

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Engineer Professional Advisory Committee**
Thursday, September 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 1:05 p.m. MDT in Denver, Colorado. The August 22, 2002, meeting minutes were approved. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 24, 2002, at 1:00 p.m. EST at FDA, 9200 Corporate Boulevard, Conference Room 330V, Rockville, Maryland.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

1. Denver - Thanks to the NPS and EPA in Denver for hosting this month's EPAC meeting. Our field trip this morning was very nice, special thanks to CDR Maurice West and LCDR Meredith Bond.
2. Strategic Visioning - RADM Williams was very pleased to announce that the Engineering Category Strategic Action Plan for the next 4-5 years has been passed on to EPAC. This is a result of the meetings that were convened in March to discuss five focus areas: recruiting and retention, leadership development, esprit de corps, recognition, resource sharing.
3. Award Liaisons - Each agency is taking nominations for the NSPE Engineer of the Year, due October 9th. Please be sure that each agency has put forth a nomination.
4. Infrastructure Security Partnership - Organization of government entities who have joined together to look at things such as infrastructure security. The first congress on the infrastructure security of the built environment will be in Washington in November (possibly the 5th and 6th). There will be two sessions where the PHS will be represented, which have been set up by CAPT Michael Gressel and CDR Kenneth Mead, both from NIOSH.
5. Healthy Building Initiative - October Pre-meeting to be discussed by Mr. Brian Kong later in today's meeting.

B. EPAC Chair: CDR Michael Coene reported the following

1. Chair-elect 2003 - No self-nominations have been received yet. It is a fun job and you can travel to exotic places, like Denver!
2. Strategic Action Plan - CDR Coene will distribute this document by email. This will be an agenda item for discussion at an upcoming meeting.
3. Thanks to Denver NPS/EPA - Special thanks to CDR West for setting up the tour of the train station and LCDR Bond for the presentations.

III. OLD BUSINESS

CDR Coene opened discussions on old business:

- A. National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) - CDR West spoke about the request for our assistance from this group. Since we could not send out our mailing list, we can go to their web page (<http://www.ncees.org/>) and voluntarily provide the information they need.
- B. Email Vote - EPAC unanimously voted to approve the proposal that CAPT Sven Rodenbeck put forth at last month's meeting on behalf of the Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee to include information regarding Water/Waste Water/Solid Waste Management, Hospital Facilities, Biomedical Devices, and Hazardous Materials on the PHS Engineers web site.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

CDR Coene opened discussions on new business:

- A. New EPAC members for 2003 - CAPT Cuzme and CDR Cayous presented the list of proposed members for 2003. Please see attached for the list. A brief discussion of rotations, reassignments and agency representations ensued. ATSDR has 1.5% of all PHS engineers, CDC has 24%, NPS has 1%, etc., so the number of EPAC members is based on the percentage of the total engineers. A vote on the EPAC membership list for 2003 was taken by email and was unanimously approved.
- B. The Infrastructure Security Partnership
 1. The group would like to have a link to the Engineers website (<http://www.tisp.org/>). Basically they would like to be able to direct people to us who have an interest in Public Health Service Engineers. This motion was approved by EPAC.

EPAC will be naming a representative/liaison to this group. EPAC should consider whether this position should go to an ex-officio member. CDR Coene agreed that this

suggestion would be reasonable. LCDR Helgeson recommended that if it is an ex-officio member, that person be required to be a member of the sub-groups that are affected by this group (Building Design and Construction and Emergency Preparedness). A vote was taken and the motion was approved.

V. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Awards: CDR Maurice West reported the following:

As RADM Williams mentioned, please get the nominations in for PHS/NSPE Engineer of the Year, which are due October 9, 2002. Also, we are accepting papers for the Literary Awards, which are due on November 1st. The Recognition Strategy was approved at the last meeting. Please note there are many mechanisms to recognize people who are and are not members of EPAC. CDR West will send out the finalized Recognition Strategy to all EPAC members soon. Some progress has been made on the architects' awards.

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

Healthy Building Initiative (HBI) – The subcommittee has been working on this since the 1999 NASPE convention. Subcommittee has developed from the "pre-workshop implementation plan," approved last month by the full EPAC, a draft invitation for review by the Chief Engineer. It is currently being updated to send out in time for the 2002-10-18 "Concept Workshop." Subcommittee chair will be contacting some invitees to solicit a couple of presenters.

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

1. The primary focus of the Career Development subcommittee's last meeting was to help the Ad Hoc Leadership Development Seminar subcommittee with planning for the upcoming engineer and architect leadership development seminar.
2. The subcommittee is looking for someone new to coordinate the new engineer's welcome program. LCDR Sean Boyd has done a great job over the past several years but is now too busy to continue. The time commitment for the coordinator is not too great and it's our chance to let new engineers know about EPAC and our activities. Anyone interested in helping to coordinate the program, please contact Lisa Hayes.
3. The subcommittee will soon begin planning the agenda for the next category day at the COA conference. If you have any ideas for themes or topics, please let someone on the Career Development subcommittee know.
4. Watch your email for the announcement of the next conference call. It may have to be moved from the usual day because of ATSDR's impending move.

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

1. As reported at the last EPAC meeting, we have received funding commitments from several agencies. So far we have commitments of \$7,500 from FDA, \$10,000 from ATSDR, a commitment from OEP for an unspecified amount, and about \$6,000 from NIH. We have not heard back from CDC or IHS yet, but will be checking with them. Just to note, IHS gave \$10,000 to sponsor “A Symposium on Leadership Development Realities Faced by Women Engineers” at the 2002 SAME National Education/Training Conference and Expo. We thank IHS for this support and realize they may be limited in what they can contribute to our seminar.
2. Bids for the contract planner were due August 26. Three bids were received and the contract was awarded to the same group who had the contract for the 2001 ELDS. Their first task is to find suitable locations in either Phoenix or Tucson so we can confirm a date and location.
3. The subcommittee has made significant progress in detailing the objectives and specific topics for each seminar session. Only a couple more sessions need to be developed, but we will be ready to start approaching speakers as soon as the exact date and place of the seminar is known.
4. In regards to finding a co-sponsor for the seminar, the committee is speaking with SAME. We are approaching the Tucson area SAME post and a subcommittee member who also works with the SAME Committee for Technology and Advancement is approaching them to gauge interest. The subcommittee is also interested in talking with NSPE, but we don't have a contact. Any EPAC member who has ties to NSPE is asked to contact LT Martin.
5. The next regularly scheduled meeting is Wednesday, October 16 at 1:00 pm EDT. Please contact LT Martin if interested in joining the call.

E. Emergency Preparedness: CAPT Rodenbeck reported the following.

1. The last meeting was held on September 12.
2. The subcommittee is proceeding for approval by EPAC to reach out to the Army Corps of Engineers and Environmental Protection Agency emergency response folks on an information exchange using the SAME Readiness Committee as a neutral ground moving forward with being able to share resources in times of need.
3. Three new projects:
 - In addition to what has already been completed, information training materials, i.e., 101 on damaged structures; which would be similar to the material on medical devices and medical facilities that was approved

earlier this month. It is intended to provide our engineers basic information on damaged buildings. The subcommittee is reaching out to structural engineers at NIH and IHS.

- Looking into developing guidance for civil servants so that they can be involved with emergency response activities.
- The committee has been tasked with developing the questions that the CPOs would use to determine whether a candidate will be able to work well under the stresses associated with CCRF. RADM Williams added that CPOs discussed taking our existing matrix *How to Deploy the Right Engineer* (Therapist and Nursing categories have something similar) and develop a book across all categories so that the Surgeon General would know who we are and how to deploy the right officer in any situation. Also, there is a National Nurse Response Team and a National Pharmacist Response Team. The other piece that the CPOs recommended was to look across categories or multiple categories to consider response teams as part of PHS response teams.
- Next meeting will be on October 10 at 3 pm EDT.

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

1. On-Call Mentoring - CAPT Leroy Mickelsen has provided the details of the "On-call" Mentoring Program to the Information Subcommittee for posting on the Mentoring page of the PHS Engineers' web site. We anticipate this addition, which will include a description of the "On-call" process and how PHS engineers and architects can use the program, will occur by the end of September.
2. Engineering Leadership Development Seminar (ELDS) Presentation - The Subcommittee brainstormed possible presenters from other organizations that we felt would be capable presenters on the topic of mentoring. We are initiating contact with these individuals to confirm their interest and willingness to participate.
3. Next Meeting - The next meeting of the Mentoring Subcommittee is scheduled for Tuesday, 08 OCT 2002 at 11:00am ET and can be joined by dialing 919-541-1996.

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

Last Subcommittee Meetings were held on July 9 and September 10.

1. Engineer Associate Recruiter (EAR) Program Update.
 - A new EAR Program Overview document has been developed. See attached. This will also be posted on the new R/R website (soon).



- There is an Engineer Newsletter online article submitted in July by LCDR Tatum summarizing the first year of the EARP. See www.usphsengineers.org website.
 - Welcome new EARs: LCDR Chris Brady, LCDR John Longstaff, LT Marcus Martinez and ENS Mark Hench. Total number of EARs: 30. EAR Contact log to be posted and maintained on the R/R website (soon).
 - Monthly Associate Recruiter Program (ARP) Lead/ DCP Conference Call held on September 11. The following issues were discussed:
 - a) Formalized training modules and a manual are being developed by DCP for Associate Recruiters. Training modules may be offered online, or at the next COA meeting.
 - b) Where to credit officer's participation in the ARP within the officer's OPF? Participation currently shows up in the "PHS Support" section, via the Certificate of Enrollment that must be faxed back by the EAR. Other options being explored are the "Personnel Orders" section, and the "Uniformed Awards" section. The goal is to get ARP participation to automatically show up when a Promotion Information Report (PIR) is generated for the officer. Work continues on this issue.
 - c) The EARP Overview document was shared with all other category leads on the call as an example of how to promote the ARP within their respective categories.
 - Conference call being planned within the next month for all EARs in order to match Engineer applicants in the DCP pool to specific EARs. The goal is to provide one-on-one mentoring to all engineer applicants in application, commissioning, and job search issues.
2. Update on specific R/R Information or Initiatives
- Newly redesigned R/R website section has been assembled and is currently being tested internally. Thanks LCDR Kardous and CDR Coene for assistance.
 - Recruitment Posters have been developed for use by EARs to promote PHS Engineer opportunities at universities. These will be posted on the website (soon).
 - Several recruitment visits have been planned for the fall (17 so far in Sept and Oct). See latest recruitment calendar attached. Please send an email to LCDR Helgeson for any recruitment visits you plan to attend this fall or next spring.



Eng Recruit Calendar
03.doc

- DCP is soliciting Senior Engineers in order to serve on a Standardized list of Applicant Board Members. They would like to start this process with the beginning of the new fiscal year, if at all possible. EPAC is soliciting for 12+ senior Engineer board members that can serve for a year. DCP will attempt to rotate board members and give them an advance notice of

the board. Please send an email to CAPT Rodenbeck at the Office of the Chief Engineer if you are interested in serving.

- DCP posed the question: What do you see as the 3 greatest needs of the Engineer PAC that Recruitment and Assignment Branch can assist with? EPAC R/R took up this question and responded with the following input to the Chief Engineer:
 - a) We need a strong internal marketing initiative to clearly communicate the message to hiring officials, supervisors, and other officials on the HOW's and WHY's of hiring or detailing commissioned corps officers. DCP has strong internal marketing presentations available. A particularly strong presentation was given in July 2001 at the DCP recruitment conference by LCDR Ron Keats. These presentations need to be focused on the core Public Health agencies that have not been hiring many CO's over the past several years (NIH, CDC, and FDA to a lesser degree) and the agencies that have blanket MOU's in place with a large need for PHS expertise (EPA, etc!!!!!!!!!!!!)
 - b) We need stronger coordination and formalization between the Associate Recruiter Program, DCP and the Applicants. For instance: Every single applicant to the corps should be formally matched with an Associate Recruiter from their prospective category as soon as possible, early in the process. The name of the Associate Recruiter should be a field that is tracked in the DCP online database. This will help leverage the pool of Associate Recruiters that have signed up for the program and are waiting to contribute their talents and energies to the process. This will also provide a way to track an AR's individual progress in mentoring applicants through the process.
 - d) We need DCP to clearly identify and manage the internal constraints and barriers that exist that are hampering the efficient commissioning of PHS applicants. We have seen (and heard) over the past several months' serious signs of inefficient operations at DCP. Some of these signs include:
 - i) poor processing of paperwork for COSTEPS,
 - ii) lack of interest in promoting and improving the COSTEP program
 - iii) data from applications and other paperwork not being entered into the DCP database in a timely manner (i.e. the paperwork is in a stack on XYZ's desk and we don't know when they'll get to it),
 - iv) lack of response from DCP to new applicant's questions and concerns,
 - v) increased workload on DCP technicians with decrease in staff,
 - vi) high staff turnover rate.

Of particular concern is the lack of a completely online application process. This was promised over one year ago at the DCP recruitment conference; today this seems to be no closer to reality. In order for DCP to help all the categories in the Recruitment process, we need

DCP to clearly communicate what these internal barriers are and how they will be addressed. We further need DHHS to provide additional support to DCP in addressing the barriers that they identify. If we are to realize the vision communicated by our senior leadership in growing the corps, the internal process of commissioning and placement must become more efficient and less frustrating to the applicant.

Additional clarification, along with data and specific examples, was requested from the Office of the Chief Engineer on the above recommendations. LCDR Helgeson is currently assembling this data. EPAC members are encouraged to provide any data or input they may have (specifics) to LCDR Helgeson. IHS HQ's has been contacted and they are compiling the requested data as well.

3. Next R/R Conference Call: Tuesday, October 8

New members are always welcome to join the subcommittee!

Any questions or comments from EPAC?

H. Rules: CAPT Jose Cuzme covered this area under New Business.

I. Information: CAPT Gene Sullenger was absent. CDR Coene reported that there was no meeting in September.

The group has been working with the Mentoring Subcommittee to post the On-Call Mentoring and also with the Awards Subcommittee to post the new awards announcements as well as ongoing work with the Recruiting and Retention Subcommittee by helping them with their new web site. In addition CDR Coene is working on some of the COA presentations to get them on Webcast, the first one being RADM William's talk.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Division of Commissioned Personnel (DCP) Liaison: LCDR Claire Karlson was absent, but sent the following report:

1. General Duty Applications received in August: 10

Senior Costep applications: 0

Junior Costep applications: 0

2. Calls to Active Duty (CAD) during August: 2

3. Current status of category as of September 17, 2002:

405 Current active duty engineer officers in all agencies (two less than

last month)

4. New Applications received for September as of September 17, 2002.
General Duty applications - 2
Senior COSTEP - 0
Junior COSTEP – 0

DCP will be hiring another Human Resource specialist (technician) who will be supervising the other HR specialist. Also looking for another Staffing Officer with IT experience. Potential position for another HR specialist.

- B. Commissioned Officers Association (COA) Liaison: CDR Kathy Poneleit was present, although she is no longer on the COA National Board.

CDR Poneleit did mention that she is a part of the group coordinating the AMSUS meeting for both 2002 and 2003. She wanted to note that USPHS is responsible for coordinating the 2003 meeting. CDR Poneleit will be working with EPAC and CPOs to get the meeting coordinated.

- C. Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) Liaison: LCDR Scharen was absent.

- D. Junior Engineer Report: LCDR Sean Boyd reported that there is nothing new to report. Instead, he read the minutes from the August JOAG meeting, since he was not present at the August EPAC meeting. These notes were previously included in the August EPAC meeting minutes.

- E. 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. CDR Cayous announced that there will be a position available in CAPT Cuzme's office; the official announcement will come out next month.

- F. Additional Announcements

- Recent HHS Awards ceremony, past chairs of EPAC were recognized. Also the core members of the Leadership Development Subcommittee received unit commendation. CAPT Chadwick proudly announced that he is also an award recipient!
- Tomorrow the group in Denver will be going to the Colorado School of Mines for recruitment purposes.

- VII. ADJOURNMENT**: The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m. MDT.

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), LCDR Sean Boyd (FDA, ex-officio), CAPT Kevin Chadwick (IHS, 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 Jamie Natour (HRSA), CDR Kathy Poneleit (OSG), CAPT Sven Rodenbeck (ATSDR), CDR Todd Scofield (IHS), CAPT Rao Surampalli (EPA),** LCDR Nathan Tatum (ATSDR, ex-officio), **CDR Maurice West (NPS), Mr. F. Mitchell Williams (NIH),** RADM Robert Williams (ATSDR, ex-officio),

Members Absent:

LCDR David Ausdermore (CDC), CDR Jo Ann Griffith (EPA, ex-officio), LCDR Claire Karlson (DCP, ex-officio) **LCDR Denman Ondelacy (IHS), CAPT Gene Sullenger (FDA),** LCDR Hilda Scharen (OEP, ex-officio), LCDR Nicole Wolanski (FDA).

GUESTS:

Bill Blair (NIH/NIEH), CDR Ed Cayous (IHS), CAPT John Collins (NPS), LT Michael Copeland (EPA), CDR Lee Hanley (EPA), LCDR Scott Lee (OS/OASPHEP/OER)

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