

AESOP Activities and Support Services for 2002

With the restructuring of the Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA), its Policy Board of Directors (PB) and the new Budget and Advocacy Committee (BAC), it is important that efforts be made to assure that the system's advocacy efforts are not adversely affected. This document provides clarity as to the types of services that AESOP Enterprises, Ltd has provided and will be expected to provide for the 2002 year.

As much as possible, AESOP will be charged with start-to-finish responsibility to assure that defined products and projects are carried out in a timely fashion. This document assigns to AESOP a variety of responsibilities relating to the area of active advocacy. This approach does not preclude NASULGC's active involvement in an appropriate way; indeed, it clarifies the support services that AESOP provides in support of NASULGC and the Board on Agriculture Assembly Committees. The goal is to streamline the decision and production process, while insuring that NASULGC has clear "sign-off" responsibilities at the appropriate critical points.

There are certain responsibilities and services that NASULGC must perform. There are services that either NASULGC or AESOP could perform such as staff support for the Board on Agriculture, news services, development of system documents and so forth. This document seeks to clarify this area of overlapping responsibilities. It also spells out, with examples, the types of support that AESOP will provide. By clearly delineating responsibilities between NASULGC and AESOP, confusion over who provides various support services will be eliminated.

It is essential that NASULGC and AESOP coordinate activities, especially visits with Administration, Departments, Congressional offices and staff so that each is aware of what the other is doing or has done.

AESOP RESPONSIBILITIES

AESOP reports to the Chairs of ECOP and ESCOP and is responsible for the activities listed below. Issues beyond the scope of this document require prior approval of ECOP and ESCOP.

AESOP will work closely and in partnership with the Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA), Budget and Advocacy Committee (BAC). And also with:

- Farm Bill Task Force
- Farm Bill Implementation Task Force (if appointed)
- ECOP Budget Committee
- ECOP Legislative Committee
- ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee
- ESCOP Advocacy and Marketing Committee
- Council of Governmental Affairs
- The Leadership of the LGU system

In general, AESOP activities will include:

- Advocacy activities with elected representatives and their staffs (i.e., a Capitol Hill focus);
- Developing and monitoring the advocacy calendar;

- Building coalitions and networks to support initiatives and budget authorizations;
- Providing assistance with budget development and implementation with the Executive Branch including USDA, OSTP, and OMB;
- CARET coordination will be through NASULGC, the AHS, and AESOP when directly involving "Hill visits" (see below);
- Providing assistance to appointed Deans of member colleges who have the responsibility of working with Commodity and Farm liaison activities;
- Drafting legislative language in cooperation with the BAC and other groups as appropriate;
- Providing advice/support to ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee and ECOP Budget Committee and ECOP Legislative Committee

AESOP will give focus to the following tasks:

- Completion of the Farm Bill, and;
- Mobilizing resources allocated through the congressional Agricultural Appropriations subcommittee.

Additional Priority Areas:

- Bio-security/Agro-security
- Community vitality
- Biotechnology
- Environment
- Bio-products and bio-fuels

Advocacy for formula funds is a system priority. Funding for competitive grants should be promoted whenever that support is not in conflict with formula funding increases. AESOP will identify lead persons (within AESOP) for each of the focus areas.

ECOP and ESCOP will identify lead persons for each of the above priority areas within the respective organizations.

Board on Agriculture Assembly, Budget and Advocacy Committee

AESOP's main focus is to facilitate success of the BAC and will serve as the staff organization supporting this committee. As such, AESOP works closely with the BAC Chair and Vice-Chair on all aspects of committee business. To this end, AESOP has already assisted in the development of a tentative legislative calendar for the 2002 year.

Congressional and Administrative Contacts

AESOP will advocate on behalf of the BAA with the House and Senate Agriculture Committees and the House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committees.

AESOP will work with the appropriate individuals within USDA, OMB, and the Administration.

AESOP and NASULGC will inform each other of communications or visits with these offices to provide continuity.

BAC Chair and Vice-Chair

There is a close working relationship between AESOP and the leadership of the BAC. AESOP will draft letters, memos, agendas, and background documents for the Chair and Committee.

A typical series of events is as follows:

- AESOP notifies the Chair of a need to respond to a Congressional event
- Chair asks AESOP or NASULGC to draft an email to notify Committee members
- Chair asks NASULGC to convene a teleconference of the Committee
- AESOP works with the Chair to draft an agenda for the teleconference, which AESOP sends to the Chair, the Committee, and to NASULGC.
- AESOP and the Chair have a discussion prior to the teleconference to work through background materials and current updates
- Chair leads the discussion on the teleconference, AESOP provides updates and discusses political strategies
- AESOP may be directed to draft a letter, position statement, or background document, which is provided back to the Chair, the Committee and NASULGC.
- NASULGC takes notes of the teleconference for distribution.

AESOP will coordinate with Chair's home staff to work out calendars, possible dates for meetings.

NASULGC is responsible for making hotel, facilities, and related arrangements for Committee meetings.

Testimony

In concert with the BAC Chair, AESOP will draft most testimony and letters or statements on behalf of the BAC that are to be submitted to Congressional Committees or the Administration. Every effort should be made to share draft documents and testimony with the BAC. In general all documents representing the System will be on NASULGC letter-head. Such documents will be shared with ESCOP, ECOP and other parts of the system.

As appropriate, AESOP will also draft for Congressional staff background materials, testimony and questions that can be used in the Hearing process. AESOP will brief the witnesses on the testimony and possible questions.

Legislative Language

AESOP will draft legislative language that captures the recommendations of the BAC. The BAC Chair and/or the committee will review draft language.

Resource Documents

AESOP will develop resource documents as appropriate and will assist in editing and preparation of background and "white papers".

AESOP will develop budget spreadsheets to assist the BAC in its deliberations.

At the request of Congressional offices, AESOP will work with appropriate university leadership to provide background materials on priority issues as related to a particular state.

Presentations

AESOP will assist in development and review of presentations by the Chair to be made to the larger system, NASULGC meetings, CARET and lay leaders/.

Publications

The Chair of the BAC is responsible for design and publication of the budget advocacy documents that are developed for the year. AESOP will provide draft materials and assist in the development of these documents. The Chair and NASULGC will decide on the details of the publication process. NASULGC must provide final approval.

Media Efforts

As appropriate, AESOP will provide advice and review materials intended for media distribution.

Advocacy News

AESOP will provide NFH Issue Updates (bi-weekly).

AESOP will provide interpretive summaries of the news, providing background and context as related to the above priority areas.

AESOP will provide NFH Alerts as warranted.

AESOP will work with the Chair of the BAC to disseminate NFH Action Alerts on specific issues. If a response is needed, AESOP will provide a suggested draft response with salient points that can be customized by a particular Dean or Director for use in his/her state.

AESOP will attend hearings and briefings in order to ascertain behind the scenes details.

AESOP will maintain an up to date web site.

ESCOP/ECOP Initiatives

AESOP will provide perspective and advice to ESCOP and ECOP on specific initiatives.

AESOP will facilitate discussions between representatives of the system and agency officials to stimulate working relationships that address common interests.

Once developed to this point, if requested, AESOP will draft:

- A summary request regarding funding or legislative language, which must include the justification and proposed outcomes of the initiative
- Supporting background material
- A position statement on behalf of the system

- Congressional testimony and/or letters to the Administration
- Letters of support from universities in key Congressional Districts and States.

ECOP and ESCOP Committees

AESOP will work closely with the leadership of ECOP and ESCOP. AESOP will provide briefings and counsel to the following committees usually via participation in conference calls.

- ECOP Executive Committee
- ECOP Budget Committee
- ECOP Legislative Committee
- ESCOP Chairs Advisory Committee
- ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee
- ESCOP Advocacy and Marketing Committee
- ESCOP Executive Committee

AESOP will provide advice to the ESCOP/ECOP Image Enhancement Task Force.

Meetings

AESOP participation in regional section meetings will be eliminated to reduce costs and to allow focus on Washington D. C. activities. However, if desired, AESOP may participate in regional meetings via conference call. The regional Executive Directors will facilitate any conference calls of this nature.

Official AESOP participation in system meetings will be limited to:

- Budget and Advocacy Committee meetings as required
- BAA Policy Board Meetings (as needed)
- SAES Workshop
- ESCOP winter meeting (to be held in Washington D. C., March 2002)
- Combined COPS meeting
- NASULGC Annual Meetings
- National Leadership Development program briefings as appropriate

AESOP will participate in an array of other ECOP and ESCOP committee meetings via conference call to provide briefings, background, and counsel.

CARET

All meetings of CARET are the responsibility of NASULGC and the AHS. The activities of CARET will be targeted to advocacy as part of the BAC efforts. AESOP will support CARET advocacy efforts. On request of the BAC Chair/Vice Chair, AESOP will provide legislative orientations, briefings, and briefing materials that will assist CARET in its advocacy efforts at the March and September CARET meetings.

All requests for program participation should be made well in advance to allow adequate preparation.

Reports

AESOP will submit quarterly reports of activities and accomplishments to the Chairs of ECOP and ESCOP.

Accountability and Evaluation

Management oversight and evaluation of CY 2002 activities will be provided by The Accountability and Evaluation Committee (AEC) comprised of the following:

- The BAC Chair or Vice-Chair
- Chair of ESCOP
- Executive Vice-Chair of ESCOP
- Chair of ECOP
- The NASULGC Extension Executive Director

The AEC will distribute AESOP quarterly reports to the Chair of the BAA-PB, the Chairs of ECOP and ESCOP committees with responsibility for budget and legislative matters, the Chair of the Farm Bill Implementation Task Force (if appointed), and any other committee with which AESOP maintains a close working relationship with a request for a written evaluation.

The AEC will meet quarterly via conference call with AESOP to evaluate the feedback from the committee chairs and to discuss progress. The committee will provide written feedback to AESOP with copies to ESCOP, ECOP, the BAA-PB Chair, and BAC. The Committee will also conduct a final evaluation at the end of the contract. The Executive Vice-Chair of ESCOP will be responsible for facilitating the conference calls, and for keeping minutes and records.