

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Engineer Professional Advisory Committee
Thursday, February 28, 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 1:06 p.m. EST at FDA, 9200 Corporate Boulevard, Conference Room 330V, Rockville, Maryland. The January 24, 2002, meeting minutes were approved with a minor correction. The next meeting will be held Thursday, March 28, 2002, at 1:00 p.m. EST at the FDA Building, Room 330V and the IHS Twinbrook Building, both in Rockville, Maryland.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

A. Acting Surgeon General

RADM Kenneth Moritsugu has indicated that he will be an active Acting Surgeon General as he plans to continue the momentum generated by VADM David Satcher. He will be pushing for continued progress in all areas. An example is that he has asked each CPO to submit a ½ page Environmental Scan every week to look at issues of importance internally and externally, as well as in terms of legislation, so that he can in turn appropriately represent the issues of the PHS to Secretary Tommy Thompson. Eventually, these documents may be shared among corps members through CPOs/PACs.

B. AMSUS Annual Meeting

Meeting will be held in Louisville, KY in November (see <http://www.amsus.org/>). We have been asked to nominate worthy candidates for the awards that will be given out at this meeting. Please go to the web site for additional information and inform RADM Williams of potential engineer candidates. The nominations for PHS will come from the Office of the Surgeon General.

C. Advisor to JOAG

A number of people have expressed interest in serving in this capacity. The applications will be reviewed by screening committee (chief engineer, nurse, scientist, dietician; along with chair of JOAG) and an advisor will be selected.

D. COA Annual Meeting

Will be held in Atlanta. All who are interested are strongly encouraged to attend. Travel plans should be made as early as possible to allow agencies to attempt to get funding for multiple officers to attend this meeting in light of the 5 or more rule.

E. DCP Vacancy

GS-13 or commissioned officer human resource specialist needed. See DCP web site (<http://dcp.psc.gov/>).

F. Appeal of Promotion

Currently there is an effort underway to consider appeals of promotions based on administrative errors. This would be in addition to the existing process to appeal to the board of corrections. Additional information will be forthcoming.

G. Strategic Visioning Session

Last week 16-18 engineers and architects, both commissioned corps and civil servants got together to discuss the important areas for the engineering category for the next 3 years. The overall purpose was to talk about how we can enhance the leadership role of the engineers and architects within the PHS. The top five areas that need to be focused on include 1) Recruitment and Retention, 2) Leadership Development, 3) Recognition (internal and external), 4) Resource Sharing, and 5) Esprit de Corps. Each of these areas will have specific goals associated with them. EPAC will be involved in the development of implementation plans. Also, the OCE is looking into developing mission and functional statements for the category. RADM Williams extends his personal thanks to all who participated.

H. Engineers' Week – February 19-22

Last week was Engineers' Week. Engineer of the Year awards were presented to the following engineers at the luncheon on February 22: Dr. Farhad Mamarzadeh, (NIH), CAPT John Collins (NPS), CDR Paula Simenauer (FDA), CDR Jo Ann Griffith (EPA), CAPT Ken Martinez (CDC), Mr. Juan Reyes (ATSDR), CDR Matt Dixon, (IHS/ANTHC). Reminder upcoming awards nomination deadlines, including 3 SAME awards, Hollis Medal (senior), Green Medal (junior), Cummings Plaque (teams) all have a deadline of March 30. Please see the engineers' web site (<http://www.usphsengineers.org/>) for additional information.

I. Recruiting News

New associate recruiters announced: CDR Robert Biddle, CDR Mutahar Shamsi, LCDR Patrick Craney, LCDR Denny Haag, CDR Dave Koski, LCDR Chuck Kardous, LCDR Matthew Martinsen, LTJG Tammy Colombo, LCDR Darral Tillock, LT Shari Windt, and LTJG Roger Dahozy. Congratulations! RADM Williams encourages everyone to follow their lead and attempt to squeeze a bit more out of their day.

J. Category Day on April 24th

Plan to attend while you are at the Annual COA meeting in Atlanta. The topic is Engineers Response to Attacks on the World Trade Center and Anthrax Outbreaks.

Great speakers are planned. Also, it is an opportunity to meet with the Acting Surgeon General.

K. Next Leadership Development Opportunity

Symposium on Leadership Development: Realities Faced by Women Engineers, to be held at the SAME Annual Conference in May in Kansas City. Those who want to attend but do not have funding, please get your request in to Ms. Lisa Hayes. It is a great opportunity to meet with colleagues in the PHS as well as those in other military services and show them our service pride and spirit, particularly when we out sing them on awards night, keeping in mind we don't yet have a song!

L. Error in FDA Vacancy Announcement

Eagle-eye LCDR Scott Helgeson caught an error in an FDA announcement for CSO positions. This announcement appears to discriminate against commissioned corps officers, by indicating that if you are a commissioned officer, you would need to resign your commission in order to apply, and it goes on to say if you'd like to keep your commission, there are other ways to apply. This was brought to the attention of RADM Michael Davidson (DCP) who will contact FDA and look into the matter further. RADM Williams asks that we all continue to bring our concerns to him so that changes can be made where necessary.

EPAC Chair: CDR Coene reported the following.

A. Engineers Luncheon

Thanks to those who coordinated the luncheon: CDR Griffith, Ms. Hayes and LCDR Nathan Tatum. It was a terrific meal and no small feat to organize the event and transport the USPHS flag from a distance.

B. Disney, Inc.

Disney Theme Parks give discounts to members of the military, but members of the USPHS have been excluded from this offer. COA is looking into this to see if we could be included in the promotion as well. Promotion ends last of April for all.

III. OLD BUSINESS

CDR Coene announced that Mr. Brian Kong volunteered to be the new Chairperson for the Building Design and Construction Subcommittee. After it was determined that a vote was unnecessary, an official appointment was made by CDR Coene.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

CDR Coene opened discussions on new business, however no topics were brought up.

V. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Building Design & Construction: Mr. Kong reported the following:

The last subcommittee meeting occurred on February 12.

Concerning HBI, we need to revise and deliver our proposal for a Surgeon General's Workshop to the Office of the Surgeon General. CAPT Sven Rodenbeck who works for Chief Engineer RADM Williams, had requested a literature search by CDC in addition to the National Science and Technology Council's commissioned search. The current proposal needs to be revised, to be tailored primarily for public health officials not engineers. Several at EPA and CDC had reviewed the proposal-very minor suggestions were received and currently being reviewed. Chair is requested to forward a copy of the latest draft to subcommittee members.

Subcommittee members in attendance are supportive of a combined Surgeon General-Federal Facilities Council (FFC) workshop, as FFC has agreed to support funding the workshop. The disadvantage is to find funding within HHS with SG's approval. Advantages include funding and more exposure. Chair is requested to move forward with the joint workshop.

Mr. William Brodt can provide subcommittee more exposure through NASA. Subcommittee members' support combined PHS-NASA healthy building and environmental activities. FFC can assist in this effort. Chair is requested to move forward with this effort.

Mr. Brodt initiated the OMSI program at the NIH with emphasis on the next generation of 3D engineering tools for building design, operation, maintenance, and facility management. Chair is requested to provide further information at the next meeting.

Subcommittee members in attendance are supportive of using technology to facilitate future meetings, i.e. videoconferencing, computers for PowerPoint slides, internet...this technology is available at some sites, i.e. NASA, NIH. Subcommittee members are requested to determine if resources are available at their site to use for further discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Dan Hightower, via e-mail, encouraged all to discuss activities at each agency. This could be initiated by sending questions to the available EPAC server list on how to solve issues, requesting information on project progress, or requesting assistance on contract services. Mr. Richard McCrone also highlighted this issue of improving communication between agencies and w/ the private sector. Chair is requested to discuss this further at the next meeting.

Mr. Hightower inquired about DHHS setting up 20 regional sites at universities with a Public Health School to address terrorism and the built environment. Mr. Kong will follow up for discussion at the next meeting.

For those interested in participating in FFC, please refer to http://www4.nationalacademies.org/cets/ffc.nsf/web/ffc_home?OpenDocument.

Subcommittee members in attendance are supportive of incorporating a Surgeon General's workshop into a possible upcoming FFC two-day workshop on healthy buildings. Chair is requested to provide further information at the next meeting including obtaining approval from SG, if required, and making arrangements with FFC.

Mr. Bradley Provancha inquired about the status of the NIOSH team report that evaluated HVAC and building systems for their susceptibility to biological or chemical attacks. Chair is requested to investigate further.

Mr. Provancha noted AIA recently had presentations based on terrorist attacks including anthrax cleanup and blast mitigation. More information can be found at their web site <http://www.aia.org/>.

There was extensive discussion on building operation and maintenance particularly on reliability centered maintenance, total building commissioning, and accounting system for measuring the environment of care. Chair is requested to discuss this issue further at the next meeting.

B. Career Development: Ms. Hayes reported the following.

The agenda for the Category Day Session at the COA conference has come together very well. The agenda centers around engineers' roles in the response to the World Trade Center attacks and the anthrax outbreaks. The latest agenda is available on the COA web site and the USPHS Engineers website.

The subcommittee is considering revising the current welcome program for PHS engineers and will be discussing that in the near future.

Our next meeting is Thursday, March 14 at 3:00 EST.

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

1. The committee has decided to plan a three-day seminar. We are working on a draft agenda and are reviewing the After Action Report written after the last seminar to make sure we are addressing the participant's suggestions.
2. We are also working on getting agency funding for the seminar. Once funding issues have been decided, we can submit a task order to get a conference planner.
3. Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 21 at 1:00 pm EST. Please contact LT Martin if interested in joining the call.

D. Emergency Preparedness: CAPT Rodenbeck reported the following.

There was no meeting in February. The next meeting will be held on March 14 at 3:00-4:30 p.m. EST and will be the first subcommittee meeting this year. If anyone is interested, please contact CAPT Rodenbeck to obtain the conference call bridge and code numbers.

E. Information: CAPT Gene Sullenger reported the following.

The committee met and focused discussion on how to proceed with posting articles and papers on the Web version of the newsletter. There was much discussion on the whole concept of eliminating the newsletter all together. Or, if the newsletter concept remained, whether or not articles posted would somehow be viewed by the reading public as “elevated in stature”.

After much discussion, CDR Coene developed a draft Newsletter page, which seemed to cover all concerns related to the posting of articles.

Other issues discussed:

- How to post the Chief Engineer’s Quarterly report
- How to post the EPAC Chair’s Quarterly report
- How to notify the PHS engineers that changes were available
 - Through LCDR Tatums’s weekly announcement message (email)

EPAC members are asked to go to the Web and provide feedback on the changes. The URL will be provided in an upcoming email from LCDR Tatum.

Pros and Cons of each:

- Pros for Newsletter format
 - We are used to it
 - Don’t like change
 - May force periodic formal submission
- Pros for No Newsletter
 - Remove quarterly reports
 - Articles are not “Rated” – lesser or greater than something else

Meetings held on second Tuesday of the month.

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

Last R/R Conference Call: Tuesday, February 5.

1. Engineer Associate Recruiter (EAR) Program Update.

4 additional IHS EAR’s submitted to OCE for approval (when these officers are approved, the total AR’s in IHS will be 8). 1 NIOSH EAR submitted to OCE for approval.

LCDR Helgeson presented a briefing for IHS SFC Branch Chiefs on the EPAC R/R activities as well as AR Program, February 7, San Diego.

Promoted the ARP program. Discussed barriers to recruitment and placement of officers. Major problem with lack of COSTEP applications at DCP. See issue IV below.

Next ARP conference call with DCP scheduled for Wednesday, March 13.

2. Update on specific R/R Initiatives

- a) Please review and use the new Engineering Professionals: Choose a Challenging Career in the U.S. PHS Commissioned Corps recruitment document.

This document is designed to be a CO engineer specific insert for the back of the new DCP brochure, or a standalone handout to prospective engineer recruits.

Email to prospective recruits.

Latest 2002 specific information on pay and benefits.

- b) Updated Inventory of Recruitment Materials has been posted. (includes Eng. Professionals Document)
- c) Updated Engineer Recruitment Calendar has been posted to the web.

Upcoming Recruitment Events. March schools or events to be visited by Engineer recruiters: Idaho State, Utah State, Citadel, College of Charleston, Cal State University in Sacramento, University of Utah and the "Women for Hire" conference in Atlanta.

d) New R/R Initiatives for 2002

- i. Continued improvement in the R/R website.
- ii. Continued focus on motivating PHS engineers to recruit for the category. What can you do to RECRUIT TWO IN ZERO TWO!!!
- iii. Develop or update an internal marketing document (how to hire and place CO's)

3. Issue: Perceived lack of support in DCP for COSTEP placements in IHS.

IHS has 250 of 411 engineers in the Commissioned Corps. Most new IHS engineer CC hires are in the SFC program. For many years, SFC has relied on the COSTEP program as the primary recruiting program. Many former COSTEPs return to IHS for permanent employment. Others tell their friends about the work at IHS and help in the recruitment for permanent employees. Many CC engineers start their careers in IHS and move on to other agencies later in their career. COSTEP is important for the engineer category.

Last year, DCP was late in processing orders for COSTEPs. Several traveled to duty stations without orders; many faced uncertainty about promised employment. Debriefing of IHS OEHE (ENGR & EHO) COSTEPs revealed that the students loved the jobs and hated the hiring process. DCP told IHS that this was a one-time problem.

IHS has requested 64 engineer COSTEPs total. Although the DCP Jr. COSTEP applicant database is full of names (7 pages), DCP has few to offer to agencies. Apologies are offered. IHS HQ has hesitated to weed out weak applicants because they have received so few names from DCP - 14 to date.

Things seem to be broken.

4. Issue: New FDA hiring initiative for Consumer Safety Officers

Hundreds of entry level jobs in dozens of duty stations. Encourage promotion of these opportunities. Can be appropriate for all categories. Confusion at the field in FDA on hiring CO's for these jobs. Issue discussed at the CPO PAC/ Chair meeting yesterday.

5. Issue: DCP has proposed placement committees be formed with each category.

Description of this proposal from LCDR Claire Karlson:

“The category forms a committee of individuals from the different agencies who are selected by the CPOs. Each month, this committee meets via teleconference to go over the current applicant list, distributing the applicants among the committee members for contact calls to be made. The monthly meeting updates the committee members on the status of applicants' intentions and agency hires. One committee member serves as the chair, keeping a detailed applicant log. Results of this recruitment effort, keeps the applicant list current and provides an initial phone contact from a prospective hiring agency, enhancing employment opportunities for the applicants.”

Discussion on this proposal? Problems with placement of officers. IHS placement has endorsed this proposal. LCDR Meredith Bond expressed the opinion that we need to work on an internal marketing document to establish a way to approach this, e.g., EPA has their own system with several personnel officers. LCDR Denman Ondelacey suggested that other than agency representatives if there should be possibilities of various other advisory committees outside of EPAC, e.g., American Indian/Alaskan Native Officer Advisory Committee. LCDR Helgeson asked if the committee members should have power to place, or just make phone calls? Isn't that DCP's role? CAPT Sullenger asked what if any privacy issues are associated with this? LCDR Helgeson will be collecting comments and forwarding them on to RADM Williams.

6. Next Conference Call: Tuesday, March 5

New members are always welcome to join the subcommittee!

Any questions or comments from EPAC?

G. Mentoring: Mr. Mitchell Williams reported the following.

Met on February 12. On-call mentoring program was revisited. Issue of value of this program came up early, but has resurfaced. Addressed by formally soliciting information from engineers, through weekly announcement from OCE to determine how much this will be used. Informally talking to people outside the subcommittee. So far, good response. In lieu of formal mentoring, if someone has an issue or topic they'd like addressed without getting into a long-term relationship, the on-call program would serve as a referral to someone who could answer the questions as they arise. RADM Williams indicated that this program may be in competition with other programs, i.e., Dental program.

Trying to develop someone to take over as chair of this subcommittee when Mr. Williams term ends this year. Looking for someone to continue and reinvigorate the program.

Next meeting Tuesday, March 12, 11 am EST. Contact Mr. Williams for additional information.

H. Rules: CAPT Jose Cuzme had to leave early, so Mr. Joseph Corliss reported the following.

Meeting was held on February 6, 2002 and the topic was the goals and agenda for 2002. Two major issues on the agenda, one of which related to CAPT Kevin Chadwick's work from 2 years ago - changes for the EPAC. These changes are not yet sanctioned into the rules. Committee is going to look into and report back next month. The second issue that they want to prepare a draft of the membership composition of the EPAC to determine the eligibility of members of the National Park Service to be represented on EPAC. CDR Coene mentioned that based on an email from CDR West, the NPS does have enough engineers (10) so they will pick up an EPAC slot.

I. Awards: CDR West reported the following:

The Awards Subcommittee has completed the evaluation of nominees for the Engineer Literary Award, the Ian K. Burgess Young PHS Engineer Award, and the Villforth Leadership Award. Recommendations for award winners will be submitted to the Chief Engineer on February 28, 2002. Nominations for the PHS SAME Awards are being accepted through March 30. Please submit nominations for the Hollis Medal, the Green Medal, and the Cummings Plaque to the Office of the Chief Engineer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Division of Commissioned Personnel (DCP) Liaison: LCDR Karlson did not attend the meeting so there was no report.

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

CDR Poneleit reminded everyone to register for the annual COA meeting in Atlanta.

- C. Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) Liaison: LCDR Hilda Scharen did not attend the meeting so there was no report.

- D. Junior Engineer Report: LT Sean Boyd reported the following:

The JOAG is continuing its rebuilding effort in the New Year and is confirming its old membership and seeking new members for existing vacancies. If there are any junior engineer officers interested in participating on a JOAG committee, you can volunteer by contacting LT Sean Boyd at sbb@cdrh.fda.gov or 301-594-4654 x128.

Also, the OSG is currently seeking a senior advisor to the JOAG. The senior advisor must be at the O-6 grade, should be interested in the welfare of junior officers, should be familiar with Corps policies and procedures, and should have professional advisory committee experience. The JOAG senior advisor must commit to a term of 3 years and must have agency support. There is no requirement that the senior advisor be located in the DC Metro area. Interested officers should send a CV and brief statement (2 page max) indicating why you're interested in the role and how you perceive the responsibilities of JOAG Senior Advisor to CAPT Richard Barror. This is an excellent opportunity for a senior officer to interact with the OSG while "giving back" to the corps by growing its future officers.

14. Job Vacancies: Known vacancies are now posted or linked on the PHS Engineers website (www.usphsengineers.org). The weekly OCE statements from LCDR Tatum via e-mail are another resource.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m. EDT.

EPAC MEETING PARTICIPATION:

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

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

Members Absent:

Mr. Michael Adjodha (FDA), LCDR David Ausdermore (CDC), CAPT Kevin Chadwick (IHS, ex-officio), CDR Jo Ann Griffith (EPA, ex-officio), LCDR Claire Karlson (DCP, ex-officio), LCDR Hilda Scharen (OEP, ex-officio), CAPT Rao Surampalli (EPA)

GUESTS:

Mr. Joseph Corliss (IHS)

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