



# ENGINEER PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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APRIL 13, 2023 GENERAL MEETING



# EPAC Chair Remarks

## ➤ Need to know

- Jun 8th/9th – Onsite mid-year check in @ 1700 (All Engineers Welcome)
- May 25th - CAPT Tatum retirement @ 1100 ET & Senior Officer Panel @ 1500 ET
- EPAC Innovation Form (EIF) – Chair Elect applicant pool

## ➤ Kudos corner

- Special Events: PHEP Webinar, Deployment Panel, Esprit De Corps
- OBC 143: LT Kierys and OBC 144: LT Sharma

## ➤ Keeping the pulse

- Recruitment re-imagined (CCHQ, CPO, EPAC engagement)
- Training

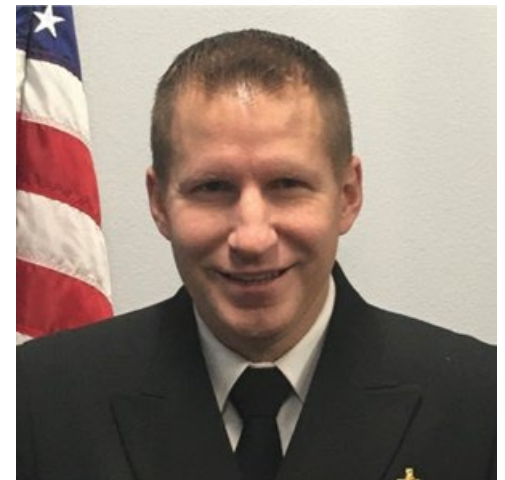
## ➤ Gifford's gouge

- “A winner is someone who recognizes his God-given talents, works his tail off to develop them into skills, and uses these skills to accomplish his goals.”

- Larry Bird



**EPAC Chair**  
CDR Michael Gifford



**EPAC Chair-elect**  
CDR Matthew Mergenthaler

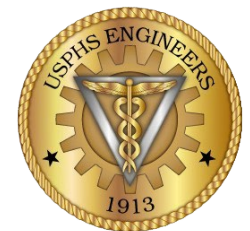


# Chief Professional Officer Remarks

- Modernization Policies Update
  - CCHQ still developing CCIs/POMs (questions & feedback re: permanent promotion, force distribution and management, and retirement)
  - Revision of CCI 384.03 – Mandatory, Voluntary, and Involuntary Retirement, 1/9/23
- CCHQ Connect Sessions
  - Practice Hours (3/22/23)
  - CCI 384.03 – Mandatory, Voluntary, and Involuntary Retirement, 4/12/23 @ 1200 EST
- PHS Deployment Safety Academy for Field Experience (D-SAFE) Consortium Training
  - Asynchronous Course: CCLMS, UNMC CANVAS LMS
  - In-Person: applications for training sessions in CCLMS, [UNMC PHS D-SAFE](#): Session 12 (4/12-23-4/13/23), Session 13 (4/25/23-4/26/23), Session 14 (5/9/23-5/10/23), Session 15 (5/23/23-5/24/23), Session 16 (6/6/23-6/7/23), Session 17 (6/28/23-6/29/23)
  - Webinar: Norovirus: What PHS Officers Need to Know (4/13/23)
- Online Uniformed Services ID Card Renewal Pilot: renewals / reissuances online via the Identification Card Office Online website (<https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/>).
- CCHQ Priority Request: Engineer Recruitment Strategy
- Engineer Strategic Plan, 2022 – 2025



**Chief Engineer**  
RDML Emil Wang



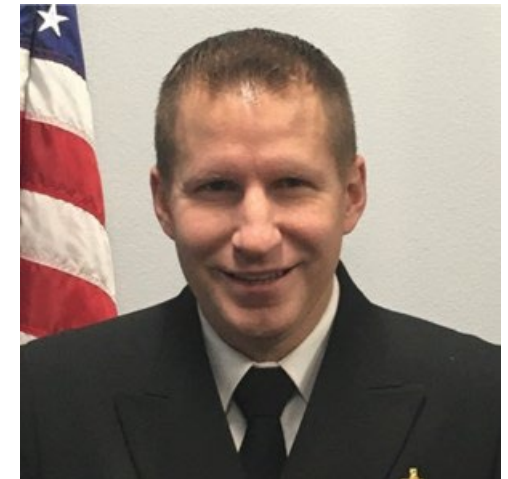


# Agenda

- **Opening Remarks** from EPAC Chair & CPO (5 minutes each)
- **\*Subcommittee Updates** (27 minutes; 3 minutes each)
  - Rules; Awards; Events; Information; Mentoring; Public Health Engineering Practice; Readiness; Recruitment and Retention; Special Projects Presentation; Career Development
- **\*Liaison Updates** (5 minutes)
- **\*Open Floor: Discussion, New Business, or Questions** (10 minutes)
- **Closing Remarks** (5 minutes)
  - End of General portion of EPAC meeting
- **Vote Proposal for Bylaw-Chair-elect** (10 minutes)
  - Applicable to Voting Members only



**EPAC 2023 Executive Secretary**  
LCDR William Chang



CDR Matthew Mergenthaler  
For LCDR Chang

\*Updates and Open Floor are based on time permitting



# Rules Subcommittee

- Reviewing two EIFs
  - Criteria for Chair-Elect Nomination Process, Voting on this today (LCDR De Vera)
  - Review process to recognize contributions of volunteers beyond LOA, expect to have award drafted by next meeting ( LCDR Bandukwala)
- Other ongoing Tasks
  - Implement and refine EIF process – transparency and insure no good ideas are overlooked
  - Review of Voting Member Selection Process – transparency, continuity, consistency
- Next Meeting will be April 19, 2023 at 10 AM EST
- Work is emergent throughout year and calls for Volunteers will be ongoing. Reach out to CDR Mergenthaler [matthew.mergenthaler@ihs.gov](mailto:matthew.mergenthaler@ihs.gov) or LCDR de Vera [melissa.devera@ihs.gov](mailto:melissa.devera@ihs.gov) if interested



**Rules Chair**  
CDR Matthew Mergenthaler



**Rules Vice Chair**  
LCDR Melissa de Vera



# Awards Subcommittee

- Proposed slate of Spring Cycle Awardees currently undergoing the CCHQ vetting process. Expect that to be complete in the near future if not already. Awardees to be formally recognized at the 2023 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium in May during Engineer Category Day. Big thanks to our team of Award Reviewers as well as the Nominators.
- Big thanks to Information Subcommittee for being on top of it providing timely updates to our page.
- April-August Plan: Work on Subcommittee projects (SOP, Awards Guidance, Subcommittee Operations Guide, etc.)
- Please start thinking about possible nominees for the Fall Awards Cycle (Hollis, Green, Cummings, EROY, EOY, Michaels). Nominations due November 1. Call for nominations open up August 15. Never too early.



**Chair**  
LCDR Travis Sorum



**Vice Chair**  
LT Drew Katherine



# Events Subcommittee

## ➤ 2023 Events and Initiatives

- AMSUS 2023: 13-16 FEB – National Harbor, MD
    - Lead – LCDR Hanniebey Wiyor / Co-Lead – LCDR Nam To
    - **Event Complete** – Thank you to our leads for a successful event!
  - E-Week 2023: 23 FEB – IHS HQ, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD
    - Lead CDR Omobogie Amadasu / Co-Lead CDR Mark Hench / Advisor LT Drew Katherine / **Lead on Deck 2024 – LT Schuyler Price/ 2024 Co-Leads/Advisors – ASPR Engineer Officers**
    - **Event Complete** – Thank you to the IHS and our leads for a successful event!
    - **Next Steps** – Document upload to APAN and /Hotwash
  - CPO Townhall: 9 March, Next Townhall 10 August
    - Leads CDR Tamara Rosbury and CDR Kurt Kesteloot
  - SAME JETC 2023: 2-4 MAY - San Antonio, TX
    - Lead – LT Bijay Tamang / Co-Lead – CAPT Varsha Savalia / **Lead on Deck 2024 – VACANT**
  - Category Day 2023: 8-11 MAY – Tulsa, OK
    - Lead – LCDR Jaison Eapen/ Co –Lead - LT Maggie Ziols/ Lead on Deck – LT Yvesna Blaise
    - **Mentoring Session planned for May 9th**
  - One Page Event Summaries – Format Approved
- **Leadership Volunteering Opportunities** – Contact: CDR Adeuya and LCDR Eapen via email at [roxanne.adeuya@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:roxanne.adeuya@fda.hhs.gov) and [Jaison.Eapen@hhs.gov](mailto:Jaison.Eapen@hhs.gov)



**Chair**  
CDR Roxanne Adeuya



**Vice Chair**  
LCDR Jason Eapen



# Information Subcommittee

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## EPAC Website

- Email [epac-postings@list.nih.gov](mailto:epac-postings@list.nih.gov) for change requests/update

## Information Subcommittee Meetings 2023

- 2ndMonday of January and then every other month on the 2ndMonday
- <https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/engineer/information.aspx>

## Newsletters

- Spring/Summer edition soon to be published
- Volunteers and articles for next Fall/Winter edition by 8/31



**Chair**  
LCDR Gary Riley



**Vice Chair**  
LCDR William Chang





# Mentoring Subcommittee

- **New Program Participants:**
  - Open Recruitment – If you're interested in the program, go to the EPAC Mentoring website and fill out the intake questionnaire. If you have a mentor/mentee in mind, fill out the contract. Submit to 'epac.mentoring@gmail.com'.
- **Hails and Farewells:**
  - Mentoring On-boarded two new officers: CDR Corey Sawatzky (IHS) and LCDR Hanniebey Wiyor (FDA). Welcome Aboard, CDR Sawatzky and LCDR Wiyor!
  - CDR Sadaf Toor was accepted into the Army War College this year, and will be stepping down from the SC for now. Congratulations, CDR Toor!
- **Mentoring SC Interest?** Meetings are the 4th Wednesday of every month at 1600 Eastern Standard Time. Email CDR Thakur ([Nikhil.Thakur@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Nikhil.Thakur@fda.hhs.gov)) and LCDR Junes-Harvey ([juliane.junes-harvey@ihs.gov](mailto:juliane.junes-harvey@ihs.gov)) directly.



**Chair**  
CDR Nikhil Thakur



**Vice Chair**  
LCDR Juliane Junes-Harvey



# Public Health Engineering Practice Subcommittee

## Climate Change Work Group

- Online presentation on April 27<sup>th</sup> to the NPS Engineers group (~100 engineers)
- Poster Presentation at COA Symposium
- Formulating work plan for the next year - possible topics include:
  1. Sustainable Engineering / Renewables / Preventative Engineering / Sustainable materials related to climate change
  2. Electricity Dependence – Backup Power / Renewables
  3. Cyanotoxins
  4. Air quality Impacts and Equity Issues from Wildfires
  5. PFAS – How to test, treat and dispose of PFAS
  6. Lithium in drinking water
  7. Impact on Health Care Community from Natural Disasters and Emerging and Infectious Diseases
  8. Storm Recovery/Impacts to Sanitation Infrastructure/Lessons learned



**Chair**  
LT Bryan Wimer



**Vice Chair**  
LCDR Timothy Martin

If interested email LT Dara Zimmerman: [dara\\_zimmerman@nps.gov](mailto:dara_zimmerman@nps.gov)



# Public Health Engineering Practice Subcommittee

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## Working with Career Development subcommittee on the public health training database

- Working through the current list to find trainings/programs that are worthwhile
- If you know of specific programs that offer certificates in public health related to engineering please reach out

## PHEP General Meeting information: 3rd Thursday each month at 2pm Eastern

- LT Wimer (CDC) - [gia3@cdc.gov](mailto:gia3@cdc.gov)
- LCDR Timothy Martin (OS/ASPR/BARDA) [Timothy.Martin@hhs.gov](mailto:Timothy.Martin@hhs.gov)



**Chair**  
LT Bryan Wimer



**Vice Chair**  
LCDR Timothy Martin



# Readiness Subcommittee

## ➤ Connect With Readiness!

- RSC meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays of the month from 1130-1230 ET: ([MS Teams link](#)) or call in (audio only) at +1 513-769-4574,,335304847# **Come Join us!**
- Obtain updates on Readiness at: <https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/engineer/readinessnew.aspx>

## ➤ Key CY23 Initiative/Project Updates:

- **Readiness Training Workgroup (Led by LCDR Steven Tidwell):**
  - RSC Readiness Deployment Panel – Presented on 30MAR23, recording available for viewing soon on the RSC website. **Thank you** to CDR Yambot & LT Tian for their leadership to the panel members: CAPT Cowman, CDR Marrero, LCDR Weisberg, LT Wilkinson and LTJG Martinez for their insights!
  - DRE Basic Assessment training at COA Sympo (May '23) – **Canceled** due to the high cost per person
  - Safety Officer Resources Guide – Developing a compendium of safety related resources
- **Readiness Support Workgroup (Led by LCDR Steven Tidwell):**
  - Engineer's Capability Statement – '18 Fact Sheet to be updated to better market our unique skillsets
  - Disaster Response Engineer, DRE – Supporting the initiative with several DRE related projects in 2023 (i.e., RDB deployment skillsets database update and develop a certification process)
- **Deployment Booklet Workgroup (Led by CDR George Ngatha):**
  - FY2022 Deployed Engineers in Action booklet is under a QA review prior to final publication



**Chair**  
CDR David Gwisdalla

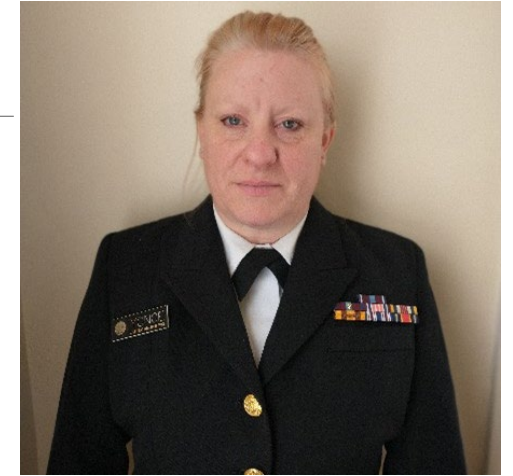


**Vice Chair**  
CAPT Tara Goen Bizjak



# Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee

- Workgroups:
  - Communications: Esprit de Corps held on March 30 (another in the fall)
    - Presentations on life abroad (CAPTs Ogan and Cowman)
    - Networking opportunity with other PHS officers
  - Training & Tracking:
    - Flyer to send out to universities advertising COSTEP 2024
  - COSTEP Team (Lead: LT Ashley Martinez)
    - Need volunteers to assist with COSTEP recruitment (need about 3-7 officers)
    - Focus on communications with COSTEP applicants
- Informational Meeting with CCHQ CADRe Branch:
  - Approximately 1 out of 17 PHS applicants makes it to CAD
  - What can EPAC do?
    - Extra recruitment focus on ABET accredited universities
    - Looking for other ways to assist
- Contacts: [yonce.stacey@epa.gov](mailto:yonce.stacey@epa.gov) and [mark.hench@ihs.gov](mailto:mark.hench@ihs.gov)



**Chair**  
CDR Stacey Yonce



**Vice Chair**  
CDR Mark Hench

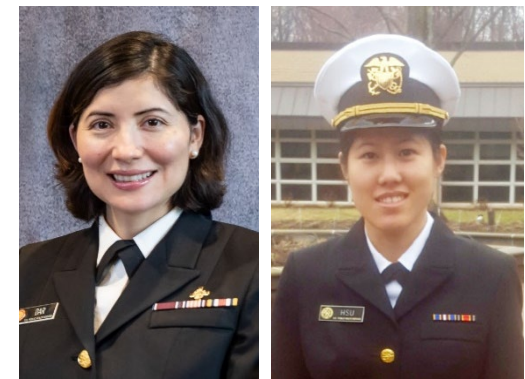


## Special Project: Engineer Strategic Planning (ESP)

- ESP is finalized, approved by CPO and OSG, uploaded on EPAC website.
- Communication plan was developed to roll out the ESP.
- Task assigned to this ad-hoc subcommittee is complete.



**Lead**  
CDR Praveen K.C.



**Co-leads**  
CDR Cristina Dar & LCDR Vicky Hsu



# Background

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- Initially commissioned by CAPT E. Dieser (CE14)
- Timeline 2022-2025 to align with RDML Wang's term as CPO
- Approved by the OSG
- Available on the EPAC website
  - EPAC homepage under Chief Engineer's Corner
  - Meet the CPO page



## What is Engineer Strategic Plan (ESP)?

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- Framework to execute the vision and mission of USPHS as related to Engineer officers
- Provides targeted direction to advance our engineer category
- Serves as a common operating plan for engineer officers





## 4 Focus Areas

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1. Recruitment and Retention
2. Career Development
3. Readiness and Deployment Support
4. Modernization



# Focus Area 1: Recruitment and Retention

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- Increase the force strength of Engineer officers to meet mission requirements. Identify and make recommendations regarding factors that affect the recruitment and retention of Engineer officers.

## Specific Goals

- Align efforts to support recruitment, hiring, and retention of officers.
- Engage in outreach efforts with third parties.
- Evaluate onboarding processing of active duty-cleared engineer applicants.
- Implement and inform candidates of CCHQ's policies.
- Work with CCHQ to identify factors that may lead to disqualification and/or applicant withdrawals and provide recommendations for engineer appointment standards.
- Develop After Action report to track efforts and outcomes of recruitment and outreach strategy.



## Focus Area 2: Career Development

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- Provide resources and guidance for the professional development and career progression of Engineer officers within Career Pathways and tracks.

### Specific Goals

- Develop recommendations for Engineer career progression paths.
- Work with CCHQ to better align billets with leadership roles.
- Establish collaborative opportunities between the Applied Public Health Engineer disciplines to support engineer officers' ability to meet promotion benchmarks and cross-discipline networking.
- Identify and share relevant engineer credentials, licensures, and advanced degrees.
- Identify and recognize officer contributions and achievements.
- Increase EPAC mentor-mentee assignments.
- Develop resources for work-life balance and integration with USPHS mission challenges.



## Focus Area 3: Readiness and Deployment

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- Ensure the ability of Engineer officers to maintain readiness and to effectively respond to deployment needs.

### Specific Goals

- Provide recommendations for expanded deployment roles for Engineer officers.
- Establish and maintain database of officer skillsets.
- Connect and support officers deployed in the field.
- Identify and recommend relevant disaster response engineer trainings.
- Highlight **versatility** of engineer deployment roles.



## Focus Area 4: Modernization

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- To maintain Engineer category visibility and relevance to the Corps and advocate for Engineer category interests during CCHQ modernization process and transition to the Applied Public Health promotion category.

### Specific Goals

- Identify opportunities to promote Engineer category visibility and engagement within the Applied Public Health promotion category and to CCHQ.
- Establish resources and guidance to implement modernization promotions and separations/retirement policies.



## How will the ESP be implemented?

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- Primary vehicle will be through EPAC
  - Subcommittees
  - Ad hoc workgroups
  - Special projects
- Measurable outcomes may be captured in the end-of-year reports



## Acknowledgments

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- RDML Emil Wang
- CAPT Edward Dieser
- CAPT Jill Hammond
- CAPT David Harvey
- CAPT Kris Naset
- CAPT Sam Russell
- CDR Deborah Cox
- LCDR Chris Peltier
- LCDR David Walker

**Thank you!**



## Feedback / Questions

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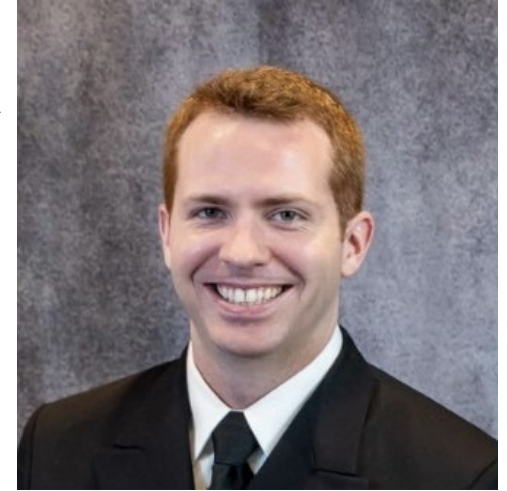
- Today's open floor Q&A with RDML Wang
- EPAC website
  - “Anonymous Feedback”
  - “CPO Comments Box”





# Career Development Subcommittee

- SAVE THE DATE – Senior Officer Panels:
  - May 25<sup>th</sup> on Change Management and Officer Resiliency
  - October 19<sup>th</sup> on Collaboration and Partnership
- Building Repository of Professional Credentials, Licensures, and Advanced Degrees applicable to the Engineer Category
- EPAC Welcome Package at EPAC for review
- Engineering Officer Career Development Model at OSG for review
- PY2022 Data Analytics at EPAC for review, process established to have PY2023 Data Analytics released sooner
- New Engineer completed OBC 144
  - LT Hom Sharma with CDC/NIOSH in Pittsburgh, PA – Won Distinguished Graduate!
  - Photos of previous OBCs [here](#)
  - At least one Engineer in April OBC 145



**Chair**  
LCDR Michael Simpson



**Vice Chair**  
CDR Chris Fehrman



# Career Development Subcommittee





# Liaison Updates



CDR Piermatteo



CDR Kesteloot



LCDR Remley



LCDR Wandersee

## ➤ CCWIAB

- Reminder of Current [CCWIAB Resources](#):
  - [Resource Guide for USPHS Officers Getting Married or Getting Divorced, and for Dependents Surviving the Death of a USPHS Officer \(Version 3.0, May 2019\)](#)
  - [Resource-Guide-for-Expectant-Parents-Version-2.0.pdf](#)
  - *(Coming Soon) Updated Resource Guide for Officers Diagnosed with Breast Cancer*
- If you have any questions or issues you wish to raise to CCWIAB, please send an email to [kimberly.piermatteo@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:kimberly.piermatteo@fda.hhs.gov).

## ➤ COA

- Symposium May 8-11 in Tulsa is quickly approaching. Details: Symposium - PHS ([phscof.org](http://phscof.org))
- Current COA advocacy: Priorities ([coausphs.org](http://coausphs.org))
- Contact COA for concerns: Contact Us ([coausphs.org](http://coausphs.org))

## ➤ SAME

- 2023 Joint Engineer Training Conference, 2 May – 4 May, San Antonio, TX
- LCDR Jaison Eapen will be graduating from the SAME Leader Development Program
- Two PHS Engineer officers presenting
- LCDR Kevin Remley (Speaker) and LCDR Jaison Eapen (Moderator), From Concept to Lasting Impact: Leadership at All Levels on 3 May at 2:30 PM (CDT)
- Three PHS Engineer officers attending to accept SAME awards
- 2023 Hollis Medal, 2023 Cumming Plaque, and 2023 STEM Champion-Individual
- <https://www.samejetc.org/>

## ➤ JOAG

- JOAG call for Voting Member is extend until 4/14 for At-Large positions (7 total), reach out with any questions [michael\\_Wandersee@fws.gov](mailto:michael_Wandersee@fws.gov)
- Next JOAG General Meeting is 4/14 at 1300 ET



## Open Floor

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- **The floor is open** for discussion, new business, or questions
  - Please unmute yourself to speak
  - When speaking, please identify yourself (rank and name) and duty station



## Closing Remarks

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- **Thank you** all for joining us today
- SAME JETC May 2-4
- COA USPHS Symposium May 8-11
- Senior Officer Panel May 25
- Our next **EPAC General Meeting, July 13<sup>th</sup> 1500-1630 EST**
- Find the latest EPAC information and calendar updates on our website <https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/engineer/>



**EPAC Chair**  
CDR Michael Gifford

**This concludes the General portion of our EPAC meeting.**



## Voting Proposal: Chair-elect

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12/06/2022 – EPAC Innovation Form received

- Problem: Lack of self-nominations for EPAC Chair-elect
- Proposed Solution: Allow new incoming Voting Members to run
- Alternate Solution: Remove barrier for former Voting Members



**Rules Vice Chair**  
LCDR Melissa de Vera



## Voting Proposal: Chair-elect

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- 1. Remove from Article I.III Section 1 barrier for former EPAC Voting Members to have been selected for a second or third term as a requirement to run for EPAC Chair-elect.**
- 2. Add to Article I.I Section 7 a special 2-year term for former Members appointed to Chair-elect AND add to Article I.III Section 1 that special term is automatic if elected.**
- 3. Add to Article I.I Section 2 that two Voting Membership seats will be reserved for the special 2-year terms to ensure that Membership does not exceed maximum allowed by Charter.**
- 4. If above changes pass, add to Article I.III Section 1 the requirement of a former EPAC Voting Member to have received an SAA with in the last 6 years for a previously served term as an eligibility requirement for running for EPAC Chair-elect.**



## Voting Proposal: Chair-elect

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### Impacts

- Larger pool of potential Chair-elect candidates
- Maintains the Bylaws 1-year rule without placing further restrictions on former VMs
- Keeps Chair-elect nomination process and the Voting Member selection board separate and independent processes
- Allows former VMs more flexibility for planning their service with EPAC





## Voting Proposal: Chair-elect

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### Concern: Chair must be Member

- Not explicitly instructed by the Charter
- Bylaws do require that the Chair is an EPAC Member
  - Additionally, if the Membership term expires at end of term as Chair-elect, then term of Membership may be extended with SG approval.
- Bylaws imply that Chair-elect should be a member but do not explicitly state



## Voting Proposal: Chair-elect

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### Solution: Chair must be Member

- Allow incoming Chair-elect to serve a special 2-year term
  - Ensures Voting Membership during term as Chair
  - Does not require SG approval, Charter allows PACs to designate 2-year terms
  - Gives former Members flexibility in planning their EPAC careers
    - Can run multiple times without committing to Membership term if run for Chair-elect is unsuccessful
    - Those who serve get immediate respite by not having to fulfill obligations as a Member after completion of their Chair term



## Voting Proposal: Chair-elect

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Concern: Vetting Former Members

Solution: Must have received an SAA

- SAA only awarded to Members who successfully serve a 3-year term
- Recently awarded to ensure recent participation in EPAC