

NATIONAL SECRETARIAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL

AND

ORGANIZATIONAL SECRETARIAL
ADVISORY COUNCILS

ANNUAL REPORT - 1997

Prepared by

NATIONAL SECRETARIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

August 1997

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NATIONAL SECRETARIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

ANNUAL MEETING

The National Secretarial Advisory Council (NSAC) held its annual meeting April 29-May 1, 1997, in Albany, California. The Council was hosted by PWA Representative, Libby Fouse, and Dr. Antoinette Betschart, Director of the Western Regional Research Center. New Council member Janet Ferst, Secretary to the Administrator, ARS, was welcomed to the Council. Guests attending were Andrea Peele and Sherrill Murray, Human Resources Division (HRD), Greenbelt, Maryland. Andrea provided a training session on team building skills and Sherrill led a meeting on secretarial recognition issues. Focus Reports were given on the Partnership in Excellence Program, Area Organizational Councils, the REE Secretarial and Clerical Program Results Team, and Secretarial Recognition Programs. The NSAC worked in depth on the Quick Reference Guide for ARS Secretarial/Clerical Personnel, met with WRRC secretaries and clerical staff for roundtable discussions, and also toured the Center.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS Home Page

A subcommittee of five members worked to enhance and further develop the draft NSAC Home Page. It was agreed that the project required resources outside the Council to implement this initiative.

Three subcommittee members attended a training session in Greenbelt, Maryland, conducted by Scott Finke, AITD, to learn how to convert text documents to HyperText Markup Language (HTML) and then edit those documents. In addition, Scott presented information on how the Internet works and how home pages are constructed. As a result of this training session, the NSAC Home Page was redesigned, updated and Agency approval attained. The address of the NSAC Home Page is <http://www.ars.usda.gov/afm/nsac> or access from the ARS Home Page.

Quick Reference Guide for ARS Secretarial/Clerical Personnel

A subcommittee was formed for the secretarial handbook for ARS. The final product titled *Quick Reference Guide for ARS Secretarial/Clerical Personnel* will list references, cross references, points of contact for specialized expertise, and Agency acronyms. A target release date of early FY-98 was set for distribution to all ARS secretarial and clerical personnel.

Newsletter

A subcommittee of four members was formed to develop an NSAC Newsletter. Sample formats were reviewed. The first draft newsletter has been approved by the Council members. The newsletter will be issued in September 1997. Future issues of the newsletter will be included on the Council's Home Page on the Internet.

Partnership in Excellence Reports

Administrative Financial Management (AFM) - The AFM Secretarial Advisory Council is working to provide better communications and customer service through training, networking, and information exchange meetings in support of the *Partnership in Excellence* program. The Council has three teams that are putting together plans for cross-training, networking, better communications, training, updated reference manuals on correspondence and office procedures, and organizational charts in order to provide better services to customers. Everything the AFM Secretarial Advisory Council is working on is being done in support of the *Partnership in Excellence* program. The Council is excited about the accomplishments of the three teams established from the first annual AFM secretarial meeting. The work is more challenging and time-consuming than predicted, but is creating enthusiasm and dedication between the team members and most of the AFM secretarial staff.

Beltsville Area (BA). A Subcommittee was established by the Beltsville Area Secretarial Advisory Council (BASAC) to set up an orientation program for secretaries and office automation clerks in the Beltsville Area. The Subcommittee will provide training opportunities and establish a "Buddy System" whereby new employees shadow a seasoned secretary for 2-3 days. They are working with the Beltsville Area Mentoring Program Committee to increase secretarial participation. As the Subcommittee scratches the surface in initiating new ideas, they are committed to providing the necessary tools and knowledge to enhance job satisfaction to BA secretarial and clerical personnel.

Mid South Area (MSA). Copies of the *Partnership in Excellence*, sample handout, and examples of other information packets were distributed to all MSA Secretarial Council members for discussion, development, and implementation of a mentoring program for secretaries. It was the consensus of the MSA Secretarial Council that orientation will be provided as new secretaries are hired. The assignment of mentors will be on the agenda for discussion at the Fall 1997 MSA Secretarial Council meeting.

In 1997, the Mid South Area Office provided orientation to one new secretarial employee from Auburn, Alabama. The employee met with respective MSA staff members at Stoneville, Mississippi, to discuss organizational structure, office protocol, procedures for correspondence, filing, manuscripts, Research Personnel Evaluation System, budget, RMIS, and CRIS. The employee also met with staff members responsible for budget, personnel, computer, procurement, travel, and property. During the orientation, the employee was encouraged to communicate and network with peers and to be an active member of the Unit's team. Discussions helped the employee understand the overall operation of the Research Unit, the Mid South Area, ARS, and USDA.

Midwest Area (MWA). It is the policy of the Midwest Area to appoint all new hires with a mentor for a 1-year period of time. Initial contact is by phone; after that time, it is strongly recommend that the mentee's location pay for the mentor to travel and spend a day with the employee in a working environment. After the initial visit, all other contact is by phone or GroupWise®. In the case of local personnel, contacts are made by phone or face-to-face. The mentors are selected by the Area Director's Secretary based on experience and knowledge of employees in the Area.

National Agricultural Library (NAL). The NAL Secretarial Advisory Council (NALSAC) has developed a "NAL Secretarial Orientation Overview/Checklist" for new secretaries and clerical support staff. This overview can also be used for current support staff employees who did not receive a formal orientation when first reporting to NAL for work. The purpose of this initiative is to increase communication and efficiency throughout NAL. The NAL Director, Pamela André, has urged supervisors to use this plan in their work units when necessary.

National Program Staff (NPS). The NPS Organizational Secretarial Advisory Council (OSAC) plans to initiate and implement the *Partnership in Excellence* mentoring program. Through this program, staff can share their expertise as resources in the areas of RMIS, Word Perfect 6.1, Internet, Harvard Graphics, travel (foreign and domestic), InForms, and other suggested areas. Currently, the Administrative Officer meets with new employees using a developed employee orientation for NPS. The new support staff employee is given a copy of the National Program staff Secretarial Handbook which was developed by the Secretarial Procedures Handbook Committee, NPS-OSAC. After the initial orientation, the employee meets with the Associate Deputy Administrator's (ADA) secretary for a more thorough introduction to support activities. The ADA secretary remains the point of contact for questions concerning day-to-day activities. Secretaries throughout the NPS are knowledgeable in these various areas and are called upon for their expertise.

North Atlantic Area (NAA). In the Area's quest to ensure that secretaries have an opportunity to be fully trained in the key aspects of their positions, understand and appreciate how they fit into the overall operation of their organizational unit and ARS as a whole, the *Partnership in Excellence* program was implemented in the NAA. For four days during the month of April, four new secretaries were brought into the Area Office for orientation and training. The agenda included meetings with the Area and Associate Area Directors; Area Administrative Officer; Area Budget and Fiscal Officer; Area Contracts Specialist; Area Agreements Specialist; Purchasing Agent; Area Computer Specialist; and the Area Travel Clerk. The video, *Science in Your Shopping Cart* was viewed, and excellent feedback was received from the newly hired as to the contributions and research being conducted by the Agricultural Research Service. Training was provided on ARS correspondence and the RMIS system. Each new secretary also spent an afternoon "Shadowing" a senior secretary. Feedback was excellent from both the participants and their supervisors.

Northern Plains Area (NPA). The NPA does not have a *Partnership in Excellence* Program in place at this time.

Pacific West Area (PWA). In June 1996, the PWA Secretarial/Program Support Advisory Council conducted a survey among all PWA clerical employees to determine training needs. Based on the results of this survey, the Council developed a proposed training program to be implemented by the Area Office in conjunction with their already established RL/SY Training Program. The proposed training program was submitted to the Area Office in August 1996, just prior to the reassignments of the Area and Associate Area Directors. At the Council's February 1997 meeting, Associate Area Director, Art Schipper, stated he is supportive of the proposed *Partnership in Excellence* program and hoped it would be implemented soon in PWA.

South Atlantic Area (SAA). The SAA does not have a *Partnership in Excellence* program; however, establishing a program is one of the SAA Council's primary goals for 1997-98.

Southern Plains Area (SPA). The SPA does not have a *Partnership in Excellence* program in place at this time.

Teleconference Calls

Quarterly calls were held to discuss issues and plan methods and processes towards achieving the goals set.

FY-98 GOALS

- Enhance the NSAC Home Page.
- Develop and distribute the NSAC Newsletter.
- Finalize and distribute *Quick Reference Guide for ARS Secretarial/Clerical Personnel*.

- Work with HRD staff to develop training programs for secretarial/clerical personnel using the information in the NSAC *Training and Planning Guide for ARS Secretarial/Clerical Personnel (1996)* as a reference.

AFM STRATEGIC PLANNING

In June, the NSAC was invited to respond to six Strategic Planning Questions developed by Administrative and Financial Management (AFM). Nine members were present and participated in the meeting. Presentations were made by AFM Division representatives on how their divisions were responding to the specific charges identified in the Strategic Plan. NSAC responses were discussed, compiled, documented and forwarded to John Espenschade for inclusion with other responses to be reviewed by the AFM Council.

USDA HONOR AWARDS

The National Secretarial Advisory Council earned the 1997 Honor Award for the category, "The Secretary's Award for Support Personnel." The Secretary's Honor Awards are the most prestigious awards the Department can give and recognize outstanding contributions to agriculture, to the consumers of agricultural products, and to the ability of the Department to serve rural America. The 1997 Honor Award Ceremony was held on Wednesday, June 11, 1997, at the Andrew Mellon Auditorium in Washington, D.C., with a reception in honor of award recipients immediately following. Ms. Angela V. Marchetti (NSAC Co-Chair) accepted the award on behalf of the Council. In addition, the Council attended a buffet luncheon at the ARS Administrator's Office honoring all ARS honorees. Each member of the Council received a certificate signed by Secretary Glickman with the citation "For outstanding efforts to promote professionalism and excellence in the secretarial and clerical occupations in the Agricultural Research Service."

SECRETARIAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM

The Headquarters Secretarial Recognition Program has been modified to include all Area Office and Area Administrative Office Secretaries who are not eligible to receive the award in their Area. NSAC and Human Resources Division developed new guidelines for the revised recognition program.

Several Areas have had recognition programs in place for some time and some Areas have recently implemented their own recognition programs. Winners for 1996-1997 are:

- Beltsville Area Secretarial/Clerical Employee of the Year, 1996 - Claudette Joyner, GS-0318-08, Secretary to the Director, Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center, Beltsville, Maryland.
- Headquarters Secretary of the Year, 1996 - Patricia McGarvey, GS-0318-08, Secretary, Office of the Deputy Administrator, AFM, Washington, D. C.

- Mid South Area Secretary of the Year, 1996 - Linda L. Deer, GS-0318-06, Secretary, Food and Feed Safety Research Unit, Southern Regional Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Midwest Area Secretary of the Year, 1997 - Deborah K. Bitner, GS-0318-06 Secretary, Biopolymer Unit, National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, Peoria, Illinois.
- Northern Plains Area Secretarial Award, 1997 - Polly L. McMichael, GS-0318-06, Secretary, Cereal Crops Research Unit, Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center, Fargo, North Dakota.
- Pacific West Area Secretary of the Year, 1997 - Elisabeth "Libby" Fouse, GS-0318-07, Secretary to the Director, Horticultural Crops Research Laboratory, Fresno, California.
- Southern Plains Secretary of the Year, 1997 - Ruth Treat, GS-0303-07, Program Coordinator, Plant Science and Water Conservation Research Laboratory, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

REE ESTABLISHES SECRETARIAL COUNCIL

Cecelia Stortzum, ARS Human Resources Division, gave a report on the REE (Research, Education and Economics) Secretarial and Clerical Program Results Team, of which she was a member. The final report of the team was presented in a brochure entitled, "No More `Justa' Secretary." As a result of this report, REE has established a Secretarial Advisory Council. Janet Ferst, Secretary to the Administrator, and Mary Silva, Secretary to the Director of the National Agricultural Library, will represent ARS on the REE Council.

ORGANIZATIONAL SECRETARIAL ADVISORY COUNCILS

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Current members of the AFM Secretarial Advisory Council are:

Joyce Craig - Co-chair
Mary Goleski - Co-chair
Pat Berry
Clarice Fleming
Linda Simpson
Sheila Tucker
Angie Marchetti - Technical Advisor

Accomplishments

The AFM Secretarial Advisory Council recently formed three focus groups. The first team is focusing on orientation and training; the second team put together a Correspondence Sample and Reference Manual; and the last team is concentrating on better telecommunications systems for AFM.

- The Correspondence Team compiled the new AFM Correspondence Samples and Reference Manual and obtained the approval of the Deputy Administrator, AFM, to make distribution to all AFM secretarial and clerical staff. This manual was distributed and training was provided at the AFM Secretaries Annual Meeting in May.
- The Telecommunications Team presented the results of their findings to the Deputy Administrator, AFM, and as a result, voice mail has been implemented in AFM. Policies, standards, and guidelines for use of the voice mail system were developed by the AFM Voice Mail Policy and Standards Team, which included two members of the AFM Secretarial Advisory Council.
- The Orientation and Training Team is working on information obtained from questionnaires sent to support staff and management regarding cross-training, informational meetings and workshops, shadowing and peer-networking, and improved cooperation between management and support staff. The Team is using the information derived from the questionnaires to institute programs in support of the *Partnership in Excellence* mentoring program. The plan is to provide improved orientation and training, information-sharing documents, more individual guidance

on the job, and organizational information to secretarial and other clerical staff in AFM.

- Sponsors Bimonthly Brown Bag Lunches for AFM secretaries to provide a forum where new information is shared, important issues are discussed, and secretaries have the opportunity to keep in touch and share ideas.
- A member serves on the AFM Team tasked to revise the performance appraisal program.

Goals

- Continue holding bimonthly Brown Bag Lunches for AFM secretaries.
- Continue developing the *Partnership in Excellence* program for AFM secretarial and clerical staff.
- Provide assistance and participate on the Move Project Team which will coordinate all aspects of the AFM relocation to the new Beltsville office complex.

BELTSVILLE AREA

The Beltsville Area Secretarial Advisory Council (BASAC) was established by Dr. K. D. Murrell, Area Director, in March 1995. Each BA Center/Institute/ Division is represented by one member and meetings are held monthly. Current members of the Council are:

Claudette Joyner, Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center - Co-Chair
Judith Holland, Livestock and Poultry Sciences Institute - Co-Chair
Carol Appelbaum, Facilities Management and Operations Division
Janet Gates, Natural Resources Institute - Recorder
Denise Hackley, Plant Sciences Institute
Nadine Hiers, U.S. National Arboretum Elaine
McGuire, Technical Advisor

Accomplishments

Secretarial Workshops. An All Hands Meeting for all BA Secretarial and Clerical Support Personnel was held on December 5, 1996. Stephen Pollard, Records Management Office, AFM, AITD, Information and Analysis Branch and Maggie Kukis, Records Appraisal and Disposition Division, National Archives, shared information regarding records management and in particular records/file retention. The new BA Associate Director, Phyllis Johnson, was introduced and spoke on how competent secretaries have contributed to the development of her career. Mary Clements, Employee Development Section, HRD, informed everyone of the existence of the Smart Center in Greenbelt and its benefits to ARS employees. Carolyn Violett, Personnel Specialist, HRD, spoke on the subject of classification/upgrading and answered numerous questions.

National Secretaries' Day Observance. A one-half day workshop was held in conjunction with the BA Civil Rights Office on April 23. Secretaries from AFM, NPS and NAL were invited. Pat Frick, Policy, Innovation and Employee Development Branch, HRD, gave an overview of the Conflict Resolution Program. A seminar "How to Think Outside the Box" was presented by Sue Feltz from SkillPath® Seminars.

Newsletter. The BASAC Flyer was published in June 1996 and March 1997. The publication is designed to keep secretarial and clerical staff informed of what is happening in the Beltsville Area. Subjects such as highlights on what BASAC is doing, articles on specific offices at BA (Director's Office and the Facilities Management and Operations Division), articles of interest to working women in general, a how-do-I column on helpful tips, an up-to-date list of the Impact Line and information on training from secretaries who have taken a particular course and want to recommend it to others, etc. Copies are distributed to all BA secretaries and the Beltsville Area Leadership Team.

The Impact Line. Information on the Impact Line is published in the BASAC Flyer. New ways need to be explored to ensure that all secretaries are aware of available help.

Partnership in Excellence. A Beltsville Area Secretarial Advisory Council (BASAC) Subcommittee was established to set up an orientation program for secretaries and office automation clerks in the Beltsville Area (BA). This subcommittee is working on the following items:

- Development of Desk Reference Binders. This binder would contain information and step-by-step procedures for duties specific to the position, providing readily available access to pertinent job information.
Development of this resource would not only assist a new employee in becoming acquainted to the office, but would also serve as a guide to temporary employees or those on a detail assignment.
- "Buddy System." New employees would initially spend 2-3 days with a seasoned secretary and that individual would be available to assist the new employee on an as-needed basis thereafter. This idea will be adopted by Institute Secretaries for a trial period.
- Training. Coordination has been completed to establish training in the upcoming year for RMIS. Additionally, efforts have been made with the BA Travel Office to implement a program as well. Due to upcoming personnel issues, completion of the travel training program may be delayed. The Subcommittee and Institute secretaries attended an in-house overview of the Smart Center located in Greenbelt. A hands-on look at the resources available from the Smart Center was made and passed on to other BA secretaries. Subcommittee members and Institute secretaries encourage use of this resource.
- Inclusion of a Partnership in Excellence column in the BASAC Flyer (newsletter). Recommendations were made to incorporate information from the Partnership in Excellence Subcommittee into the BASAC Flyer, allowing the Subcommittee a vehicle in which to disseminate training and related information.

- Opening Doors to Informal Training Opportunities. Some of the BA Institutes hold monthly workshops that cover a variety of subjects for their secretaries. Opening the door to all BA secretaries will allow for an enhanced learning opportunity and promote the exchange of information between secretaries.
- Inclusion of a BASAC representative on the Beltsville Area Mentoring Program (BAMP) Committee. A meeting will be held with the Chair, BAMP, to introduce the idea.

Goals

Procedures Manual. Work is well underway for the attainment of this goal. The proposed date for an up-to-date Procedures Manual has been postponed due to the reorganization of the Beltsville Area Service Centers. When this manual is completed, a workshop will be held to present it.

MID SOUTH AREA

The Mid South Area Secretarial Council was formed in May 1996. Members of the MSA Secretarial Council are:

Patricia Brown, Stoneville, Mississippi – Chair
 Paula Brodofsky, Stoneville, Mississippi
 Wanda Hildreth, Auburn, Alabama
 Betty Hoogerwerf, New Orleans, Louisiana
 Cynthia Sandefer, Oxford, Mississippi
 Sandra Warren, Stoneville, Mississippi - Technical Advisor

Accomplishments

- Held scheduled conference calls.
- Distributed NSAC *Training and Planning Guide for ARS Secretarial/Clerical Personnel* to all secretarial/clerical personnel in the Mid South Area.
- Implemented the *Partnership in Excellence* program.

Established a mailbox (GroupWise®) for all secretaries and their supervisors so that information from the MSA Council can be sent more efficiently.

Continued to keep lines of communication open among secretarial and clerical employees in the Mid South Area.

Goals

- Conduct a meeting of the MSA Council and all MSA secretaries in Fall 1997.
- Rewrite/revise Charter to extend the length of the terms of the members.
- Develop a MSA Secretarial Handbook. This will be done after the National Council distributes the *Quick Reference Guide for ARS Secretarial/Clerical Personnel*.

MIDWEST AREA

The MWA Program Administrative Support Task Group (PASTG) met twice in person, and held three conference calls over the past year.

Current members of PASTG and the Locations they represent are:

Sherri Buxton, Peoria, Illinois -- Co-Chair

Lori Wilson-Voss, Ames Campus Locations, Iowa - Co-Chair

Sandy Groneberg, St. Paul and Morris Minnesota,
and Madison, Wisconsin

Alice McCain, Urbana, Illinois and W. Lafayette, Indiana

Susan Ohlendorf, National Animal Disease Center, Ames, Iowa

Shirley Runge, Peoria, Illinois

Jean Sparks, Columbia, Missouri

Karen Sussman, Columbus, Coshocton and Wooster, Ohio and E. Lansing, Michigan

Marcia Jenkins, Peoria, Illinois - Technical Advisor

Accomplishments

- Developed and disseminated an issue sheet to all clerical employees to bring issues of concern to the Area Directors.
- Implemented the Midwest Area Secretary of the Year program in 1997. Ms. Deborah K. Bitner, NCAUR, Peoria, Illinois, was selected as the first Midwest Area Secretary of the Year. The award was presented by the Area Director's secretary, Sherri Buxton, at the MWA Research Leader/LAO Leadership Conference Awards Banquet.
- Disseminated quarterly newsletter to all clerical employees; the PASTG was also encouraged by the Directors to forward these newsletters to Research Leaders.
- Participated in the RL/LAO Leadership Conference by giving a presentation to RL's and LAO's and conducting a poster session.
- Visit each MWA Location to present training, and promote participation in the PASTG activities.

- Developed a Standard Office Procedures (SOP) Manual and disseminated copies to secretaries, section heads and location administrative officers for comments.

Goals

- Incorporate review comments of the SOP Manual at the June 9-12, 1997 meeting of the PASTG at East Lansing, Michigan.
- Distribute the SOP Manual by the end of FY-97 to each employee PASTG represents.
- Establish a Home Page for PASTG on the Internet.
- Explore possibilities of making the newsletter and SOP Manual accessible through the Internet on the PASTG Home Page.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY

The National Agricultural Library (NAL) Secretarial Advisory Council (NALSAC) continues to work toward its goal of ensuring that NAL has highly skilled professionals working in partnership with management to meet its secretarial and administrative needs.

Council members for 1996-97 are:

Ann Palmes, Technical Services Division – Chair
 Phyllis Bickerton, Information Systems Division
 Gail DeAtley, Public Services Division - Recorder
 Shirley Evans, Office of Director
 Mary Silva - Technical Advisor

Accomplishments

- Held three all-hands meeting to improve communication and share information among the secretarial support staff.
- Invited secretarial councils from the National Program Staff, Beltsville Area, and Administrative and Financial Management (AFM) to NAL for an overview of NAL services, a tour, and technology demonstrations.
- Sponsored three no-cost, on-site career development classes for secretarial staff and as space permitted for all NAL staff. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Advanced Myers-Briggs Comprehension and Team Building were presented by the AFM Human Resources Division staff.
- Chaired a committee that developed a secretarial and administrative support handbook. This handbook has been a valuable resource for all NAL staff.

- Developed a formal orientation program for new secretaries which was approved for implementation by the NAL management team.

Goals

Work with the USDA Target Center to schedule a briefing on work station ergonomics for NAL staff.

- Continue quarterly all-hands meetings for NAL secretarial and clerical staff.
- Meet periodically to work on updates to the Handbook.
- Continue sponsoring career development opportunities. Proposed classes include Proofreading, Listening Skills, Business Writing, and "Promotable You."
- Explore establishing a NAL Secretarial Recognition Program.
- Study the possibility of establishing a Home Page.

NATIONAL PROGRAM STAFF

Current members of the National Program Staff-Organizational Secretarial Advisory Council (NPS-OSAC) are:

Cathy Lonaberger - Chair
 Barbara Zapp - Vice-Chair
 Susan Avery - Recording Secretary
 Catherine White - Executive Secretary

Committee Chairs are:

Beth Lloyd - Building 005 Security
 Kathy Martin - Training/Career Enhancement
 Catherine White - Support Staff Restructuring

Accomplishments

In November 1996, NPS-OSAC submitted a Plan of Work for the year which was approved by Dr. Richard L. Dunkle, Acting Deputy Administrator.

Significant items on the Plan of Work included:

- Initiate and implement the National Secretarial Advisory Council's Partnership in Excellence mentoring program. Through this program, staff can share their expertise as resources in the areas of RMIS, Word Perfect 6.1, Internet, Harvard Graphics, travel (foreign and domestic), InForms, and other suggested areas.

Currently, the Administrative Officer meets with new employees using a developed employee orientation for NPS. The new employee is given a copy of the National Program Staff Secretarial Handbook which was developed by the Secretarial Procedures Handbook Committee, NPSOSAC. After the initial orientation, the employee meets with the Associate Deputy Administrator's (ADA) secretary for a more thorough introduction to support activities. The ADA secretary remains the point of contact for questions concerning day-to-day activities. Secretaries throughout the NPS are knowledgeable in these various areas and are called upon for their expertise.

- Implement a pilot program for wearing ID badges on a voluntary basis in Building 005.

The Security Committee has been very active in promoting safety awareness throughout Building 005. Dr. Dunkle signed a memo encouraging employees in Building 005 to wear their Government ID badges as a deterrent to thefts which had been occurring in the building. Additionally, at the request of the Security Committee, foundation shrubs were trimmed back and lighting outside of the building was increased to aid in safety awareness.

Subsequent to the preparation and submittal of the Plan of Work, the NPSOSAC prepared the NPS Support Staff Restructuring (SSR) Report. To accomplish this task, NPS-OSAC hosted a brainstorming session of all support staff employees in NPS concerning the restructuring of the support staff within NPS. The outcome of several meetings with the support staff resulted in a report submitted to Dr. Dunkle outlining a proposed model to be used by Dr. Dunkle and his management team as they further defined the steps to be taken in the restructuring process. Function areas of the NPS support staff were identified. Subcommittees then researched and submitted reports to HRD on these functions. These reports have become the basis for much of the classification work being done for the restructuring.

Goals

- Continue to be involved in promoting training and career enhancement activities.
- Continue the security awareness program in Building 005.
- Review the current charter of the NPS-OSAC for expansion to include all support staff employees.

NORTH ATLANTIC AREA

Current members of the NAA Council are:

Diane Koch, Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania - Chair
Prunella Brashich, Plum Island, New York
Phyllis Davis, Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania
Lorraine Greene, Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania
Teri Anne Jordan, University Park, Pennsylvania
Denise Madden, Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania
Joyce Smith, Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania - Technical Advisor

Accomplishments

- Continue mentoring, shadowing and orientation as part of the NAA Secretarial Advisory Council's (NAA SAC) activities, and this year the orientation has been expanded to include clerical employees at the various locations. The orientation includes a session with the Area and Associate Area Director's secretaries to acquaint new secretaries with the NAA Secretarial Handbook and other resource materials that should be available to them at their desks. This includes an in-depth review of formal and informal correspondence, foreign correspondence and RPES case write-ups along with general information. Sessions are also scheduled with each of the sections of the Area Administrative Office which lets the participants get a feel of the different operations that go on within the Area. Training in RMIS is provided with hands-on experience followed by a day of "Shadowing" a secretary in the daily operations of an office.
- Distribute minutes of conference calls/meetings to all secretaries, clerks, and Research Leaders in NAA and shared with the National Secretarial Advisory Council.
- Selected the second rotating member for the NAA SAC allowing for a smooth and effective transition without disruption to the Council.
- Distributed updates to the NAA Secretarial Handbook. These addenda are then distributed to all NAA secretaries, clerks, and other Agency personnel who have handbooks.
- Drafted and made several revisions of a proposed NAA SAC Newsletter. Implementation of the Newsletter has been delayed due to changes in leadership in the Area Director's office.
- Formed a subcommittee to handle Resource Assistants listing and volunteers to serve as resource assistants are being solicited. This resource will give location secretaries a point of contact if initial contacts are not available.

- Formed a Subcommittee to put together instructions for using GroupWise® mail on the LAN/WAN and through the Internet. Work is on-going with Area Computer Specialist to put together generic instructions for distributions to NAA secretarial and clerical employees.
- Prepared and sent a questionnaire regarding concerns of secretarial staffs (job satisfaction, working relationships, etc.) to all secretarial and clerical employees in NAA. The NAA SAC have received the responses and the results will be summarized and distributed to the Area secretaries, clerks, Research Leaders, supervisors, management personnel, etc.
- Participated in the Leadership Conference in Dover, Delaware March 31-April 2, 1997. This Conference involved Area Management, Research Leaders, Center Directors, Administrative Staff and Secretaries. Headquarters personnel were invited to speak and/or provide training. A session on "Business Writing for Professionals" was presented by Mr. Richard Spencer, SkillPath® Seminars, to all the secretaries. Dr. Horn was a guest speaker to the Conference and made a personal appearance to speak directly with the secretaries and answer any questions they had. Dr. Horn told the group that he felt their jobs were very important to this Agency and to keep up the good work.
- Drafted a "Welcoming Packet" for new secretarial employees.

Goals

- Work with the Area Director and Administrative Officer to publicize the call for nominations for the "Secretary of the Year" award for NAA.
- Continue developing and distributing the NAA SAC Newsletter.
- Conduct a face-to-face meeting with all NAA SAC members in late Spring/early Summer 1997.

NORTHERN PLAINS AREA

The Northern Plains Area Secretarial Advisory Council (NPASAC) was formed in 1996 by volunteers who were solicited from the Area. Although volunteers were numerous, the committee was limited to five members plus the Technical Advisor. The first meeting was held in September 1996 in Fort Collins, Colorado. At this meeting the NPA was divided up with each Council member representing identified locations. This will enable each Council member to participate in the activities of the Council and be a "local" contact for their identified locations. They are also responsible for dissemination of NPASAC information to Area secretaries.

The Current council members are:

Kathleen Aragon, Laramie, Wyoming

Louise Dalton, Fort Collins, Colorado – Chair
Sandy Mathewson, Manhattan, Kansas
Sharon Peterson, Grand Forks, North Dakota – Recorder
Jan Preston, Lincoln, Nebraska
Sue Thornburgh, Fort Collins, Colorado - Technical Advisor
'Retired June 30, 1997.

Accomplishments

- Prepared and distributed the Council Charter throughout the Area.
- Assisted in preparing the Secretarial Breakout Agenda for the 1997 Leadership Conference. Topics included: striving to prevent added stress on the job; time management and priorities; being informed and keeping others informed; and putting education and training to work. Upon completion of the breakout sessions, the secretaries finalized a report which was presented to the entire conference.
- Requested to review nominations for the NPA Secretarial Award and make a recommendation to the Area Director. However, since a committee member was nominated for the award, the NPASAC did not actively participate in the selection process.
- Established a directory of volunteer resource secretaries to serve as mentors to other secretaries in specialized areas, i.e., RMIS, PCTARE, SIMP TRAV, etc.
- Prepared a "Welcome Letter" to be sent to newly hired ARS secretaries.

Goals

- Establish a mentoring program as well as provide adequate orientation and basic in-house training for all newly hired secretaries.
- Provide assistance to the National Secretarial Advisory Council.
Promote recognition and promotions for ARS secretaries.
- Identify outside training courses and encourage networking among secretaries.
- Devise a means of keeping secretaries informed of new procedures.
- Advise management of matters concerning the secretarial profession.
- Keep secretaries involved in the secretarial portion of NPA Leadership Conferences.

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

The Office of the Administrator does not have an Organizational Council, but plans to work very closely with the NPS OSAC which has represented their interests in the past.

PACIFIC WEST AREA

The PWA Council changed its name to Secretarial/Program Support Advisory Council to provide greater representation throughout the Area. The Council continues to work toward their goal of ensuring that PWA has highly skilled professional secretarial/program support staff working as part of the location leadership team to meet the program/administrative goals of the Agency. The PWA Council conducted meetings at the following ARS locations: Corvallis, Oregon and Phoenix, Arizona. At the Phoenix meeting the Associate Area Director established a new/permanent position titled "Area Office Representative."

Current Council members are:

Tammy Durfee, Pullman, Washington - Co-Chair
Patti Speckman, Riverside, California - Co-Chair
Linda Aarstad, Prosser, Washington
Barbara Ballengee, Shafter, California – Recorder
Veronica Cullum, Albany, California
Monta Whitehurst, Albany, California
Libby Fouse, Fresno, California - Technical Advisor

Accomplishments

- Sent 15 welcome letters to newly-hired secretaries and clerks.
- Added a Secretary Corner to *Quakes*, the PWA Quarterly Newsletter, to pass information to secretaries throughout the Area.
- Established a mentoring program. Six secretaries are willing to serve as mentors and they were identified in the December issue of *Quakes*.
- Conducted a survey of all secretaries and clerks in PWA on training needs and, as a result, developed a secretarial training program that was submitted to the Area Office for approval and implementation.
- Assisted in developing the PWA Employee Recognition Program which was implemented late in 1996.
- Developed an Application for Membership to the PWA Council, which was sent Area-wide. A replacement member to the Council was selected from the applicants.

- Drafted the PWA Secretarial Handbook which was sent to and reviewed by the Associate Area Director.
- Responded to requests from the National Council throughout 1996.

Goals

- Finalize the PWA Secretarial Handbook and make distribution by late 1997/early 1998.
- Develop and implement an electronic newsletter for secretarial/program support personnel.
- Participate in the development of a PWA Leadership or Secretary Conference for 1997.
- Involve more PWA secretarial/program support personnel in Council activities through the use of Technical Subcommittees.

SOUTH ATLANTIC AREA

The South Atlantic Area Secretarial Council (SAA/SAC) held its second meeting in Athens, Georgia, August 1996, with newly appointed Area Director, Dr. Roger Breeze. The SAA/SAC plans to hold their 1997 meeting in Tifton, Georgia.

The Area Director appointed two new Council members in 1997.
Current members are:

Susan Mewborn, Athens, Georgia – Chair
 Patricia Fields, Clemson, South Carolina
 Rhonda F. Harper, Athens, Georgia
 Migdalia Malave, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico
 Sabrina Whitley-Ferrell Raleigh, North Carolina – Recorder
 Peggy Zelonka, Gainesville, Florida
 Kay Carr, Tifton, Georgia - Technical Advisor

Accomplishments

- Prepared the SAA Directory with Mission Statements and distributed it throughout the Area.
- Distributed the NSAC *Training and Planning Guide for ARS Secretarial/Clerical Personnel* to secretaries and supervisors.
- Implemented the Secretary of the Year Award Program.
- Conducted a survey via e-mail to identify what additional training was most desired and began plans for the utilization of the SAA Athens Training Facility.

- Made arrangements for the secretaries from the Tifton, Dawson, and Byron locations to meet in conjunction with the 1997 SAA/SAC meeting, and to participate in a training session on foreign travel and VS-COM by two Area Office specialists. Survey results indicated that this would enhance job performance and improve productivity and morale.

Goals

- Prepare SAA Secretarial Handbook to complement the *Quick Reference Guide for Secretarial/Clerical Personnel* assembled by the National Secretarial Advisory Council. Reference materials will be consolidated into one Handbook, making a great resource tool for all secretaries, especially new Agency secretaries.
- Plan for an Area-wide secretarial training/meeting in Athens, Georgia in 1998.
- Implement the *Partnership in Excellence* program and establish mentors for the South Atlantic Area.

SOUTHERN PLAINS AREA

The Southern Plains Secretarial Council members are:

Ruth Treat, Stillwater, Oklahoma – Chair
 Pat Agold, Kerrville, Texas
 Lola Albright, Boonesville, Arkansas
 Sherry Dewald, Woodward, Oklahoma
 Eilene Gibbens, El Reno, Oklahoma
 Janice Story, Lane, Oklahoma
 Anne Steele, College Station, Texas - Technical Advisor

Accomplishments

- Established SPA Council.
- Improved communication through an area-wide newsletter distributed by the Council.
- Prepared and distributed a questionnaire and compiled results for the Area Director on locations' progress in implementing specific recommendations identified in *Stepping Into the Future*.
- Assisted with planning and participating in SPA Leadership Conference.
- Developed criteria for a SPA Secretarial/Clerical Program Support Award.

Goals

Identify contacts within the Area who can provide assistance on a particular aspect of a job.

Gather information on self-help resources already available at individual locations and at HRD which may be shared with other locations.

Conduct site visits to other SPA locations as a means to provide orientation to new, reassigned, or redirected program support personnel.