



NACOP Notes

September 2010

Presentations and handouts from the Training Workshop will be available on our new NACOP website, currently under development. We will send information as soon as work is complete.

Message from the Co-Chairs

By: Sandy Groneberg, Sr. Co-Chair, MWA
Jackie Kelly, Jr. Co-Chair, HQ

The National Advisory Council for Office Professionals (NACOP) held its annual meeting in Auburn, Alabama, June 15-17, 2010. We welcomed Linda Fulton (Mid South Area) as a new NACOP member. Heather Lewandowski (Midwest Area) and Barbara Hodges (Southern Plains Area), former NACOP members, returned as committee members to plan the training workshop held in Norman, Oklahoma, August 18-19, 2010. Drusilla Fratesi (Mid South Area) completed her term on the Council and was recognized for her numerous contributions. She continued her involvement as an important member of the training workshop planning committee. Although the focus of our annual meeting was planning the training workshop, we also reviewed our Charter and last year's accomplishments, and established new goals for the coming year.

The training workshop in Norman received excellent review comments. Many participants requested that we place the presentations and handouts on our web site. These resources will be available for your use as soon as the new web site is complete. This edition of NACOP Notes highlights additional information from the training workshop.

Local (Area) councils play an important role in improving communication, awareness, and skills among office professionals and strengthening programs and opportunities for career development. NACOP encourages participation on local councils to expand one's knowledge of the Agency while networking with other office professionals. The rewards of participation are enormous. We wish all local councils the best in achieving the goals they have set forth for the coming year.

Presentations at NACOP Training Workshop

Contributed by Diane Koch

Whether you are a seasoned pro or relatively new to ARS, the recent NACOP Training Workshop had something for everyone. There were six general session speakers along with nine featured breakout sessions. All of the presenters were informative, encouraged active participation, and were very entertaining. Their take home message, in each case, was the value of the Office Professionals to ARS.

The general sessions consisted of the following: Ms. Kate O'Hara's (MWA) presentation on ARS: Making a Difference was a look at the impact that ARS science has had in our lives and a look to the future for more good things to come. A presentation by Dr. Sharon Drumm (ONP)

focused on the fact that we are all doing more with less and sometimes it is ok to say “No.” Mr. Jim Bradley (AFM) addressed the generational differences in the workforce and the changes that will be needed for the future. Ms. Diane Strub’s (MWA) presentation was on career advancement and how each individual needs to define what success looks like for them. A speaker from the National Center for Employee Development (Norman, OK), Ms. Jodie Watson, spoke about how your lifestyle can affect your physical, emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, and financial health and well being. And last, by not least, Mr. Jeff Schmitt from ODEO helped us to understand how collaborative relationships foster diversity and inclusion and minimize disagreements.

The presenters and topics for the “breakout” sessions included: Ms. Lisa Baete (NPA) on Records Management – what is a record, what to do with your e-mails; Ms. Marcie Currie-Gross (NPA) on Grants.gov – overview of grants.gov, what is an LOI?; what is needed in ARIS; Ms. Michelyn Boyd on WebT&A – pay and leave policies, credit time, comp travel, audits; Mr. Gerald Brunson on procurement – mandatory sources, sole source justification, refreshments, hosting a local meeting ; Ms. Cathy Lonaberger (HQ) on ARS correspondence – memo vs. letter format, e-mailed correspondence, clearance procedures; Ms. Josie Portales (SPA) on SharePoint – share and transfer large files, set up alerts, set up a site, examples; Ms. Diane Eggert and Ms. Janelle McClintock on travel and GovTrip – troubleshooting in GovTrip, FTIS-OSEC approval and reporting, ask the expert; Dr. Richard Brenner (OTT) on partnership initiatives - strengthening research capabilities through competitive grants, new Agricultural Technology Innovation Partnership program; and Mr. Jason Groves (ARS HS) on foreign nationals in ARS labs – introduction to new e-230 system, assistance memos, check-in and out procedures.

As you can see there was a wide variety of topics and each had something to offer any Office Professional. The “breakout” sessions were well attended. Most sessions had handouts, which will be posted on the NACOP website, and links were

provided for future reference or sharing with those who could not attend.

Overall, the evaluations of the Workshop were very positive. Participants enjoyed opportunities for networking and making new acquaintances, and a feeling of appreciation was taken home.

NACOP TRAINING WORKSHOP – DIVERSITY AND INTERACTION

Contributed by Linda Fulton

Two major benefits of the NACOP Training Workshop, August 18-19, 2010, in Norman, Oklahoma, may not have been obvious in the midst of the amazing training presentations. **These two benefits were diversity and networking with other office professionals.** Attendees included individuals from all regions of the United States defined by many cultures as well as the male and female genders.

Interaction outside our day-to-day habitual comfort zone provided an opportunity to view other cultures and thought processes as related to our positions. It was educational to learn how individuals interact with their respective supervisors, as well as discussions of innovative ways to handle office paperwork and to work together as team members. The tidbits learned outside the official workshop timeframe were invaluable, and the contacts will prove to be of endless benefit in the future.

Many of us saw prior acquaintances that we only see every few years. This proved helpful to those of us who rely on these interactions to gather first hand information we need to accomplish specific work-related functions. Comparisons of how tasks are accomplished oftentimes lead to a more efficient way of accomplishing a task. Networking with those we knew and those whom we met for the first time gave us a fresh look at our profession.

It is very difficult to articulate the immeasurable advantages this training workshop provided due to face-to-face interaction with individuals from

different regions of the country. When meshing ideas, surprising ways of accomplishing a job come to the forefront. To sum up my thoughts, “There is absolutely no tool more effective for learning and training than face-to-face interaction both within the confines of the workshop with presenters and visiting after hours with attendees. In person communication facilitates novel and resourceful ways for office professionals to complete tasks.”

HEADQUARTERS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS (HACAP)

Contributed by Cozette Talib



Headquarters Advisory Council for Administrative Professionals (HACAP) represents administrative personnel who support the Headquarters staff in the Miscellaneous Clerk,

Assistant or Program Support Assistant Series, GS-303; Secretarial Series, GS-318; and Office Automation Series, GS-326 with a wide array of skills from communications to customer service training. HACAP enhances the office administrative professional through training, mentoring, and recognition while providing a bridge for management and administrative professionals to build an alliance of support.

MISSION

The mission of HACAP is to serve the Office of the Administrator, Deputy Administrator, Administrative and Financial Management in an advisory capacity on new initiatives that impact Headquarters administrative professionals. HACAP’s mission is dedicated to improving workplace performance through providing support staff with innovative training, pertinent information, and quintessential professional development that is needed to excel and succeed as administrative professionals.

GOAL

The Council’s goal is to ensure that ARS Headquarters (HQ) has highly skilled office administrative professionals working in partnership with management not to meet but to exceed the needs of the Agency. HACAP’s objective is to encourage communication among administrative professionals, HACAP and the administration. Encourage networking among administrative personnel for effective communications and efficient working relationships. Advise the Administrator and the Deputy Administrator, Administrative and Financial Management on matters relating to development, advancement, and recognition of Headquarters administrative professionals. All of this is done with the goal to improve the workplace performance by providing support staff with the essential information and skills needed in today’s competitive business arena.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Sponsored the “Bloom Where You’re Planted” spring session. This session provided the opportunity for Administrative Professionals in the appropriate series to network with other administrative professionals in a meet and greet atmosphere.
- For National Women’s Health Week, HACAP sponsored “Women’s Nutrition and Health.” Dr. Deirdra Chester from Beltsville Human Research Center spoke on women issues, nutrition, healthy eating, and wellness.
- HACAP sponsored Purchase Card training with Linda Wilson, Procurement Analyst.
- Sponsored two “KSAs, Resumes and Accomplishments...Oh My!!” training instructed by two highly qualified Human Resource Specialists. The training highlights were resume training, writing effective KSAs, acquiring skills to get ahead, and identifying accomplishments.
- Sponsored “Internal Interview Training” focusing on tips and techniques for the internal interview. It was facilitated by two Animal and Plant Health Inspection

Service (APHIS) Human Resources Training Specialists.

- Coordinated a meeting with APHIS Human Resources Training Specialists to assist them with starting an Administrative Council at their location.
- HACAP is proud to announce that three of our council members have rose to the challenge and soared to new heights:
 - An Administrative and Financial Management employee promoted to Human Resources Specialist,
 - A HACAP Chair was promoted to a Management Assistant position in the Office of National Programs, and
 - An Office of International Research Programs employee has accepted a new position with Food and Drug Administration.
- Held a Bake Sale at the ARS CFC Food Day Celebration and received a letter of appreciation for volunteering, organizing, and donating goods for a worthy cause.
- And, many, many more accomplishments.

HACAP operates as a liaison to the National Advisory Council for Office Professionals on matters that concern administrative personnel located at HQ.

HACAP's hope is to cultivate and maintain excellence by demonstrating our profession through accountability and high ethical standards. We aspire to communicate openly while building strong relationships with commitment, adaptability, respect, and integrity.

HACAP – Making things happen at Headquarters!!!



11 RULES OF WRITING



1. To join two independent clauses, use a comma followed by a conjunction, a semicolon alone, or a semicolon followed by a sentence modifier.
2. Use commas to bracket nonrestrictive phrases, which are not essential to the sentence's meaning.
3. Do not use commas to bracket phrases that are essential to a sentence's meaning.
4. When beginning a sentence with an introductory phrase or an introductory (dependent) clause, include a comma.
5. To indicate possession, end a singular noun with an apostrophe followed by an "s". Otherwise, the noun's form seems plural.
6. Use proper punctuation to integrate a quotation into a sentence. If the introductory material is an independent clause, add the quotation after a colon. If the introductory material ends in "thinks," "saying," or some other verb indicating expression, use a comma.
7. Make the subject and verb agree with each other, not with a word that comes between them.
8. Be sure that a pronoun, a participial phrase, or an appositive refers clearly to the proper subject.
9. Use parallel construction to make a strong point and create a smooth flow.
10. Use the active voice unless you specifically need to use the passive.
11. Omit unnecessary words.

Adapted from: Grammar Rules

<http://www.junketstudies.com/rulesofw/>