

SLS Endorser Breakout
July 29, 2014

BLUF: Endorsers appreciated being included at SLS, and having access to CHC leadership for open dialog. There is an overall desire for increased flow of information and transparency to be more helpful to chaplains as an additional source of accurate information. They also desire to stay informed in a timely manner on where DoD and the Chiefs of Chaplains stand on religious freedom issues, particularly when they hit the media. Strong interest in modeling a best practice from the Army Chief of Chaplains office and their frequent engagement and EA-led conference calls to keep them informed on matters pertaining to each division in the office.

Concerns Raised

- ☒ Shaping pastoral identity as criteria for chaplaincy and the two year relationship stipulated within the precept
 - Concerns over this criteria and perceived disadvantage to applicants endorsed by umbrella organizations
 - Kibben clarified 2 years of experience/relationship is with RO they represent, not umbrella org, as it appears on the DD 2088.
- ☒ Kibben addressed the funding challenges for OJT for CCPOs and clarified this would not be held against candidates as they seek to supersede
- ☒ How rigid is the GPA requirement for accessions as stipulated in the precept (3.2 for undergrad and 3.4 for MDiv) Kibben: Fairly stringent, but not necessarily unbending- a good solid candidate is in competition with others that may have the same experience, the GPA can play into final decision on which applicant is selected
- ☒ Desire for more info to help build relationships with their chaplains and also be an additional source of correct info that might not otherwise make it down the chain of command to the deckplate chaplain
- ☒ Desire for increased transparency and ability to stay on the pulse of the Chief of Chaplains office to relay to their chaplains
- ☒ Concern about incorrect messaging from Navy recruiters on 2 year relationship with RO
 - Chaplain Kibben clarified not all recruiters are chaplains and expressed a desire to reign recruiters back in and to improve communication efforts with our recruiting command to ensure accuracy and consistency with messaging. Kibben also expressed interest in increased flag engagement at seminaries to set expectations with potential applicants.
 - Kibben: wants to get with the students so they understand what chaplaincy is about but also needs endorsers to understand her/CARE's expectations when sending applicants and/or wondering why their applicants were turned down
 - Some of what was highlighted during the precept brief on accessions was to help endorsers understand why we are turning away certain applicants and underscore the Navy's high standards and competitive nature of the process
- ☒ Concerns for Reserve CCPOs without a command, losing their connection and experience in the operational environment
 - Chaplain Kibben advised the CCPO also needs to be proactive and take initiative for VTUs- may need to address with the CCPO Manager to ensure that is being communicated as an option to our CCPOs
- ☒ CCPO supersede question- After ordination, once they supersede into the Reserves will it make it harder for them to be recalled to active-duty?
 - Kibben: Navy has been gracious and flexible on our recall numbers, our recalls are often equal to our number of direct accessions and highly valued—but it does

reflect on our office's engagement and relationship with manpower leadership in the Navy

- ☒ If a candidate is 2 years or 1 year away from ordination, are they suitable for CCPO program? Kibben: a little too early to be a candidates for CCPO program
- ☒ Easy to be misunderstood with the speed of news on matters relating to religious freedom and chaplaincy in the DoD. Desire for consistent PAG (Personnel Action Group) for PR matters from AFCB to better communicate with endorsers and keep them informed on where DoD stands on issues concerning chaplaincy-with one rep from each Chief of Chaplains' office.
 - Tidd: Limitations of AFCB staff to make this happen and inevitable lag to get out in front of some of these issues due to policy lag and speed of news
- ☒ What do you need from endorsers to better assist you? More input? More phone calls?
 - Tidd: The next steps in the evolution of chaplaincy across DoD is exploring what does it mean to be an endorser. Some have been endorsers for some time, have experience, insight, and acumen to do it well and the commitment to ministry in the military and can help us with the transition and translation from civilian ministry to a military environment, institutional environment. Not everyone gets that. The challenge we wrestle with as leaders in the Navy CHC. How do we work with a large body of people with differing backgrounds and abilities when the institutional experience is not consistent across our endorsers? Share with fellow endorsers your best practices and help mentor them.
 - Robinson/Doug Lee: New endorser training needs overhaul- program expectations in coming year at NCMAF to address this. NCMAF can help advocate in ways the Chiefs cannot.
 - Clarified that NCMAF does not represent all DoD endorsers and that the Chief of Chaplains' relationship is directly with endorsers not a non-federal entity.
 - Tidd: Be careful about jumping to conclusions. Sometimes there are things we cannot say that would compromise our responsibilities as we advise senior leadership. Find an opportunity to ask the question of us, but understand we may not be able to provide a firm answer as the policy may not be in place. Consider the possibility there may be more to the story and that we're making the best decisions with the information available to us at the time. Tidd reiterated his focus on religious freedom for all and leading a Corps from over 100 different religious beliefs and practice. How do we work together to ensure the religious freedom of our chaplains, and more importantly the religious freedom of our people. We spend so much time focused on ourselves; we lose the focus on our people, our Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen. It's based on communicating respect for all, regardless of differences in religious beliefs, which can also describe how endorsers can operate together as such a diverse body.
- ☒ Concern for improving care for our chaplains who are returning depleted from deployment. Desired partnership to improve support for the caregiver and working with endorsers who serve as pastors to their pastors. Tidd: We have that shared responsibility to care for our chaplains. Concern for increasing sea deployments and chaplains going back-to-back operational tours. Tidd: Don't want to break our chaplains. Cognizant of the demands on Catholic chaplains. As the only one who can approve the detailer assigning a chaplain on back to back operational tours, have made a concerted effort to not approve this.

- ☒ Question on new denominations and how chaplains can have a strong pastoral identity in a new faith group.
 - Kibben: New endorser cannot be approved until an applicant from outside the military comes before the board and makes it through. Cannot be a current chaplain seeking to switch endorsers
- ☒ Concern for military's focus on what is PC vice celebrating religious liberty and respect for all, a perceived culture of fear –NDAA education needed for chaplains on what this means for them
- ☒ Where is the Naval chaplaincy in viewing previous Navy experience on the application?
 - Tidd: I think it's helpful but not determinative. Depends on the kind of experience they had and how well they did. It's a data point. One among many that can work for or against someone. It certainly speaks to their familiarity with the military structure but it can sometimes be hard for them to make the transition from their previous role to a chaplain.

Ideas/Suggestions

- ☒ “The more you can trust the endorsers, the more information you can give us, it really helps us relating to our people.”
- ☒ Appreciate CHC Update emails: “We can be messengers to help get the word out beyond what you're doing.”
- ☒ Appreciate Army Chief of Chaplains' Office phone directory and open communication with their office
 - Relationship with Manpower Division to communicate selection board results and once a month reach out via email
 - EA keeps them connected with new phone directory as folks transition from their positions in the office-helpful to know who works where
 - Interest in something similar to the Army Chief of Chaplains EA-led conference calls where Div/Dirs report out updates with Q/A at the end-appreciate their transparency
- ☒ Interest in copy of OPNAV policy on accessions/precept language-Kibben committed to providing a copy of policy once available
- ☒ Interest in CCPOs ads to share in their denominational conferences to aid recruiting efforts-SAC clarified finals will be released in the Fall on navy.com and will share with endorsers once released