

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Engineer Professional Advisory Committee**  
Thursday, December 19, 2002

The Engineer Professional Advisory Committee (EPAC) welcomes your input and participation. Meetings are open to all PHS Engineers and Architects. Those who are not able to attend in person may attend via conference call.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

CDR Michael Coene, EPAC Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. EDT in Rockville, MD. The October 24, 2002 minutes were approved. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 23, at 1:30 pm EST in North Carolina, Research Triangle Park. The agenda and other information regarding this off-site meeting will be sent by email.

**II. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**A. Office of the Chief Engineer (OCE):** RADM Robert Williams reported the following announcements.

CPO PAC Meeting Announcements

1. Surgeon General – He is recovering nicely from his surgery, so well, in fact he was able to accompany the other surgeons general to Guantanamo Bay for a recent meeting. He is currently working on his priorities, fleshing out the definitions for three main areas; prevention, preparedness (across the Commissioned Corps and the Public Health Service and agencies), and closing the gap (health disparities and research). More to come on this subject in the near future.
2. COA Conference – Individual category papers and individual category day will now fit into the same day. There will not be a separate break out session for papers. For example, the sessions to be held on Monday and Wednesday are being developed by the program committee and Tuesday is category day.
3. Field Utility Uniform – The Surgeon General prefers the woodland green BDU. More information to come later from DCP.

4. AMSUS - VADM Carmona was very pleased with the events he participated in. Kudos were given to CDR Poneleit, who is also working on the AMSUS 2003 meeting.
5. Aide de Campe – Request out now for an Aide-De-Campe for the Surgeon General. Non-reimbursable details for 3–6 months.
6. Report to Congress – On the topic of strengthening and revitalizing the PHS Commissioned Corps. That report was signed off by the Assistant Secretary for Health, Dr. Eve Slater, in September 2002. It will be available either on a website or by email.
7. CCRF – A move underway - RADM John Babb and his group will be moved into the office of the Surgeon General with the pending move of the rest of OER into the Department of Homeland Security sometime in 2003.
8. Promotion Task Force – Has been working steadily and will hopefully have a penultimate draft of the report to the Surgeon General and the Deputy Surgeon General in January. The highlights will be discussed at the next CPO PAC meeting. The progress to date has been to develop precepts and looking at how we can develop benchmarks, i.e., what does it mean to be an O-4 in terms of performance, officership, education, etc.

#### EPAC Announcements

1. E Week February 17-21 - The PHS Engineers luncheon and awards ceremony will be held on February 21 at USUHS. We have five PHS officers and civil servants that are up for the top 10 Federal Engineer of the Year. We will know more in January.
2. 2003 Architects and Engineers Leadership Development Seminar - Mark your calendars! The seminar will be held in Tucson, AZ at the Sheraton El Conquistador from April 21-24. Registration information will be available in January. We have requested the Surgeon General to come and speak.
3. Award Nominations – Nominations for the SAME Green and Hollis awards and the Cummings Plaque as well as the for the Villforth Leadership and Burgess young engineer awards are due in February.
4. EPAC accomplishments – It has been a full year of accomplishments, and we have a number of members who are rotating off. This is CDR Mike Coene's last meeting as EPAC Chair, although he will be staying on as an EPAC member. RADM Williams thanked CDR Coene for his leadership and the wide range of accomplishments across all the subcommittees.

RADM Williams further suggested that each subcommittee chair provide a summary of their subcommittee's activities and accomplishments for the past year. Other folks who are rotating off are CAPT Leroy Mickleson, CDR Maurice West, Mr. Mitch Williams, Ms. Lisa Hayes, and LCDR Nicole Wolanski.

**B. EPAC Chair:** CDR Michael Coene reported the following

Thanks - CDR Coene gave special thanks to:

- ◆ RADM Williams for his leadership;
- ◆ Mr. Brian Kong for all his work on the Healthy Building Initiative;
- ◆ LT Jen Martin for planning the 2003 Leadership conference;
- ◆ Ms. Hayes and her work on the Engineers Luncheon and Engineers category day of the COA conference;
- ◆ CDR West for processing all the awards and awards handbook;
- ◆ The Recruiting and Retention subcommittee for the new impressive website and all their efforts, especially to LCDR Helgeson;
- ◆ The Rules subcommittee and CAPT Cuzme for getting the new members on board and getting a new Chair-elect;
- ◆ Emergency Preparedness and CAPT Rodenbeck for putting together the new handbooks;
- ◆ Mentoring and Mitch Williams
- ◆ ...basically, CDR Coene feels that the members of EPAC made his job easy this year.

Special thanks to the chairs who are rotating off: Mitch Williams, Ms. Hayes, CDR West, and CAPT Mickelson. Thanks also to LCDR Wolanski for being the executive secretary.

**III. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to discuss.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

CDR Coene opened discussions on new business:

- A. Change of Assignments/Membership Representation - LCDR Bond has been switched from EPA to National Park Service. She will now hold the At-large position and CAPT Surampalli will now fill the EPA slot. Each will fulfill the remainder of their terms and business will continue as usual. EPAC unanimously voted to approve this change.
- B. Election of EPAC chair elect for 2003 – CAPT Cuzme introduced this topic and started by calling for any nominations that have not previously been received. CDR Kathy Poneleit gave a description of her intent as well as her work and

training experience. A vote was taken and CDR Poneleit's nomination was approved and she is now the EPAC chair elect for 2003.

- C. Strategic Action Plan – Plans will be emailed to CDR Coene and this topic will be brought up for discussion in the January 23rd meeting.
- D. End of Year Report – Each subcommittee chair, please submit a report of your committees' accomplishments for the past year.

## V. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Awards: CDR Maurice West Reported the following:
  1. The Awards Subcommittee received 14 papers to be judged in the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Engineer Literary Awards. Papers were submitted in all five categories. The projected schedule is to complete the 1<sup>st</sup> round of scoring by the end of January, the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of scoring by the end of February, and a recommendation to the Chief Engineer in early March.
  2. The Awards Subcommittee is currently evaluating six nominations received for the PHS Engineer of the Year. Nominations were submitted by ATSDR, FDA, HRSA, IHS, NIOSH and NPS. Evaluations will be completed by the end of this month and a recommendation will be forwarded to the Chief Engineer the first week of January, 2003.
  3. The Awards Subcommittee is calling for nominations for the Ian K. Burgess Outstanding Young Engineer of the Year, the John C. Villforth Leadership Award, and the SAME Hollis Medal, Green Medal, and Cumming Plaque. Information on these awards and nominations forms can be found on the engineers' web page at <http://www.usphsengineer.org/Awards>. The deadline for application for all awards is February 28, 2003.
  4. I have had several discussions with the American Institute of Architects regarding cosponsoring a PHS Architect award. They recommended that we develop an award program that follows the process outlined in the American Institute of Architects Component Guidelines for Architectural Design Awards Program. AIA would then review the protocol and determine if the awards program is appropriate to be cosponsored by AIA, or recommend changes that would result in the award being cosponsored by AIA. The Awards Subcommittee is proceeding with establishing an ad hoc subcommittee to develop an award protocol using AIA guidelines.
  5. The Awards Subcommittee has reviewed the Engineering Category Strategic Action Plan. One action item has been initiated as discussed in 4, above. The remainder of goals and action items identified in Focus Area IV, Recognition would be appropriate for the Awards subcommittee as well as supporting the

goals of some of the other focus areas. The Awards Subcommittee will have further discussions and incorporate the remaining goals into the 2003 agenda.

6. LCDR Bond is the new chairperson for the Awards Subcommittee.

B. Building Design & Construction: Mr. Brian Kong reported the following:

The Healthy Building Initiative (HBI) Concept Workshop was held on 2002-10-25, and consisted of 19 participants. Many thanks to the EPAC leadership RADM Williams, CDR Coene, and CAPT Rodenbeck for helping achieve the goals of the concept workshop and moving this initiative forward. Mr. Gene Cox-Ganser and Mr. Robert Goldstein were guest speakers. The subcommittee has identified association groups for HBI support and has received several replies. This is in preparation for a meeting with the OSG, which has been postponed from 2002-12-17 to 2003-01-16. Subcommittee is preparing a short PowerPoint presentation and a brief HBI paper for this meeting. Subcommittee appreciates any input from the full EPAC.

Subcommittee started again to discuss updates from various subcommittee member organizations. For example, HHS Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Facilities noted a recent article "Best Maintenance Practices" Maintenance Technology November 2002 that stated 100% of a maintenance person's time being covered by a work order and maintenance costs being within +/- 2% of budget are a couple of standards for best maintenance practices. NASA extended a prototype training to HHS. "Construction Best Practices-Sustainable Design" was held 2002-11 at San Francisco. A representative from NIH DES was able to attend.

C. Career Development: Ms. Lisa Hayes reported the following:

The Career Development subcommittee has been focused on three things in our past two conference calls: 1. Helping the ad hoc Engineer and Architect Leadership Development subcommittee when they need our assistance in their planning efforts. I'm sure LT Martin will share the latest update on the planning in her report. 2. Planning the agenda for Category Day at the COA conference in 2003. And 3. Reviewing the Engineer and Architect strategic action plan and determining how the subcommittee can contribute to the implementation of the recommended actions in the plan.

1. **Category Day Planning** - The theme for the COA conference in 2003 is "Weaving Tomorrow's Public Health Infrastructure". The subcommittee wants our Category Day theme to tie in with the conference theme and how it relates to engineering. Ideas about the Category Day agenda that were considered by the subcommittee are:

a. Career paths available to PHS engineers and identifying strategies, etc., to establish your own career path

- b. The war on terrorism's likely effect on our agencies' budgets and therefore on our jobs.
- c. Cutting edge technologies being used by engineers
- d. Potential expansion of the Commissioned Corps
- e. Project engineer presentations
- f. How our engineering projects fit into the overall public health infrastructure
- g. The new FUU's

Some potential themes suggested for the day were 'expanding horizons of PHS engineers' and 'engineering, the keystone public health'

The subcommittee decided that there were some common "threads" (remember the theme of the overall conference is "weaving tomorrow's public health infrastructure") in the suggestions being made about the agenda topics. Those threads were leadership, technology, individual professional development, and organizational impact of engineering. We know that if we will tell the engineers who might be interested in presenting at Category Day that we want them to make a presentation about "threads", that many will think that is too abstract and will not submit an abstract for consideration. So we will tell them that we want them to present about what they do or a project that they've done. Then the subcommittee will take the proposed presentations and see how they could be used to emphasize these threads and work with presenters to illuminate these issues or threads.

Each subcommittee member will recruit papers from our colleagues and other contacts in PHS. In addition, we will ask LCDR Tatum to include a request for presentations in the weekly email that he sends to all PHS engineers. Hopefully, by the January conference call we will have some "abstracts" to consider including in the agenda. The subcommittee needs the EPAC's help in recruiting presentations for the day and would appreciate any suggestions about the agenda that you have to offer. When you see LCDR Tatum's email soliciting presentations, please pass it along to your colleagues encouraging them to submit an abstract.

2. **Strategic Action Plan** - The items that we thought the Career Development subcommittee could possibly work on were: in the Recruiting and Retention focus area-developing individual bios showing examples of career paths; in the Leadership Development focus area-identify existing leadership development programs and/or develop a leadership handbook for the category.

- D. Leadership Development Seminar Ad hoc Subcommittee: LT Jennifer Martin reported the following:

The 2003 Engineer and Architect Leadership Development Seminar is only four months away and the committee is very busy working on several issues:

1. Getting a co-sponsor commitment  
OCE has contacted Gary Burroughs, Regional VP of the SAME Rocky Mountain Region and asked if one of the regional posts would be interested in co-sponsoring our seminar. The Houston SAME post has volunteered to co-sponsor if no posts in the Rocky Mountain Region are able to.
2. Seminar marketing strategy
  - Send information on seminar out through OCE announcements
  - Post seminar information and agenda on engineers website
  - Create advertising brochures for the seminar and ask supervisors/managers who work with engineers to distribute to their employees. If we can get seminar info into the hands of decision makers they may be more supportive of employee participation. Since budgets have not been decided and training decisions are on hold, we want to time our advertising right so this info is coming out around the same time budgets are decided. The committee is asking all EPAC members to help identify supervisors in engineer-rich areas. Please submit the names of supervisors who should receive this information to LT Martin.
  - Institute a “call down” service where one engineer calls several others and asks them to spread the word to additional engineers.
  - Committee members are looking into what distribution methods we can use at the agency level to advertise the seminar.
3. Official speaker invitations  
The committee has made preliminary inquiries with their first choice in speakers. We are still waiting to hear from a few. Some of the speakers we are approaching are:
  - VADM Carmona. We’ve asked the Surgeon General to be our keynote speaker on the subject of Engineers and Leadership. VADM Carmona will get back to us the middle of January.
  - Dr. Julie Gerberding. We’ve asked the CDC Director to speak with us on How to Make Difficult Decisions. We have not heard back from her.
  - Frank Lombardi. Mr. Lombardi is the Chief Engineer for the NY and NJ Port Authority. We’ve asked him to speak on the subject of Leadership During Crisis Situations. He will get back to us in January.
  - Dr. Dale Henry: Dr. Henry is a professional trainer. He spoke at the 2002 SAME National Education/Training Conference & Expo. He will come speak for a half-day on the issues of teamwork and communication.
  - RADM Villforth. He has accepted our offer to participate on a panel discussion concerning career progression.

The committee will send out official speaker invitation letters in January. Additionally, we have asked permission to have the US PHS color guard perform at the seminar opening.

Our next regularly scheduled meeting is Wednesday, January 15, 2003 at 1:00 pm EST. Contact LT Martin if interested in joining the call.

E. Emergency Preparedness: CAPT Rodenbeck reported the following.

The subcommittee met on November 14 and December 12. The group is making excellent progress on the development on the Reinforced Concrete Structure Rapid Assessment guidance information book, which will be similar to what is already posted on the PHS engineers website. The group has also drafted up suggested screening questions for the CPOs to use in their deliberations. A plan of action for meeting the strategic goals has been drafted and sent to CDR Coene. A new project that will be undertaken in the new year is providing information for civil servants so they have a better understanding of how they can get involved with emergency preparedness responses. The next meeting will be held on the second Thursday in January and a new access number will be obtained and given to anyone who wants to participate in the call.

F. Information: CAPT Gene Sullenger announced that this is his last meeting as the chair of the Information Subcommittee. CDR Coene will take over this role. CAPT Sullenger briefly restated the Information Subcommittee report from last month.

G. Mentoring: CDR Scofield (who will be the new chairperson) reported the following in Mr. Mitchell Williams absence:

1. Engineering Leadership Development Seminar (ELDS) Presentation - The Subcommittee has received confirmation from Jerry Farrell, Executive Director of the Commissioned Officers Association, as the speaker on the topic of mentoring at the ELDS. Mr. Farrell has positive experiences in mentoring relationships, both as a mentor and protégé, and provides a successful example of what mentoring can offer an individual.
2. Office of the Chief Engineer Welcome Program - The Mentoring Subcommittee has recently received its first quarterly listing of new engineers from the coordinator of the welcome program, and we have just completed gathering their e-mail addresses. The Subcommittee will be sending each new engineer a brief message describing the advantages of participating in the PHS Mentoring Program and a personal invitation to participate. The welcome program seems an ideal source for potential participants in the PHS Mentoring Program, and we hope by making personal contact that we can provide a valuable resource to these engineers and architects that are new to the PHS.

3. PHS Engineer Category Strategic Action Plan - The members of the Subcommittee reviewed the Strategic Action Plan and identified the potential role of the Subcommittee and the Mentoring Program in implementing this Plan, as follows:
  - a. Promotion of mentoring and the PHS Engineer Mentoring Program, specifically, as a leadership development tool.
  - b. Utilization of the Mentoring Program (including mentors specifically) and the new "On-call" Program to identify and disseminate information regarding potential career paths available to PHS engineers and architects to increase recruitment and retention.
  - c. Reinforce to mentors involved in mentoring relationships the importance of nominating or to push protégés to self nominate, PHS engineers and architects for available awards to increase recognition of PHS engineers and architects.
  - d. Emphasize the potential for the "On-call" mentoring program to serve as a knowledge resource to be shared among the PHS engineers and architects.
4. Next Meeting - The next meeting of the Mentoring Subcommittee is scheduled for Tuesday, January 12, 2002 (Date and year are incorrect.) at 11:00am ET.

H. Recruiting and Retention: LCDR Helgeson reported the following:

1. Last R/R Subcommittee Meetings: November 19.
2. Engineer Associate Recruiter (EAR) Program Update.

Total number of EARs: 29. Welcome new EAR: LTJG Nathan Epling, IHS Engineer in Toppenish, WA. See new R/R website for latest comprehensive list of EAR's.

Monthly ARP Lead/ DCP Conference Call held on November 13 and December 11. Issues discussed:

- a. DCP has \$50k to help fund recruitment fair entrance fees and other non- travel or per diem expenses. See attached. Please submit your cost proposals to LCDR Helgeson by January 6, 2003. R/R Subcommittee to prioritize proposals at January 7 subcommittee meeting. DCP needs a prioritized list from each category by January 15. Goal is to get some funds out for spring recruitment events.

- b. The categories are responsible for operating the ARP program. There is wide variability in the operation across the categories (engineers lead the way, docs are at the end). Therefore, DCP has decided to centralize more of the ARP program. The Category leads will still be required to provide policy guidance, and input into the approval of new EAR's. CPO's will still be the awarding official for the ARP badge. DCP to manage the application and enrollment process.
- c. ARP training to be provided at the COA conference.
- d. ARP manual still being developed by DCP.



ARPFundrequestprocedures.doc

- 3. CDR Helgeson has stepped down as the Category Co-Lead (for IHS EARs). CDR Dave Koski, Acting Deputy Director for IHS Aberdeen Area, Sioux City, Iowa, has been recommended for replacement. RADM Williams to process appointment certificate. LCDR Nate Tatum remains the other Category Co-Lead.
- 4. Update on specific R/R Information or Initiatives

Newly redesigned R/R website pages have been posted and evaluated by EPAC members. <http://www.usphsengineers.org/rrweb>. Several email comments have been received and will be implemented.

Recruitment Fairs Attended by Engineers November and December: AISES National Convention in Tulsa OK, University of California at Davis, Humboldt State, and University of Cincinnati. Latest recruitment calendar posted on the website. Please send an email to LCDR Helgeson for any recruitment visits you plan to attend in Spring 2003. Submit cost proposals for possible DCP funding.

- 5. Development of an implementation plan for the R/R portion of the Engineers Strategic Plan
  - a. Increase to 10% Engineer participation in the Associate Recruiter Program.
 

This equals about 40 engineers. We currently have 29 EAR's.

Strategy:

    - i) Launch new website - Promote it to prospective EAR's.

- ii) Encourage EAR's to present at internal meeting and workshops (i.e. IHS Area workshops)
  - b. Identify Career Paths.
 

Several items have already been completed. Need update of the Engineers Handbook (Career Development Subcommittee). Need to develop and communicate CO compared to CS career paths. Strategy:

    - i) Must work with Career Development subcommittee and possibly Mentoring subcommittee for this item. LCDR Helgeson to discuss at the January EPAC planning meeting.
  - c. Human resource needs for architects and engineers. Will survey agencies, then focus R/R efforts. Need more information on this element. There were several questions from the subcommittee. This element was tabled until the next subcommittee meeting. Need input from EPAC at the January meeting.
6. Next R/R Conference Call: Tuesday, January 7, 2003

New members are always welcome to join the subcommittee!

Any questions or comments from EPAC?

I. Rules: CAPT Jose Cuzme reported the following:

The Rules subcommittee met four times this year to work on the inconsistencies in the Charter and Bylaws. The group also met to work on the nominations for new members. The Mentoring subcommittee should be getting an official sanction from the Surgeon General this in 2003. Consider comparing the Charter and guidelines with other PACs next year.

**VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A. Division of Commissioned Personnel (DCP) Liaison: LCDR Claire Karlson reported the following:

- 1. General Duty Applications received in November: 6
  - Senior Costep applications: 0
  - Junior Costep applications: 5
- 2. Calls to Active Duty (CAD) during November to present: 1
- 3. Current status of category as of December 19, 2002:

409 current active duty engineer officers in all agencies

4. New Applications received for December as of December 19, 2002.

General Duty applications - 10

Senior COSTEP - 0

Junior COSTEP – 8

Total of applicants for year 2002 through Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2002 is 152 applicants

General Duty – 73

Senior COSTEP – 9

Junior COSTEP - 70

Still advertising on HOTJOBS.com for Engineering vacancies 3 times a week during the month of November. Still generating an instruction letter on how to download the application for those who are approved, and a rejection letter to those who do not qualify.

Those resumes that have accredited degrees are being sent to Scott Helgeson and to Nate Tatum for their review and distribution for follow-up.

Receiving applications from engineering students from the visit we did at the Polytechnic University in Puerto Rico in October.

- B. TISP Liaison – CDR Beck was not in attendance.

- C. Commissioned Officers Association (COA) Liaison: CDR Kathy Poneleit reported the following:

She did not have a COA report. CDR Coene reminded everyone of the Surgeon General reception to be held on January 15, 2003. CDR Poneleit reported that she created a website for AMSUS planning and she will send out the link to EPAC by email.

- D. Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) Liaison: LCDR Scharen reported the following:

Many changes this year within SAME. Dr. Bob Wolf is now the director at SAME. Changes in education and training as well as the young member organization and committee. More concrete things to get more young members involved. The 2003 conference will be held in Seattle.

- E. Junior Engineer Report: LT Matt Martinson reported the following:

JOAG continues to work on rules and procedures, specifically related to election of new chair, etc. Some new initiatives include career development, a junior

officer reader list, making the Engineering Leadership Development Seminar into a program that would be applicable and valuable to all PHS officers/PHS employees.

- F. Job Vacancies: Known vacancies are now posted or linked on the PHS Engineers website ([www.usphsengineers.org](http://www.usphsengineers.org)). The weekly OCE statements from LCDR Tatum via e-mail are another resource. CAPT Cuzme mentioned a position available in IHS Division of Facilities Planning and Construction for an O-5, GS 11/12 billet addressing policies in the management of hospitals and facilities in IHS that was announced last week. Contact CAPT Cuzme for additional information.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**: The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m. EST.

**EPAC MEETING PARTICIPATION:**

**Participants**: (Members in bold, with alternates attending matched by number to the members absent):

**Mr. Michael Adjodha (FDA), LCDR Meredith Bond (EPA), CDR Michael Coene (FDA), CAPT Jose Cuzme (IHS), Ms. Lisa Hayes (ATSDR), LCDR Scott Helgeson (IHS),** , LCDR Claire Karlson (DCP, ex-officio), **Mr. Kyung Kim (NIH), Mr. Brian Kong (NIH), LT Jennifer Martin (CDC), CAPT Ronald L. Mickelsen (CDC), LCDR Denman Ondelacy (IHS), CDR Kathy Poneleit (OSG), CAPT Sven Rodenbeck (ATSDR), LCDR Hilda Scharen (OEP, ex-officio), CDR Todd Scofield (IHS), CAPT Gene Sullenger (FDA), LCDR Nathan Tatum (ATSDR, ex-officio), CDR Maurice West (NPS),** RADM Robert Williams (ATSDR, ex-officio), LCDR Nicole Wolanski (FDA)

**Members Absent:**

**LCDR David Ausdermore (CDC), LCDR Sean Boyd (FDA, ex-officio), CAPT Kevin Chadwick (IHS, ex-officio), CDR Jo Ann Griffith (EPA, ex-officio), LCDR Jamie Natour (HRSA), CAPT Rao Surampalli (EPA), Mr. F. Mitchell Williams (NIH),**

**GUESTS:**

None present

**AUTHORIZATION:**

I have recorded the above EPAC meeting minutes:

---

LCDR Nicole Wolanski  
Executive Secretary, EPAC

---

Date

I have read the above minutes, which accurately describe this meeting, and on behalf of the EPAC approve their distribution:

\_\_\_\_\_  
CDR Michael Coene  
Chairperson, EPAC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I authorize distribution of these minutes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
RADM Robert C. Williams, P.E.  
Chief Engineer, USPHS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date