

Nomination / Application  
for  
National Association of State Chief Administrators (NASCA)  
2006 Outstanding Program Awards

**Program Title:** SAO College  
**NASCA Member:** State of Ohio  
**Submitted by:** Roger B. Booker, AIA  
**Title:** State Architect of Ohio

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### **Justification Summary**

After realizing an eroding uniformity in the state's management of its capital facilities development, in 2001 the Office of the State Architect, a program unit of the Ohio Department of Administrative Services, initiated SAO College, a program to train its statewide partners in the practices and policies of managing the design and construction of the state's capital facilities.

During the ensuing period, projects managed by the office have realized a significant improvement in the rate of on-time completion (from 35% to 83%), a major improvement in completing projects within the original budget (from 65% to 83%), a general improvement in customer satisfaction, and improved status within allied professional groups.

SAO College has presented training to well over a thousand attendants from all facets of its client base, including architects, engineers, accountants, construction contractors and suppliers, and allied government personnel. It has been presented in the three major cities of Ohio: Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Columbus.

### **Significant Innovation / Originality**

Some early phase surveys of its owner-customers revealed that many were uncertain of the value of the Office of the State Architect ("SAO"), and many professional-customers of the office were confused about the processes and procedures required by SAO for designing and constructing state facilities, and surprisingly, the internal staff were not uniformly applying its own rules of practice.

As the concept of SAO College evolved, a variety of applications came in to being. The location would vary, the presentation would vary, and the method of presenting would vary. All variations, however, would focus on teaching the principles and policies espoused by SAO for all state projects. To our knowledge, this is one of the first applications of such a methodology of presenting government to its varied constituents.

SAO College has had training conducted by staff professionals and paraprofessionals, and is usually produced with a private-sector subject matter expert or one from another public agency as a co-presenter. SAO College feedback has told us this lends even more credibility to the attendants at the exercise. By providing design and construction professionals with easy access to the presenters, SAO has fostered better communication with a wide sector of its customers. It has also enjoyed a reduced number of inquiries about potential project problems and more frequent comments about client satisfaction, and more.

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The sessions have been presented in classroom style, seminar format, panel discussions, group debates, and even a “quiz show” format similar to the television show “Jeopardy”. All methods have been successful, varying in some degree to the topic and the venue.

### **Demonstrated Effectiveness**

Each SAO College class offers the students an opportunity to rate the class they attended and the speakers for each class. The result of the feedback gives SAO a great indication of how close we meet our intended goals and gives some ideas on how to improve for the next series of seminars. It gives SAO valuable insight about the effectiveness of the speakers and the timeliness of our topics. Generally, the returned surveys have been positive and demonstrate a continuing need for this program.

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### **Applicability**

Our industry and technology are dynamic and they require constant attention. We have never-ending responsibility to understand the changes and to implement well-designed responses to them. Face to face interaction is a human need that satisfies a necessary but fleeting form of communication. This methods used in SAO College to educate and share information sharing is effective, perhaps even essential in this age of electronic dialog. State entities and others can benefit from sharing their information of how to make projects progress more smoothly and efficiently. Simply posting information on a website is not always the right way to share the right information at the right time. This method can be applied to any government organization.

### **Requirements**

The state of Ohio is a dues-paying member of NASCA. SAO College has existed since 2001.