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**Engineer Professional Advisory Committee (EPAC)**

***EPAC General Meeting Minutes***

*March 19th, 2020*

1. **Welcome/Call to Order (EPAC Chair, CDR Samantha Spindel)**

* Meeting called to order at 1500 EST

1. **Roll Call (Executive Secretary, LCDR Michael Simpson)**

* Officers or Alternate email LCDR Simpson to confirm attendance

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subcommittee** | **Name** | **Alternate** | **Attendance**  **(Yes, No, Excused, Alternate)** |
| **EPAC Chair** | CDR Samantha Spindel | LCDR Michael Simpson | Yes |
| **Executive Secretary** | LCDR Michael Simpson | LT Timothy Martin | Excused |
| **Chief Engineer** | RADM Edward Dieser | N/A | Yes |
|  | | | |
| Awards | CDR John Kathol | CDR Michael Termont | Yes |
| CDR Matthew Mergenthaler | LCDR Travis Sorum | Yes |
| Career Development | LCDR Omobogie Amadasu | LCDR Joshua Sims | Yes |
| CDR Eric Hanssen | CDR Leo Gumapas | Yes |
| Events | LCDR Derrick Buck | LT Timothy Martin | Yes |
| LCDR Michael Gifford | CDR Jeremy "Bret" Nickels | Excused |
| Information | CAPT Josh Simms | LT Drew Katherine | Yes |
| LCDR Garrett Chun | LT Adam Ramos | Yes |
| Public Health Engineering Practice | CDR Leo Gumapas | CDR Andrew Yang | Excused |
| CDR James Coburn | LCDR Hanniebey Wiyor | Yes |
| Readiness | CDR Frank Chua | CDR Shane Deckert | No |
| CDR Sean Bush | CDR Mark Hench | Yes |
| Recruitment and Retention | LCDR Praveen KC | CDR William Fraser | Yes |
| LCDR Fred Kelly | LCDR Kenneth Chen | Yes |
| Rules | CDR Deb Cox | CDR Stacey Yonce | Yes |
| LCDR Matt Palo | LT Christian Parra | Yes |
| Strategic Planning for Engineering | CAPT David Harvey | LT Melissa De Vera | Yes |
| CDR Sam Russell | CDR David Gwisdalla | Excused |
| ***\* When a member is not available, the Alternate can serve as the voting proxy.***  ***\*\*See Appendix A for more information about each member, including hyperlinks to email addresses*** | | | |
|  | | | |
| **EPAC Liaisons** | | | |
| **CCWIAB** | CAPT Varsha Savalia | CDR Theresa Grant | Yes |
| **COA** | CDR Nikhil Thakur | LCDR Michael Simpson | Excused |
| **JOAG** | LT Colin Tack | LT Jaison Eapen | Yes |
| **SAME** | CDR Steve Sauer |  | No |

1. **Chief Professional Officer (CPO) Remarks/Update** **(RADM Edward Dieser)**

* Discussions during Quarterly Town Hall, which occurred for the two preceding hours included:
* Requirements for PHU, APFT, BLS during time of social distancing
* Recruiting
* Promotions
* Deployments and coronavirus mission

1. **EPAC Chair Remarks (EPAC Chair, CDR Samantha Spindel)**

* Had ~100 Engineers joined us for the 1st Quarterly Town Hall meeting with RADM Dieser
  + Thank you for your questions and for a great discussion
  + If you have additional questions, please feel free to provide those to Samantha.spindel@fda.hhs.gov
  + Thank you to LT David Sullivan for coordinating and moderating!
* Thanks for your flexibility with re-scheduling this meeting
* Thank you to all of our subcommittees for their continued productivity

1. **Awards Subcommittee Discussion (CDR John Kathol, Chair)**
2. **Awards Review Board (February Cycle-Villforth, Lynch, Burgess, ELIT, SAME Awards)**

* Nomination period closed on Feb. 10th.
* Nomination period was extended to Feb. 28th. Resulted in an ~75% increase in nominations (26 total, 3.25 Avg. Nomination Per Award Category). All awards received a minimum of two nominations.
* SAME Awards Review and Awardee Recommendation Sent to EPAC Chair-March 11th.
* Recommended Awardees sent to OSG for review. Award Notification by CPO Pending Review.
* Villforth, Lynch, Burgess and ELIT Awards currently under review.

1. **Strategic Initiatives Team (Lead: LCDR Travis Sorum –** [**travis.sorum@ihs.gov**](mailto:travis.sorum@ihs.gov)**)**

* Update Award Nomination Packets, Examine EOY/NSPE Award Nomination Process, Update Rubrics as needed, Create Review Team Criteria. Work strategy under development.

1. **Project/Initiative SOP Initiative (Lead: LCDR Abbas Bandukwala –** [**Abbas.Bandukwala@fda.hhs.gov**](mailto:Abbas.Bandukwala@fda.hhs.gov)**)**

* 50% draft SOP complete, work ongoing.

1. **Career Development Subcommittee Discussion (LCDR Omobogie Amadasu, Chair)**
2. **PE Licensure Fact Sheet (Lead: CDR Eric Hanssen –** [**eric.hanssen@nih.gov**](mailto:eric.hanssen@nih.gov)**)**

* Will be distributed to Category in next “Engineer Announcements” and posted on webpage

1. **USPHS Symposium Speed Mentoring (Lead: CDR Kurt Kesteloot –** [**kurt\_kesteloot@nps.gov**](mailto:kurt_kesteloot@nps.gov)**)**

* CDR Kurt Kesteloot (lead) will meet with event workgroup this week to discuss planning

1. **Mentoring Resources (Lead: CDR Sean Bush –** [**Sean.Bush@ihs.gov**](mailto:Sean.Bush@ihs.gov)**)**

* Started uploading resources to assist Mentor-Mentee pairs to CDS webpage, if you have suggested resources please email CDR Hanssen

1. **CDS Webpage (Lead: LT Adam Cooke –** [**Adam.Cooke@fda.hhs.gov**](mailto:Adam.Cooke@fda.hhs.gov)**)**

* Working with team lead to implement a smoother interface. Have a draft from last year and in the process of pushing changes to the website

1. **Online Engineering Masters Programs Survey (Lead: LCDR Tyrrell Lang –** [**Tyrrell.Lang@ihs.gov**](mailto:Tyrrell.Lang@ihs.gov)**)**

* Survey questions have been drafted and were sent to EPAC Voting Members for feedback on 4 March feedback period ends April 1st.

1. **Events Subcommittee Discussion (LCDR Derrick Buck, Chair)**
2. **SAME – JETC (Lead: LCDR Jessica Sharpe –** [**jessica\_sharpe@nps.gov**](mailto:jessica_sharpe@nps.gov) **and CDR Steven Sauer -** [**Steve.Sauer@ihs.gov**](mailto:Steve.Sauer@ihs.gov)**)**

* Walter E. Washington Convention Center, DC, May 27-29, 2020
* The awards were recommended by the CPO and are currently being reviewed by the OSG. BG Schroedel was made aware of the situation.
* Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, SAME is continuing to plan for the event and will provide guidance by April 15th whether or not the event will take place. Alternatives include: rescheduling, modifying the event, blending with another event, or going virtual.

1. **COF Symposium “Category Day” (Lead: LCDR Fred Kelly –** [**fred.kelly@nih.gov**](mailto:fred.kelly@nih.gov)**)**

* Renaissance Hotel Glendale, AZ, June 15-18, 2020
* Solicitation for volunteers was sent out.
* Will continue to update regarding the status of the event.
* Co-Lead: LCDR Matthew Palo, Chair-on-Deck: LCDR Michael Gifford.

1. **AMSUS Annual Meeting (Lead: LCDR Michael Simpson –** [**michael.simpson@fda.hhs.gov**](mailto:michael.simpson@fda.hhs.gov)**)**

* Gaylord Nation Resort and Convention Center, MD, Dec. 6-10, 2020
* First meeting was March 6th
* Still developing Engineer’s role in this event
* Will not be a 2021 AMSUS as they are transitioning to a February Annual Meeting month starting 2022
* Co-Leads: LCDR Michael Tollon, LCDR Hanniebey Wiyor

1. **Information Subcommittee Discussion (LCDR Garrett Chun, Vice Chair)**
2. **Content Management (Lead: CDR Jim Kohler –** [**Kohler.James@epa.gov**](mailto:Kohler.James@epa.gov)**)**

* Currently working with the Career Development Subcommittee to update their pages
* Will continue to have discussions with the other Subcommittees to update those pages
* Need additional website designers to aid in the revamp
* Submit update requests to [EPAC-POSTINGS@LIST.NIH.GOV](mailto:EPAC-POSTINGS@LIST.NIH.GOV)
* Anonymous Feedback section on website

1. **Desire for a centralized file location for EPAC file sharing (Lead: TBD)**

* Our category is spread amongst multiple agencies. Therefore agency-specific SharePoint cloud servers will not work.
* Currently beta testing APAN SharePoint – allows users to edit documents (not concurrently). Each user will be required to create an account and will require an initial user logon.
* Reach out to [garrett\_chun@nps.gov](mailto:garrett_chun@nps.gov) if your subcommittee has need.

1. **Newsletter (Lead: CDR Jason Peterson –** [**Jason.Peterson@cms.hhs.gov**](mailto:Jason.Peterson@cms.hhs.gov)**)**

* Received enough articles to publish a spring newsletter

1. **Public Health Engineering Practice Subcommittee Discussion (CDR James Coburn, Vice Chair)**
2. **Overall Administration**

* Drafting standard operating procedures and plan for initial draft prior to April 9, 2020
* Redesigning PHEP website
* Working with IT Subcommittee and ICAC to have a SharePoint for Skills database

1. **Engineering Library/Competency (Lead: CDR Leo Angelo Gumapas –** [**leoangelo.gumapas@nih.gov**](mailto:leoangelo.gumapas@nih.gov)**)**

* Have initial file hierarchy and query rules
* Files are hosted in OneDrive, and an embedded link will be on PHEP Website

1. **Engineering Standards (Lead: CDR Hugo Gonzalez -** [**Hugo.Gonzalez@ihs.gov**](mailto:Hugo.Gonzalez@ihs.gov)**)**

* Document on accessing standards from IHS Sanitary Facilities Engineer is complete

1. **Vaping Activity at Science and Engineering Festival in Washington DC (Lead: TBD – Event Postponed)** 
   * The event is “postponed, date TBD” per the website: <https://usasciencefestival.org/>
   * Partner with NIH to develop an interactive activity at 2020 Science and Engineering Festival.
   * Designing interactive activity to illustrate concept of dissolved solids to show how vaping can contain solutes that are invisible that can be harmful
   * Logistics for conducting activity need to be determined
2. **Readiness Subcommittee Discussion (CDR Sean Bush, Vice Chair)**
3. **Deployment Readiness Support (Lead: CDR Quynh Nguyen –** [**QuynhT.Nguyen@fda.hhs.gov**](mailto:QuynhT.Nguyen@fda.hhs.gov)**)**

* Request engineer readiness data for analysis to identify any root causes.
* In lieu of data, develop and recommend best practice.

1. **Readiness Training and Education (Lead: CDR Shane Deckert –** [**shane.deckert@ihs.gov**](mailto:shane.deckert@ihs.gov)**)**

* Met March 13th to discuss Health Facility Assessment trainings with a partial list started
* Working with Events Subcommittee to facilitate a pre-conference training at 2021 COA
* Developing initiative – Leadership Training for Deployments

1. **Information Management (Lead: CDR Tara Bizjak -** [**Tara.Gooen@fda.hhs.gov**](mailto:Tara.Gooen@fda.hhs.gov)**)**

* No new updates.

1. **Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee Discussion (LCDR Praveen KC, Chair)**

* Nothing substantive to report this month

1. **Rules Subcommittee Discussion (CDR Deb Cox, Chair)**

* Nothing substantive to report this month, please see LCDR Palo’s COVID-19 Response below

1. **Strategic Planning for Engineering Subcommittee Discussion (CAPT David Harvey, Chair)**

* Nothing substantive to report this month

1. **General Discussion/Questions/Final Remarks**

* Want to thank CDR Cox on identifying a need to highlight the COVID-19 response from LCDR Palo’s perspective.
* Thanks to the numerous officers that participated in the quarterly town hall meeting
  + RADM Dieser plans to support OSG as best possible
  + RADM Dieser will be working through many administrative items as possible over the next two years so that the next CPO can focus more on the engineer category.
* Stay ready!
* Monitor your health and seek medical attention if you have symptoms that appear to be similar to COVID-19 [symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html)
* Practice good hygiene and social distancing!

1. **Commissioned Corps Women’s Issues Advisory Board Update (CAPT Varsha Savalia)**

* CCWIAB liaison to JOAG needed
  + Seeking JOAG liaison (which would involve providing CCWIAB updates or calling into the JOAG general call to provide updates).
  + Interested? Email CCWIAB Chair CDR Eunice Chung-Davies Eunice.Chung-Davies@fda.hhs.gov

1. **Commissioned Officer’s Association Update (CDR Nikhil Thakur)**

* 55th USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium Update - June 15-18, 2020​
  + Officers can participate and receive funding to attend COF, as a co-sponsorship agreement has been signed
  + Please review email from DSG. You can use official email and reasonable limited time to participate and organize symposium related tasks.
  + Permissive TDY is an option if your agency cannot fund you. If your supervisor and agency support your attendance, but cannot provide funding due to financial limitations, and if you are willing to pay your own way, then Permissive TDY is the next option to use. Please review the Permissive TDY policy - this is considered official travel, but at no cost to the government. COA has scholarships for Junior officers for the registration portion.
  + No group can sell the merchandise at the COF symposium (no fundraising during duty hours)
  + All presenters and presentations will be vetted by the OSG.
  + For more information on the USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium, <https://www.phscof.org/symposium.html>
* Update on search for new Executive Director of COA to replace Col (Ret) Jim Currie
  + Final interviews for the candidates by the end of March
  + A replacement hopefully in place by the 2nd week of April

1. **Junior Officers Advisory Group Update (LT Colin Tack)**

* Call for Nominations for JOAG Voting Members – Due April 23, 2020
  + Includes one engineer requested for OY20-21 beginning 10/1/2020, position currently held by LT Tack
  + Responsibilities for the engineer Voting Member (VM) include serving as JOAG VM, serving as co-chair for one of JOAG’s 9 committees, and serving as JOAG-EPAC liaison
  + For more information, see documents linked below or reach out to LT Tack ([Colin.Tack@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Colin.Tack@fda.hhs.gov))



* JOAG has suspended all in-person events (e.g. Meet and Greets)
* The next JOAG General Meeting will be held on Friday, April 10th from 1300-1400 EDT

1. **Society of American Military Engineers Update (CDR Steve Sauer)**

* Nothing to report

**Next EPAC Meeting**

**2nd Thursday of the Month**

April 9th, 2019

1500 – 1600 EST

**Webex**: [**Start the meeting**\*](https://fda1.webex.com/fda1/j.php?MTID=m1ce91e7c5ae9bedeb962c2fb23d8ecf0)

*\*Click on URL and have system call you.*

***OR Call In***

**Call-In Number**: 210-795-0506

**Meeting Access Code:** 904 995 269

**APPENDIX A**

**2020 EPAC VOTING MEMBER FULL ROSTER**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Chief Engineer** | | | | | |
| **Term** | **Name** | **Rank** | **Agency** | **EPAC Role** | **Location** |
| 2018-2021 | [Dieser, Edward](mailto:eyn3@cdc.gov) | RADM | CDC | Ex-Officio | Atlanta, GA |
| **EPAC Voting Members** | | | | | |
| **Term** | **Name** | **Rank** | **Agency** | **EPAC Role** | **Location** |
| 2018-2020 | [Spindel, Samantha](mailto:Samantha.Spindel@fda.hhs.gov) | CDR | FDA | EPAC Chair | Beltsville, MD |
| 2018-2020 | [Buck, Derrick](mailto:derrick.buck@ihs.gov) | LCDR | IHS | Events, Chair | Tempe, AZ |
| 2018-2020 | [Simms, Joshua](mailto:joshua.simms@fda.hhs.gov) | CAPT | FDA | Information, Chair | Silver Spring, MD |
| 2018-2020 | [Gumapas, Leo](mailto:leoangelo.gumapas@nih.gov) | CDR | NIH | Public Health Engineering Practice, Chair | Bethesda, MD |
| 2018-2020 | [Palo, Matthew](mailto:matthew.palo@fda.hhs.gov) | LCDR | CDC | Rules, Vice Chair | Jamaica, NY |
| 2019-2021 | [Hanssen, Eric](mailto:eric.hanssen@nih.gov) | CDR | NIH | Career Development, Vice Chair | Hamilton, MT |
| 2019-2021 | [Amadasu, Omobogie](mailto:omobogie.amadasu@ihs.gov) | LCDR | IHS | Career Development, Chair | Rockville, MD |
| 2019-2021 | [Bush, Sean](mailto:sean.bush@ihs.gov) | CDR | IHS | Readiness, Vice Chair | Escondido, CA |
| 2019-2021 | [Praveen, KC](mailto:kc.praveen@epa.gov) | LCDR | EPA | Recruitment and Retention, Chair | Washington, DC |
| 2019-2021 | [Cox, Deborah](mailto:cox.deborah@epa.gov) | CDR | EPA | Rules, Chair | Atlanta, GA |
| 2019-2021 | [Harvey, David](mailto:david.harvey@ihs.gov) | CAPT | IHS | Strategic Planning for Engineering, Chair | Rockville, MD |
| 2019-2021 | [Russell, Sam](mailto:russell.sam@epa.gov) | CDR | EPA | Strategic Planning for Engineering, Vice Chair | Washington, DC |
| 2020-2022 | [Kathol, John](mailto:John.Kathol@ihs.gov) | CDR | IHS | Awards, Chair | Tempe, AZ |
| 2020-2022 | [Mergenthaler, Matthew](mailto:matthew.mergenthaler@ihs.gov) | CDR | IHS | Awards, Vice Chair | Sacramento, CA |
| 2020-2022 | [Gifford, Michael](mailto:michael_gifford@nps.gov) | LCDR | NPS | Events, Vice Chair | Washington, DC |
| 2020-2022 | [Chun, Garrett](mailto:garrett_chun@nps.gov) | LCDR | NPS | Information, Vice Chair | Portal, CA |
| 2020-2022 | [Coburn, James](mailto:James.Coburn@fda.hhs.gov) | CDR | FDA | Public Health Engineering Practice, Vice Chair | Silver Spring, MD |
| 2020-2022 | [Chua, Frank](mailto:Francis.Chua@ihs.gov) | CDR | IHS | Readiness, Chair | Sacramento, CA |
| 2020-2022 | [Kelly, Fred](mailto:fred.kelly@nih.gov) | LCDR | NIH | Recruitment and Retention, Vice Chair | Bethesda, MD |
| **Ex-Officio Volunteers** | | | | | |
| 2020 | [Simpson, Michael](mailto:michael.simpson@fda.hhs.gov) | LCDR | FDA | Executive Secretary | Silver Spring, MD |
| 2019-2020 | [Thakur, Nikhil](mailto:nikhil.thakur@fda.hhs.gov) | CDR | FDA | COA Liaison | Silver Spring, MD |
| 2019-2020 | [Savalia, Varsha](mailto:varsha.savalia@fda.hhs.gov) | CAPT | FDA | CCWIAB Liaison | San Antonio, TX |
| 2019-2020 | [Tack, Colin](mailto:colin.tack@fda.hhs.gov) | LT | FDA | JOAG Liaison | Jamaica, NY |
| 2019-2020 | [Sauer, Steve](mailto:Steve.Sauer@ihs.gov) | CDR | IHS | SAME Liaison | Spokane, WA |

\*Clicking on the Voting Member name will open their email address