

**Meeting Notes**  
**RAC Website Working Group**  
**Monday, May 21, 2018**  
**9:00-10:00 a.m. (EST)**

**Participants:** Cynthia Jones, Sue Sillick, Beth Klemann, Allison Hardt, Natassja Linzau, Flavia Pereira, Dale Peabody

**1. Review and approval/disapproval of April 23, 2018, meeting notes (Attachment A)** —The April meeting notes were approved (Cynthia/Allison). **Natassja** will post these on the website.

**2. Update on Draft Website Governance Document (Attachment B)**—Approved by the RAC Leadership on 5/11/18. Discuss next steps.

Allison reported that the individuals on the RAC Leadership call were very impressed with the governance document and that they had no recommended changes. The group decided that we should post the governance document on the website. There was some discussion about where on the website the governance document should be posted, as well as the best format for the document.

Here are the next steps we identified for this document:

- A.** We decided to post a link to the PDF document under “What’s New” on the homepage, as well as linking to it on the Administration Task Force homepage under “Products.” **Natassja** will post the document and link to it in the appropriate place on the website.
- B.** We will notify the RAC listserv that this document is now available and offer it to any groups who would like to use it as a model for their website (e.g., High Value Research website, Transportation Pooled Fund website, etc.). **Natassja** will draft an email and send it to Allison and Beth for approval.
- C.** **Natassja** will send a copy of the document to David Dubov, the Web Services Manager for AASHTO, as well as Keith Platte and Jim McDonnell.
- D.** The group also suggested that if people ask about the document frequently enough, we could also link to it on the FAQ page.

Allison mentioned that another issue raised during the RAC Leadership call was about funding for the four websites. The current contract for three of the websites will expire in June 2019; the contract for the fourth website expires in June 2020.

- Chris Hedges brought this issue up during the RAC Leadership call and he said that it doesn’t matter to him how we fund them, but if we want them to continue, we need to figure out the best way to provide funding for their support and maintenance.
- Another option to consider would be to fund the websites out of NCHRP’s administrative overhead funds.
- RAC Leadership will consider the most appropriate way to fund these websites, because the websites directly support the RAC Task Force and R&I activities.
- Sue said she doesn’t think that the funding should come from a pooled fund study or Technical Service Program, because all of the states benefit from the websites.
- Cynthia concurred with Sue that the websites support research managers’ overall activities as well as the broader work of RAC and task forces, rather than being restricted to the support of a few individual

states, so using a pooled fund study or Technical Service Program for funding the websites does not make sense.

- Allison said that Dale would be talking with the Task Force Chairs about possibly putting together a problem statement to fund the websites.
- Dale said that he and Sue had a conversation about thinking of funding for Task Force support and websites. He is asking each Task Force to pull together their list of needs to get funding for the next 5 years or so.
- We will put funding for websites and support of Task Force activities on the Website Working Group Agenda for June. **Natassja** will put this item on the agenda for our June meeting.

### 3. Review Pending List—Group needs to discuss what we will focus on next.

#### Website Changes still pending:

- **Website Enhancements Wish List**—Based on our discussion of the address/print plugin, we agreed to discuss what other changes members think would make the website work better.
- **Update FAQ page**—Test page is located at: <https://research.transportation.org/test-page-two/>
  - The group agreed that we should make this a “homework” assignment for our June meeting. **Natassja** will include looking at the FAQ test page as a homework assignment in her email when she sends out the meeting notes.
- **New Model Calendar page**—Natassja still needs to create a draft page with the new layout and include all the changes that Sue suggested.
  - We discussed this item and the requirements for the model calendar. Sue has provided some good suggestions and comments that **Natassja** will incorporate into the calendar, as soon as she has time.
  - The goal is to make a high-level, general calendar that includes the deadlines for all of CRP’s programs (ACRP, BTSCR, NCHRP, TCRP). There could be different ways to present the information, such as color-coding by program, etc.
  - Allison said she liked the high-level view but acknowledged that this info is presented differently in multiple places (e.g., links to RAC 101, specific dates in RPPM, Mentoring Guidelines).
  - Cynthia mentioned that she uses the model calendar when mentoring to help new RAC members understand the flow of the research cycle for CRP. She also said that she uses the timeframes outlined in the Funding Guidebook.
- **Review and Update RAC Surveys Topics/Categories** (suggested by Sue)
  - Natassja mentioned there is a list of the current topics used in the RAC Surveys database at the following URL: <https://research.transportation.org/survey-categories/>
  - We need to look at other topical lists that are available, such as the topics used in RPPM for Strategic Research Topics.
  - Flavia mentioned that the Value of Research(VoR) Task Force is looking at topic categories for submitted projects. She said that Bill (Chair of VoR) would be collecting ideas from other DOTs.
  - Flavia shared the topic categories they use at Connecticut DOT with Bill and will share those categories with the group (see Attachment A). Flavia also shared that Connecticut DOT tries to have a few broad categories rather than many small categories.
  - Sue shared the categories they use in RPPM (see Attachment A).

- Beth added that research topics are a subset of what the RAC Surveys are about; it's not just research, but other transportation categories such as structures, materials, etc.
- Flavia suggested that maybe we could follow what the VoR Task Force does but add other topics that relate to surveys, as needed.
- **Natassja** will add the Survey Topics/Categories as an agenda item for our June meeting.
- **Natassja** will also include a two-fold homework assignment: (1) group members should look at the categories we currently have on the website and (2) review and/or research the categories/topics used for RiP, TRID, RPPM, HVR, and other sources, so we can get a sense of what already exists.
- **New Page on R&I/RAC Website for Help Documents**—This is a request from Keith Platte. Here is the text from his email:

A work group within RAC has developed a series of five “how to” documents, which are attached. Could we set up a new page on the Research website that contains the attached documents? I was thinking each PDF could be a picture to click. Is this possible? The end game is to send the page with all these documents (we are looking to produce another 5 or 6 of these) to the other AASHTO committees to help them with the research process.

- How to Guide on Transportation Research Funding
- How to Guide on the AASHTO Committee Research Process
- How to Write an Effective Research Statement
- How to Create a Transportation Research Strategic Plan
- Purpose of "How To" White Papers for the AASHTO Committees

Natassja shared a sample page that she created for Help documents, which can be viewed at the following URL: <https://research.transportation.org/aashto-committee-outreach/>. However, Sue said that none of the documents are ready for posting yet because they are still in draft form. She said that AASHTO has assigned an intern to work on this, but that won't begin until after the AASHTO Annual Meeting. **Sue** will be in touch with Natassja when the Coordination and Collaboration Task Force is ready to proceed.

**4. Website changes completed.** Natassja posted the meeting notes from February and March, which were approved at our last meeting. She also sent Allison the draft governance document, which was subsequently discussed at the Administration Task Force meeting and ultimately was approved during the RAC Leadership call on 5/11/18.

**ADJOURNED.** Next meeting will occur on **Monday, June 25, 2018, from 9:00 to 10:00am Eastern, via Zoom.**

## **ATTACHMENT B**

### Sample Lists of Topic Categories for Consideration

#### **From RPPM:**

Administration and Management  
Aviation  
Bridges and Other Structures  
Construction  
Data and Information Technology  
Design  
Economics  
Education and Training  
Energy  
Environment  
Finance  
Freight Transportation  
Geotechnology  
History  
Hydraulics and Hydrology  
Law  
Maintenance and Preservation  
Materials  
Marine Transportation  
Operations and Traffic Management  
Pavements  
Passenger/Public Transportation  
Pedestrians and Bicyclists  
Pipelines  
Planning and Forecasting  
Policy  
Railroads  
Research (about Research)  
Safety and Human Factors  
Security and Emergencies  
Society  
Terminals and Facilities  
Transportation (General)  
Vehicles and Equipment  
Other

#### **From Connecticut:**

Administration  
Construction and Specification  
Highway Geometrics

Hydrology and Hydraulics  
Maintenance and Operations  
Materials and Pavement  
Safety  
Geotechnical  
Surveying  
Structures  
Training and Implementation Technologies  
Traffic Engineering  
Transit and Commuter Rail  
Transportation Planning  
Energy and Environment  
Management and Performance  
AASHTO RAC Reports

**From Maryland:**

- Environmental
- Highway Design
- Hydrology and Hydraulics
- ITS
- Maintenance
- Materials
- Planning
- Safety
- Traffic