



## **Applying for JOAG Voting Membership**

**Question and Answer Session**

**Wednesday, March 3, 2010**

*Transcribers: LT Valerie Marshall and LT. Shauna Mettee on behalf of the JOAG Communications and Publications Committee*

**LCDR Toblin:** Kind of similar to some of the Journeyman series calls we tried before, i.e. the billet transformation question and answer session; put your phone on mute while you're not speaking and then when you have a question unmute yourself. I guess some phones have a mute. If not \*6 should work to mute yourself. Alright, well, it's 12:01, so I'm going to get started. My name LCDR Robin Toblin. I am a first year voting member and I'm the scientist liaison for JOAG and I'm the chair of the membership committee. We also have LCDR Blakeley Denkinger on the phone. She is the JOAG Vice Chair, meaning she's on our executive committee and she's actually a second term voting member, so this is her third year as a voting member and she was on the membership committee last year. So, she is a great JOAG reference and resource and the authority on things JOAG. Merel are you on the line?

**LCDR Merel Kozlosky:** Yes, I am.

**LCDR Toblin:** Great. Do you want to introduce yourself quickly?

**LCDR Kozlosky:** Oh sure. I'm LCDR Merel Kozlosky. I'm also a voting member of JOAG. This is the first year of my voting member term and I am a co-chair of the Awards Committee, which is one of the JOAG committees. So, I'm looking forward to giving you all some input as we go through the call.

**LCDR Toblin:** Thanks. I thought it's great that Merel could be on the line because she also has received applications for awards. So some of the tips that I am going to have are probably some things she is familiar with because it's just standard to applications for all kinds of awards, nominations, and applications. So, she's a great person to have on the line as well.

**LCDR Toblin:** Hello. This is the LCDR Toblin. We're on the call. This is for the Voting Member Question and Answer Session. So hopefully, everyone is here is for the right thing. I just want to start really quickly by doing an overview of voting membership. A lot of this is already online so I'm not going to go into too much detail since you can find this on the JOAG website.

([http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/joag/index\\_files/About JOAG Membership.htm](http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/joag/index_files/About_JOAG_Membership.htm)).

Just because some people may not have looked at the website yet, I'll give a little bit of information. Probably you all know, if you're on the call, that JOAG is the voice of the junior officers and there are roughly 3,000 junior officers in the Corps, and I believe about 1,700 officers on our listserve, some of whom are senior officers. By in large, it's junior officers, so it's a very large organization; and there are 20 voting members. Everyone that is part of JOAG is considered a General Member, but then these 20 are voting members, meaning when there's something to be changed, i.e. lets say in the bylaws, awards, these are the kind of things that a voting member will vote on. There are 11 categories, and 11 categories liaisons, and then there are nine at-large positions. Each year, roughly 10 of the positions roll on and then another 10 people roll off. So that way you have about half of the people who've already been in a year, and half the people that are new. So that way you constantly have some continuity of leadership and knowledge in JOAG, which is great.

This year we have nine spots available. We have four liaison positions for the HSO category, the nurse category, the engineering category, and the therapist category; and then we have five at large spots. So for those of you not in those categories, you still have five spots to obtain. And, really for those of you in the categories available, you have one more spot you can obtain and there are fewer people competing for that spot than the at large spots. But either way, five spots are quite a few. And, so I encourage those of you not in those four categories to still consider applying anyway because someone has to fill those spots, so why not you. That's sort of the basic overview. There are a lot of questions on our website and all of this, our website, can be linked from the JOAG page. And, if you're on the list serve, you should've gotten our website last week where all this information is for the applications.

**Applications are due Friday, March 19** so that's two weeks from this Friday. And they're due to me and my e-mail, probably you have it, is [rtoblin@bop.gov](mailto:rtoblin@bop.gov). I'm going through on the website. There's a frequently asked questions page and that's why I'm not going to talk too much more because probably a lot of the basics about voting membership are on here. Again feel free to ask questions, and if there on the F.A.Q.s I may just refer you to that. I have a bunch of tips for the application but for now I am going to let people ask questions, then we can get back to that later.

But before we start, I want to make one thing clear. When you're applying I'm not scoring these applications so don't feel like you can't ask me a question because you worried that it's going to come across as silly and that I'm going to vote you down because of it. One of the things we put in the Standard Operating Procedures is that the membership committee does not vote, so that way I can be more helpful and objective and it doesn't seem threatening for you with questions. So, that's important to know. So, you know at any point, I'm very responsive on e-mail, and you can call me with any questions you have. And I put the package together but I do not vote.

### **QUESTIONS AND TIPS**

Please, if you have any questions unmute your phone, give us your name, and rank, and category, and then go ahead with your question.

**Q1. LCDR Smith:** Hello, this is LCDR Mike Smith, Scientist Category. I'm just kind of naïve about the whole JOAG voting member. How many times do they physically meet? I guess you have to lead a committee, right, [as a] voting member? So, like the work involved, can we talk about that?

**A1. LCDR Toblin:** Sure. Absolutely. So there is one meeting a month as a voting member, every other month is a General Meeting for all of JOAG and we participate on that and give a report for either our committee or if we're a liaison to a PAC, we would also give that report. And then the alternate months, there's the Journeyman series. And following the Journeyman Series, there's a voting member only call, and those occur on Friday afternoons. So that's once a month and the meetings are either 1 or 2 hours. If you're a PAC liaison, you'll also be on your PAC calls, you know however frequently those occur. For my

category, it's once a month. I know for other categories they have an all day meeting once every three months so that varies by category. And then very likely, like you mentioned Mike, you'll be chairing or co-chairing a committee. I think nearly all of our voting members are doing that and those again vary by committee but usually they have meetings about once a month, some once every other month.

Sometimes, for instance the membership committee, which I chair, we're meeting a lot more right now because voting membership is up and running and we're planning things like this meeting; but other times of the year, we meet less frequently because it's not as concentrated at the time. I would assume the awards committee is probably the same way for Merel. So but then there are other committees like professional development, which is going to be consistent throughout the year, so you'll be on those calls. Then there's work in between, i.e. setting up meetings, appointments, projects, talking to officers, mentoring officers. Let's say somebody you know on your committee wants to apply for a voting membership and you've gotten to know them this year maybe you would work with them next year to help them with their application. There are things like that. And then there's also some requests that come in from the Office of the Surgeon General or the Chair of JOAG that come to Voting Members and we'll do that to. So for instance we made a change to the bylaws recently, we all had to vote on that. Or if there's a request for more information, we might be the ones that would give, try to give a representative sample of what junior officers think on an idea without bringing it to all 3000 junior officers.

So that should give you a little bit of the flavor on this. [There is] some more information about that on the frequently asked questions [website]. I took a poll of the voting members and the median amount of hours per week they spend is three - that's if you're not an executive committee member. Executive committee members spend a lot more time than that. But that is your choice - once you're a voting member to apply or run for those positions or not.

**LCDR Smith:** Thank you Robin, that was helpful.

**Q2. LT Guardia:** Hi. It's Martin Guardia. I'm a Lieutenant and I'm an HSO. My question is I didn't really see on the application form where it specifically says (or maybe there is and I

missed it) if you're applying for a liaison position or an at large position. Because I'm wondering if, say for example, you apply for a liaison and you're not selected would you automatically be reconsidered for an at large [position] or do you have to reapply for that?

**A2. LCDR Toblin:** No, that's a great question and you basically have the process right. The way it works is we look at all the applications. And then, let's say you're in the HSO category, all the voting members score all of the applications and then my committee gets the scores. We put them together and we would say, "Okay, there were six HSO applicants, Martin's application was the highest one, so he is now, he had the highest score, he's now the HSO." Then the other five people are put back into the pool for the at large positions.

**Q3. LT Guardia:** Okay. Is there a specific [place] to request what you're applying for on the application?

**A3. LCDR Toblin:** No. We assume that if you are applying for one of the categories that has an opening, you'd be happy to be the liaison for that category.

**LT Guardia:** Okay. I'll put that in the body of my write up.

**LCDR Toblin:** Absolutely. I'm the scientist liaison, as I mentioned before. I said [in my application] that last year one of the things that I was looking forward to doing was hopefully being a liaison for the Scientist Category.

**LCDR Toblin:** Alright, while we're waiting for other people to generate questions, I'm going to go ahead and give some tips on the actual application.

**Tip 1: LCDR Toblin:** These first two are things to help me out and I'd be most grateful if you would help me with this. If your CV is one page that would be very helpful because I'm going to make this format consistent for every applicant. And so if your CV isn't on one page, if it spills over to the other page, I have to delete spaces or make your margins larger or do something to make it on one page without deleting any of your information. So please make it on one page. That would be so helpful.

**Tip 2: LCDR Toblin:** And then the other thing is once you send me an e-mail, wait for me to confirm it with you. You don't have to call or follow-up multiple times right away. It may take me a day to get back to you, especially those of you that send it in on that last day on March 19. It's a Friday. I may get back to you over the weekend but if I don't, it doesn't mean I didn't get the application. So give me a day to write back and say I have everything and then if you haven't heard from me feel free to follow-up at that point.

**Tip 3: LCDR Toblin:** And on that, while I'm going over that, I just want to mention [that] there are a few pieces to the application. You've all probably seen it but just to go over it again: You have the one page cover CV from your category CV, the application which has both demographic information as well as your narrative responses to the JOAG questions, and then you'll have your supervisor's approval. And please get that scanned in and then put those all in one e-mail. That would all be very helpful if that's all in one e-mail for me.

**Tip 4: LCDR Toblin:** And in the past, we've had supervisors write sort of little support letters. But because some supervisors don't and that's not part of our scoring criteria we're not going to be including that in what goes to the voting members. So you can tell your supervisors if they were going to do that it won't really help you. You appreciate it but it's not going to do much for you so they don't have to take the time to do that. Any questions on any of what I just said?

**Q4. LTJG Tilghman:** This is LTJG Tracy Tilghman. You mentioned that you wanted (I just called in) I just caught the tail end of what you were saying. You mentioned that you wanted the CV to be on just one page?

**A4. LCDR Toblin:** I think every category has a CV and you have a one-page cover page or one page cover summary (*jumble*).

**LTJG Tilghman:** Okay, got it.

**LCDR Toblin:** And what I was commenting on was that I've seen some summaries where it flows over one page and so just to aid me, it would be great if you could modify that so it actually fits on one page.

**Q.4. LT Van Horn:** This is LT Peter Van Horn. I'm an HSO Category officer. My question is this: One prior JOAG Journeyman Series, I know the one about the awards, there were links that could give members an idea of what a successful, let's say, OSM award narrative would look like, or the achievement award, or citation award. Are there any links on the JOAG page, or any available letters that you maybe perhaps had in the past to give sort of direction on perhaps what you're looking for in people who have successfully been members of JOAG?

**A4. LCDR Toblin:** It's a great question; it's a great idea. I've actually been considering it myself and even publishing my own and some other members on the voting membership committee. As of right now, there's not, but I can go over some. This is kind of what I was going to talk about in tips so while you asked I can go over some ideas that I have. I was looking through my application last night and not that mine is so awesome or anything but I did get selected so it had some merit. And then a couple of applications I've received - just some tips based on those that might help everybody out. Some of them are going to sound really obvious but nonetheless I'm going to say them anyway just to help you out.

**Tip 5: LCDR Toblin:** First, you should really consider having consistent formatting between your questions. So I would say don't have text in one and then bullets in the other; just because it's easier for someone to sort of get in the mindset of the way it's formatted if you keep it all the same way. You could still get selected if you do it that way but I think it would be easier for a reader to see all text or all bullets. I myself did text. I've seen other ones that are bullets. I don't know that one is necessarily better than the other. To me, one advantage of the text was that I could have it describe things a little bit better in a complete sentence. But again, there's no reason you couldn't put a bullet. Let's say you're a member of a committee, or the lead for a project on a committee. You could put that in, then under that you could say the achievements you've had. And so either way is fine. But try to keep it consistent.

**Tip 6. LCDR Toblin:** Also separate the question from the answer. I've seen some applications where it's hard to just see where they end and where they begin. Either bold the question or bold your answer. I simply put a space in between the question and the answer. That makes it a lot easier to read. I think if it's easier to read someone is probably more likely to score you higher even if the content was really good

**Tip 7. LCDR Toblin:** Similarly, keep your capitalization consistent. Preferably, use appropriate capitalization. Again, seems basic, but make sure you do that. Don't be haphazard about this. You still have 2 ½ weeks left. Again - I'm not voting. No voting member is going to know who got their application in earlier than later. I'd be happy if I didn't get them all in at 5 pm on March 19 but you're welcome to get them in on March 19 at 5 pm. So, don't rush through it to get it in sooner if you need more time to make sure you're proofreading it and showing it to another colleague or a senior officer. Take the time to do that - you still have 2 ½ weeks to do that.

**Tip 8. LCDR Toblin:** The rest of these may be in less logical order but they're all relevant. So let's go through them. There's a section on here, Number 3 that says what particular committees are you interested in serving in and why. One way to get started if you're very new would be to go our webpage. There's a list of all the committees and there's a call for nominations. In our call for volunteers for those committees, in that call, it describes what each committee works on. If that's an interesting committee to you, you may want to write to that committee chair currently and ask what they do or ask if there are any other ideas that they might want to do in the future. That would be a good way to really substantively talk about what you want to do with that committee. And make sure you have the correct committee name because if you don't have the correct committee name, someone's going to think you didn't take the time to even look at the website, which doesn't show a lot of commitment.

**Tip 9. LCDR Toblin:** If you're already on the committee, by all means write about that committee, if that's something you'd be interested in chairing. Talk about your experience with that committee and how you're really enjoyed it; and new ideas you have. So for instance, what I did last year was, I mentioned, three committees that might interest me and I sort of went through each one and said why I thought the committee was important, how I thought I could help it, and maybe even a new idea, if I had any, for those committees. I even threw out an idea for a new committee. So you can be creative with that. But make sure you take the time to look at the committee and really show that you've thought about it and that you know what you're talking about because there's so much on the website. If you don't it's

going to be clear that you didn't look anything up. So that's a lot of information all at once. Any questions based on what I just said?

**Tip 10. LCDR Denkinger:** This is LCDR Denkinger. I just wanted to also throw in there that at the end of the application it shows exactly how we're going to score your answers to each question. And so, if you look at that it will show you. If you want to get 30 points on this question, this is how you need to write your answer to the question. And just from having scored applications for the last two years, I can tell you that if you don't take the time to thoroughly think out your response and write a clear logical response that shows that you're aware of what JOAG is about, but you know a little bit about JOAG, you're going to get a pretty low score. Some applicants that we have just write one or two sentences for each one of the questions. But you're not likely to get picked if you don't write a good clear response.

**Tip 11. LCDR Denkinger:** The other thing is if you write a response to a question saying something related to an activity that JOAG would never be involved with or couldn't ever be involved with, you're not likely to get a high score either. So if you say, I want to start a new committee so that we can tell the Commissioned Officers Association what they should do at each one of their meetings or something like that. That's not something that JOAG can do. So just make sure that you think about what the mission of JOAG is and how your ideas fit in with that.

**Tip 12: LCDR Toblin:** And that is actually related to another thing I was going to say. I'm glad you brought that up. In scoring, we list off how much each question is worth. So, the first and third questions are worth 30 points. The second and fourth questions are worth 20 points. So, if you're able to, understandably if you haven't done a lot with JOAG its going to be hard to say a lot for Question 1, but if you've worked with JOAG before, you're probably going to try to give a little bit more for Questions 1 and 3 because their worth more. So mine [my application], I don't know if I planned this out, or if it just worked out this way. I'm looking at it now. I have Questions 1 and 2 on one page, 3 and 4 on the next page, 1 is little bit longer than 2, and 3 is a little bit longer than 4. Again, you're getting more points for this, so the more information you can give on those larger point valued questions the more likely you are to get a higher score.

**Q5. LT Scott:** Hi my name is LT Revondolyn Scott. Category is dietician. And I just want to refer back to Question 1 because you were just speaking about it. What advice or suggestions would you give to someone like [me]. I'll put myself out there. I have not been in any activity or any committees with JOAG. What advice would you give to me? Should I not put the application in at this time or should I wait? What would you say?

**A5. LCDR Toblin:** Well, here's one thought: One would be it's going to be harder for you to get selected. On the other hand that really depends on how many applicants we have and how you answer the other questions. And, if you're not going to be bruised by not getting selected, then there's no harm in applying now and then a year from now applying again and using some of the same answers but modifying them. I'll put myself out there. I didn't get selected my first year. So then I applied the next year and I did get selected. And I think that happens on a fairly regular basis so this is something. Again, this is 20 people out of 3000 officers. This year there's only nine spots. So for you as a dietician, since we already have a dietician liaison in LCDR Denkinger, you only have five spots. It is a slim chance, but there's no harm in applying. That's how I view it. And then for that one (Question 1), you're probably going to say, (If I were you I might say), "I don't have any past JOAG involvement but based on what I've learned about JOAG since I became interested I think it would be really helpful because A, B and C and you can say what you're hoping to do with it."

And then on this matter if you don't get selected, this is of course not why you called in to learn what to do if you didn't get selected. But for all of you, if you don't, use that year to get more involved with JOAG. And that's what I did, when I didn't get selected. I joined a second committee; I took a leadership role in one of the two committees I was on. I became a lead for a project on the Recruitment and Retention Committee. So by the time I applied the next year, I was an active member with two committees, I had a leadership role in JOAG, and then I was selected. So, go ahead and apply this year (why not) and then use that application next year as a starting point, if you don't get selected. You may very well. You may have a lot of experience in your PAC or another organization and you may have some really great ideas. We like to see great ideas.

**Tip 13. LCDR Toblin:** Okay, well, I'll keep going with my tips. Again, feel free to pop in at any point. Don't feel like you need to fill the two pages. If you can feel the two pages with substantive material, by all means, but don't add fluff just to get to the end of two pages. I think if you have good stuff to say in a page and a half and you've answered the four questions, that's okay, too. Sometimes, if you're very involved, some of you on the call are very involved with JOAG, it will actually be hard for you to get your information into two pages. But don't let that limit [you], don't feel like you need to fill up two pages.

**Q6. LT Callamer?:** This is LT Callamer?. I'm an HSO. I'm just wondering what if my readiness status is exempt. Would I be able to apply or would I be disqualified? I followed the F.A.Q. and it said one of the requirements is you have to be basic ready.

**A6. LCDR Toblin:** I'm going to turn that question over to Blakely. I don't actually know the answer for that. I assume if you're exempt that would be okay but I'm going to confirm that.

**LCDR Blakely:** How does that work when you go up for promotion? Do they just waive that requirement for basic readiness?

**LT Callamer?:** Well, for right now, I'm exempt.

**LCDR Blakely:** Right, so if you were up for promotion, you don't have to meet that requirement. And I would assume that would be the same case here. We would waive that requirement for you.

**LT Callamer?:** Okay. Thank you.

**LCDR Toblin:** That's a good question. I hadn't thought of that. I'm going to add that to next year's F.A.Q.s. I'm writing it down right now.

**Tip 14. LCDR Toblin:** Another point would be Question 2. It says please, 'Please comment on your leadership experience both inside and outside of the USPHS and/or JOAG.' Don't repeat your CV here. I think it could be very easy to list off all the activities you've been doing. You of course want to mention them but tell us a little bit more about what you did. Let's say

you're secretary of your PAC. Don't say you're secretary of your PAC without telling us here, that means I wrote monthly notes, and created a roster, because those are all skills that we're going to be happy to see because those are related to being a Committee Chair as well. So tell us what you did on those don't just list off the fact that you were a squad leader at your OBC, tell us what that means because we want to know about the experience not just what your title was. And also feel free to bring stuff in outside of PHS. I was really involved in student government during graduate school and I got a lot of leadership experience that way. So I talked a lot about that in my application because I thought that was relevant. So, it doesn't just have to be PHS leadership. If you have PHS leadership, that's great. I talked about both. I made two paragraphs where I talked about PHS, and I had another one where I talked about student government.

Merel or Blakely, do you guys want to pop in and say anything about your applications that I haven't covered here or ideas that you have?

**Tip 15. LCDR Merel Kozlosky:** Yes. This is LCDR Merel Kozlosky: One thing I'd like to emphasize, which goes along with what you just stated about not just listing that you were the secretary of an organization but really talking about the impact. And I would say that throughout the application what I noticed with different applications or award nominations that I've reviewed is that what is most effective is to really look at the particularly the verbs that you're using. So look at very strong verbs that describe what you did as well as the impact. And when you're listing something, listing the accomplishments or the impact that you had in terms of the number of something that happened or a percentage change. When you can really quantify, if something lends to being quantified, quantifying your accomplishment or the impact- that has a bigger impact on the reader than just simply listing something in general terms. So if you look through your write up and then look back and see if there's a stronger verb that I could use here that shows that I had more of an integral role in this activity or is there a way I can quantify this or really highlight how this impacted the end result. Then all of the duties you had or accomplishments you've had, those will all come across as stronger.

**LCDR Toblin:** Thanks so much. That's a great idea. I really like your verb idea. [I'm] reading my own application, looking at my own verbs now [wondering] if I used good verbs.

That's a really great idea. I hadn't heard it described that way. I like that. Any other questions before I go on to my other tips?

**Tip 16. LCDR Toblin:** Going back to I guess really question three and four. One and two are kind of what have you done before. Three and four are what you want to do and what skills, what you bring to JOAG – how you can benefit this organization. Be concrete. And when I say concrete, tell what you are going to do, so, you know, your skills shouldn't be, "I'm a really good leader, and I can help JOAG." Or, "helping JOAG makes this world a better place." It sounds hokey, but don't believe that things like that haven't happened. Merel and I have seen applications with things like that in there.

For instance, question 4, 'what skills do you have?'. I'll tell you about, in mine, instead of text I listed 4 particular skills, and then I wrote... I wrote the name of the skill, and then I wrote out what that skill was, and why I thought it would be helpful. So, the skills that are helpful for JOAG, and I wrote a bunch of them out here. Let's say you have good web or publishing skills – well, the communications and publications website, I mean committee, that's what they do. They help with the newsletter, they help with our website, so that would be so helpful. Let's say you've been the treasurer of an organization, or you have a CPA and you think that would help or something like that. Mention that. We have a finance officer, we have a development committee that helps raise funds, for JOAG.

You know, I, in the past, have coordinated the elections before so that was a pretty useful skill. It turns out, that helped me be selected as membership chair so I mentioned that. I said some event planning. Well, we have to plan some events for the COF symposium. So event planning, the fact that I had done that in the past, that's a useful skill. Organization - or you're secretary of an organization. Right now, you've been a leader of an organization, so you have managerial skills. You've done conflict management resolution before because of your job. These are all things that are going to be real helpful to JOAG so that's what we mean when we say skills. Be really specific with what skills you're bringing to us and how that will help. And it doesn't have to be... so mine are across the board so you could really have – you could see my skills and thought, wow, that could be good for any of 4 or 5 committees. It doesn't have to be all focused on one committee because at the end of the

day you can say what committee you're interested in, but the chair actually selects people for committees. So, it's good to be flexible on that as well.

Any questions on that, on skills, or what I'm talking about for that question?

*(No Questions)*

**Tip17.** Ok, and then, similar to that. In terms of the committee, I mentioned this before... Choose a committee. What committees are you interested in? Choose one. Choose two, even three. Tell us why that's interesting to you. Tell us about any ideas you have. How you've been involved with it before, or you've done a similar committee in the PAC or other organization, and maybe you're the recruitment officer now for the Optometrist PAC. Well that's awesome. You can use those skills from your Optometry PAC to become the Recruitment & Retention (R&R) or Membership Chair for JOAG. So, we're really looking for something specific here.

**Tip18.** In terms of the vision, that's obviously a little bit less specific. So that's a little bit more nebulous. It's a little bit harder to think of. But think of... describe your vision for JOAG. What do you think of it as? How does it help you, how does it help junior officers? What do you see as the goal of the organization? What direction do you think it should head in, in the future? And what role do you want to have in that as a voting member, above and beyond the committee that you chair? You know, maybe you want to work on making sure that every new officer knows about JOAG, or you want to make sure that junior officers have a role in everything else that the surgeon general is doing. Or, that mentorship gets stronger. There are a lot of different things you could say. You really want JOAG to work on this particular topic in the next two years. Any questions on that?

*(No Questions)*

**LCDR Toblin:** That is all I have on my tip sheet. But, I'm happy to answer other questions if people have them.

**Q6. LT \_\_\_\_\_:** CDR Tobin, this is Justin \_\_\_\_? A LT with the Shiprock Service Unit with IHS, Nursing category. My question, it is more general and may not be for this forum but, what is the general timeline for a new officer? My CAD date was in August. I just did OBC in February, and my interest is in recruitment and retention and the contact with those chairs has already been done. My question is what kind of a time line, with a year or two in there, or what steps do you take after that before you do a voting membership because I'm not interested in getting into that until I've got some experience with the corps under my belt. What are your suggestions for that timeline of, you know, volunteer for a committee, you know, then try to get more involved with the committee as far as a co-chair or chair and then voting membership?

**A6. LCDR Toblin:** Great, great question and thanks for coming on the call for your future interest. That's really excellent. There are a couple of answers I have for this. One is more strategic for your own career, and one is more general for JOAG. So, let me say it's strategic for your own career, again this is just think about this for your own career and for what your interests are. Some people suggest that because the promotion from O-2 to O-3 or O-3 to O-4 are sort of automatic that you might hold off until you are an O-4 to be a voting member because that's a really great thing to put on your CV and when you go up for O-5, which is competitive, very competitive in almost every category, you now have this really strong officership, or role on your CV. So some people might suggest waiting until you're an O-4.

That being said, you may just really like JOAG. You like being involved in it, you want to do it now, you're ready, you've been doing JOAG for years, you've been involved with committees, and you're ready to do it. You're going to probably going to get selected because everybody knows your awesome work because you've been doing it for so long. You know, if you want to do it, then there is no reason to hold off, but there is that strategic piece of it. You know, I'm a new Lieutenant Commander, and some could say I could have waited a couple of years because I'm not up for promotion for 6 years, so by the time I went up I wouldn't have been a voting member for 4 years, so there is that piece of it. In terms of the general idea, ranks notwithstanding, and that strategic aspect notwithstanding, I would say, that the route most people take is that they would join a committee, they try to get involved with projects with the committee. There are leads available for different projects, or even a non-voting member co-chair available – take that. Or even say a secretary – that

person often gets very involved if it's a large committee. And then, it doesn't have to be that long. I can give you my timeline, and I don't know about everyone, but, I've only been in the corps for two and half years at this point. So, I was only in for about two years when I became a voting member. And like you, I got involved shortly after OBC and applied right away and didn't get selected. And basically the comment I got was "you've got a lot of great things to say, get more involved with JOAG". And then the next year, as I mentioned, I joined a second committee, I became a lead and then I applied again. So, I wouldn't say you have to be in for many, many years, you just have to show... it helps a lot to be very involved with JOAG, but that can happen relatively quickly.

**LCDR Toblin:** Any input you, Blakeley or Merel, want to give on the topic?

**LCDR Denkinger:** I would just say that it depends on your category too, because some of the categories, like the dental category, or the medical category, it's very difficult, um, to find individuals that can serve as voting membership in those 2 categories because, you know, I know that they're extremely busy and doing some really important work so, as is everyone, but sometimes depending on what category you are you may have, you know, you may have to go begging you to be a voting member, a JOAG voting member so if you're an HSO, or more of a category with more junior officers it may be more difficult on your first go around to become a voting member. You may need to get some more time under your belt, experience under your belt, but also, prior military experience. If you have prior work experience before you joined the corps, those things are all relevant and can be used in the application.

**LCDR Toblin:** Great, great point. Especially the point about the different categories. This year we happened to have HSO, nursing, engineering, all of which are fairly large, and the therapist category which is smaller. So again, that's a good point; last year there were a couple categories that they were hard pressed to find people. And then we had to go searching people out. We're hoping this year, we're really pushing to get a lot of people to apply. We're hoping that that will continue in years to come. But none the less, but you know, my category, I'm a scientist, there's only 300 officers in my category. And last year, only 2 people applied that were scientists, so I had a 50/50 shot of getting in. Just for my liaison position, let alone, you know, the other however many at-large positions there were last

year. So, there's also something to be said for applying the year that your liaison spot is open and that certainly can help.

**LCDR Kozlosky:** So one additional thing I'll throw in, this is Merel, is to also consider other category, or other organizations that you might be wanting to take more of a leadership role in and maybe looking at how you want to time that out. That, if you want to become a voting member of your PAC, then maybe you might not want to be a voting member of your PAC and a voting member of JOAG at the same time because you might start to stretch yourself too thin, amongst your different commitments. So, to also think about how you might want to time out other leadership positions that you might be interested in outside of JOAG and that might help you determine when you might want to be a JOAG voting member.

**LCDR Toblin:** That's a really great point. I know I had been considering being a voting member in my PAC and some people I know in my PAC basically said you'll never be able to do it all. In particular, think about how much longer you have as a junior officer. If you're an O-2 you have many years left. If you're an O-4 and you have promotion in a few years, now might be the good time if you only have a few years left in your PAC for the rest of your career. Consider where you are in your own career.

**Q6. LT Martin Guardia:** Hi. This is LT Martin Guardia again. My question is, I see where on the Q and A's that the meetings are usually on the phone – conference calls. Is there any requirement to be present, in person, at the Rockville at any time, or is that optional, or how does that work?

**A6. LCDR Toblin:** Uh, that is totally optional. Um, it's requested if you happen to live in the D.C. area that you try to go to a few, but even that isn't mandatory. I can tell you that personally I was going to go in February for just the first time. I do live in D.C., but then it snowed so I didn't go. But there have been at least one other or two other meetings that I haven't even gone and I actually live in D.C. So, no, there is no requirement. It's preferable if you could come to COF but we understand that the funding may not come that easily from your agency, or you might not make the HHS memo. But I can speak from my own experience that, and perhaps the others can say, how awesome it was to go to COF and meet all the people that you've been working with on committees. You know, meet the other voting

members that you have never met before but that you've been working so closely with. It's really a lot of fun, and that meeting does occur in person. There is an actual JOAG meeting there. It's neat to be able to give your committee updates in person, looking at people, having an interaction with the people. Having them smile back to you, it doesn't seem quite as austere as our every other month conference call. It's a really nice experience. So, it's great if you can go to COF as a voting member but restrictions based on funding from your agency or other timing issues.

**LCDR Toblin:** Are there other questions? *(pause 4 seconds)* Well if you have questions, I'll stay on the line for another minute. If you have other questions that we haven't answered here, that you think of over the next two weeks, please feel free to email me at any time. I respond to emails very quickly. And I hope to receive applications from a number of you. Any other questions?

**Q7. LCDR Darlene Brown:** Yes, I have a question. This is LCDR Darlene Brown, and my question is, if you are an O-4, LCDR, and you're thinking about doing the application for the membership, and you're up for promotion next year. But of course, you don't know if you're going to get promoted or not. Should you not apply, or should you.

**A7. LCDR Toblin:** You should not apply. Unfortunately, you're not eligible. Because if you are up for it, and you get it, then you're automatically not eligible, and then we have a spot that's not filled. Even if you're up for O-5 in 2011, we'd still ask that you not apply. If you're up for O-5 in 2012 and your category pins-on July 1<sup>st</sup> or later, then you could apply because then you'd only be an O-5 officer for only three months of your 2 year career. But if you're potential pin on date is any sooner, because you might get it [the promotion], unfortunately you're not eligible.

**LCDR Toblin:** Any other questions?

**LT Guardia:** Martin again. I don't have a question, but would you be willing to stay on the line after this to talk about COF after this for a minute?

**LCDR Toblin:** Sure

**Q.8. LCDR Irene Chan:** Hey Robin, this is Irene. I saw on a previous email that this call was going to be recorded, right? Are you going to be posting your tip sheet as well?

**A8. LCDR Toblin:** Hmm, probably not because it's going to be transcribed. The communications and publications committee will transcribe the .mp3 file. So, there will be in an organized fashion, everything I'm saying, word for word winds up in a transcript that goes online.

**LCDR Toblin:** Well, thank you so much for your time. Let me know if you have other questions. I look forward to your applications. I'll stay on the line if there's anyone that has individual questions. Thanks everyone!