

## **Draft Goals for a Legislator Orientation and Training**

### **Legislative Council**

Proposed for April 4, 2014, Meeting

Prepared by Susan B. Fox

#### Goals

- 1) Provide three categories of training: all legislators, committees and presiding officers, and leadership
- 2) Provide more time than in the past to improve orientation and make it ongoing, continue training after there is some shared experience (i.e. additional time in December, "mock session").
- 3) Break the training down into sections (just in time).
- 4) Integrate training with social time to build relationships.
- 5) Provide additional training and a guide specifically for committee members, presiding officers, and staff to provide shared understanding of their roles, responsibilities, rules, and powers and their support of one another.
- 6) Provide specific guidance about purpose and function of committee work, how to accomplish responsibilities, maintenance of decorum, and importance of deadlines.

#### Additional Information

Excerpts from Strategic Planning Outcomes

#### Legislative Framework Ideas and tasks:

##### Calendar

- Provide more time to improve orientation and make it ongoing;
- Use the ability to break down the training further into sections like personal information needed (pay and benefits, parking, computers), committee information, floor actions, etc.
- Include in the discussion of the calendar the better use of the first Saturdays for potential training

##### Communication and Training Tasks

- For chairman, vice-chairman, ranking minority members - additional training, identify training modules, review, identify, and find places for enhancement.
- Guide for committee members: there was discussion about a focus on bills and various deadlines, calendar (related to above), committee member rights and responsibilities (use information from Rules and Mason's to explain a rule and the purpose for the rule)
- During session, continue training after there is some shared experience. Identify goals and objectives, i.e. potential integration with some social time for legislators to get to know one another better outside of the Capitol. One idea that came up under the calendar discussion was to build on the past practice of freshman dinners for more time to be with other experienced legislators, leadership. Current practice is informal, lobbyist-sponsored, and bipartisan organized by two experienced legislators.

- Staff needs additional training and communication with chairs so both may understand better each other's role and what support is there for the committee chairman and members. Staff needs to know that leadership and chairs will be supportive of receiving advice and need opportunities for chairman and staff to build a trust relationship. Look into joint meetings with all chairs and staffers to hear guidelines and provide additional time for chair and staffer to talk and come to agreement about roles and responsibilities. We need examples of past chairs for mentorship and leadership needs to provide direction and, in turn, leadership may want guidelines on what direction they need to provide.

What steps, strategies, and actions will foster the best possible outcomes?

- Continuing to improve leg orientation process

Communication and Training:

- Enhanced training for all groups: freshman, leaders, bipartisan, committee gatherings. Additional orientation during December - additional day
- Training of leadership staff about process and role, Discussion about permanent vice chairs. Open lines of communication between staff and leadership. Try to set up early meeting with all leadership with Governor
- Additional chairman training. Chairman (vice-chairman) training: accepted standards, what's coming and how to run a committee, leadership direction to ask questions, early December training is not enough especially when there are many sophomore chairman, norms and decorum, does the committee or the chair "own" the committee, staff and chairman relationship- training and support. More education for chairman in regards to options, subcommittees. Require minority vice-chairman - sitting with chairman - rules committee change
- Training on committee function: How do you raise an issue/problem? What is the function of a committee hearing? Structure of rules/decorum in committee? Promote conflict or promote investigation of a bill? More upfront committee training: explaining rules and powers of full committee, ways to take time out. Up front committee-focused meetings. Guide drawn up to be a better committee member.
- Committee dinners at beginning of session? (two groups) Remind committee chairman of duty to call and welcome members
- Conflict management - training? grandstanding? not personal
- Training day all day - end with social
- Additional orientation during December - additional day for committee chairman, freshman - come in and do a complete mock legislative day. Hands On - motions, substitute motions, "problem legislator", lobbyists.
- Periodic information seminars: staff and interested legislators, caucus hands out topic list and legislators rate topics from most important/interest. Staff will present those topics. Staff meeting with legislators weekly on any topic a group wants covered.