



## EPAC Career Development Subcommittee May 24, 2021 Meeting Minutes



### Subcommittee Leadership

**Chair:** CAPT Eric Hanssen – [Eric.Hanssen@nih.gov](mailto:Eric.Hanssen@nih.gov) (406) 802-6208

**Vice Chair:** LCDR Michael Simpson – [Michael.Simpson@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Michael.Simpson@fda.hhs.gov) (301) 796-4070

Action items are **highlighted**

### **Chair/Vice Chair Opening Remarks**

- Thank you everyone for joining – know a lot of you are deployed so that shows extra initiative to attending while being deployed
- CDS Leadership met with RADM Dieser and CDR Cox discussing the release of the new 2022 benchmarks
  - They requested us to provide them questions we have received from EPAC as well as questions CDS has in regards to efforts to making the category more aware of benchmark changes
  - This most likely will also include supplemental guidance for promotion boards and officers in preparation of promotion
- **If you don't have an account please do so, if you need help setting it up please reach out. [https://wss.apan.org/fedgov/usphs-epac/\\_layouts/people.aspx?MembershipGroupId=106948](https://wss.apan.org/fedgov/usphs-epac/_layouts/people.aspx?MembershipGroupId=106948)**
- Our website is also doing a great job too!

### **Council of Captains (Project Lead: LCDR David Dar – [David.Dar@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:David.Dar@fda.hhs.gov))**

- Status Update: LCDR Millner had kick-off meeting for 3<sup>rd</sup> Senior Officer Panel on May 14, next meeting on May 28
- Questions were solicited for promotions and set aside for this type of event so discussion with panel will focus on using these questions so we appreciate
- Challenges/problems/request for feedback: one Senior Officer, CAPT Angela Mtungwa, may be deployed for next month impacting her contribution to presentation
- Next scheduled milestone with date: Senior Officer Panel #3 scheduled for July 8

### **Online Engineering Advanced Degree Programs (Project Lead – LCDR Tyrrell Lang – [Tyrrell.Lang@ihs.gov](mailto:Tyrrell.Lang@ihs.gov), unable to attend)**

- Status Update: Looking for 1-2 CDS members to assist in writing/proofing an article about obtaining advanced degrees
  - If you've recently started an Advanced Degree and would like to help prevent others from going through the same headache you did in decision process or help document the questions others should ask themselves before pursuing a degree, this is the project for you!
- Challenges/problems/request for feedback: Less responses to survey than we had hoped for, should still be enough to draft white paper on the pursuit of advanced degrees
- Next scheduled milestone with date: White Paper will be issued to CDS leadership for review by August 2021



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### Professional Certifications and Credentials Project (**Project Lead: LCDR Tom Peter – [Thomas.Peter@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Thomas.Peter@fda.hhs.gov)**)

- Status Update:
  - Finished following up with BME respondents to clarify responses where necessary (with one exception that slipped through the cracks and should be quick to resolve)
- Challenges/problems/request for feedback:
  - Need to determine how changes to the benchmarks potentially impact our project
  - People that were on deployment have returned and
- Next scheduled milestone with date:
  - Select certifications to include in whitepaper that will compare valuable BME certifications to the P.E. license by June 2021

### Update CE/PD Template documents: (**Project Lead: LCDR Kelly Kachurak – [Kelly.Kachurak@nps.gov](mailto:Kelly.Kachurak@nps.gov)**)

- Project Complete, waiting for the updated documents to be added to the EPAC website. There was an issue with the servers that has prevented the upload so far.

### Licensure Book Share/Recommendations (**Work Group Lead: LCDR Omobogie Amadasu – [Omobogie.Amadasu@ihs.gov](mailto:Omobogie.Amadasu@ihs.gov)**)

- Status update:
  - A few announcements have gone out and still no interest in getting PE books.
  - One email request came in for FE books – did not confirm if request from PHS officer or CS
  - Ask the EPAC to change the scope of the spending. Allow the funds to be spend on other reference materials such as Project Management Professional (PMP) or other certifications that add value to USPHS and the Category.
  - Sadly no response from reaching out to individuals that responded to Credentials Survey with interest in obtaining PE
- Request for feedback:
  - Next steps for changing scope – requesting CDS discuss process with EPAC Leadership, especially since change of benchmarks does not explicitly call out PE licensure
  - EPAC permission/vote for using the funds for reference books beyond the PE. There is little to know interest by the Category to use this.
- Next Milestone:
  - Another announcement or clearance from EPAC to spend differently.

### Mentor/Mentee Assignments (**Work Group Lead: LCDR Omobogie Amadasu – [Omobogie.Amadasu@ihs.gov](mailto:Omobogie.Amadasu@ihs.gov)**)

- Status Update:
  - Plan to fully implement the database software by June that was created from LCDRs Bandukwala and Dyer



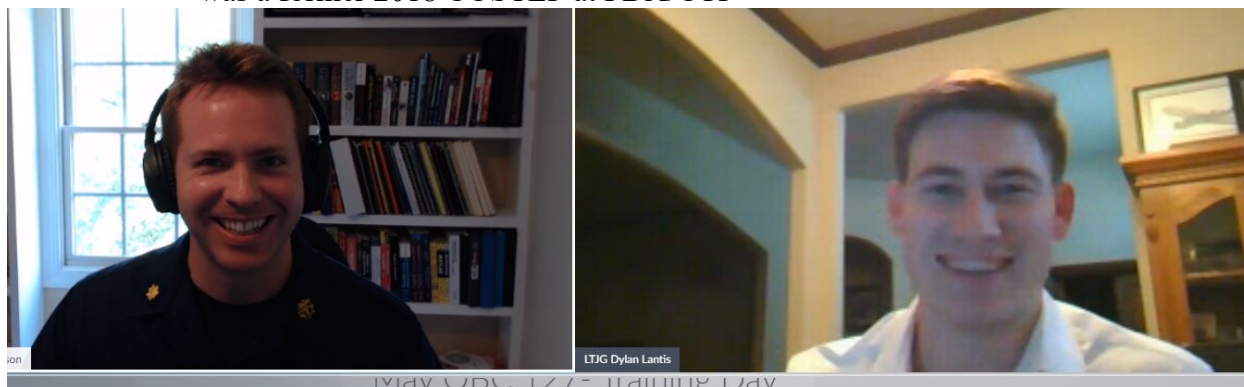
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- CDR Thakur streamlined all of Distribution List generic correspondence in the form of email templates and preparing the EPAC Mentoring Program for success beyond our tenures.
- Have 13 mentees that we have to pair. Our goal is to pair these officers in the near future
- Documents pushed to the EPAC website for posting (Engineering Mentoring Checklist and flow diagram for mentoring participation) but not yet posted due to complications with the website team.
- Will consider spreading the word on AMSUS Smart Brief on Leadership – [smartbrief.com/leadership/?referrerId=gEcUkhgOWI](https://smartbrief.com/leadership/?referrerId=gEcUkhgOWI)
- Challenges:
  - Close to finishing all the groundwork to focus on higher level activities
- Next milestone
  - Keep the level of engagement with participants with monthly emails that contain mentoring materials (SMART Goals, Engineering Mentoring Checklist)
  - Mid-year reviews (July) to document for certificates at the end of the year
  - We may send out a new questionnaire form to complete and update our database – responding to forms will automatically be input into the Access database

### OBC Open House Representation (**Work Group Lead: LCDR Michael Simpson – [Michael.Simpson@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Michael.Simpson@fda.hhs.gov)**)

- May Virtual OBC Open House occurred May 18
  - New Engineer officer was LTJG Dylan Lantis out of Lawton, OK with IHS. He was a former 2018 COSTEP at FDA/CTP



### Website development (**Work Group Lead: LT Adam Cooke – [Adam.Cooke@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Adam.Cooke@fda.hhs.gov)**)

- Minutes for March and April have been requested to be added to site.
- Challenges/problems/request for feedback
  - IT issues are impacting the ability to upload documents to site
  - Does your project have a home on the website?
    - If it doesn't it's a quick fix – just let LCDR Cooke know what should be done to make it fit



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- CDS will be asking each project individually at next meeting if Project Lead has emailed LT Cooke confirming location of project on CDS website
- Collect three image suggestions for each black box – the section title can be included in the image or placed below
- Next scheduled milestone with date – dates depending on resolution of IT issues
  - Other Resources decommission

### **Data Analytics of Promotion Board Scores and Recommendations (Project Lead LCDR Tim Martin – [Timothy.Martin@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Timothy.Martin@fda.hhs.gov))**

- There currently are no updates due to multiple deployments.
- We plan to work on obtaining additional data via a targeted survey and then proceed in data analysis - look for trends or information that highlights what a promotable officer is
  - Plan to generate white paper and presentation to EPAC on findings
  - Have determined the data elements and in process of generating survey
  - Will ask Council of Captains Initiative to let Project Lead know of any valuable information that should be asked of recently promoted officers being surveyed
- Anticipated timeline is to complete those activities by end of September 2021.

### **Splitting/Updating Career Track Guidance/Handbook into White Papers/Webpages (Project Lead LCDR Noah Buikema – [Noah.Buikema@nps.gov](mailto:Noah.Buikema@nps.gov))**

- Status Update
  - First draft completed and sent to CAPT Hanssen for feedback (05/05/2021)
    - This will be used as a blueprint for us to follow on career track of other agencies
- Challenges/problems/request for feedback
  - Review process of leadership – Our group needs feedback/greenlight before committing to larger agencies (FDA/CDC/EPA)
  - Need feedback and review as soon as possible, so our group can focus on the larger agencies with many career tracks and pathways.
  - List of billets for various agencies would be useful to match up with offices in which officers are working – working with CDR Kesteloot for these items (when or if they become available)
- Next scheduled milestone with date:
  - Review and address comments from CAPT Hanssen – will receive by end of the week
  - Developing interview questions for CAPT section of each agency (aka, "how did your career lead you here") – will be reaching out to Council of Captain's project for asking these questions
  - Developing contacts at FDA/CDC/EPA for career tracks in various offices (see other tasks) – will then reach out to other agencies



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### PAC Career Development Key Drivers and Activities Analysis (**Project Lead LCDR David Sullivan** – [David.Sullivan@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:David.Sullivan@fda.hhs.gov))

- Status Update
  - Contacts have been made with CDS representatives of other categories with planned follow-up for recommendations of their current best practices, as well as sharing our own.
  - Collaboration with LCDR Martin's CDS project for relevant best CD practices internal to EPAC
  - All PACs have a Career Development Subcommittee – the titles and size of the Subcommittee can vary but subcommittee that covers Career Development is being contacted
- Challenges/problems/request for feedback
  - No immediate challenges requiring additional input
- Next scheduled milestone with date
  - Adjusted a quarter for deployment delays - End of Q3 results for best practices outside of EPAC for Q4 analysis of projects/data metrics and trends

### Core Competencies Assistance to PHEP SC (**Project Lead LCDR Mary Millner** – [Mary.Millner@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Mary.Millner@fda.hhs.gov))

- Status Update
  - Tested whether storing database on APAN is feasible
  - Will set up a secure folder for storage of database for any PII concerns
- Challenges/problems/request for feedback
  - Security assessment by OCIO leadership and the security team is ongoing. Timeline for completion of the review is unknown. This will be to see if OASH will be able to support this
  - Have been new employees recently which has caused a slight delay, but they did let us know they have not forgotten about us!
- Next scheduled milestone with date
  - 06/09/2021 - Joint meeting with CDS/PHEP to discuss next steps (where database will be housed, who will run it, etc.)

### MOU with non-HHS agencies (**Project Lead CDR Kurt Kesteloot** – [Kurt.Kesteloot@nps.gov](mailto:Kurt.Kesteloot@nps.gov), unable to attend)

- Status Update: LT Katherine has joined the project. He began drafting notes about MOUs
- Challenges/problems/request for feedback: None at the moment
- Next scheduled milestone with date: Should have a document discussing MOUs by July 2021 Meeting

### General Discussion and Questions

- Discussion of changes for 2022 Benchmarks
  1. **Performance Rating and Reviewing Official's Statement (Performance)**
    - removal of "Contribution to Agency Missions"



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- removal of service awards as a benchmark item – should we still differentiate service vs individual awards on CV?
- 2. Education, Training & Professional Development
  - Pg. 4. Credentials: generalized statement on degree being beyond qualifying (bachelors in engineering). Same with credentials (none required) - gives CDS the ability to help provide various degrees/credentials available
  - There has been significant confusion experienced in CDS with the term of “certification”, does a Graduate Certificate hold the same weight as that of a society certification? If not, does a Graduate Certificate count as a degree beyond the required qualifying credentials?
  - There were concerns that officers were not given adequate credit for obtaining advanced degrees outside of MPH or engineering field. If the degree the officer has chosen improves their added value to the agency, it is still an acceptable degree and will earn credit for “Credentials”, correct?
  - Pg. 5 Licensure: removal of “Licensure as a Professional Engineer (PE) by NCEES or Registration or board certification” to become “where applicable” - should officers add statement in CV if position requires credential required for position (i.e. PE at IHS or Level 2 Investigator in FDA/ORR for O-5 billet)?
  - Pg. 5 PH T&E: removal of leadership position on Tier 1 or Tier 2 team (assuming since we're moving away from Tiers), award of FMRB or other campaign awards & recognition, removal of "Leadership Training"
  - Pg. 5 PH T&E – appreciate the current relevance of PACE, however, concern that promotion boards will no longer value other efforts that demonstrated past deployment leadership and readiness such as a section chief on an RDF
  - This precept has 4 factors and is worth 20%, does that mean each factor is worth 5%?
- 3. Career Progression & Potential
  - Pg. 6 Mission Priority states “≥ 1 permanent duty assignment in a hazardous duty or isolated hardship location, or in national health security”. Given that most positions in isolated hardship locations are for entry-level billets, are mid-career officers who never were stationed at isolated hardship locations at a disadvantage to those that did?
  - Pg. 6 Mission Priority – What billets specific to engineers would fall within “national health security” to meet MP Bucket 4?
  - Please assist in reiterate Mission Priority buckets, if you are in a billet meeting more than one MP, does one score higher than a person with just one MP?
  - Can an engineer meet MP Bucket 2 for “in organization that provides direct clinical care”?
  - Explanation how MP Bucket 5 is not associated with the other MP 1-4 buckets, does this make this MP a lower significance?
  - 2021 benchmarks stated in “Assignment Diversity that “additional credit given to... remote from direct supervisor” or “supervising staff in remote locations”, does this no longer have added value?



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- Does Assignments also exclude “initial call to duty” in quantity of assignments? If so the numbers are the same as previous benchmarks but if not then the numbers are one less
- How does the benchmarks address Subject Matter Experts (SME) roles that have national impact but are non-supervisory?
- COSTEP positions appear in PIR, do they count for this benchmark? Along the same lines, prior service assignments do not appear in benchmarks except statement on prior service, does this count towards “Assignments” and “Mobility”?
- This precept has five factors and is 25%, does that mean each factor is worth 5%?
- 4. Professional Contributions & Service to the PHS Commissioned Corps (Officership)
  - Pg. 7 H/I/D: explicitly calls out deployments run by CCHQ
  - There has been instances in the past for natural disasters where USPHS deploy too slow and agencies such as NPS have been a lot faster at deploying officers out the door; based on this change excluding interagency deployments officers are penalized for agency deployment
  - It previously was stated that Agency deployments award officers in RedDOG deployments days but based on the benchmarks it is not meeting the benchmark requirement, is that correct?
  - Do intra-agency deployments count (vs interagency) if it was sanctioned through CCHQ (for example, FDA officers deployed to IHS reservation)?
  - If there is significant importance on deployments and readiness, why was the only mention of deployments moved from Precept 2 (20%) to Precept 4 (15%) therefore making deployments less significant to the benchmarks of a PHS officer
  - Pg. 7 Professional Contributions – section not broken up in four quadrants to correlate to rank header, assumption is far left column covers T-O3/P-O2 and T-O4/P-O3, sections combined of Officer CC Contributions and Professional Contributions
  - removal of recruitment activities as a benchmark item but does have recruitment of other mentors
  - If the ultimate goal is to increase number of USPHS, why was recruitment activities removed from the benchmarks?
  - This precept has three factors and is 15%, does that mean each factor is worth 5%?



2022 Promotion  
Benchmarks w comn

- The purpose of this request is to have EPAC CDS assist RADM Dieser in asking questions that engineer officers have in regards to the benchmarks. As Voting Members, CAPT Hanssen and LCDR Simpson have a responsibility to bring questions and concerns to EPAC Leadership and the CPO. This responsibility is stronger if it impacts career development of engineers.



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- This request is for RADM Dieser to have questions to address for the upcoming EPAC call but if questions arise later CDS Leadership will send them forward.
- All questions sent to CDS Leadership by Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup> will be sent to CDR Cox and RADM Dieser to be potentially addressed at the next EPAC call but most likely by the end of the year

### New Business and Closing Remarks

- Any proposed projects or initiatives?
- We will send CDS finalized Mid-Year updates as well as feedback from June 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting with EPAC Leadership
- Previous month minutes have already been uploaded to the following website:  
[https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/engineer/cd\\_minutes.aspx](https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/engineer/cd_minutes.aspx)
  - Please review meeting minutes as highlighted items are action items requested to be completed prior to next meeting
- Thank you to everyone, especially for staying late to address all questions and concerns with the updated benchmarks





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**Next call Monday, June 28th 3:00pm – 4:00pm ED**



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