



# Scientist Professional Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 7, 2011  
1100–1300 (EDT)

Toll-Free Number: 1-877-691-9937

Pass code: 4549026

## Chief Scientist Officer and 2010/11 SciPAC Voting Members

Rank	Name	Role	Present
CAPT	Williams-Fleetwood, Sharon	Chief Scientist Officer	Yes
CDR	Newland, Matthew	Chair	Yes
CDR	Abe, Karon	Vice Chair; Rules & Membership Chair	Yes
LCDR	Boehmer, Tegan	Executive Secretary	Yes
CAPT	Nelle, Timothy	COF Liaison	Excused
CDR	Aponte, Boris	Mentoring Chair	Yes
CDR	Avchen, Rachel	Category Day Co-Chair	Yes
CDR	Bensyl, Diana	Immediate Past Chair	Yes
CDR	Eaton, Danice	Website Chair	Yes
LCDR	Facey, Judy	Billets and Direct Access Liaison	Yes
CDR	Guo, Wei		Yes
LCDR	Hu, Sally	Career Development Chair	Yes
LCDR	Kenney, James	Awards Chair	Yes
LCDR	Murphy, Matthew	Category Day Chair	Yes
CAPT	Murry, Michael	Recruitment, Retention & Readiness Chair	Yes
CDR	Novak, Ryan	Policy Review Chair	Yes
CDR	Robbins, Nisha	Visibility Chair	Excused
LCDR	Seo, Paul	Recruitment, Retention & Readiness Co-Chair	Yes
LCDR	Sram, Jacqueline		Yes
CDR	Zhang, Yi	Science Chair	Yes
<b>Other SciPAC Roles held by Nonvoting Members</b>			
CAPT	Moffett, Daphne	SciPAC Historian	No
CDR	Newman, Sara	COA Liaison	Excused
LCDR	Schobitz, Richard	PSYPAG Liaison	Yes
LCDR	Toblin, Robin	JOAG Liaison	Yes

## Participation by Nonvoting Scientist Officers

Rank	Participant	Agency	Present
CAPT	Lawrence, Theresa	HHS	Yes
CAPT	Massoudi, Mehran	CDC	Yes
CAPT	O'Connor, Ralph	CDC	Yes
CDR	Dutton, Samuel S.	DHS	Yes
CDR	Riggs, Margaret	CDC	Yes
CDR	Ruano-Rossil, Jorge	FDA	Yes
CDR	Schuyler, Donna	BOP	Yes
LCDR	Adjemian, Jennifer	NIH	Yes
LCDR	Bennett, Marco	FDA	Yes
LCDR	Bhagwat, Aditya	DoD	Yes
LCDR	Bodart , Jennifer	DoD	Yes
LCDR	Breiding, Matthew	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Calanan, Renee	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Chen, Sanny	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Colborn, James	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Cui, Minglei	FDA	Yes
LCDR	Davis, Shane	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Frazer, Nicole L.	DoD	Yes
LCDR	Gardner, Tracie	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Garnett, Theodore	FDA	Yes
LCDR	Highsmith, Keisher	HRSA	Yes
LCDR	Njai, Rashid	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Purfield, Anne	FDA	Yes
LCDR	Rodgers, Loren	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Sancho, Alfredo	DoD	Yes
LCDR	Saydah, Sharon	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Schobitz, Rick	DoD	Yes
LCDR	Sloop, Sue L.	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Smith, Michael	FDA	Yes
LCDR	Spikes, Pilgrim	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Steffen, Scott	FDA	Yes
LCDR	Streeter, Emily	DoD	Yes
LCDR	Tate, Jacqueline	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Thomas, Peter	CDC	Yes
LCDR	Toblin, Robin	DoD	Yes
LCDR	Xu, Fei	FDA	Yes
LT	Barradas, Danielle	CDC	Yes

LT	Gieraltowski, Laura	CDC	Yes
LT	Ivey, Asha Z.	CDC	Yes
LT	Myers, Todd	DoD	Yes
LT	Odom, Erika	CDC	Yes
LT	Pamboukian, Ruiqing	FDA	Yes
LT	Parks Brown, Sharyn	CDC	Yes
LT	Rivera, Luz	FDA	Yes
LT	Steele, Matthew	FDA	Yes
LT	Sydnor, Charlene	NIH	Yes
LT	Tartof, Sara Y.	CDC	Yes

**1) Call to Order and Welcome: CDR Matthew Newland**

- Email LCDR Tegan Boehmer ([tboehmer@cdc.gov](mailto:tboehmer@cdc.gov)) for roll call on the day of the call.
- Mute your phones when not speaking (press \*6 if you do not have a mute button)
- Do not place the conference call line on hold.

**2) Report from the CPO: CAPT Sharon Williams-Fleetwood**

- Scientist Officers of the Year: Please join me in congratulating the following officers for their selection as our Scientist Officers of the Year. We recently selected CAPT Mehran Massoudi as the Derek Dunn Memorial Scientist Officer of the Year and LCDR Matthew Murphy as the Junior Scientist of the Year. CDR Margaret Riggs was selected as the Scientist Responder of the Year a few months ago and she is also competing for the Commissioned Corps Responder of the Year to be announced at the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium later this month. In addition, Scientist officer LCDR Richard Schobitz was selected as the Psychologist of the Year by the PsyPAG. We are honored to recognize these fine Scientists and look forward to formally recognizing them during Scientist Category Day on June 21, 2011.
- USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium memo: HHS and Commissioned Corps leadership recently shared guidance with the agencies regarding coverage for travel to the USPHS Symposium. Costs covered by the government include hotel lodging (3 nights) and registration expenses. Travel and meals and incidental expenses are the responsibility of the officers.
- CPO Career Development Session: The CPOs are sponsoring a career development session Monday, June 20, 2011 from 7-9am at the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium. Topics that will be covered include 1) what it means to be a commissioned officer and a highly trained professional, 2) mission matters, and 3) ways to support the Corps. The session will wrap-up by bringing all three topics together to address how to have a great career in the Corps.
- Billets: We are now 4½ months into the Scientist standard billets launch. We are making progress and all officers have started the process. We still have about 20 officers that need to complete the billet form, thus completing their major responsibility. In addition, we will continue to work closely with the agency liaisons to facilitate the process at the rating and reviewing official stages. LCDR Judy Facey is facilitating and monitoring the billets process along with the support of CAPT Ching, CAPT McGuinness, and CDR Newland.

- 2012 Promotion Benchmarks: The 2012 promotion benchmarks have been posted on the CCMIS website. Currently, the Scientist 2012 promotion benchmarks were pulled for needed edits but will be quickly reposted. [Note: they were reposted on June 7, 2011]
- Appointment Standards: The General and Category-specific appointment standards were posted on the CCMIS webpage in May 2011. These standards were in the drafting stage for a long period of time during which we consistently provided comments to request Time and Education (T&E) credit for a master degree obtained between the bachelor and doctoral degrees and to allow for limited tours for practicing psychologists while they work to become licensed. The final posted version does not contain these changes but instead reflects the emphasis to have more consistency across the Corps.
- Compensation Policy Advisory Board (CPAB): The CPAB met in May. This board will review and propose any efforts related to special pay. Category white papers will be updated with discussions targeted for the end of the summer.
- Corps Impact during 9/11 Response: The CPOs met with Gay Converse, the OSG Communications Director, and discussed identifying a few officers that were involved in the 9/11 response and possibly using their stories in some manner during the upcoming anniversary of 9/11 as a way to communicate the service role of the Corps. Scientist officers that were involved in the 9/11 response should send a brief description of their role and impact to CDR Newland and CAPT Williams-Fleetwood by close of business on Wednesday, June 15, 2011.

### 3) Report from the Chair: CDR Matthew Newland

- USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium: The Surgeon General (SG) or a representative of the SG will be addressing each category during the Category Day event at the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium. Please keep the environment positive.
- Regular Corps: Officers are receiving letters in their eOPF officially notifying them of their change to Regular Corps status. Please share updates with SciPAC as your officers receive them. It is encouraging to see the process unfold and is good for esprit de corps.
- Frocking Policy: The DoD documents on frocking were reviewed with RADM Canton (OCCFM). We decided not to pursue this issue for many reasons: 1) frocking is granted in very few cases in DoD and is based on statute, 2) the promotion process is different in DoD (e.g., there are no Temporary Promotions), and 3) it would be cumbersome to develop a USPHS frocking policy that would only apply to a few eligible individuals and could be considered burdensome to the Secretary. The issue was discussed thoroughly with RADM Giberson, CAPT Merriweather, and CDR Gibbins and the determination was made that there are currently many other, more pressing issues to be addressed.
- Questions and Discussion:
  - LT Laura Gieraltowski asked whether Regular Corps nominations will have any effect on promotion. She has heard a rumor that if an officer is up for promotion and his/her name has not yet been forwarded to the Senate for confirmation then the officer may be at a disadvantage. CDR Newland replied that he has not heard anything on this matter but will look into it. CAPT Williams-Fleetwood mentioned that the Corps is in favor of avoiding actions which will have a negative impact on officers and stated that she will also seek clarification.

- LCDR Jackie Sram asked whether there are any new rules regarding wear of the Regular Corps ribbon, given that all officers will soon be Regular Corps. CDR Newland stated that officers should not wear the ribbon until it shows up in their eOPF as an award authorized to wear. CAPT Williams-Fleetwood mentioned that she has not heard anything to date about whether there will be a change in policy regarding wear of the Regular Corps ribbon moving forward.
- CDR Alfredo Sancho asked about the timeline for when the nomination process will be complete for all officers. CDR Newland replied that the anticipated timeframe for having all officers approved by the Senate is the end of summer 2011.
- CAPT Ralph O'Connor mentioned that the list of officers nominated for confirmation (as viewed on the Thomas website: <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/Browse.php?&n=Issues>) includes the old ranks rather than our current Navy ranks. CAPT Williams-Fleetwood said she noticed same thing, but has not heard any discussion as to why the old ranks are being used. If she does hear anything on this topic, she will pass it along to SciPAC.

#### 4) **Report from Vice Chair:** CDR Karon Abe

- No report

#### 5) **Subcommittee Reports**

##### a. **Awards:** LCDR James Kenney; Co-chair, LCDR Minglei Cui

- Congratulations to CAPT Mehran Massoudi and LCDR Matthew Murphy for being selected as the 2011 Senior Scientist of the Year and Junior Scientist of the Year, respectively.

##### b. **Career Development:** LCDR Sally Hu; Co-chair, LT Charlene Sydnor

- The major change for 2012 category benchmarks is that 5% for basic readiness has been deleted and 5% has been added to the "Education, training, and professional development" section. In other words, the percentage for the second section is now 20% instead of 15%. However, even though the Readiness precept no longer carries any weight with regard to numerical score for promotion, basic readiness remains one of the administrative checks for promotion. Officers in a "not ready" status as of the December 31<sup>st</sup> OFRD status report prior to the promotion year will receive an automatic "Board Not Recommend". In addition, officers in a "not ready" status as of the subsequent March 31<sup>st</sup> OFRD status report, who were otherwise successful, will be removed from the successful list. Please make sure you maintain basic readiness at all times; this is especially important for officers who are eligible for promotion.
- There is one important change for DEERS ID Cards. As of June 2011, Social Security Numbers (SSN) will no longer be printed on any new DEERS ID Cards (including our uniform service ID cards and beneficiary ID cards). The SSN will be replaced with an 11-digit DoD number on all ID cards issued after June 2011.
- Recent updates to the Post-9/11 GI Bill are summarized below. These updates are based on a presentation provided by Ms. Mary Boone in May 2011 to employees of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Please note that PHS and NOAA officers are scheduled for eligibility to transfer their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to eligible family members (including spouse and children up to age 26) as of August 1, 2011; however, the Department of Health

and Human Services (DHHS) is still awaiting approval of the national security certification from Secretary of Defense Gates before Secretary Sebelius can authority the transfer of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to PHS officers (see the COA Liaison report below for more information). In the meantime, DHHS is responsible for developing policies and procedures to implement transferability and other provisions to the amendments for PHS officers.

- Proposed Changes Effective August 1, 2011:
  1. Pays all public school in-state tuition and fees. Private and foreign school costs are capped at \$17,500 annually (previously there was no cap)
  2. Allows reimbursement for more than one “license or certification” test (previously only one test was allowed)
  3. Allows reimbursement of fees paid to take national exams used for admission to an institution of higher learning (e.g., SAT, ACT, GMAT, LSAT)
- Proposed Changes Effective on October 1, 2011:
  1. Pays for Non-college degree (NCD) programs, on-the-job and apprenticeship training, correspondence trainings, and flight programs
  2. Allows students on active duty to receive a stipend for books and supplies
- For more details, please visit the VA Web site [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or contact the PHS VA Coordinator, Ms. Mary Boone, who gave a presentation to SciPAC in December 2010. Ms. Boone’s slides and contact information are posted on the SciPAC website.
- LCDR Minglei Cui attended the 42nd Office Basic Course (OBC) graduation ceremony in May 2011 to welcome CDR Raymond Anderson (IHS) and LT Tamara Henderson (FDA) on behalf of CAPT Williams-Fleetwood and SciPAC. A group picture of the graduation ceremony has been posted on the home page of the SciPAC website.
- As a result of a schedule conflict with the potential speaker, we are not having a Career Development training session today. The subcommittee is still working on it and hopes to have a training session in July or August.
- Scientist Handbook updates:
  - We have completed the Readiness section of the SciPAC handbook. This section is available on our website.
  - We are waiting to post the new version of the Officer Basic Course section of the handbook. We have received guidance from the OBC Cadre regarding changes that will occur with the OBC in the next several months. We will wait to post the new OBC section at the end of July 2011 to allow for any changes with OBC to take effect. If we do not receive information about the OBC changes by July, we will post what we have for the OBC section and make additional edits in the future as necessary.

c. **Category Day:** LCDR Matt Murphy; Co-chair, CDR Rachel Avchen

- The USPHS Scientific Training and Symposium will be held June 20–23, 2011 in New Orleans.
- Category Day is Tuesday, June 21, 2011. Currently, the Surgeon General is scheduled to speak at 12:45.
- The Scientist and Medical Categories will host a shared social event the evening following category day on Tuesday, June 21, 2011 starting at 6pm, with a cruise along the Mississippi River from 7–9pm. The event will include live music and dancing (\$37.35) as well as a Cajun dinner option (\$61.00 total). You can reserve your tickets at

[www.neworleanssteamboat.com/2011/usphs/reserve.htm](http://www.neworleanssteamboat.com/2011/usphs/reserve.htm). If you have trouble accessing the link I suggest trying from a nongovernment computer or reserving by phone. Sign-up for the social event can take place until Tuesday, June 21, 2011 and you are able to cancel your ticket up to 48 hours prior to the event date.

d. **Mentoring:** CDR Boris Aponte; Co-chair, CDR Mark Methner

- The SciPAC mentoring subcommittee survey is fully functional and is undergoing final changes. In the upcoming days, it will be pilot tested and sent to the SciPAC Executive Board members for approval. This survey will provide the necessary information to restructure the SciPAC mentoring program.
- The survey will be made available to Scientist officers via the SciPAC listserv. On the first page, you will be asked to select one of the three links that best suits your role: mentor, mentee, officer not involved in the program. The dates for the availability of the survey will be communicated soon.
- LCDR Toblin asked whether officers should participate in survey if they are happy with their existing mentor. CDR Aponte requested that all officers participate and clarified that mentors will not be reassigned based on the survey results. It is important to note that the survey will be anonymous and that no one on the Mentoring subcommittee will be able to identify which officers have participated in the survey.

e. **Policy Review:** CDR Ryan Novak; Co-chair, LCDR Fuyuen Yip

- We received no requests for policy document review during May 2011.

f. **Recruitment, Retention & Readiness:** CAPT Michael Murry; Co-chair, LCDR Paul Seo

- As of the beginning of June 2011, there are a total of 304 Scientist officers on board
  - 15 Officers listed as “exempt”
  - 25 Officers listed as “not qualified” as follows: O6=15, O5=7, O4=2, O3=1
  - Not including exempt officers, our category is 91.3% qualified
- An internal meeting was held with CAPT Coppola regarding recruiting. The RRR subcommittee will review the draft recruiting brochure entitled “Best Kept Secrets: Scientists” and provide comments for improvement and accuracy.
- CDR Newland reiterated to Scientist officers that it is always important to be basic qualified and that readiness is especially important around promotion time, i.e., at the end of December when promotion materials due and at the end of March when OFRD performs a last check before promotion materials are reviewed.

g. **Rules and Membership:** CDR Karon Abe

- We received 19 applications for 2011–2013 SciPAC voting membership. There are six Commissioned Corps slots available. The Rules and Membership subcommittee will meet Friday, June 10, 2011 to decide which of the nominees will be selected.
- The SOP for each subcommittee is due on July 1, 2011. LCDR Jackie Sram will take the lead on reviewing the SOPs so that we can have consistency across the subcommittees.
- The SciPAC Charter revisions were signed off by the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG). The revised Charter is available on the SciPAC website.

- CDR Newland thanked everyone who applied for SciPAC voting membership this year. He reminded all officers (including those applicants who are not selected as voting members) that there are always opportunities to get involved in SciPAC.

**h. Science:** LCDR Yi Zhang

- I have revised the draft of the article per the comments/suggestions received from the first round of the review cycle. The second revision will be distributed to all members of the Science subcommittee for additional comments/suggestions. In addition, I am going to set up a teleconference with all contributors in order to finalize the article. I will keep you updated.

**i. Visibility:** CDR Nisha Robbins; Co-Chairs, **LCDR Matthew Breiding**, LCDR Fei Xu

- Note: CDR Robbins is on maternity leave; LCDR Breiding gave the June report.
- The May SciPAC newsletter was released following the May SciPAC meeting. Thank you to CDR Carma Ayala and LT Heather Sylvio for leading the effort.
- LCDR Emily Streeter has been putting the finishing touches on the SciPAC poster for the 2011 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium. Thank you to her and to those of you who submitted photographs for the poster.
- LCDR John Stansberry will be presenting his findings on developments in efforts to produce a vaccine for Leishmaniasis at the 2011 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium.
- Finally, Scientist officers LT Ruiqing Pamboukian, LCDR James Kenney, LCDR Fei Xu, and three other category officers presented the SciPAC poster at the recent Annual Asian Pacific Islander Observance held by NIH.

**j. Website:** CDR Danice Eaton, Co-chair, CAPT Cynthia Striley

- No report

**6) Liaison Reports**

**a. Billet Transformation:** LCDR Judy Facey

- We are now 5 months into the launch of the Scientist category-specific billets process and with the help of the rapid responders (CAPT Ching, CAPT McGuinness, and CDR Newland) all our officers have completed the first step of the billet process.
- If you have changed jobs recently please remember to update your contact information (email address, phone number) in your eOPF file.
- If you need any assistance with the billet process, please do not hesitate to contact me at facey.judy@epa.gov or 703-305-5450.
- CDR Newland thanked LCDR Facey for her hard work. He mentioned that the mutlidisciplinary billets are next and that the process will likely begin sometime this summer.

**b. COF:** CAPT Timothy Nelle

- As of June 1, 2011, our balance is \$2961.42.
- We have an inventory of 99 coins and 51 T-shirts.

c. **COA: CDR Sara Newman**

- The COA raised concern in April regarding the announcement by the Secretary of Health that USPHS would be subject to furlough in the event of a government shutdown. The COA believed that this action called into question the status of the Corps as one of the uniformed services. Executive Director, Gerard Farrell sent a letter to the Secretary raising concern about this decision, and has not yet received a response.
- Post-9/11 GI Bill transferability: COA appealed to the Secretary of Defense to provide the necessary national security certification to implement Post-9/11 GI Bill transferability for the PHS Commissioned Corps. The Secretary of Health and Human Services can only exercise the transfer authority in Public Law 111-377 when authorized by the Secretary of Defense; that transfer authority is needed before August 1, 2011 to give the Department of Health and Human Services sufficient time to establish a transfer of benefits option for PHS officers. COA is seeking support to convince Secretary Gates to provide the needed authority.
- More details on these two topics and others can be found in the June issue of Frontline and on the COA website (<http://www.coausphs.org/>).

d. **JOAG: LCDR Robin Toblin**

- JOAG's General Meeting and Meet and Greet will be held on Sunday, June 19, 2011 from 6–8pm Central Time at the Sheraton, Grand Chenier, 5th Floor. Gift bags with snacks will be provided.
- JOAG's Social will be held on Wednesday, June 22, 2011 from 7–close at Pat O'Brien's (624 Bourbon Street).
- RADM Lushniak and RADM Halliday, the Deputy Surgeon General and Chief of Staff of PHS, will be meeting with JOAG from 11:30–12:30 on Wednesday, June 22, 2011. Space is limited. Please contact LCDR Toblin (Robin.l.toblin@us.army.mil) if you want the link to register.
- The JOAG Awards will be presented at the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium.
- T-shirts are available for pre-order and will be available at the USPHS Symposium, as will mugs, gym towels, coin racks, and challenge coins.
- The most recent issue of the JOAG Journal was released last week. It will be on the JOAG website shortly at: [http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/joag/index\\_files/JOAG\\_Journal.htm](http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/joag/index_files/JOAG_Journal.htm)
- JOAG will be supporting the “Let's Move” initiative at the USPHS symposium by hosting two events. We will invite the local community to the Surgeon General's 5K on Wednesday, June 22, 2011 at 7:15am and will partner with a community summer camp and the Chris Paul Foundation to teach children about engaging in healthy eating choices and physical activity on Thursday, June 23, 2011 from 9-11am. Volunteers are welcome for both events. Please email LCDR Robin Toblin (Robin.l.toblin@us.army.mil) for more information.

e. **PSYPAG: LCDR Richard Schobitz**

- The PsyPAG DoD Special Interest Group (SIG) continues to grow. The next meeting of the DoD SIG is scheduled for June 15, 2011 at 1200 Eastern. The dial in number has not been announced yet and will be sent out via the listserv once it is available.

- The Advocacy committee is developing a paper looking at license limited tours for psychologists who are in the process of obtaining state licenses for independent practice. Examples of successes in the past and reasons for these tours will be included.
- The last PsyPAG general meeting was June 1, 2011. The meeting featured a presentation from Dr. Anita Brown, retired Army prescribing psychologist.
- The next PsyPAG general meeting is scheduled for August 3, 2011 at noon Eastern. The call in number is 1-877-691-9937; pass code is 4549026.

#### **7) Other Business, Questions, Comments**

- CDR Abe announced that she just received an email from CDR Nisha Robbins announcing the birth of her daughter, Delaney Robbins, earlier this morning at 10:43am. She weighs 8 lbs 0 oz and is 20" long. Congratulations CDR Robbins!

#### **8) Closing Remarks: CDR Matthew Newland**

- It has been a difficult year for the Commissioned Corps and the federal government in general. We understand that officers are likely to have many questions and concerns about changes to policies and procedures. It is important that officers remain within the established chain of command when seeking answers, especially when they concern sensitive issues. The SciPAC Executive Board and CPO are here to serve you and are happy to take your questions to the appropriate level as needed. Please continue to stay focused on your important work.

**NOTE:** Next meeting **Tuesday, July 5, 2011 @ 1100–1300 EDT**