



Committee-to-Committee Liaisons: Procedural Guidelines and Expectations

The role of a committee-to-committee liaison is to improve the communication and relationship between committees through specific goals, deliberations, and action items that are mutually established and periodically reviewed by the affected committees. The ultimate goal is to eliminate undesirable duplication of efforts and, where committees' interests converge, to provide an efficient means to link their efforts for more productive outcomes.

A. Types of Committee-to-Committee Liaisons

There are several types of possible liaison assignments:

- *Joint visiting* – This is the traditional liaison where liaisons visit another committee's meetings and may or may not provide reports.
- *Mutual interest area sharing* – This is an extension of the traditional liaison wherein liaisons provide pertinent information to committees tackling issues of mutual interest.
- *Information gathering* – Here the liaison interacts with the committee to collect information to be used by the liaison's committee in committee discussions and action.
- *Succession planning* – The liaison (ConC and N&E) serves as a reviewer, coach, and talent scout to make recommendations that impact the committee's long range development and effectiveness.
- *Collaborative working* – The liaison is part of a joint subcommittee or working group tackling mutually identified issues with a defined outcome and product report that includes recommendations.

B. Procedural Guidelines for Committee-to-Committee Liaison Assignments

Regardless of the type of liaison assignment, the liaison must be engaged in committee activities through agreed-upon goals jointly established by the committees. The respective committee Chairs play a crucial role in the achievement of effective "liaisoning" and defining the specific expectations. Thus, Committee Chairs should consider the following in establishing, supporting, involving, and reviewing committee-to-committee liaisons:

- Make all liaison assignments with the purpose of improving communication and relationships between the committees. Maintain a current committee website and utilize electronic means (e.g., ACS Network) to make committee materials available to all committee members, including liaisons, on a timely basis.
- Develop approximately five committee goals for the year and post these on the committee website.
- Use the ACS staff liaison to review other committees' agendas for areas of mutual interest.

- Establish a ‘liaison coordinator’ within the committee to examine the mission and goals of other committees and areas of mutual activity to identify where liaison appointments can be beneficial.
- Select the type of liaison that best fits mutual interest area(s).
- Create defined outcomes for each liaison assignment that are shared with the affected committees, published in the committee’s agenda book, and posted on the committee’s website.
- Publish in the committee’s agenda book and post on the committee’s website the roster of the committee’s committee-to-committee liaisons.
- Communicate via electronic means (e.g., email), phone, etc. with liaisons before each meeting to articulate meeting objectives and issues.
- Include liaisons in relevant between-meeting committee/subcommittee discussions related to their mutual interest whether by email, teleconference, etc.
- Incorporate written liaison reports into the agenda book.
- Include oral liaison reports **only** when these address issues being considered by sub-committees and schedule these with related action items or sub-committee reports. Do not cluster liaison reports out of context at the end of the meeting.
- Utilize a three-year periodic review of all existing liaison assignments to determine their viability to the committee’s mission. This review should include the perspective of the existing liaison and recommend continuation only when value is being added. In some cases, annual reviews of the liaison relationships may be appropriate.

In some cases, greater committee-to-committee interaction may be required than can be accomplished through an individual liaison. This may necessitate the formation of joint subcommittees, task forces, or coalitions to address issues or converging interests of both committees. In such a case, a lead committee should be established or the lead should be rotated between the committees involved.

C. Liaison Best Practices Expectations

The effectiveness of liaisons in serving committees should be greatly-enhanced by following these best practices:

As a liaison, you should

- Know the stated goals and defined outcomes for your liaison assignment.
- Know and understand the mission and goals of the committee.
- Assume an interactive role with the committee of the liaison assignment.
- Have routine meetings with the Chairs of the host and liaison committees and definitely communicate with them immediately prior to the Committee Meetings/National Meetings.
- Read and be familiar with relevant issues on both host and liaison committee agendas prior to the meetings.

- Communicate between meetings with the complementary liaison to focus on and work to achieve the defined outcomes.
- Participate in any committee/subcommittee discussions relevant to your assignment that are scheduled between national meetings.
- Be prepared to actively participate in committee and subcommittee discussions.
- Provide a written liaison report for each agenda book and for any posting on the committee websites that focuses on progress toward the defined outcomes.
- Present an oral report **only** when there are relevant and timely issues related to the defined outcomes. This oral report should be coordinated with the appropriate sub-committee report or action item and focus on the progress toward the defined outcomes. The oral report should not include a list of committee activities or programming at the meeting – this should be included in the written report or distributed in a handout.
- Be actively involved in the three-year (or annual if needed) periodic review of your liaison assignment and address the viability of the liaison assignment to the committee's mission.

D. Suggested Timeline for Liaison Activities

January/February:

- Review the top five (5) goals of your home and host committees

One Month Prior to the National Meeting -- Early Spring/Late Summer:

- Submit a written report for inclusion in host committee's agenda book.
- Committee Chair (or Liaison coordinator) should contact liaisons to discuss how they can advance the committee's goals.

As soon as Committee Agendas are available:

- Review the host committee agenda for items of interest to the home committee.
- Review home committee agenda for items which could be facilitated by the host committee.
- Contact the complementary liaison to discuss any overlapping committee interests.
- Prepare a handout for distribution at host committee meeting.

Immediately after the National Meeting

- Check with Committee Chairs and Liaisons regarding any action items.