

Template for Close Out Session Report  
AASHTO-RAC  
July 10 – 13, 2006 Meeting

Title of Session: SCOR/RAC Officers Strategic Planning Session

Title of Presentation: SCOR/RAC Officers Strategic Planning Session

Date & Time: July 10, 2006 12:00 pm

Presenter(s) Name: Group Session

Phone: 202/334-1472

Note Taker: Chris Hedges

Contact Information: Email: chedges@nas.edu

Session summary:

The purpose of this session was to initiate the development of a strategic plan of action for use by RAC over the next several years. The desired outcome was a set of next steps needed to complete the development of the plan of action.

What key issues or ideas were discussed that need follow-up?

Cooperation among Research Programs

Facilitate coordination and cooperation among existing transportation research programs at federal and state levels. (E.g. state DOT programs, TRB programs, UTCs, FHWA, RITA, etc). Facilitate (and champion) a mechanism to share information among the leadership of these programs to help ensure that programs are complimentary, not duplicative. (RIP and TRIS can be an important resource for these activities).

Articulate the research needs of state DOTs to help direct UTCs and national programs.

Facilitate leveraging of transportation research funds with other organizations. Serve as a broker to set up funding partnerships and cooperative agreements.

Help to influence research program policy.

Reauthorization

Assist with the development of AASHTO's recommendations on research for the next reauthorization.

Determine what we did last time. What went "right" and what went "wrong"? What do we want in the next reauthorization and how do we get it?

*(Notes: The youngest and least experienced Congressional staff were assigned to research. We may have put forward too many research ideas. Too little clarification was provided on FHWA's programs. UTCs may have hurt themselves by getting too many earmarks. F-SHRP was underfunded and assigned to the wrong research title. However, SP&R funding was increased).*

Work closely with "coordinators" (lobbyists, federal liaisons) in your jurisdiction to promote the value of research.

Help to get research needs on the agenda of a new DOT commission on future transportation needs.

*(Note: This DOT commission is chaired by the Secretary of Transportation. AASHTO has established four groups to review needs for future of the interstate system, highway financing, freight, and safety. These groups will provide input to the DOT commission. Reports are expected by September, and will provide general direction for next reauthorization)*

Continue to demonstrate and market the value of research in the reauthorization process. Aim at the right target audience (DOT CEOs, Congressmen, general public). Need a unified message with respect to research needs. Demonstrate the value of the research that has been funded under the last and current transportation bills.

Identify what is *different* from last time (emerging issues) and how research can address these issues. Propose research as a *complement* to road construction / maintenance, not a competitor.

Study the model used by UTCs in the last reauthorization process. How did they achieve large increases in reauthorization? They hired a lobbyist, and didn't promise specific projects, they promised results. Stress short term programs with short term results (but keep long term needs in mind). Stress the benefits in specific congressional districts.

## The Value of Research

Measure, demonstrate, and communicate the value of research to decision makers.

Need to do a better job of “capturing attention” – marketing and promotion.

Marketing starts at home – need to foster relationships, develop trust, and forget alliances with senior management at DOTs. When management changes, the process must be repeated.

Find better ways to overcome resistance to change. (E.g. get operational staff involved with research from the beginning, don’t just hand them results at the end).

Need “softer” ways of evaluating value of research. Are the products being used? Are they beneficial, and how? May not need detailed analysis of costs and benefits. Don’t underestimate the value of compelling anecdotes.

Find ways to “roll up” performance measures from individual projects and programs to a national report on the value of research. Mine the information and put it in a format that’s appropriate for the target audience. May need specialized marketing expertise and non-traditional products (e.g. TV and radio spots). Need to learn from the private sector, trade and industry associations.

## UTCs

Serve as liaison between state DOT research programs and Council of University Transportation Centers (UTCs).

Find ways to direct or influence earmarks that provide the most benefit to the U.S. transportation system (e.g. address national research agendas or unfunded research needs from other programs such as NCHRP, SHRP 2).

Foster relationship between RAC and CUTC to identify opportunities for cooperation and collaboration. (*Appoint liaisons between RAC and CUTC?*)

Compile case studies of successful collaborations between DOTs and UTCs.

Explore opportunities to DOTs to provide loaned staff to RITA.

## Research Management

Facilitate the exchange of best practices on research program management among RAC members.

Develop improved models for the dissemination and implementation of research results.

Support the National Transportation Library and the continuing development and refinement of transportation library networks.

Build on TRIS as the central repositories of information about ongoing and completed transportation research. Expand the range of organizations that can submit information directly to the two databases.

Conduct a review of the peer exchange process and develop recommendations for future directions.

### Research Agenda

Determine whether RAC has a role in developing a national agenda.

*(Note: Many efforts have taken place to develop research agendas, including the national R&T Partnership forum, FHWA "road maps", AASHTO standing committee research agendas, etc., TRB annual critical issues list, results of TRB Environmental Needs conference)*

Determine RAC's role with respect to non-highway transportation research.

Determine RAC's role in the identification of best practices in transportation department management.

### SCOR/RAC Organization

Clarify relationship between RAC and SCOR. *(Are there ways to increase the interaction between SCOR and RAC?)*

Review RAC/SCOR organizational structure in the context of current mission and activities.

Review the need for subcommittees or task forces within RAC. *(Are there better*

*ways to use the time at the TRB annual meeting in order to achieve RAC's objectives?)*

Clarify role of RAC as liaison between state DOT research programs and:

- Other AASHTO committees
- U.S. DOT modal administration research offices
- TRB Committees on Technology Transfer and Conduct of Research
- Council of University Transportation Centers (UTCs)

Identify any action items that require follow-up.

Pursue the issues identified above as the basis for the development of a RAC strategic plan.

Other Remarks: