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**OCTOBER MEETING: PROGRAM MANAGEMENT – TECHNIQUES AND
PILLARS**

VICE ADMIRAL JOSEPH DYER, USN (RET.)

[WEBEX MEETING NUMBER 276 141 101](#) (further directions on page 7)

THURSDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2015

9:00 pm EDT, 8:00 pm CDT, 7:00 pm MDT, 6:00 pm PDT;

UTC/GMT 0200 23 October 2015

Details on Page 2



Successful programs – be they fighter planes, pharmaceutical production lines, or major construction projects - have much in common. This talk will provide insights and give you a checklist of the things that matter most.

[Vice Admiral Dyer](#) is a graduate of North Carolina State University with a B.S. in chemical engineering, and the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, with a degree in financial management.

He is currently a consultant in the tech, aerospace, and defense markets. He operates at the intersection of technology, finance, and risk mitigation. His career in the US Navy ranged from being a test pilot to serving as Commander of the Naval Air Systems Command.

More information can be found on the [VLS Events Website](#).

IN THIS ISSUE

Neil Yeoman provides us with another letter to the editor, Amanda Scalza shares her views on making the most of meetings, and I reflect a little on the continuing discussions on diversity and other issues.

-- Jennifer I. Brand, Editor

CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS ON DIVERSITY

Our first letter to the editor last month caused quite a stir: readers actually wrote responses! I also heard, indirectly, that

there were concerns from some of the AIChE leadership about the letter. At their request, I am adding a disclaimer to this and future issues. (This month's disclaimer appears on the last page.) On the positive side, I am pleased that the VLS Newsletter has such a lofty readership.

The reader responses were more direct and interesting. As a reminder, Neil Yeoman's letter was three substantive paragraphs which can be summarized as follows: the first said diversity is a complex issue; the second gave an example of why Neil believes that the demographics of the

engineering population may not ever reflect the demographics of the general population; and the third proposed that diversity should not be promoted, but allowed, with the result that diversity will happen naturally in healthy workplaces where barriers have been removed. Neil also warned that achieving this is not trivial.

Most of the readers who responded aligned themselves into two distinct camps: the outraged, who focused on the second paragraph as an attack on women, and the exuberant, who focused on the third paragraph as a call for moving beyond the current counting approach tied to the demographics of the general population. Other readers have offered further discussion for the November Newsletter.

As editor, I am glad that readers are responding and care enough to write and share with others. Responses show that diversity is definitely an issue that is important to our members. I am also heartened that everyone agrees on the principle that, as Neil Yeoman says, “barriers ... should be removed and people allowed, indeed, encouraged to work in any area that best fits the needs and abilities of the people working and the requirements of the work that needs to be done”. The goal is not controversial, but the pathway to achieving it is.

I was disappointed by some of the responses. It was not *what* they said, but *how* it was said that made them unpublishable. Persuasive arguments are much stronger without *ad hominem* attacks or selective omission of essential words

while quoting. I would be happy to publish letters and articles presenting differing perspectives on interesting issues, as long as the writings are suitable (*i.e.*, civil, truthful, and relevant).

-- Jennifer I. Brand, Editor

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Neil Yeoman writes:

In the September 2015 VLS Newsletter, past chair Noah Meeks, current chair Amanda Scalza, and future chair Daniel Sujo gave us some of their thoughts on things in the work place. Let me add my two cents from a different functional and generational perspective. I received my B.Ch.E. in 1956, studied a year for an M.S., started working full time in 1957, and retired in 2001, a little before Daniel and Noah started college and a bit before Amanda started high school.

I worked as an R&D engineer for a food processor from 1957 to 1960, in a variety of process engineering, project engineering, and engineering management positions for an E&C company from 1960 to 1986, and as R&D director for a process equipment supplier from 1986 until retirement. From 1958 through 1965 I fulfilled my military obligation (a need that no longer exists) as a company grade officer mostly in an Army Reserve Engineer Combat Battalion in a variety of positions. From this background I conclude that experience is the best

teacher and experience teaches that thoroughness and attention to detail are fundamental for the best engineering. Although in many professions creativity peaks at a young age in engineering it tends to increase with years on the job. These things apply to the R&D I did in the first and third jobs I list above and the process and project engineering I did in the second job, as well as in the military. Engineers should learn everything that they can about the work they are doing and check everything that can possibly be checked. We need to follow the rules but make sure that we understand them, not only the "what" and the "how," but also the "why." We must question what we do not understand, but do so diplomatically. Most engineers will want to help if asked to. If there are some people who aren't willing to help, their fellow workers quickly learn who they are.

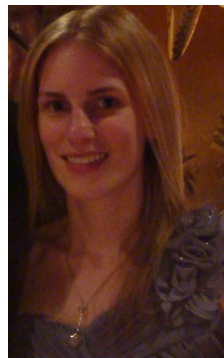
Engineers should look for ways to participate even if there is no apparent immediate benefit other than the good feeling of doing so. What Noah, Amanda, and Daniel are doing and have done outside of work will help them in their personal and professional lives in ways not easily foreseen. I got involved in community activities shortly after exiting the army reserves (which was a very time consuming activity), in professional activities about a decade later, and with AIChE a bit more than a decade after that. Why it took me so long to get involved with AIChE is a long story best told elsewhere. It is great to see people getting involved with AIChE at the

young ages the current top VLS leaders enjoy.

The problem Daniel notes about the disconnect between what academia teaches and what industry seems to want is not new. He offers a concept upon which others might be able to build, or, if they cannot, he at least reminds us of a problem that time alone has not been able to solve. If Jennifer agrees to continue printing letters I write maybe we, with the wide reach the VLS has, can explore how to address that issue and maybe, collectively, in collaboration with the appropriate AIChE entity, offer some ideas that others might productively use.

MEETINGS, MEETINGS, MEETINGS!!!!

Chair Amanda Scalza



Some days, it feels like the least welcome word in the world is "meeting". You get invited to yet another meeting in that tiny, half-hour spot you reserved to check email and you just can't help but sigh out loud. But you realize that, conducted well, meetings can be an extremely valuable means of sharing ideas and finding novel solutions. This month, I would like to talk about my guidelines for organizing, leading, and getting the most out of meetings, from the routine and regular meetings to the

occasional but crucial large-scale restructuring or goal-modifying sessions.

1. *Logistics* are the kickoff to your meeting, your first impression. Start by thinking about your stakeholders. Stakeholders vary in their requirements. Some must be at your meeting in order for it to be successful. Others will want to know about the meeting and need to know the outcomes, but the meeting can move forward without their attendance. Having the right stakeholders means insuring that the voice of those who will be impacted by decisions can be heard. Failing to do this could mean extra meetings, or failure to consider a major aspect of a change. Finding a time that works for everyone can be tricky: just because everyone's calendar is empty on Thursday at 4 pm doesn't necessarily mean meeting then is a good idea. It is often better to wait for a time when the attendees can focus on the tasks at hand, rather than watch the clock because they have other commitments.
2. *Preparation* is important to keeping the meeting on task and on schedule. For example, as a meeting host or chair, I estimate at least twice the amount of time for preparation as the length of the meeting. This includes sending invitations, setting objectives, finding background information.

Starting the meeting by reviewing the agenda or all of the objectives can help to put everyone's mind on the goals. This review should set a flexible framework without stifling creativity or discouraging exploration of alternatives, in order to reach the best conclusions as efficiently as possible. A skillful chair or host must both encourage meaningful and balanced discussion and keep the group on schedule, which is a delicate balancing act.

3. *Follow through after a meeting.* This may sound familiar to many of you, but sending meeting minutes and action items at the end summarizes the results and the discussion and helps achieve the agreed-upon results. How many of us have walked out of a meeting wondering what, if anything, the meeting was about? Attendees and chairs alike should take notes, create a list of action items, and remember to schedule the next meeting, if needed, as soon as possible after the meeting ends, if not at the end of the meeting itself. For me, action items with deadlines help me prioritize my work. Without deadlines, action items are too easily pushed off for the next fire. After the meeting is also the time to loop back to those who could not attend, or others who should be informed about upcoming changes or other meeting results.

We attend and host many meetings each week. For all participants, exchanging feedback can be extremely useful. I am lucky to work in an honest, constructive culture both at work and in our VLS team. The good feedback and cooperation I get in both places help keep my “not another meeting” sighs to a minimum.

CONTRIBUTIONS

I am very pleased that reader discussion has begun in our pages, and hope others will follow suit by speaking out on issues of interest to them.

Send letters to the editor or other contributions in an email to the editor at jbrand@unl.edu using “VLS Newsletter” in the subject line.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

VLS Meetings are the fourth Thursday of the month:

--- Thursday, October 22nd ---

[Vice Admiral Joseph Dyer, USN \(ret\)](#)

--- Tuesday, November 10th ---

Utah Museum of Contemporary Art

7 – 9 pm (MST)

Meet at the AIChE Annual Meeting

Salt Lake City, Utah

**2015 is European Industrial and
Technical Heritage Year**

ATTENDING A VLS MEETING

- **Join by internet:**
 - <https://aiche.webex.com/aiche/j.php?MTID=m8a0766c5d03559acce05542a78513954>
 - Meeting number 276 141 101
- **Join by phone:** Access code: 276 141 101
 - 1-866-469-3239 Call-in toll-free number (US/Canada)
 - 1-650-429-3300 Call-in toll number (US/Canada)
 - [Global Call-in numbers](#)
 - [Toll-free calling restrictions](#)

Attendance at a Virtual Local Section Meeting is open to AIChE Virtual Local Section Members, AIChE members, and other interested people.

The statements and opinions in this newsletter reflect the views of the contributors, not of the AIChE or the VLS, neither of which assume responsibility for them.

PDH CREDIT FOR VLS MEETINGS

LAURA J. GIMPELSON, P. E.

Attendees of the Virtual Local Section Meetings can receive up to 1 hour of professional development credit that meets the continuing education requirements of most state professional engineering registrations. To receive the certificate documenting your attendance, send an email to the VLS secretary, Laura Gimpelson, at virtualaiche@gmail.com.

Include the following information in your email:

1. Name of the Presentation and Speaker
2. Attendee's name as listed on the registration certificate
2. Attendee's registration number and state/providence of issuance

The certificate, in pdf format, will be issued within 30 days of the receipt of the request.