



## **JOAG VOTING MEMBERSHIP**

### **Question and Answer Session**

**Wednesday, March 2, 2011**

***Transcriber: LCDR Christina Coriz on behalf of the JOAG Communications and Publications Committee***

For an overview of the JOAG Membership please see the “Applying for JOAG Voting Membership” transcript dated March 3, 2010. This year we have 11 open positions for voting membership for the 2011-2013 term and this includes 4 at large openings, filled from any category also have 7 liaison positions, Environmental health dentist, dietitian, pharmacist, physician, scientist and veterinarian . If not one of category still 4 other at large spots open that can be filled by any category. Don't be discouraged if one of the liaison positions is not open. Also, review the JOAG Website for additional information like VM application along with frequently asked questions.

### **QUESTIONS and TIPS**

**Q1. LCDR Eva McClanahan** environmental health officer, what is the most critical information to include on the one page CV Summary?

**A1. LCDR Chan:** Every category has a format. Each category has a one page CV cover. If you want to forward what is in cover that will be adequate. But high level points will touch on where you are in your career, current duty station, awards, current readiness status. If you are to forward that cover letter from the category specific CV.

**Officer:** As far as I know Environmental Health got rid of the cover letter.

**LCDR Chan:** If you are in a situation where the cover is deleted from the standard format. You can look at other categories and follow their format.

**LCDR Toblin:** The CVs are used as a supplement. They are not the main part of the application. The VM will look at it when scoring the application. However, VM's are more interested in what you are saying in the short answer questions. If you are in a situation where you do not have a CV cover, don't spend as much time on it. VM's will look at it to see what other activities you have done, but if you have written your answers well you may have already highlighted that information in your short answer.

**Q2. A Scientist Officer,** would you recommend officers in their first year of being called to active duty apply for a position or would it be best to wait because of how competitive a first officer would be compared to everyone else who would be applying?

**A2. LCDR Chan:** The number of applications we have can certainly make it more difficult if you do not have any experience or involvement in JOAG. But I don't want you to look at it as a negative and you should not apply, if you are the type of person who can roll with the punches. There is no harm in applying and if you are not selected then a year from now apply again. You will gain experience of applying and it puts your name out there. If for any reason you are not selected you will be identified as someone interested and persistent. You also have an opportunity to take the year in between to go back and get involved in a committee or get on a workgroup and get your name out even more. I would say it is not a waist if you don't have the experience you think you need. Because sometimes it depends on how many people are applying. What we really look for are people who have energy and good ideas to bring to organization which is really what is key. If you are really gung ho, so to speak, about being involved in JOAG and you can bring expertise, bring ideas, then I absolutely suggest you apply.

**LCDR Toblin:** I applied my first year I was not selected and I was selected the year after. I think we have a VM right now who was selected in their first year. If you are not selected in your first year certainly apply the next year. I think you will have a good chance.

**Q3. LT Abbey Shannon** in the dental category. I have a question regarding the time commitment. I read on the FAQs it is approximately 3 hours per week. What is the time commitment, as far as, the number of meetings, PAC meetings as well as the committee meetings?

**A3. LCDR Chan:** Let's start first with general membership meetings. Those are on alternate months so a VM meeting is in between the general meetings. You are looking at attendance of one meeting per month. If you are serving as a committee chair, you will hold a meeting. Some committee meetings are monthly some are every other month. That depends on the committee and your vision for that committee. If you are a category liaison, PAC Liaison then you also have to factor in you are joining the PAC meetings as well as reporting that information back to JOAG. So you balancing 3-4 meetings. In between, say you membership committee chair you are also fielding questions from general members, you are working on projects for your particular committee. There is a time commitment. Keep in mind you can note this time and apply it towards a special assignment award.

**LCDR Toblin:** Depending on which committee you are on some have more or less duties at different times of year. 3 hours is really a median. Some people spend more some spend less. Some are evenly spread throughout the year CPC or profession development. Those chairs do work throughout year. On the other hand, the Development Committee which helps create merchandise sold at COF and COF Planning Committee are much heavier right around spring, early summer, the time of the conference. Once the conference is over committee work is pretty light. Allocation of time depends on the committee you are on.

**LCDR Chan:** The Membership Committee has two co-Chairs. Some committees have a single chair. With co-Chairs you can spread out work. With VM process we start most our work in January until the voting process is complete and selections are made and finalized. Within the committee, subcommittee's or projects also impact where your time is spent and at what point.

**Q4. A Pharmacy Officer,** I have two questions. One, is looking at past years in general for each position that is open how many applicants were there? My second question is if I am currently involved with APOAC which is Asian Pacific Officers Advisory Committee, serving as committee chair, would it be advisable to apply for JOAG position knowing the possible time commitment?

**A4. LCDR Chan:** As far as time commitment, I would advise this to any officer at the end of the day it is a time commitment. What you will do for JOAG is a reflection of who you are as an officer. I would think anyone stepping into this role would want to put their best foot forward. That being said, when it comes to time commitment and time management the key for people who are very actively involved in more than one organization begin involved in JOAG it does take time, it takes energy, it

takes effort, you have to balance against your current workload with other committees to determine at the end of day, I would only take a step forward if you know you can dedicate the time and energy necessary so you can do a good job with the position. That will vary from person to person. Some people may be a little better at multi-tasking and juggling multiple positions. At the end of the day when you go back to it, think about whether you can dedicate the time and effort that will allow you to do a good job and fulfill all your responsibilities. As far as your first question, in regards to how many applicants we have received in the past that has varied from year to year and from category to category. Robin can speak to her experience last year.

**LCDR Toblin:** Last year there were 21 applications all together and there were 9 positions open. 10 were from HSO category so you can see that was top heavy for one category. They tend to be an active category in regards to JOAG. Last year our mission for our liaison spots we wanted to make sure we had at least two applicants from every category. There are going to be some categories that are smaller when there are only two applicants. When I applied there happen to only be two applicants. I am a scientist officer and it is a smaller category. It depends on the year you are applying. Obviously 21 applications to fill 9 spots we were hoping for more. This year we are hoping for more. I have heard of 35-40 applications before I was here.

**Q5. A Pharmacy Officer,** I have the understanding most of the meetings are done thru conference calls and geographic location is not an issue. Have you had people involved at smaller clinics that do not have complete control over their staffing have they been successful in their participation with the meetings?

**A5. Lcdr Burnham:** I am a physical therapist. I balance a caseload and participating in JOAG. For me, my supervisor is giving me some time to set aside. He is a PHS officer so that is key for me. You have to look at all those angles, are supervisors willing and you are able to put your best foot forward. Then it may be a good fit.

**LCDR Chan:** I think what Kit points out is key. Definitely communicate your intention. It is required to have supervisor approval as part of application. It is always helpful when you are able to have someone who is supportive of what you are doing. Ultimately, they are the one who may have to let you off the line in case you are a pharmacist working in a busy clinic. I certainly understand balancing that aspect. I think going in and being able to describe what the

commitments are. Keep in mind there are certain meetings, general meetings every other month, your committee meetings and meetings if you are PAC liaison. Those are fixed. In terms of committee work, it does not have to be done during your typical working hours. There is a lot to accomplish thru email and keep communication in projects going even after hours. So that should not be a barrier. I don't think there should be an idea that any work for JOAG should only be done during my working hours. This is extracurricular to your duty station expectations.

**Officer:** Thank you, I have supervisor approval and in fact encourages it. But working in such a small clinical there are times due to staffing issues I may be the only pharmacist available. Missing a scheduled meeting would reflect poorly on me.

**LCDR Toblin:** You may want to contact our dental liaison. He is a dentist at an IHS facility in Oklahoma. I think he has a similar position. He has missed meetings here and there. We understand when we select someone from a clinical billet. Especially, in a category like the dental category. Almost all dentists are clinicians there may be some in administrative roles or policy roles. That is something the VM understands. You might want to shoot him an email if you want to get in touch with someone that is in a similar situation.

**LCDR Chan:** One of the goals of JOAG is to represent Junior Officers so that means jobs in all different settings and all agencies so we are definitely cognoscente of those constraints and one of those things we want representation for.

While we wait for another question, I will discuss some application tips. I would like to remind everyone the application deadline is Friday, April 1<sup>st</sup>. It is helpful if we do not have a rush of applications on that particular Friday. I would say pace yourself and allow yourself enough time to complete the application. Sending it in before the application is due will help ensure I can respond back and let you know if you are missing anything or if there are any problems with the files you send. I want to mention if you send an application package I will confirm the receipt by email. I am good at responding to email within 24-48 hours. If you send it on Friday give me until Monday to respond. If you have not heard from me then you are welcome to send me a follow up. The complete application does include 5 things. The application form, the response to the narrative questions, the one page CV summary, (when we say one page we mean one page. We have seen situations where the CV summary flows over to another sheet.) your supervisory approval form

and also the printed copy of your PIR in your eOPF. For those of you applying a second time, you will notice this is different from last year's application. So take note of that. It helps me if all pieces arrive in a single email. The supervisory approval form, in the past, some supervisors have written support letters. It is not part of the requirements so let your supervisors know not to do this because it is not really going to help your application and it ends up being an inefficient use of time. The narrative scoring criteria is attached to the application. Pay attention to the weight of points with each question. It has changed slightly from last year. If you have done this in previous years, take note of the changes. This year the third question carries the most weight. So it does make sense to pay attention to the questions that carry more weight. At the end of the day there are only 4 questions and they are all important. But if you have less to say about one area you may be able to balance by writing more for a different question. Also keep in mind to stay on track make sure you are answering the question that is being asked. Writing more is not always value added if the information is not informative. Try not to use the narrative as a form to rehash what is in your CV summary. The point of the narrative is to give additional information we do not already know in the application. Tell us more about yourself and your vision. However, it is probably going to be unavoidable to mention something on your CV. But use the narrative to fill in the gaps and give more detail.

**LCDR Toblin:** Please put all the elements together in one document. We spent a lot of time merging the forms into one single document. When dispersing to VM's each applicant has one packet and submitting in one document will save us a lot of time. The point allocation could be used as a guide for how much to write. The first 2 questions are 25% you may want to split half a page and half a page. It is up to you, but you may consider putting your information in bullets or narrative. I have seen it done both ways and it works both. Whichever you are more comfortable with and I want to let you know it is an option to use bullet points.

**Q6. LT Mitchell Holiday** a dietitian at the federal bureau of prisons. I have a question for some of the officers on the call who are currently members of JOAG. As an officer contemplating whether to apply, can you give some personal experiences about positives or some negatives that you have had in terms of frustrations with JOAG or some of the activities common among committees. Can you also address if I am a 0-3 officer, and was elected can I be re-elected for a second or potentially third term?

**A6. LCDR Chan:** Let's break the question up. Some frustrations as a VM, I think we all have our regular jobs so people touched on the time management factor. With JOAG there are multiple pieces in coordinating projects. Coordination in different settings and time zones can be challenging at times. I would not say it is a humungous frustration. It can be challenging depending on type of project. If the project will be implemented nation-wide or in different regions the basic communication and timing can get a little tricky. Another area is the transition of leadership. I was fortunate because I have Robin, I can run to her and ask questions. We were meeting before I officially took over the role and that is not the case for every committee. Having a solid resource with the transition of leadership is helpful. One thing we are doing to address this is putting together a FAQ that serves as a guide for new officers serving as committee chair. The document addresses where you can find information, navigating your new role, and how to address different scenarios. Sometimes it can be trial and error. It is nice to have a resource to answer questions.

**LCDR Burnham:** I agree with Irene in terms of time management and getting all moving parts together and the coordination. I think those things are important to look at and sometimes those things can be difficult because people are in a different time zone. In the most part everything has worked out pretty well and also having Robin as a resource has been a great assistance for us to transition into this role. I don't think all the other committees have that same assistance.

**LCDR Toblin:** I want to echo what they mentioned. There are two pieces I want to bring up. Sometimes you rely on other people to get things done and you cannot force other people to get their work done. There are committees that work together. We rely on Communications and Publications Committee to record the call and transcribe. We also work with them on the website. They only have one person to help post information on the website. It takes a while because he is only one person and he has a full time job. We cannot get our webpage up and running until they get it up and running. The subcommittee leads or secretary are volunteers and they do not get a special assignment ribbon, because they are volunteers and they can quit at any minute and so you have to rely on other people. The other piece is the interplay with the executive committee. Each committee has a structure of subcommittee up to committee chair to Executive Committee representative, which is how I am involved in the Membership Committee this year. Then after the Executive Committee we may be on the phone once a month and then there is a lot of emails in between. On executive committee you approve all new projects, documents like SOP, JOAG strategic Plan and there is a piece from each committee. There are a ton of documents that come

thru the Executive Committee (EC). So when the Membership Committee or any committee submits anything to the executive committee. They can expect a two weeks wait at a minimum. That can get frustrating if you are done with your project. Another example of a frustration is there are different approaches for things. Some of you that know me know that I am a bit of a renegade and that has some pros and cons. When a person on the executive committee is more conservative in their approach they may not choose to go forward with a project that you feel is important. You may not always have control over what projects go forth.

**LCDR Chan:** I believe the second part of your question was related to the term of appointment. The initial term you are selected is for two years. The terms is staggered so roughly half the people are completing their term and half are in their first year of their two year term. This allows for continuity in leadership. Within voting membership there is an Executive Committee. If you are selected to be in an Executive Committee position and it required an extension beyond your initial two years there can be an extension. You have the option to reapply after your first term for a second two year term. The total cannot go beyond four years. This information is in the bylaws. I would refer you to the JOAG website under Governing Documents.

**Q7. Health Services Officer,** earlier you mentioned the at-large committee positions. Are you able to talk about which of those positions are open and available?

**A7. Lcdr Chan:** At-Large positions can be filled from any category. It does not matter if you are a pharmacist or dentist or any other category. Breaking down the 7 liaison positions when we say liaison those have to be specific to that category. This year if your category does not have a liaison position open when you apply you will be considered under an at-large position in which there are 4 slots. This opens 4 chances versus 1 liaison position. Also, let's say you are applying and there is a liaison position open we will assume you are happy to serve as the liaison if selected. For those who are not selected for liaison they will move on to the separate pool for the at-large spot. Overall, at minimum everyone will be considered for an at large spot. For a liaison position there is in only one slot if it is open.

**Officer:** My question is actually for the 4 positions open. Will we know what committees those will be in charge of?

**LCDR Chan:** I am sorry I misinterpreted your question. Committees are assigned by the JOAG Chair. The decision is based on openings and there can also be reassignments. Just because I am on the membership committee does not necessarily mean I will be membership chair next year. We can look at the JOAG website and see which officers are ending their two year term and see which committees will need a chair the following year.

**LCDR Toblin:** The JOAG Chair ultimately makes the decision based on your previous experience both in and outside of JOAG and also based on your preference. Irene was a member of the Membership Committee last year so it made sense for her to be a part of that committee. Kit was involved in Professional Development, Recruitment but he expressed his interest in Membership. You do have the option to express your preference. So he was placed on the committee based on his interest. In addition to the JOAG Committee Chairs you have 5 people on Executive Committee. These 5 people are not committee chairs. Irene or Kit may apply to be on the Executive Committee then their spot will come open on the Membership Committee. Committee chairs do have squatter rights if they want to stay on a second year they can do that.

**LCDR Chan:** I want to give a couple more tips, before I was talking about the application package. In terms of dealing with the narrative, keep in mind the bulk of what you are evaluated on comes from the narrative and what you write in response to those questions. It helps to be creative and shy away from general statements. If you have something you have done discuss how it is applicable to JOAG and how you can apply it to a committee or project you are interested in. General saying "I want to help JOAG" or "I think I am a good leader." is not really helpful. If you can say I have done this in the past and it demonstrates my leadership ability I was president of this or lead this working group. Whatever your circumstance it is the details that will set you apart as an applicant. My understanding is, in the past, we have had applications that had general statements and at the end of the day the people reviewing the applications do not know what you are capable of.

**LCDR Toblin:** The last narrative question that asks about what skills you bring you can relate those skills to different committees you may be interested in being a part of. So instead of saying, "I am a good leader." Or "I am a people person." You might say, "I have website design experience and I have worked on a newsletter therefore I would be a good Communication and Publications Committee Chair." Or "I have helped run elections for my PAC or different organizations therefore I

would be a good Membership chair.” You might want to get specific or if you are good at planning you might want to be COF Planning Committee Chair.

**LCDR Chan:** It is also helpful to give us some ideas for those who are looking at your application. State your impact in previous activities. If there is a way to measure your success, like how many people were touched or impacted by something you did. This helps set applications apart. You have limited room but of course this is not to say you have to fill the pages just for the sake of filling them. At the end of the day, go back to the consideration of the value added and your response tells about who you are and what you are capable of. There are 11 spots open this year. If you have good ideas and you have the energy to bring to JOAG please consider applying.

**LCDR Toblin:** I would like to add one more thing. First year voting members can apply to be on the Executive Committee. So you may wind up not even being a committee chair you may wind up on the Executive Committee. Our Chair- Elect is a first year voting member and our secretary was our secretary as a first year voting member. You can apply for the EC as a first year voting member. As you can imagine the JOAG Chair and Chair-Elect roles take more time versus Vice Chair or Financial Liaison. These positions are filled after the selection of voting members. So you do not have to decide right now if you want to be on the Executive Committee.

**LCDR Chan:** Thank you for joining the call today. If you have another question or want some clarification, please email me and I will respond within 48 hours.