

Scientist Professional Advisory Committee (SciPAC) Charter

(Revised May 2011)

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I. MISSION

The Scientist Professional Advisory Committee (SciPAC) provides advice and consultation to the Surgeon General (SG) on issues relating to the professional practice and the personnel activities of scientists in the Commissioned Corps Scientist Category and the Civil Service. The SciPAC provides similar advisory assistance to the Chief Scientist Officer (CSO) and, upon request, to the Agency and/or Program Heads of the United States Public Health Service (USPHS), and to non-PHS Programs that routinely use PHS personnel.

II. RELATION OF THE SciPAC TO THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

The SciPAC is an inter-agency advisory group of representatives of the operating programs of the Public Health Service (PHS). The members do not substitute for line management or in any way exercise the prerogatives of the operating programs. While SciPAC members are chosen from the respective PHS Agencies and organizations, they

neither represent Agency management nor speak for the Agency. The members are knowledgeable professionals who represent a cross section of the interests, concerns, and responsibilities of the professionals in Agencies and Programs staffed by PHS personnel.

III. OBJECTIVES

The SciPAC represents a large number of professional interests and disciplines, and recognizes the importance of the cumulative efforts of individual scientific contributions to the mission of the PHS. The committee functions in a resource and advisory capacity to assist in development, coordination, and evaluation of activities related to the scientific disciplines in the PHS with the specific objectives of:

1. Identifying and facilitating resolution of issues and concerns as they relate to the PHS Scientist category and related Civil Service professional disciplines.
2. Assessing PHS personnel needs and assisting in meeting these needs through activities in recruitment, training, utilization, and professional recognition of officers in the Scientist category and scientists in related Civil Service professional disciplines.
3. Developing position papers, statistical reports, and/or guidelines where appropriate; to advise and to comment on matters relating to the personnel issues and professional practice of the Scientist category and related Civil Service professional disciplines.
4. Promoting the development and utilization of scientists by the PHS and other governmental programs.
5. Promoting cooperation and communication among members of the scientific community and health professionals.
6. Promoting all aspects of the Scientist category and related Civil Service professional disciplines throughout the Agencies and Programs of the PHS.
7. Providing liaison between scientific disciplines within PHS components, and advice and consultation to the Agency and Program Heads upon request.

IV. FUNCTIONS

In carrying out its broad mission and objectives, the functions of the SciPAC shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Provide general professional advice and recommendations:

- a. Review and comment on issues referred to the SciPAC by the SG, CSO, Agency Heads, and/or Program Heads.
 - b. Deliberate issues, develop findings, and present recommendations to the SG and/or the CSO.
 - c. Provide advice on the professional aspects of the Scientist category, i.e., new technologies, regulations, curricula, roles, etc.
 - d. Provide advice on ethical and professional standards issues affecting SciPAC membership, retention and standard operating procedures regarding SciPAC.
 - e. Review and provide recommendations concerning proposed or needed changes to appointment standards and professional requirements required to maintain high quality staff.
 - f. Review and advise the CSO and the SG concerning requests for licensure waivers (e.g. those received from PHS psychologists).
2. Act as a primary source for career development:
- a. Advise on Commissioned Corps and Civil Service practices concerning career development.
 - b. Advise on operating practices concerning the appropriate/optimum use of scientists designed to meet PHS needs and the needs of the individual.
 - c. Advise on issues related to PHS promotion practices.
 - d. Formulate criteria for the selection of scientist candidates for training and/or other career development options.
 - e. Identify both continuing and long-term intramural and extramural education needs of the Scientist category and identify and recommend training and/or experience opportunities designed to meet these needs.
 - f. Review applications for long-term training, assess appropriateness of requested training in terms of individual and the PHS needs, and provide recommendations for the approval or disapproval of such requests.
3. Provide advice and assistance on staffing issues:
- a. Assess and project the need for Scientist category staffing levels, both Commissioned Corps and Civil Service, throughout the PHS.

- b. Provide advice on the goals, objectives, and procedures designed to meet the PHS staffing needs.
 - c. Provide guidance for recruitment to the short-term student affiliation programs (COSTEP, summer students, etc.).
 - d. Develop, and/or review and critique, Scientist category-specific PHS recruitment materials, procedures, and programs.
 - e. Help establish networks of current, as well as former PHS scientists who can assist and facilitate recruitment activities.
 - f. Provide guidance to approved PHS recruiters concerning the recruitment of qualified candidates to the Scientist category and related Civil Service professional disciplines.
 - g. Assist in the development of orientation materials for newly-hired Scientist category professionals and provide advice/recommendations concerning orientation programs.
4. Communicate and encourage appropriate use of awards/recognition systems to foster visibility:
- a. Identify, establish, and help administer professional, Scientist category specific awards.
 - b. Maintain cognizance of the existing Commissioned Corps and Civil Service award programs and opportunities.
5. Serve as a communication link and information resource for the various scientific disciplines and serve as liaison with scientific organizations:
- a. Communicate to the Commissioned Corps and Civil Service Scientist category staff important information concerning professional, ethical, and technical issues.
 - b. Encourage individual membership in, and involvement with, the scientific organizations and societies in order to promote open communications with non-Federal colleagues.
 - c. Ensure the distribution of minutes and/or other SciPAC developed materials to the extent possible and appropriate to Commissioned Corps and Civil Service staff. Ensure availability of SciPAC minutes to other PACs and the Office of the SG through the SciPAC website.

V. MEMBERSHIP

1. Basic Eligibility Requirements: Members must be full-time Commissioned Corps or Civil Service personnel, at the time they are nominated and appointed to the SciPAC, and meet the eligibility requirements for initial appointment to the Scientist category and personnel systems. In addition, all Commissioned Corps personnel must meet the Office of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD) basic readiness standards at the time they are nominated and appointed to the SciPAC and throughout their term of service on the SciPAC.

2. Voting Membership Requirements:

a. Staff from the Office of the Secretary (OS) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) may serve on a PAC providing that they recuse themselves from voting on issues and decisions that may have the appearance of a conflict of interest with respect to their duty assignments.

b. The SciPAC voting membership shall have no fewer than seven voting members and no more than 20 voting members. The term for voting membership will be 3 years.

c. Organizational Representation of voting membership: In order to provide the range of experiences and perspectives necessary for addressing issues before the SciPAC, every effort must be made to have the broadest representation possible among all agencies that are routinely staffed by Commissioned Corps Officers of the Scientist category.

d. Geographic Considerations: The SciPAC will have, as voting members, at least two individuals whose regular duty station is geographically removed by a distance of 75 or more miles from the Washington Metropolitan Area.

e. Gender and Minority Representation: Every effort will be made to assure that the SciPAC voting membership does not consist (1) entirely of men or entirely of women or (2) entirely of one race, as long as no selection is made to the SciPAC on the basis of gender or race.

f. Personnel System: The SciPAC voting membership will not consist entirely of Commissioned Corps or entirely of Civil Service personnel.

g. Professional Seniority: The SciPAC will have as a voting member at least one junior officer (O-3, O-4).

h. Professional Discipline Composition: Cognizant of the fact that the SciPAC is structured around the PHS Commissioned Corps defined professional categories which encompass more than one major professional discipline, to the extent possible the SciPAC should have at least one voting

member who possesses the requisite credentials for each of the respective sub-disciplines that make up the category.

3. Ex-Officio Members may be voting or non-voting members. The CSO is an ex-officio member of the SciPAC. The former chair may serve 1 year as an ex-officio member of the SciPAC. The SciPAC may identify other individuals and request they serve as ex-officio members.
4. Liaison roles may be voting or non-voting members. The SciPAC can identify individuals (e.g. staff from OSG) to serve in a liaison capacity to provide information or to assist with activities.

VI. NOMINATION PROCESS

1. Annually, the SciPAC will solicit, through newsletters and other appropriate means, nominations for voting membership vacancies on the SciPAC from all individuals in the category and represented Civil Service professional disciplines. Self-nominations will be solicited. A nomination committee (selected by the Rules and Membership subcommittee) and the CSO will identify, by name, those highly qualified to fill anticipated vacancies. A final list of nominees will be sent by the CSO to the SG for selection and approval.
2. This nomination process shall be conducted so that the final nomination package for a new voting membership is available for the SG's consideration no less than 60 calendar days prior to the expiration of the regular term of a current member.
3. Should the need arise to fill an unexpired term, the same process as used for regular term appointments will be followed except that the nomination package will be conveyed to the SG as soon as possible for action.

VII. TERM OF APPOINTMENT

1. Terms will be staggered so approximately one-third of the members' terms will expire annually. Newly elected or appointed voting members will begin their term in September of the operational year in accordance with the federal fiscal year; thus, the SciPAC operational year is September 1 through August 31.
2. Once a voting member has accumulated a lifetime total of 6 years of service on the SciPAC, they are not eligible for reappointment. Terms of office may be served consecutively at the discretion of the SciPAC.
3. Alternates: Cognizant of the demands of the member's primary work responsibilities, and the SciPAC's need to conduct business, the SciPAC has the option of establishing procedures to allow each voting member to appoint, and inform the Chairperson of a single individual who can serve as his/her alternate.

Such alternates shall have voting privileges when serving in the place of a primary member. It is the responsibility of the primary SciPAC member to keep the alternate fully informed and knowledgeable of the SciPAC's activities. Any Agency clearance or approval requirements for travel/per diem must be handled within the Agency by the primary SciPAC voting member.

4. Attendance: Any voting member of the SciPAC who misses greater than 3 meetings without just cause (i.e. unexcused absences) can, at the discretion of the SciPAC voting members, executive board, and/or CSO be asked to voluntarily resign from the SciPAC voting membership, or SciPAC can initiate a request to the SG to terminate said membership.

VIII. CHAIRPERSON

1. The chairperson will be elected by the voting membership of the SciPAC.
2. Term of the Chairperson: The Chairperson will serve a 1-year term and may be re-elected for 1 additional year. The SciPAC may choose to elect the Chairperson for one 2-year term with no opportunity for re-election to that post.
3. Term of Appointment: If the term of the Chairperson coincides with the expiration of that individual's membership on the SciPAC, the former Chair may serve one additional year as an ex-officio member of the SciPAC, provided the Agency Head is informed and concurs with the extension, unless reappointed as a regular member per the provisions of Section (VI).

IX. CHIEF SCIENTIST OFFICER

1. SciPAC Membership: The SciPAC CSO shall be a non-voting, ex-officio member of the SciPAC.
2. Relationship with SciPAC: All appropriate output of the SciPAC, be it correspondence, reports, minutes of its proceedings, or other business, must be transmitted through the CSO who, as he/she may deem appropriate, may provide concurring or nonconcurring comments but may not stop or unduly delay such transmittals.

X. OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES

1. The SciPAC shall develop its own internal operations and procedures (e.g. bylaws). These shall include, at the minimum, provisions covering the following:
 - a. Operational year: The SciPAC operational year shall be from 01 September through 31 August.

- b. Frequency of meeting: Meetings will be held once per quarter at a minimum.
 - c. Agenda: The Chairperson will develop an agenda and direct the Executive Secretary to make it and associated materials available to SciPAC members before the meeting.
2. Records and Reporting:
- a. Minutes of each SciPAC meeting will be developed and circulated for draft comments within two weeks of the meeting date. Draft revisions must be commented on within two weeks of circulation and a final version will be prepared within 30 days following the meeting. The Chairperson, upon approval by the voting members, must approve the official minutes.
 - b. Minutes and reports of the SciPAC will be distributed in accordance with Section IV.5(c).
 - c. The SciPAC will establish a system to maintain a permanent file of the official minutes and reports on the SciPAC website.
3. Executive Secretary: The Executive Secretary will transfer all records (e.g., meeting minutes, achievement, other documentation, etc.) produced during their term to the website subcommittee.
4. Quorum: A Quorum consists of 50 percent of the SciPAC's voting membership. An alternate attending in lieu of a voting member shall be counted in determining the quorum requirement.
5. Voting: Where voting is required or appropriate, e.g., election of the Executive Board Officers, action will be determined by the simple majority of those voting members present.
6. Subcommittees: Where the SciPAC elects to establish standing or ad hoc subcommittees, said membership may include both Commissioned Corps and/or Civil Service members provided that the subcommittee Chairperson is a voting member of the SciPAC.
- a. Awards Subcommittee: responsible for evaluating nominees for Junior and Senior Scientist of the Year, and Responder of the Year Awards, and facilitating other award functions related to SciPAC.
 - b. Career Development Subcommittee: responsible for advising SciPAC on issues affecting Scientist's career progression, assignments, promotions, and job satisfaction.

- c. Category Day Subcommittee: responsible for planning and organizing the Scientist Category Day for the annual USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium.
- d. Mentoring Subcommittee: responsible for providing mentoring services to Scientist officers.
- e. Policy Review Subcommittee: responsible for supporting the SciPAC and CSO in the review of selected policies, procedures, and guidelines that are sent to the PAC for review.
- f. Recruitment, Readiness, and Retention Subcommittee: responsible for advising SciPAC on organizational issues related to scientist recruitment, readiness, and retention.
- g. Rules and Membership Subcommittee: responsible for issues relevant to SciPAC operation procedures and other issues that do not fit within the responsibilities of other standing subcommittees.
- h. Science Subcommittee: responsible for elevating the importance of science in the PHS.
- i. Visibility Subcommittee: responsible for informing SciPAC and Scientist Officers on scientific activities, accomplishments, and opportunities available throughout the PHS and increasing the visibility of the Scientist category.
- j. Website Subcommittee: responsible for maintaining the USPHS Commissioned Corps Scientist Category website.

7. Charter Update and Approval:

- a. The SciPAC Charter must be consistent with the model charter.
- b. The SciPAC Charter must be reviewed and approved by the SG.
- c. If the SciPAC subsequently modifies its charter, such modifications require the review and approval of the SG.
- d. The SciPAC will review and, if required, update its charter at least every three years.

Dates SciPAC Charter Reviewed and Revised:

April 29, 1988

August 2, 1988

June 22, 1990

June 26, 1992

December 1, 1995

December 3, 1998

April 4, 2002

April 2, 2005

December 1, 2009

May 13, 2011

Rev: May, 2011

DECISION

Approved _____ Disapproved _____ Date _____