

# ASO CAS Communicator

May 2011

Issue 2

## Dates & Activities

### June

- Argonne CAS Effectiveness Self-Assessment 6/6-6/10
- PPPL CAS Peer Review (ASO observing)
- ASO Division CAS Training

### July

- UChicago Review of CAS related programs and activities

### August

- ASO CAS Effectiveness Review
- BOG CAS Oversight Committee Implementation Review
- Fermi CAS Peer Review (ASO observing)

## Next Issue

- CAS Effectiveness Reviews

**ASO CAS Communicator** is a periodic newsletter for conveying CAS related information and assisting in training ASO personnel.



## ASO Oversight Plan “facilitating mission success”

With the issuance of the ASO Oversight Plan in April, ASO is now poised to better utilize staff expertise in providing comprehensive oversight of Argonne. In general, the Plan describes the oversight program for maintaining awareness of site conditions and effectiveness of Argonne core processes.

ASO employs numerous methods and processes for carrying out oversight responsibilities. We utilize Argonne performance data and information, assessments, and operational awareness activities to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of core processes, programs and management systems. Our

oversight planning is further focused using risk considerations, performance history trends, assessment data, and regulatory requirements.

Major oversight program elements include: PEMP evaluations; review and approval of various Argonne core processes, systems, plans, and other submissions; operational awareness; assessments; and oversight of the Argonne CAS.

While all facets of the program are important, ASO staff spend the majority of effort involved in operational awareness activities. These activities are simply described as the routine interactions between ASO and Argonne

that provide a basis for ASO knowledge of current activities and happenings around the Lab.

Operational awareness activities include: meetings, ongoing interactions (informal and formal), walkthroughs and work observations, surveillances, issue management (including follow-up on longstanding issues) and incident / occurrence investigations and follow-up.

The other major component of ASO oversight consists of the various assessments that we perform: functional area reviews, routine assessments, for-cause reviews, external assessments, and readiness type reviews.

## CAS Training Corner

### **Q. What is the ASO Oversight Database?**

A. The database is a mechanism to inform management and others of staff oversight activities. It provides ASO with a formalized system to record routine activity data. Information from the database is used for trending purposes to substantiate our

evaluation of Lab performance under the PEMP.

### **Q. What type of information should be included in the ASO Oversight Database?**

A. Any and all activities that are related to routine interactions between ASO and Argonne should be included in the oversight database.

The database is located in the SMART system and new entries can be added under the “Create New Item” tab. Just select “ASO Oversight Activities” and **Item Type** (meeting, walkthrough, etc.) to make a new form to record data. The database can also be used to record and track minor issues to closure.

## ASO Document Review and Development

Below is the latest status on ASO operating documents:

- **ASO Oversight Plan** - Completed. April 2011
- **ASO Issues Management** - SOP being developed. June 2011
- **ASO SOPs** - All SOPs reviewed/revised. June 2011
- **ASO Quality Assurance Plan** - Under revision. June 2011
- **ASO ISMS Description** Under Revision. June 2011
- **ASO Contract Management Plan** - Revised by September 2011

ASO CAS Communicator



## Site Office Highlights from CAS Peer Reviews

To date, five SC CAS Peer Reviews have been completed. The following highlights site office CAS implementation and is being provided to use as information in further strengthening our oversight and improving ASO programs. The full reports are available on the shared directory.

### Oak Ridge

ORSO articulated a noteworthy approach to oversight and assurance, focusing on observed performance and results, rather than review of detailed documentation. Building a level of transparency into the CAS was a necessary precursor for this result, yet the transparency did not mean that the Site Office needed to see every piece of documentation. Rather, the transparency was manifested as appropriate DOE visibility into the performance outcomes and results of Corporate parent and the Laboratory management assurance activities. Lessons Learned: Shift the thinking/mindset from compliance to performance; from orders to systems; from paper to outcomes. Build trusting, ongoing relationships with the contractor at all levels. Utilize effectiveness reviews to validate process functionality.

### PNNL

PNSO also reviews assurance data produced by the Board including charters, agendas and related risk packages on areas the Board and PNNL identify as concerns. The PNSO participates in performance analysis meetings with PNNL management system owners and organizational level areas, and are afforded limited access to dashboard and PNNL Independent Oversight (IO) reports. The performance data PNNL makes available to the Site Office is enormous. The Site Office is focused on performance and mission delivery. It was noted by the PNSO they have reduced their assessments over the past several years. Mutual trust in most of the CAS functional areas is strong, and the Site Office is working with PNNL to improve trust and transparency in a few areas. Lessons Learned: PNSO reflected on shifting their activities to the most important work outlined in the PNSO Annual Performance Plan. They also discussed the opportunity to update SCMS to better describe the Office of Science shift from compliance assessment to performance measurement of the contractor.

### Berkeley

BSO is moving toward a practice of “performance validation” vs. oversight, and using multiple methods of validating performance. BSO reported that the number of formal assessments they conduct of Laboratory functions and activities has decreased significantly (~40%) as their confidence in the CAS has increased. The level of confidence in assurance systems, and productivity of interactions with the contractor at the activity level is fairly recent, especially in the ES&H area, and needs to mature to a sustainable state.

BSO believes that the CAS in place is adequate, functioning, and is in a “continuous improvement” mode having no significant gaps. Value delivered from the CAS to date includes a stronger partnership with the contractor and the Laboratory, greater trust between parties, better understanding of risks and performance in areas key to the lab’s success, efficient leveraging and partnering between the partners on assessment activities, and more efficient and effective alignment of site office resources with the needs of the CAS. BSO’s sense is that the benefits are in line with costs.

### **Jefferson**

A laudable communication mechanism is the tri-party team comprised of the TJNAF CAS manager, the JSA liaison, and the S&H representative from TJSO. This team, initially formed to prepare for the CAS Peer Review, continues to meet regularly to support transparency and alignment of CAS activities.

TJSO and TJNAF prepare an integrated assessment schedule for all their planned activities over a three-year period. They apply an assessment planning tool, which takes into consideration the requirements and the previous assessments over the last 5 years, to categorize assessment activities by risk ranking. The methodology of risk ranking is appropriate, with the permit programs/life safety area being in the highest risk category and more routine activities/programs being in the lowest risk category. The Site Office generally focuses their oversight activities in the areas of highest risk.

Through the CAS, TJSO has full access to JLab assessment schedules, reports, and performance measures. This has provided the TJSO with the confidence to leverage the CAS to reduce their assessments and increase joint assessments, allowing the TJSO to use resources to support mission rather than focus on compliance. The CAS also allows TJSO to more efficiently use expert resources from the federal complex by focusing on areas of greatest risk. TJSO is continuing to evaluate areas where reports/actions could be eliminated or requirements could be met through access to applicable information.

### **Brookhaven**

BHSO currently uses a risk-based assessment approach to perform its oversight function which considers results from the Contractor’s self-assessment processes, third-party assessments, and BHSO day-to-day operational awareness activities. The Site Office develops a risk matrix consisting of hazard levels, past performance, future operations/activities, BHSO Issues Database contents, and DOE-wide trends and patterns. The Contractor’s programs or functional areas that score higher in the matrix receive increased attention.

BHSO is working on modifying their oversight methodologies to be more system-focused and reduce transactional evaluations as the CAS matures. BHSO managers are looking at evaluating assessment results not as individual findings but more from a process/system point of view. Specifically, the Site Office no longer requires the Contractor to develop a corrective action plan for Level 2 & 3 findings, but rather expects the contractor to develop an appropriate plan and correct deficiencies. In follow-up, BHSO is conducting an assessment of how the Lab addresses the correction and closeout of Level 2 findings to verify this system approach is working as anticipated.

BHSO plans to develop an upcoming collaborative integrated assessment schedule beginning with some planning efforts this year (moving from ‘oversight to insight’). Site office personnel currently use data from their assessments to inform decisions on evaluating program areas. Similarly, the Site Office intends to work with their Laboratory counterparts to create a collaborative integrated assessment schedule, which has the potential to improve both efficiency and effectiveness. The main focus will be on finding the right balance in the type and collaborative way that BHSO approaches assessments in the future. Over time, BHSO expects to rely more on the assurance programs of the Contractor, BNL internal assessments, and external/third-party assessments to inform. Overall, BHSO’s intent is to validate systems effectiveness while still conducting all federally mandated oversight and reviews.