA  
ANGIE MARCHETTI, AFM  
ELAINE MCGUIRE, BA  
MARY SILVA, NAL  
FRANKEE SIMPSON, SAA  
JOYCE SMITH, NAA  
MICHELLE SNOWDEN, OA  
QUEEN SPRIGGS, OA  
ANNE STEELE, SPA  
CECELIA STORTZUM, HRD  
GENEVIEVE SWARTZBERG, MSA  
SUE THORNBURG, NPA  
RUTH TREAT, SPA  
SANDRA WARREN, MSA

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR OFFICE SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS	
ANNUAL MEETING . . . . .	1
ACCOMPLISHMENTS . . . . .	2
FY-02 GOALS . . . . .	2
SECRETARIAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM . . . . .	3
REE SECRETARIAL AND CLERICAL COORDINATING COUNCIL	3
ORGANIZATIONAL SECRETARIAL ADVISORY COUNCILS	
HEADQUARTERS . . . . .	6
Accomplishments . . . . .	6
Goals . . . . .	7
BELTSVILLE AREA . . . . .	7
Accomplishments . . . . .	
Goals . . . . .	
MID SOUTH AREA . . . . .	6
Accomplishments . . . . .	6
Goals . . . . .	7
MIDWEST AREA . . . . .	8
Accomplishments . . . . .	8
Goals . . . . .	9
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY . . . . .	
Accomplishments . . . . .	
Goals . . . . .	
NORTH ATLANTIC AREA . . . . .	15
Accomplishments . . . . .	16
Goals . . . . .	18
NORTHERN PLAINS AREA . . . . .	19
Accomplishments . . . . .	19
Goals . . . . .	21
PACIFIC WEST AREA . . . . .	21
Accomplishments . . . . .	22
Goals . . . . .	22
SOUTH ATLANTIC AREA . . . . .	22
Accomplishments . . . . .	23
Goals . . . . .	23
SOUTHERN PLAINS AREA . . . . .	24
Accomplishments . . . . .	24
Goals . . . . .	24
NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR OFFICE SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS	

## **ANNUAL MEETING**

We met in Athens, GA where Sabrina served as the hostess to the Council. We definitely learned the meaning of “southern hospitality.”

The Council was charged with the task of developing a questionnaire to be completed by Office Support Professionals throughout ARS. This questionnaire would then be used to develop a standardized position description for the 318 series, GS-07. Much time was spent on our role and how the questionnaire would be distributed.

The next annual meeting will be hosted by Kathy Aragon and the NPA Council, in Fort Collins, Colorado in early May.

Outgoing members were presented with tokens of appreciation. Leaving us were Ruth Treat, SPA, Phyllis Davis, NAA and Tammy Durfee, PWA.

## **Accomplishments**

### **Priority Training Guide**

The Priority Training Guide developed during the previous year is still undergoing review by the staff of HRD. Future efforts will focus on working with HRD to accomplish a portion of these identified training goals.

The NACOSP objective for this project was to establish standard secretarial training on some issues for use across the board in ARS. Such a program will enable ARS secretaries to increase their knowledge and make them more effective.

In developing this list of training issues, we took the perspective of a new secretary, i.e. what information is most important to quickly become familiar with routine functions and what tasks are likely to be encountered next? Where possible, we have utilized or made reference to existing training materials. We have specifically avoided systems software training that should be developed and provided by other persons or groups. The majority of these training issues have been recommended for video presentations -- this will allow the information to be available at locations whenever needed.

## **Home Page**

The Home Page has been under major revisions. Some of the items to be included are:

- Directives to Policies & Procedures
- Linking throughout the Page

Color Changes  
Bios for Members  
Quick Reference Manual

## **Newsletter**

The NACOSP Newsletter will continue to be distributed. This past year we were unable to compose the quarterly newsletter as desired by the Council. New members are responsible for the distribution and we look forward to resuming our schedule.

## **Teleconference Calls**

The council aims to hold quarterly teleconference calls to discuss issues and plan methods and processes towards achieving the goals set. Many will be held in future in planning the 2003 national conference.

## **Year 2003 National Conference for ARS Office Support Staff**

Talk of the next national conference have begun. Preliminary plans have been made. We established subcommittees to begin formalizing many of these plans. The date has been set for the first week in April, 2003.

## **FY-02 GOALS**

- Update the NACOSP Home Page, Newsletter, and Quick Reference Guide.
- Continue with review and implementation of the Priority Training Guide, and expand on newly identified areas for training.

Contact: Sabrina Whitley Ferrell or Barbie Ballengee, Co-Chairs, ARS NACOSP.  
Internet: [sabrinawf@mindspring.com](mailto:sabrinawf@mindspring.com); [bdballengee@ucdavis.edu](mailto:bdballengee@ucdavis.edu)

## **SECRETARIAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM**

Recipients for 2000/2001 are:

MSA Secretary of the Year, Betty Hoogerwerf, Assistant to the Center Director, SRRC, New Orleans, LA.

Midwest Area Secretary of the Year, 2001, Jean Sparks, Columbia, MO.

North Atlantic Area Secretary of the Year, 2002, Donita Gibboney, Pasture Systems Watershed Management Research Unit, University Park, PA.

Pacific West Area Secretary of the Year, 2001, Tammy Blair, Animal Disease Research Unit, Pullman, WA.

South Atlantic Area Secretary of the Year, 2001 was Margaret Martin, Gainesville, FL.

## **REE SECRETARIAL AND CLERICAL COORDINATING COUNCIL**

The REE-SCCC continued efforts for sharing information and improving communication among the secretarial and clerical employees throughout the REE mission area.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL SECRETARIAL ADVISORY COUNCILS**

### **HEADQUARTERS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR OFFICE SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS**

Members of the 2000-2001 Council included:

Loureatha Gibson - Chair  
Lynn Booker - Co-Chair  
Martha Hollenbeck - Recorder  
Brenda Elston - NACOSP/Technical Advisor, (HQ)  
Iris Rosa - NACOSP/Technical Advisor, (AFM)

#### **Accomplishments**

- AFM Secretarial Council and the National Program Staff Council as well as the Office of the Administrator formed a partnership by consolidating as one council. On April 5, 2001, approval was granted by Dr. Horn and the new council gave birth to Headquarters Advisory Council for Office Support Professionals.
- Secretaries Day Reception was held on April 26, 2001, at the George Washington Carver Center (GWCC).
- The council was successful in procuring a yearly assignment to decorate the Deputy Administrator for Administrative and Financial Management, Bulletin Board at GWCC for the month of May.
- First meeting of the new council was held on May 24, 2001.
- The council published it's first newsletter in November 2001.

### **BELTSVILLE AREA**

#### **Accomplishments**

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## Goals

## MID SOUTH AREA

Members of the Mid South Area Council for Office Professionals for 2001 are:

Vivian Collins - Stoneville, MS, Chair  
Myra Shaw - Oxford, MS, Vice Chair  
Linda Althen - Mississippi State, MS  
Janell Becker - New Orleans, LA  
Madeline Hall - Baton Rouge, LA  
Pat Hodnett - Auburn, AL  
Brenda Aysenne - Houma, LA - Technical Advisor

### Accomplishments

- We started out the year with the announcement of the MSA Secretary of the Year, Betty Hoogerwerf, Assistant to the Center Director, SRRC, New Orleans, LA.
- A Secretarial Training Workshop was held November 7-8, 2001 at the Jamie Whitten Delta States Research Center in Stoneville, MS. Thirty RL and CD secretaries were in attendance. We officially welcomed Pat Brown as the new Executive Assistant to the Area Director at this time. Dr. King, Area Director, and Area Administrative Section Heads were all part of the workshop. Agenda items were:

ARMPS  
RMIS/ARIS  
Travel  
OSQR  
Leave Donor Program  
Leave Audits  
Contracts and Agreements  
PCMS  
Computer Hints

Some of our Research Leaders agreed to participate in a roundtable discussion. We were given a tour of the National Warmwater Aquaculture Research Center in Stoneville, MS. We distributed the new MSA Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to each Office Professional for her office. A Spot Award was given for the "Best Management Practice" submitted by attendees. Marva Nesbit was our guest speaker and motivated us all.

A list of ACCOMPLISHMENTS was prepared by the attendees and the Council was empowered to address the following ISSUES:

Grade Levels and Titles

Office Automation Assistants

Make them feel appreciated and include them in actions take by Council and Area

Look for ways to increase interaction between Council and Administrative Professionals in the MSA (Promote networking and teamwork)

Recommit ourselves to Goals

Communication

- We have made our first rotation off and on the Council. We said goodbye to three members and welcomed three new members. We have a new Web Editor and hope to do more with our website to distribute information to the MSA and beyond!
- We welcomed seven new Administrative Professionals to the MSA with our Welcome Kits.
- Our mentors are providing assistance, as requested.
- On Administrative Professionals Day, the card provided by the National Council was distributed to all Secretaries, Program Assistants and Office Automation Assistants in the Area .

## Goals

- Continue with Mentoring Program.
- Organize secretarial “share sessions” at multi-locations during the year.
- Utilize our web site and newsletter to promote communication.
- Visit all locations in the Mid South Area to meet with Administrative Professionals, Research Leaders, and Scientists.
- Support all Administrative Professionals.

## MIDWEST AREA

The MWA PASTG met 3 times in person, and held 7 conference calls during the past year. Members and the locations they represent for 2001 are:

Sherri Buxton, Co-Chair, Peoria, IL  
Sandy Groneberg, Co-Chair, St. Paul & Morris, MN & Madison, WI  
Diane Cronk, Ames, IA  
Sedina Lowe, Columbus, Coshocton & Wooster, OH & East Lansing, MI  
Heather Pace, Columbia, MO, Urbana, IL & West Lafayette, IN  
Georgetta Stonewall, NCAUR, Peoria, IL  
Lori Wilson-Voss, Technical Advisor, Ames, IA

### Accomplishments

- The MWA Program Administrative Support Task Group held it's second meeting for all secretarial support employees. The theme of the meeting was, "A Commitment to Administrative Excellence for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."
- Continue to update the MWA Standard Operating Procedures Manual which serves as a desk reference for secretarial positions in the MWA. Updates are done during the PASTG meetings to keep the manual current. The SOP is online and updated at least annually.
- 2001 marked the fifth year of the MWA Secretary of Year program. A panel unanimously selected Jean Sparks, Columbia, Missouri. Jean was honored at the PASTG's second meeting on June 20, 2001 at Peoria, Illinois.
- The PASTG continued to utilize the mentoring program for all new secretaries. Mentees work with their mentor for a minimum of one year. This program is having continual success with five mentees and mentors currently working together.
- We continue to disseminate quarterly newsletters to all the secretaries in MWA.
- The training scholarship program is continuing to be utilized to a great extent within the Midwest Area. This program provides funding for training from the Area Office allowing employees to benefit from training that may not be possible due to financial constraints within their units. Ten individuals benefitted from this program this year with the Area Office contributing \$8600.00 in support of their training. The scholarship application and information is available on the PASTG homepage.

## **Goals**

- C Continue to update the Midwest Area PASTG Home Page and SOP Manual.
- C Continue quarterly newsletters to MWA Secretaries.
- C Continue to visit the MWA Research sites and interact with location secretaries.

## **NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY**

## **NORTH ATLANTIC AREA**

## **NORTHERN PLAINS AREA**

The Northern Plains Area Secretarial Council (NPASAC) consists of the following members:

Kathleen Aragon, Laramie, Wyoming – Technical Advisor and NACOSP Member  
Louise Dalton, Fort Collins, Colorado  
Marsha Grunewald, Manhattan, Kansas  
Linda Kelly, Clay Center, Nebraska - Chair  
Olga Lee, Fort Collins, Colorado – Ex-Officio Member  
Cheri Marshall, Lincoln, Nebraska – Recorder and Website Chair  
Polly McMichael, Brookings, South Dakota

### **Accomplishments**

- The NPASAC met in November 2001. One original council member (Sharon Peterson, Grand Forks, North Dakota) rotated off the council, and one council member (Linda Sundstrom) accepted the NPA Travel Assistant position and is no longer in the secretarial series. The two vacancies were filled with Marsha Grunewald, Manhattan, Kansas, and Polly McMichael, Brookings, South Dakota.
- Each council member was assigned specific locations to act as a liaison between the NPASAC and location secretaries.
- Developing a website for NPASAC was one of our primary goals for 2001. The website was comprised of the home page at our November 2000 Council meeting. The following sections were completed, on-line ready for use in time for the Leadership Conference January 30, 2001: Charter and Mission, Council Members, Annual Reports (link to National Reports, Hot Links, New Secretary Orientation, Acronyms and Agency Abbreviations, Reminder Calendar, and Resource Assistants. The NPASAC On-Line Quick Reference Guide was scanned and on-line prior to our November 2001 Council Meeting. Revisions and updates for 2002 were discussed at our November 2001 meeting and should be completed by March 1, 2002.
- Arrangements were reviewed for the NACOSP Annual Meeting to be hosted by the Northern Plains Area in Fort Collins, Colorado, May 6-10, 2002. Kathy Aragon will serve as host. Polly McMichael will issue a request for items for the goody bags of NPA research unit by-products.
- The New Secretary Packet was reviewed, and Marsha Grunewald assumed responsibility for updating and mailing the new packets.
- The Resource Assistant List was updated. This is a listing of secretaries who voluntarily serve as mentors to other secretaries in specialized areas.

- Area Office staff Jan Jones and Nita Williams (HRD), Marcie Currie-Gross (ARIS/RMIS, Agreements), Harriet Rector (OSQR process and On-Site Reviews), and Linda Sundstrom (Travel) provided overviews and helpful information on their assigned areas for the Council members.

## **Goals**

- Increase awareness of NPASAC activities, provide a more effective support mechanism, and encourage training for NPA Secretaries.
- Maintain/update secretarial resources provided by the NPASAC.
- Address requirements and requests from National Secretarial Advisory Council

## PACIFIC WEST AREA

The PWA Office Support Advisory Council continues to work toward their goal of ensuring that PWA has highly skilled professional office support staff working as part of the location leadership team to meet the program/administrative goals of the Agency. The PWA Council conducted its 2001 annual meeting at the Pacific West Area, ARS, Area Office in Albany, California March 26-29, 2001. PWA annual council meetings are held at ARS locations to network and gather important information from the office support personnel at the locations.

Council members and their positions for 2001 are:

Judy Litster, Parlier, CA - Co-Chair  
Kara Vander Linden, Kimberly, ID - Co-Chair  
Jeannette Seward, Pullman, WA - Recorder  
Marla Lawrence, Phoenix, AZ - Handbook Coordinator  
Tammy Blair, Pullman, WA - Information Coordinator  
Veronica Cullum, Albany, CA - Area Office Representative  
Barbie Ballengee, Shafter, CA - Technical Advisor

Dr. Michael Shannon, PWA Associate Director  
Area Office Advisor/Coordinator - Albany, CA

## Accomplishments

- Update PWA-OSAC information packet and distribute to Research Leaders to continue to promote the PWA Council.
- PWA-OSAC Newsletter developed and distributed in January and August 2001.
- Finalized and distributed Pacific West Area Directory. The directory includes location names, mission statements, mailing and FedEx addresses and employee names, email addresses, telephone and fax numbers.
- PWA Office Support Handbook updated and revisions distributed in April 2001.
- Updated PWA-OSAC Website as needed including addition of PWA-OSAC Newsletter.
- Developed and distributed a PWA-OSAC information packet to Location Administration Officers at the annual ARMP reviews. The packet included: 1) Who We Are, 2) Our Mission, 3) Our Goals for 2001, 4) Our Accomplishments, 5) Our Web Address, and 6) the latest copy of the Newsletter.

- Council member Marla Lawrence traveled to the Western Regional Research Center in Albany, California, to mentor Karen Mallinen, a new secretary. Implemented Mentoring Program. Mentoring included annual reports, RMIS, (now ARIS) travel, troubleshooting, and fiscal year end instructions.

## **Goals**

- Update and distribute PWA-OSAC information packet to Location Administrative Officers for inclusion in FY03 ARMP review to promote the PWA Council.
- Continue to motivate interest in the Mentoring Program & the “PWA New Secretary Training Program”.
- Continue to maintain and update Website.
- Add directory to PWA Website and continue to update and maintain with link to PWA Council’s Website.
- Update Handbook and add to Council’s Website.
- Continue to increase visibility of PWA Council through Website, Newsletter, Mentoring Program, and updating Council display for 2002 Leadership Conference and display in Area Office after Leadership Conference.
- Continue to provide assistance to the National Advisory Council for Office Support Professionals.

## **SOUTH ATLANTIC AREA**

The South Atlantic Area Advisory Council for Office Support Professionals (SAA-ACOSP) strives to maintain an urgent Agency goal – to ensure that highly skilled, office support professionals are provided for the Area. An Orientation/Training Program is in place to provide professionals working in partnership with management to meet office support professionals and administrative needs.

Council members for 2001 are:

Debra Duckworth, Athens, GA – Chair  
Valerie Malcolm, Gainesville, FL – Co-Chair  
Bonnie Ebel, Gainesville, FL – Historian  
Shelia Jackson, Athens, GA – Information/Training Coordinator/Webpage  
Lorraine Sonoda, Ft. Pierce, FL - Recorder  
Sue Keusch, Ft. Lauderdale, FL – Member  
Cindy Davies, Clemson, SC – Member  
Vacant – Alternate  
Sabrina Whitley-Ferrell, Raleigh, NC – Technical Advisor NACOSP

### **Accomplishments:**

Finalized the SAA Directory (Green Book) and added to webpage.

Reimplemented the Mentoring/Orientation Program and added to webpage:

Feedback Sheet  
Checklist

Composed and distributed semi-annually “It’s Your Turn” letter to the SAA Office Professionals and Administrative Officers and Technicians. See attached example.

Filled vacancies with three new members: Bonnie Ebel, Shelia Jackson and Donna Hinson. Due to personal circumstances, Donna Hinson had to resign. The SAA-ACOSP now consists of seven members, one vacancy and a technical advisor.

Presented the “2001 Secretary of the Year Award” - Margaret Martin, Gainesville, FL.

Updated the SAA-ACOSP pamphlet for distribution to the South Atlantic area employees.

Drafted “Welcome letter” for all new office support professionals.

Council Members for 2002:

Debra Duckworth, Athens, GA - Chair (05/02) 2 years  
Valerie Malcolm, Gainesville, FL – Co-Chair (05/02) 2 years

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Shelia Jackson, Athens, Ga - Information/Training Coordinator/Webpage (05/02) 2 years

Lorraine Sonoda, Ft. Pierce, FL – Historian (03/02) 2 years

Cindy Davies, Clemson, SC – Member (05/01) 3 years

Sue Keusch, Ft. Lauderdale, FL – Member (10/01) 2 years

Bonnie Ebel – Gainesville, FL Member (05/02) 2 years

Vacant – Alternate 2 years

Sabrina Whitley-Ferrell, Raleigh, NC – Technical Advisor NACOSP

Distribute “Fact Finding Questionnaire” for NACOSP.

### **Goals:**

- Redesign “It’s Your Turn” - Lorraine
- Update Webpage - Shelia
- Distribute list of names, phone numbers and addresses of NACOSP members to all locations in the South Atlantic Area
- Ask for volunteers in “It’s Your Turn” to assist new office support professionals with training and information from the field level, pertinent to their jobs.
- Fill the vacant “Alternate Member” position. Ask for volunteers and nominations for new members on the council in “It’s Your Turn.”
- Propose to Area Director to institute a training & informational meeting for all office support professionals in the next fiscal year.
- Draft letter to Dr. Narang requesting an Office Professional Continuing Education Seminar in November of 2002.

## **SOUTHERN PLAINS AREA**

The Southern Plains Area Advisory Council for Office Support Professionals continues to fine tune accomplishments and update information as needed so that support staff throughout the Area are informed of all the latest and greatest changes affecting their job responsibilities. This is an on-going task and one that the Council will certainly carry out.

Members of the 2001-2002 SPA Secretarial/Program Support Council are:

Olivia Pedraza, Weslaco, Texas, Chair  
Sharon Sheffield, Lane, Oklahoma, Co-Chair  
Sandy Sims, College Station, Texas, Recorder  
Davee Crowell, Beaumont, Texas, Information Coordinator  
Justine Flowers, Little Rock, Arkansas, Training Coordinator  
Phyllis Hoffman, Temple, Texas, Member  
Rhea Fryar, Lubbock, Texas, National Advisory Council for Office Support Professionals Technical Advisor

### **Accomplishments**

- The Council had its annual face-to face meeting in Austin in June 2001. Two new members were welcomed, Sandy Sims and Davee Crowell. Rhea Fryar, Technical Advisor, gave the Council an update of what the National Council is doing.
- Continued to produce and distribute the Councils' newsletter.
- A secretarial handbook was developed and a draft sent to the Area Office. Upon approval, the handbook will be distributed to all Southern Plains Office Support Professionals.
- A scholarship program for Office Support Professionals was developed and set in place. The scholarships will be used to assist in professional development of the secretarial/office support individual through funding for conferences, workshops, short courses, or other appropriate educational opportunities.
- Council developed an orientation packet for new support staff. Council will work with Area Office to obtain names of any new support staff.
- The Shadowing Program continues to be promoted. Very positive feedback was received from one location who had their office support professional participate in the program.

- The home page continues to be updated. The homepage includes our Charter, Scholarship, Directory, Handbook, Actual Subsistence, Orientation and links to Agency sites, travel sites, forms sites and training opportunities.
- The directory for the Southern Plains Area was completed and distribution made at the SPA Leadership Conference in Lubbock.
- The SPA Advisory Secretarial Council for Office Support Professionals' poster and brochures were displayed at the 2001 SPA Leadership Conference.
- A contest for the design of a logo for the SPA Council was held and a spot award given to the winner. A committee was established and a winner was selected from all entries within the Area.
- Once again, the Council planned and facilitated the breakout session for Office Support Professionals at our 2001 SPA Leadership Conference. The Council invited Mike Ruff, Technology Transfer Coordinator, Office of Technology Transfer; Karen Kinney, Computer Specialist, Office of the Chief Information Officer; and Jim Bradley, Director, Human Resources Division to be guest speakers for our session.
- Council received a donation of a laptop computer and portable printer from the Food and Feed Safety Research Unit in College Station. The Council was very excited to receive this recognition and support from a location.
- The Council spoke to SPA office support professionals at the ARIS training about who the Council is and the assistance the Council provides. Two members from the Council will be coming off this year and an announcement was made to solicit volunteers to serve on the Council.

## **Goals**

- Continue to maintain communications through the newsletter and through more personal one-on-one interactions such as site visits and forums for sharing information.
- Continue to maintain and update the SPA directory.
- Continue to administer and promote the Shadowing Program.
- Promote professional development through the scholarship program.
- Continue to maintain and update our home page and update links.

- The Council will work on implementing a “Rescue Squad,” if approved by the Area Director. The “Rescue Squad” will come to the rescue of an Office Support Professional who applies and is accepted to a detail within ARS. In addition, it will also be available to any location that has support personnel out for extended periods of time (i.e. sick or annual leave).

**NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL  
FOR OFFICE SUPPORT  
PROFESSIONALS**

**AND**

**ORGANIZATIONAL SECRETARIAL  
ADVISORY COUNCILS**

**ANNUAL REPORT — 2001**

Prepared By

**NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR  
OFFICE SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS  
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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