



JOAG Q&A: Voting Membership Duties & Application Process

Transcript

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Transcriber: LCDR Kara King on behalf of the JOAG Communications and Publications Committee

LCDR Chan: For those who don't know me, my name is Irene Chan. I'm a second-year voting member for JOAG and I currently serve as co-chair for the JOAG Membership Committee along with LCDR Kit Burnham. He indicated he would be on the line but I don't believe he's joined us yet so when he does come on, he can introduce himself. We also have LCDR Eva McLanahan on the line and she's our current Executive Committee secretary and it's her first year as a voting member. Eva served as the Membership Committee secretary last year and serves this year as our Executive Committee liaison and so we're really fortunate to have her with us. Eva, I don't know if you just want to say hi to everyone.

LCDR McLanahan: Thank you for that introduction and hello everybody.

LCDR Chan: So, before we get too far in to the call, I just want to let people know, I'm overseeing the Voting Membership election process this year but what that means is, I actually will not be voting myself. I want to make this really clear because I don't want people to think or feel inhibited in asking any questions because you're worried whether that's going to impact my vote or not. I'm completely impartial in this process and I'm really just here to try to answer your questions and help move the application process along. I'm also pretty quick to respond to email so if we finish the call and you realize "hey, I still have more questions," please free to contact me. My email address was included in the call for nominations. Before the end of the call, I'll just note it again.

I wanted to start off by giving a brief overview of voting membership. There's a lot of new information that's been sent out over the list-serve in the past couple of weeks. I do want to note, there is delay currently in posting things on the JOAG website so please be patient with us. Actually, Eva, while I have you on the line, do we have any updates on when we may be able to get stuff posted?

LCDR McLanahan: All I know is that they're working on it as fast as they can with the server switch that's happening with all of the PHS websites.

LCDR Chan: Okay, so in the meantime, keep a close eye on your emails because that's probably going to be the primary mode of communication until we can get everything posted. If for some reason you

think you didn't receive a "call for nominations" with that call, there are also the application documents as well as a "frequently asked questions" document. So, if you are missing that email or recently joined JOAG, please shoot me an email after this Q&A session and we can get that information out to you. So as most of you on the line may be aware, JOAG serves as the voice for junior officers in the Commissioned Corps. Our members are junior officers at the rank of O-4 and below representing all of the PHS categories, although there are senior officers on our list serve. We do also have our senior advisor, and currently it's CAPT Dan Beck. Within in JOAG, you have general members and you have voting members. General members would include members would include all of the junior officers that are on the list serve, those that participate in the JOAG general membership meetings that take place every other month, or are also on JOAG committees or work groups. Then, you have voting members. These are actually elected members. Voting members include one person from each of the 11 professional categories plus there also 9 at-large positions and those can actually be filled from any category. The voting members are a 2-year term and the number of voting members and the number of positions that are up for election each year varies depending on the number of voting seats that will be vacated. But, pretty much, each year roughly half of the voting member positions are up and then this way you have some sort of continuity in the leadership for JOAG from year to year.

This year we have 10 open positions for voting membership. This will be for the 2012–2014 term and this includes 5 at-large openings as well as 5 liaison positions for the categories of dentists, engineers, health services, nurses, and therapists. So, even if you're not one of those 5 categories, there are still 5 open spots that can be filled by any category and then the at-large openings. Don't feel discouraged just because a liaison position isn't open; that doesn't mean you won't be able to make it in terms of a JOAG voting member slot. So that gives a little bit of the overview of JOAG. As I mentioned before, there is a "frequently asked questions" document that was disseminated before. Again, if you missed that, you can shoot me an email afterwards. Although the JOAG website hasn't posted everything yet related to the open nomination process, there is still a lot of great information on the website: descriptions of committees; mission statements; etc. I would really encourage everyone, if you haven't had the chance already, please get on the JOAG website and take a look through what's already there.

The point of today's session: We started this probably 2 or 3 years ago, doing these Q&A sessions. It came to our attention that people seem to have a lot of misconceptions about whether they should apply or put themselves forward for a voting membership slot and there were a lot of questions that seemed similar among a lot of the junior officers. So really this session is just an opportunity for you to ask any questions that you may have. Hopefully, there are some people on the line who have come prepared with some questions. With that, we'll just go ahead and get started. If you have a question, please un-mute your phone, give us your name, your rank, and your category, and then you can proceed with your question.

LT Patel: Hi, my name is LT Mona Patel and my category is Pharmacy. My question that I had was from all of the "frequently asked questions," it says that 5 of the 20 voting members serve on the JOAG Executive Committee and the remaining serve as chairs of the Executive Committee. How does one become part of the Executive Committee?

LCDR Chan: I'll start off and then Eva, who is actually part of the Executive Committee, I'll probably ask you to chime in. But essentially, once you're voted in as a voting member, there's actually another election process internally upon the voting membership to decide the Executive Committee each year. Even though it's Eva's first year as a voting member, as you can see, she was successful in being put into the slot of secretary for the Executive Committee. If that's something you are interested in, it's not something that's reserved, for example, for 2nd-year voting members; even 1st-year voting members have that opportunity. Eva, did you want to add a few thoughts to that?

LCDR McLanahan: You explained the process exactly correct. I guess what's important is to consider is what your interests are in JOAG so that when you're filling out your application. What I had put on mine was the committee's that I was interested in and also included secretary of the Executive Committee. Be sure to include your clear desires, too.

LT Patel: How do you find out which of the 10 committees are seeking new Chairs or Co-Chairs?

LCDR Chan: As I mentioned earlier, roughly, well actually in this year, exactly half of the spots are up so you will actually have 10 existing voting members that will remain as voting members. First of all, that is decided by the JOAG Chair. However, what has been the practice for as long as I've been involved is that typically they will give first preference to those returning voting members; if they've been chair of a committee and they would like to remain chair of a committee, they typically will not move them. If you were to take a look right now on the JOAG website, if you were to look at the current chairs of each committee and where they were placed, you could more or less figure out what may be open in the next year. It's dependent on whether the existing chairs would like to remain where they are, so there could be slight variances from year to year but that's your safest bet for getting a feel for what might be available. It is based on your interests and your strengths, what you're bringing to table. That's what the chair will make a decision off of.

LCDR McLanahan: You're right. The chair does make the decision but they do give preference to those who have been in those positions before.

LT Patel: How is the voting member a member for 2 years and so of those 2 years, would you be requested to chair a committee for those full 2 years? When you say that the voting members can choose to renew, if I'm saying it correctly, renew their membership and are able to stay on, are you saying that then you would stay on past the 2 years?

LCDR Chan: No, I'll use myself as the example. Last year, was my first year as a voting member. Kit and myself were Co-Chairs for the Membership Committee last year. This year we were asked if we were interested in remaining in those slots essentially for the 2nd year of our term. So the term is 2 years. There are some exceptions to that which I think are beyond the scope of today's discussion and are outlined in the SOP but more or less, it's a 2-year term. Your first year, you'll serve in whichever position, so in my case that was Membership Committee Co-Chair. I did enjoy that position and I have been actively involved for several years so I was given the opportunity to stay in that for my 2nd year which I agreed to.

LCDR McLanahan: We had LCDR Glendolynn Johnson, who was chair of the Welcoming Committee who decided she wanted to try for the Executive Committee and was selected as financial liaison so then a new voting member took her position as the Welcoming Committee chair. It is a one year commitment to chair a committee with the option to do it the second year of your term.

LT Patel: Okay, that makes sense. Thank you for clarifying.

LCDR Chan: Sure. Did you have any other questions?

LT Patel: Not right now. I'm sure I will. If I remember them, I may email you separately if I don't have a chance to ask you right now.

LCDR Chan: Okay that's fine. So we'll go ahead and open up the floor to any other questions, any other officers who may have questions. Those were some great questions by the way. Don't be shy folks. This is your opportunity to ask whatever. It could be related to the application itself, going through the

documents, etc. If you have any questions or concerns, seeking clarification on filling out the documents, please, this is your time.

LCDR Baird: Hi, this is LCDR Chris Baird. I'm a physical therapist out in Tuba City. I joined the call a little late but what is the time commitment for the therapist liaison?

LCDR Chan: Time commitment—it's difficult to give a definitive quantitative response. As a voting member, we touched on this a little bit. You said you joined the call a little late so I'll try not to be too repetitive. For example, in your position, if you were interested and put in an application there's a possibility that you would end up as the therapist PAC liaison. If you were a PAC liaison, the expectation would be that you are, essentially, the voice for JOAG on the PAC. You would be the intermediary between JOAG and PAC. Each PAC is set up differently. They're really not consistent from one PAC to another so depending on how your PAC is set up, there may be monthly or quarterly calls that you would attend. That would part of the responsibility as a voting member on JOAG. It's to serve as that liaison between JOAG and PAC. Between meetings, you would be responsible for disseminating information related to JOAG that you feel would be important for PAC members and vice versa and reporting that back to JOAG. Beyond that, there would be possibility that you would also serve as a committee chair. JOAG has several committees, and you can serve as either Chair or Co-Chair. Depending on the needs, depending on the skill set you bring, and also your interests, you could be chairing or co-chairing a committee as well. I can use Membership as an example. Our committee meets every other month but obviously between the meetings, there are activities that are going on, initiatives that we're undertaking, or things that we're following up on. It depends on projects that you have going on, on those committees, and the scope of the projects. That's additional time that is required as a voting member. Beyond that, we have the general JOAG meetings which voting members are expected to submit reports as well as give reports during the meeting. Alternating on those "off" months, we also have voting member meetings that take place on those "off" months. That's an opportunity, internally, for the voting membership to discuss issues related to JOAG, discuss initiatives, or work on various projects. I guess, again, it's hard to quantify but I'd say to reasonable to expect that each week you are dedicating some time to JOAG activities. Also, as a voting member you're probably going to be fielding questions from junior officers that may or may not be related directly to your committee but you'll also be fielding questions from PAC members if you are a PAC liaison. That might give you a better idea of the scope that might be involved although I realize I'm not really giving you a quantifiable answer, but does that help somewhat?

LCDR Baird: Yes, it does.

LCDR Chan: Okay. Eva, do you want to add anything to that?

LCDR McLanahan: No, I think you did a great job Irene.

LT Patel: I have one more question. Can you clarify for me the role of the JOAG-PAC liaison? What role does the voting member play if they are in that position?

LCDR Chan: As I was alluding to before, as a PAC liaison, your added responsibility really is to be that intermediary between JOAG and PAC. So, you're the information highway, so to speak, bi-directionally, between the two groups. If JOAG has important information that should go to the attention of the PAC members, then you would be providing that information to the PAC. And vice versa, if the PAC has interesting or important information that JOAG members should be aware of, that information would also be forthcoming to JOAG. So, you're serving as an intermediary and really as a person who will keep both sides, so to speak, up to date on the activities.

LT Patel: Do you know if there is an open position for the JOAG liaison or Pharm PAC?

LCDR Chan: Actually, there are five liaison positions that are open this year. They are dentist, engineer, health services, nurse, and therapist. So, for this year, the Pharmacy PAC position is filled so that's an existing voting member who will be continuing on for the second year. But again, that doesn't mean you can't apply because there are five at-large openings. Technically, for example, I am in the pharmacist category but I am filling an at-large opening because the year I decided to try for voting membership there didn't happen to be an opening for the Pharmacy PAC so I decided I really didn't want to wait. So, I went ahead and put my application in and ended up filling an at-large opening.

LT Patel: So, when you take a position as an at large opening, are you a liaison with a particular PAC?

LCDR Chan: No, I am not. There is actually a specific individual on JOAG who is a voting member who is designated as the PAC liaison, for the Pharmacy PAC.

LCDR McLanahan: But like, for example, we have six HSOs that are voting members so there's no reason why, if there's one other pharmacy voting member, why you couldn't apply and still be a voting member.

LCDR Chan: Any other questions? Okay, I guess while we're waiting for further questions, I'll go ahead and discuss a couple application tips. Just a reminder, the application deadline is Friday March 30th. You do have a few more weeks but it's really helpful if we don't end up with a rush of applications coming in at like 4:30 pm on that Friday. I would just say: pace yourself. Allow yourself enough time to complete the application. Sending it in before the application due date, will actually help to ensure I can respond back and let you know if you are missing anything in the application or if there are any problems with the files that you send in. It's really to your benefit to try to target an earlier date. Another thing I wanted to mention is that if you send me an application package, I will confirm its receipt by email. As I mentioned, I'm usually pretty good about responding to emails. If you send me your application, you can probably expect a response from me within 24 to 48 hours. Of course if you send me your application on a Friday, at least give me until Monday to respond though. If you haven't heard anything up to that point, like if it's 2 days later and you haven't heard, then feel free to send me a follow-up email. Basically, the point I'm trying to make is just at least give me 48 hours or the weekend to respond to you. The application will include 5 components. You will have the application form, your responses to the narrative questions, a 1-page CV summary and when I say 1 page, we're basically referring to the cover page that's included. Each category has a specified format as to how their CV is supposed to be set up. I have had a couple of questions already from officers. I don't remember which category it was, but for some categories, the CV cover page is more than 1 page. So, do your best to really summarize the best you can and limit it to 1 page. Then we have the supervisory approval form which is the 4th component. Then the 5th component is the printed copy of your PIR report. That's in your electronic OPF. You should be able to access it there. You can either screen shot or download it, copy & paste, but at the end of the day, all 5 components have to come through to me as a single PDF file and the order is listed on the application form. As a quick side note, in the past we have had some supervisors who written support letters for officers. That's really not part of our scoring criteria or required, so we just ask that you let your supervisors know not to do this because at the end of the day it's not going to help your application. We aren't going to score it, so it becomes an inefficient use of your supervisor's time to do that. As far as the narrative questions go, the scoring criteria for these is attached to the application form so please do take some time to read it over carefully. You'll want to pay particular attention to the weight or the points that are associated with each question. Taking a look at those points will help you to determine, "okay, where does it make sense for me to pay attention to on my response?" Really all the narrative questions are important but if you have less to say for on one of the questions, you may be able to help your overall balance by writing more for a heavier-weighted question. Hopefully that makes sense. At the end of the day, you'll want to make sure your actually answering the question that is being asked. You'll want to try not to stray off topic or write

just for the sake of writing. Writing more isn't always going to be value added, if it's not really informative or doesn't help support your case. Also, try not to use the narrative as a forum to re-hash what's already in your one page CV summary. Use the narrative questions as an opportunity to give additional information that we don't already know from the rest of your application. Now, it may be unavoidable to mention or refer to something that you already have in your CV summary. But really use the narrative questions to try to help fill in the gaps. Because what's going to happen, is that once these applications have been received, it's the voting members who are going to be looking through them and voting. Whatever additional information you can provide to help fill in those gaps or answer some of the unanswered questions just by looking at your CV summary. That's what's really going to be helpful to the voting members who are looking at these packages. The more specific details you can get, the more helpful that it is to us. Being able to, also, for me personally, although I'm not voting as I mentioned (I just wanted to reemphasize that), but being able to quantify the impact of some of the things you have done helps to really make your application stand out. Eva, I don't know maybe if you want to add some tips or experiences to that?

LCDR McLanahan: I really don't have anything else to add right now, Irene. Other than the fact that if you applied one year and you didn't make it...like, if you applied last year and are considering applying again, I definitely encourage you to do it because there are a number of people who might not make it their first year but do make it their second. I encourage you to try again if that's your case. Don't get discouraged to apply next year if this is your first year applying either.

LCDR Chan: Right, that's actually an excellent point. As Eva mentioned, we do have current and past voting members who didn't necessarily get it their first time. There's definitely interest in these voting membership slots so if you don't get it and didn't get it in the past, just think about "what have I done since then or what will I do in the time after to help to improve my chances?" One other thing that I think I forgot to mention that I think is kind of important to know is that just because you haven't previously been involved in JOAG, don't let that discourage you from applying. Being involved in JOAG, while it is something that is taken into consideration, it is not the "end all, be all" to the application. You may have a lot of skills or be able to bring a lot to the table that we're looking for and that's sort of irrelevant whether you have applied those specifically to JOAG or not. Don't let that be a factor that makes you hesitate and say, "Maybe I should wait a year or not." You have nothing to lose by giving it a chance so that's kind of the point I want to emphasize. So, were there any other questions?

LCDR Vespin? (could not verify officer name): I do have a question. This is LCDR Vespin. Where are the application forms?

LCDR Chan: The application form... at the beginning of the call, we mentioned that right now with the migration for the website, we haven't been able to post everything on the JOAG website. But all of the information as well as the associate forms were sent out with the call for nominations that went out on the JOAG list serve that went out a couple of weeks ago. If you need to have that re-sent to you, just send me an email, and we'll get the information out.

LCDR Vespin: Okay, thank you. Also, I do have another question. Do we need supervisor's approval to even apply for the JOAG liaison?

LCDR Chan: Yes, supervisory approval is required. The 5 things I mentioned for the application: the application form, the responses to the narrative questions, CV summary, and the 4th component was the supervisory approval form. It's a one page form and we will need your supervisor's signature on that.

LCDR Vespin: Okay, thank you.

LCDR Chan: And just one more thing to keep in mind, too, if your supervisor does change mid-stream... and that happens, people mobilize and go to other units, you will need to send in an updated supervisory approval form.

LT Jonathan Kwan: LT Jonathon Kwan, an HSO. I have a question. If you are not chosen to be a voting member, are you told why? Like anything you can do to improve your chances for next time?

LCDR Chan: We actually, in the past, have not been specifically been doing that. I will tell you why that's been difficult to do is because the way it works is that once we get all of the applications, all of the applications are sent out to the voting members, existing voting members who are voting.... Basically the past couple of years, we've done this through survey monkey, so they are kind of putting points, essentially ranking, based on a point system. We don't give a lot of subjective feedback. I do think though that you do bring up an interesting point in that we may want to examine whether there is a mechanism for doing so. We don't currently have a mechanism for doing that. But I do think that's kind of a good idea. If you happen to have a relationship, like you work with or you know someone who is a voting member, I know in the past, sometimes that individual may have, on their own, given some feedback to the person who was applying. But we don't have a formal mechanism for doing that currently.

LT Jonathan Kwan: Thank you.

LCDR Chan: Sure. Any other questions? I'll just check really quickly. Kit, did you happen to join the line? Okay...well, we allocated an hour for this call. It's a little after 12:30 now but this is really a time for you. The questions can be related to anything...to the process, to duties, etc. I'll give out one more call for anyone who might have any questions. You don't need to be shy. Of course, if you do prefer to ask questions outside of this forum, please feel free to email me. Okay, well, if there are no additional questions, we'll probably go ahead and adjourn. Just another reminder, the applications are due on the 30th of this month. Again, it'll be really helpful if you can submit them prior to that. I think it's to your advantage because it will allow me to let you know if you do have a complete application. Other than that, we look forward to getting the applications. If there's nothing else, if no one else has nothing to add, I think we can go ahead and adjourn for today. Alright, thanks everyone. Have a good afternoon.