

Career Planning and Decision-Making

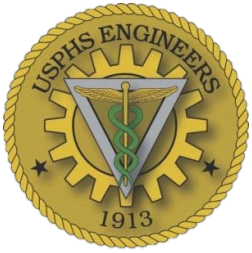
A Senior Engineer Panel

Sponsored by the Chief Engineer, the
Council of Captains, and the Engineer
Professional Advisory Committee

January 14, 2021

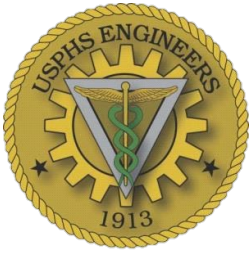
Facilitator: LCDR David Dar

Panelists: CAPTs Sean Boyd, Steven
Bosiljevac, Charles Weir, and Shari Windt



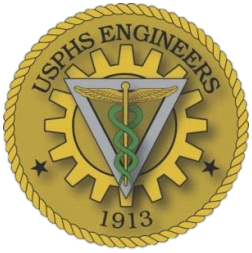
Agenda

- ▶ Housekeeping and disclaimers
- ▶ Purpose of panel
- ▶ Introduce the panelists
- ▶ General remarks on career planning and decision-making
- ▶ Your questions, grouped by topic area
- ▶ EPAC resources
- ▶ Open Q&A



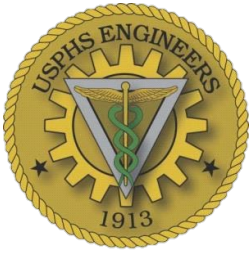
Housekeeping

- ▶ Session is recorded for posting on the EPAC website
- ▶ Attendees are muted by default
- ▶ Questions may be taken at the end of the individual sections and at the end of the overall session, as time permits
 - ▶ Questions to be generally applicable to the category or officers across a particular agency (not necessarily venue to raise questions that unique to individual agency)
 - ▶ Can follow up with officers who had questions that we were not able to get to in this session
- ▶ For questions, please unmute or utilize the chat window



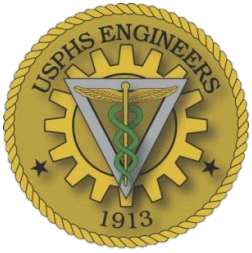
Disclaimers

- ▶ The views expressed in this session are based on the panelists' experiences and may not be representative of official policies of the Category or the Corps at large.
- ▶ Officers should utilize official resources on the EPAC and CCMIS websites.
- ▶ Officers are encouraged to seek guidance on career planning from mentors and/or other senior officers, as case-by-case input may be advised.



Purpose of Today's Session

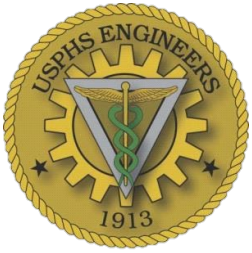
- ▶ Hear from senior engineers representing various engineering disciplines, backgrounds and Agencies on what you think about when making career decisions
- ▶ The session will provide *considerations* for you to contemplate, not *hard answers* on what's right for you and your specific situation
- ▶ *You are responsible for your career* and must tailor your plan and decisions to meet your personal and professional goals
- ▶ Discussing your situation with peers, your supervisor, or a mentor is a great way to learn from others' experience and gain valuable guidance
- ▶ Today's panelists are committed to support you with career planning needs and decisions you're facing. Members of the Council of Captains and other senior engineers are also great resources for you to talk with.



CAPT Sean Boyd

- ▶ Director, Office of Regulatory Programs, FDA/CDRH/OPEQ
- ▶ 26 years experience, all with FDA
- ▶ Expert in FDA Medical Device and Radiological Health Programs, Organizational Transformation
- ▶ Former Team Commander, PHS-1 Rapid Deployment Force
- ▶ Biomedical Engineer, MPH
- ▶ Married 24 years, father of three



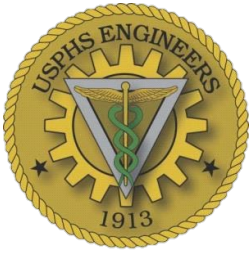


CAPT Steven Bosiljevac, P.E., MSCE

- ▶ Regional Civil Engineer & Dam Safety Coordinator, Pacific West Region, National Park Service
- ▶ 25 years in Commissioned Corps: Navajo Area IHS, California Area IHS, & NPS
- ▶ SME: Rural Water & Wastewater Systems and COR (Level 3) for A&E Services & Construction
- ▶ Previous Member of APHT-4 and EPAC
- ▶ Volunteer Professional Mentor with Engineers Without Borders - USA
- ▶ Returned Peace Corps Volunteer: Bridge Engineer-Nepal and Assistant Municipal Engineer-Puerto Cortés, Honduras



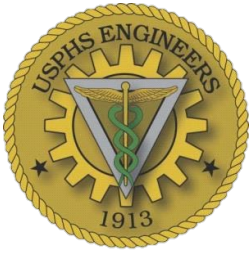
Photo by Kun Shen



CAPT Charles Weir

- ▶ ASPR Liaison at CDC
- ▶ 21 years Commissioned Corps
 - ▶ 10 years - ATSDR
 - ▶ 11 years - Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
- ▶ Expertise in Environmental Health and Emergency Management
- ▶ Former Member RIST 4
- ▶ PhD Environmental Sciences and Engineering (Minors - Epidemiology, Biostatistics), MPH
- ▶ PE - Environmental Engineering
- ▶ Prior Air Force Civilian, Air Force Active Duty

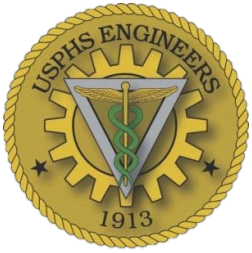




CAPT Shari Windt

- ▶ DSFC Engineering Consultant, Environmental Health Support Center, Office of Environmental Health and Engineering, IHS *or the acronyms EHSC/OEHE/IHS*
- ▶ 23 years' experience, all with IHS
- ▶ Expertise in water and wastewater system design, project management, construction and service contract development and management, Autodesk drafting software, and GIS software
- ▶ Former Team Commander, NIST-C (Tier 1 Incident Response Command Team)
- ▶ Licensed Civil Engineer (Civil), M.Engr in Engineering Management
- ▶ Married 21 years

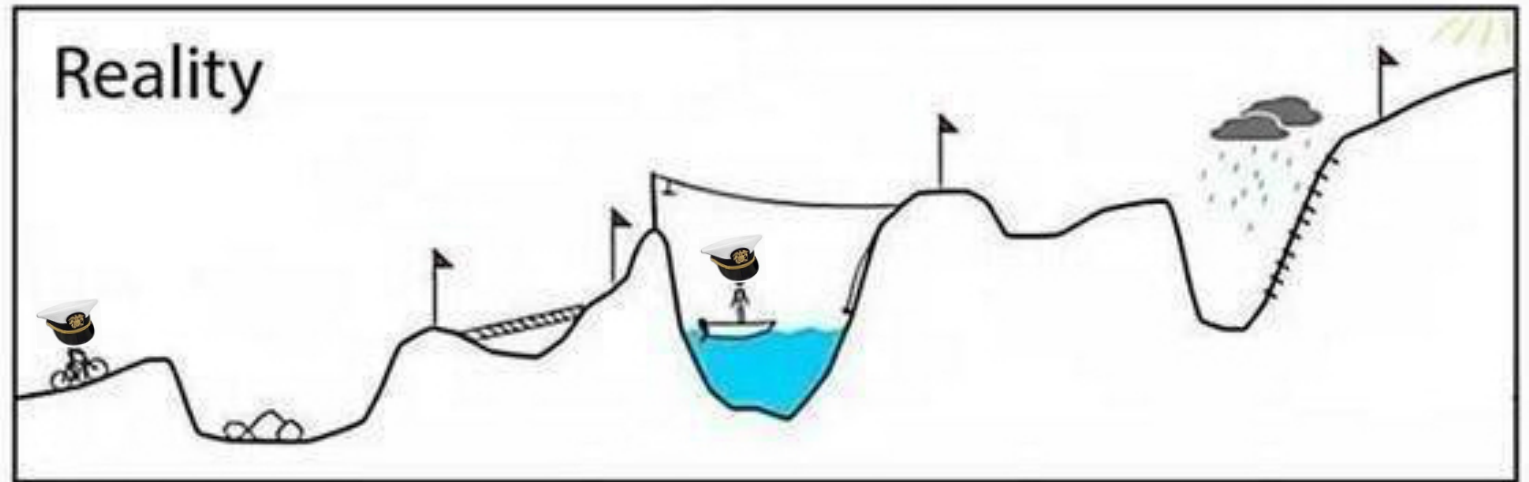
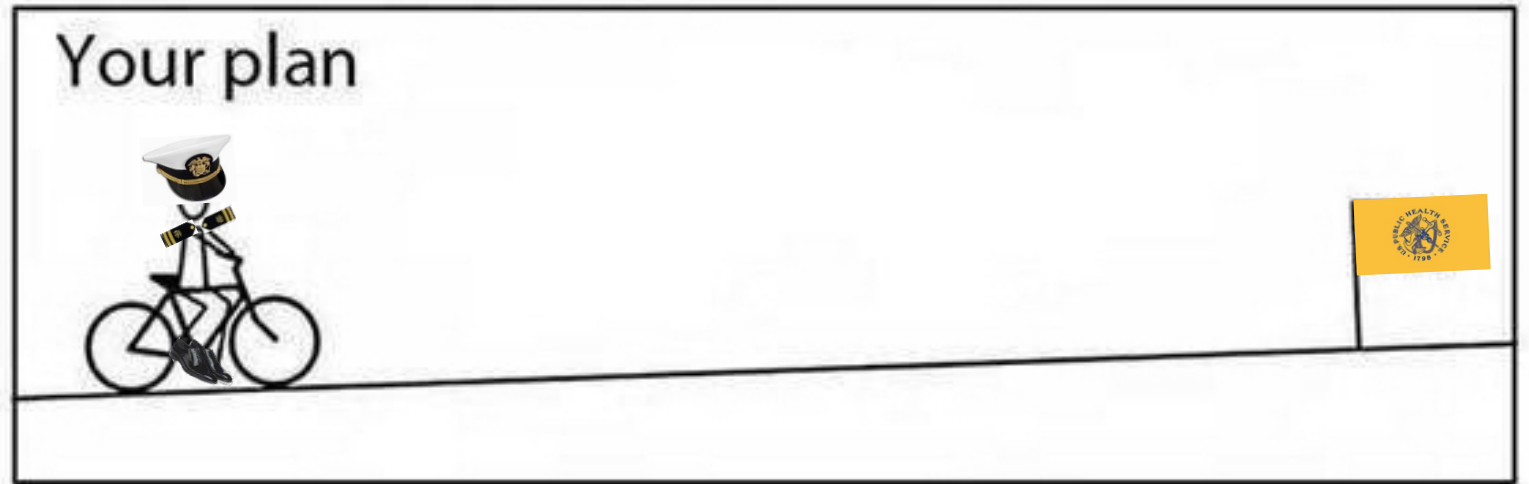


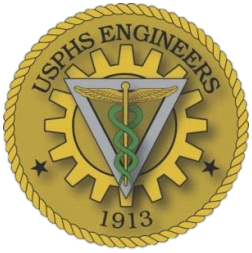


Today's topics

- ▶ Best laid plans: considerations during the early, mid, late phases of your career [Boyd, Windt]
- ▶ Stand ready: balancing emergency preparedness and response with Agency obligations [Boyd, Weir]
- ▶ A fork in the road: choosing between a technical and managerial career track [Bosiljevac, Windt]
- ▶ Mobility: geographic, programmatic and cross-Agency moves [Bosiljevac, Weir]

Best Laid Plans...





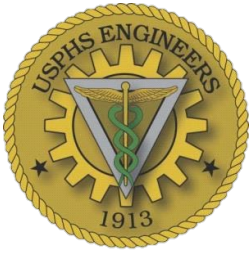
Best Laid Plans

Things change over time

- ▶ Early career - more flexibility with fewer obligations
- ▶ Mid career - build on past experience, consider changes, take on more responsibility
- ▶ Late career - likely in established career track, seek to broaden responsibilities and maximize impact

Best practices

- ▶ Set goals and pursue them over the full course of your career
- ▶ Focus on near, mid and long term objectives
- ▶ Be willing and able to refine your plan as opportunities present and your situation changes
- ▶ Challenge yourself always and be a leader where you are



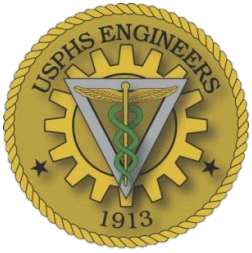
Best Laid Plans

Career planning... just do it!

- ▶ Write down your plan and review it regularly
- ▶ Make updates when needed
- ▶ Incorporate category promotion benchmarks as a guide
- ▶ Communicate! Talk with your supervisor, mentor and colleagues. Don't forget your family... you'll need their support

Seeking opportunities

- ▶ Consider what you're willing to do and where you're willing to go
- ▶ Doesn't have to be a change in position, can be collateral duty
- ▶ Don't impose unnecessary constraints on yourself, think broadly
- ▶ Request feedback from supervisors on strengths and gaps
- ▶ Get a mentor and talk with them regularly

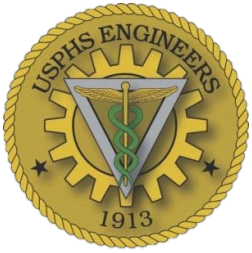


Q&A (planning)

- ▶ When would you say it is too late for any officer to make a career change?
- ▶ Can you comment on your experience as a female engineer in the USPHS?
What unique challenges have you observed and how have you overcome them?



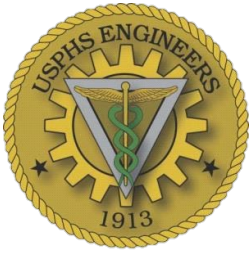
Stand Ready



Stand Ready

- ▶ Expectation of all officers
- ▶ What makes us different from our civilian counterparts
- ▶ Adds value to the officer and to the Agency, but can cause strain
- ▶ Must communicate and be transparent at home and work regarding expectations

- ▶ Often the most fulfilling aspect of an officer's career, providing care to those in need when they have no one else to turn to and no where else to go



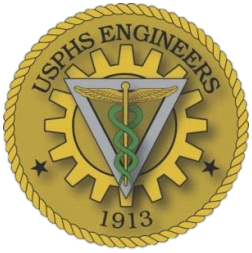
Stand Ready

In an emergency response role

- ▶ 24/7/365
- ▶ Stage in your career and fit with your overall career plan
- ▶ Value of engineering skills
- ▶ Compatibility with family life

Not in an emergency response role

- ▶ Leadership and teamwork is leadership and teamwork
- ▶ An opportunity to develop skills outside of your agency responsibilities
- ▶ Balance time commitment for your agency role vs. role in response
- ▶ Perform exceptionally in each so as to not overcommit

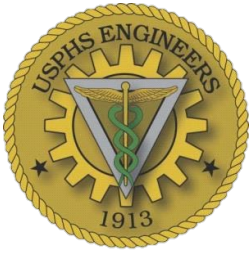


Q&A (readiness)



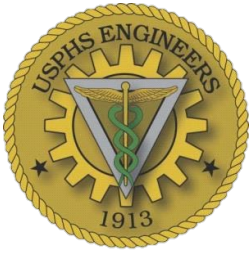
A Fork in the Road





A Fork in the Road

- ▶ All officers will have to make a choice whether to pursue a management vs technical track over the course of their careers
- ▶ Technical track - implementing programs as a developing or recognized “operator” or subject matter expert within the organization
- ▶ Management track - overseeing people and programs with responsibility for setting and achieving organizational goals



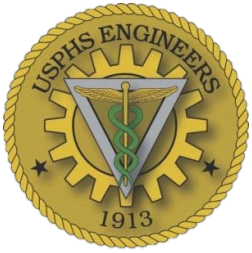
A Fork in the Road

Management track

- ▶ Excellent technical staff often promoted into management
- ▶ Don't like administrative and personnel stuff, or people? Maybe not for you...
- ▶ Seek opportunities to “try it out” first, talk to colleagues
- ▶ Clearer advancement pathways and opportunities, particularly at senior levels

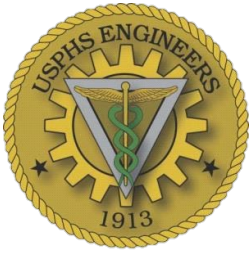
Technical track

- ▶ Common starting point for many officers, early to mid career
- ▶ You get to “be an engineer” and practice/hone your trade
- ▶ Senior technical SMEs often hold “management” responsibilities, demonstrate leadership
- ▶ Fewer opportunities for advancement at senior levels, may be one national or international expert in field, varies by Agency



A Fork in the Road

- ▶ Leadership skills needed for either track
- ▶ Career progression is about expanding your skillset, experience, and the impact of your work to serve Agency and Corps mission
- ▶ Switching between tracks an option, need to consider time in role, depth of management/technical experience
- ▶ Think about what you like to do, what you're good at, impact you can have, advancement opportunities ahead, and work/life balance

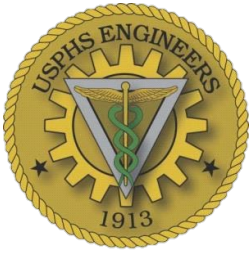


Q&A (career track)

- ▶ There is enormous emphasis on supervisory career or role in the USPHS, but management/supervisory opportunities may be limited. What advice would you give to USPHS engineers who are in technical or SME positions to remain competitive for future promotions?

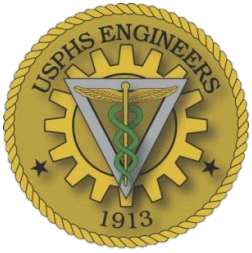
Mobility





Mobility

- ▶ Geographic (moving between locations, including remote duty stations)
 - ▶ Some agencies have limited opportunity for geographic mobility but have a wide range of billet mobility
 - ▶ Some agencies have both limited opportunity for geographic mobility and limited billet mobility
 - ▶ Some agencies have both the opportunity for geographic mobility and billet mobility
- ▶ Programmatic (movement within an Agency)
 - ▶ Opportunities vary based on the specific agency and engineer's career track
 - ▶ Allows for building on past experience, becoming increasingly expert in program area(s), advancement to more senior positions
 - ▶ Typically follow established tracks
 - ▶ Upward mobility may be limited for those not in a "headquarters" or organizationally-dense location



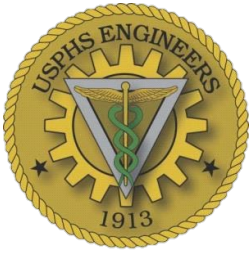
Mobility

Cross-agency challenges

- ▶ Finding the vacancy
- ▶ Determining the best way to apply for the vacancy
- ▶ Understanding the agency culture especially regarding Commissioned Corps Officers
- ▶ Understanding other agency's work, position responsibilities and agency culture
- ▶ Conveying "fit" as an officer for the position you're looking to fill
- ▶ Making the actual adjustment to the new agency and billet
- ▶ Seek opportunities elsewhere when none available in current location
- ▶ Understand constraints like security clearances, unique non-technical competencies (foreign language, cultural competencies, etc.), federal government policy for encouraging employment of Native Americans.

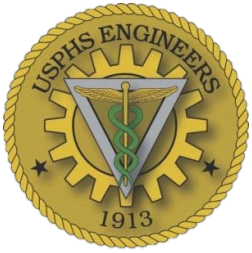
Cross-agency opportunities

- ▶ Can result in a change in career track - possibly to something completely different.
- ▶ Substantial expansion of the officer's professional experience, increases the value the officer brings to all future positions held
- ▶ Career growth/broadening through contributing to a different mission
- ▶ Increase the officer's network
- ▶ Exposure to different approaches to leadership and management
- ▶ Another agency might be a better fit for an officer's interests, skills, and career goals

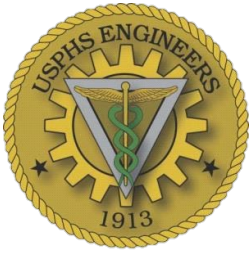


Q&A (mobility)

- ▶ The role of an engineer can be extremely varied. Some specialties may be general and broad, while others are focused and niche. As a mechanical engineer, how can I set myself up for long term success without ending up in a pigeon hole? Other agencies may need a differing skillset than what I currently possess.
- ▶ Historically, the impression given by Engineer Category Leadership was that transferring often and serving at remote duty stations were important for technical growth and promotion. Recent statements from leadership have down-played the sentiment that doing so is advantageous to an officer. What is the Council's opinion?

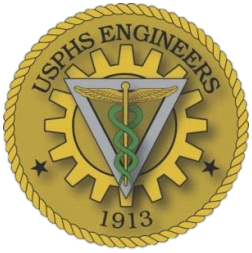


Cross-cutting questions &
comments, open mic



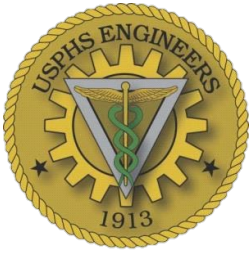
Q&A (cross-cutting)

- ▶ If you were speaking to graduating college students, what would be three things you would advise they do to be successful in their professional life?
- ▶ What trainings have you completed throughout your career that have had a great impact on your professional growth?



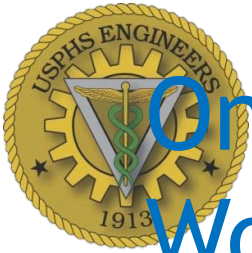
Q&A (cross-cutting)

- ▶ CCHQ reports our strength at under 6,000 officers with more retirements than CADs in this past calendar year, resulting in a shrinking force mirrored within the Engineer Category. What advice would you give to mid-career level engineers observing this trend and highly-competitive promotion rates? Shall we start looking for opportunities outside the government?
- ▶ Can you speak to any plans to promote or increase opportunities for Engineers to work existing or new government partners (e.g. US Army Corps of Engineers)?
- ▶ What resources or information is available regarding career pathways to Flag rank?



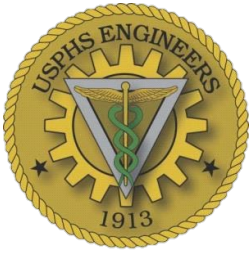
Available EPAC Resources

- ▶ [Mentoring Program](#)
- ▶ [Education/Licensing](#)
- ▶ Individual Action Plan/Individual Development Plan
- ▶ [Promotion Information](#)
- ▶ [CV Templates](#)
- ▶ [EPAC Career Development website:](#)
https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/engineer/career_development.aspx



Ongoing EPAC Career Development Subcommittee Work

- ▶ Council of Captains: Senior Officer Panels
- ▶ Online Engineering Advanced Degree Programs
- ▶ Professional Certifications and Credentials
- ▶ CE/PD Template Documents
- ▶ Licensure Book Share
- ▶ Mentor/Mentee Assignments
- ▶ OBC Open House Representation
- ▶ Data Analysis of Promotion Board Scoring and Recommendations
- ▶ Career Track Guidance
- ▶ Gap Analysis of other PAC CDSs
- ▶ MOU with non-HHS Agencies
- ▶ Public Health Leadership Training



Upcoming EPAC Events

- ▶ Thursday, February 11: EPAC General Meeting
- ▶ Thursday, February 18: E-Week Awards Ceremony/CPO Town Hall Q1
- ▶ Thursday, March 11: Senior Officer Panel #2: Officer and Leadership Development



Hosted by:



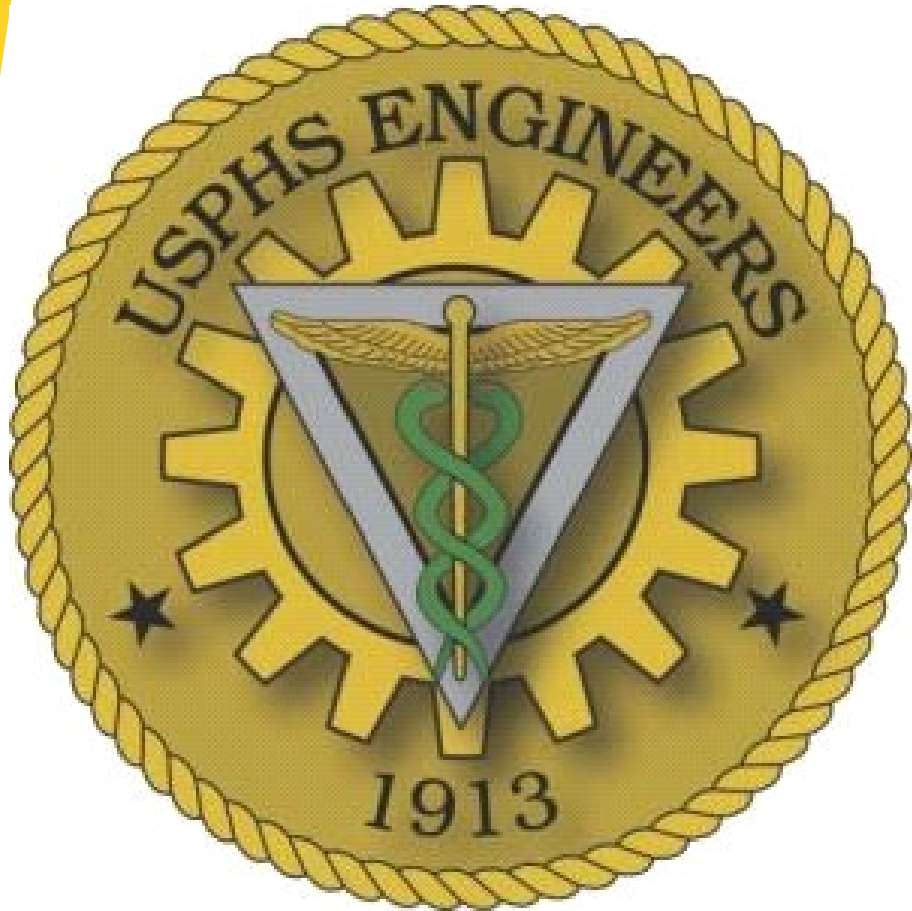
SAVE THE DATE

Engineer Professional Advisory Committee

E-week Awards Ceremony

February 18, 2021 | Virtual via WebEx





Career Planning and Decision-Making

Questions?