

Conducting Your Council's First College of Commissioner Science

Best Practices for a Successful College Program

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Preface

The Reason for Writing this Thesis

"Learning is a lifetime activity. As commissioners, we must continually adjust our skills to provide a more valuable service to our units. Therefore, commissioners should view learning as an important part of their Scouting lives – every month, every year."¹ - From the Preface to "Continuing Education for Commissioners Manual."

As Commissioners we need to continue to educate ourselves about the Scouting program and how we can best use that knowledge in service to units. Many BSA Councils currently do not offer a Commissioner College on a yearly basis and some don't offer a college at all. Some Councils do not conduct a college because of lack of interest by the Commissioner staff and other Councils do not hold a college because they are unaware of its benefits.

The hope is that this thesis will provide incentive for the Council Commissioner staff to take an active role in education of Commissioners and decide to hold their first College of Commissioner Science. The thesis will lay out a best practices approach and fill in information missing from the current "Continuing Education for Commissioners Manual."

Commissioners who understand the Scouting program will provide superior unit service. A unit that receives good service from the Unit Commissioner will follow the Methods of

Scouting more completely and consequently will offer a better program to the Scout. A good program will result in increased retention of its members and more rank advancement.

The Scope of this Thesis

This thesis is primarily targeted at the Council Commissioner staff responsible for training Commissioners. While some ideas, concepts, and methods may be used to enhance an existing college program, the scope of this thesis is largely intended for those who currently do not conduct a College of Commissioner Science and would like to offer their first one.

The first time a college is offered, additional considerations need to be made that are not detailed in the existing manual. Examples include scheduling the college, developing a theme, designing a patch, determining diploma qualifications, and deciding which degrees to offer.

Introduction

Purpose

One of the principle responsibilities of the Council Commissioner is to ensure that a complete program is in place to train every Commissioner in the Council. District Commissioners are responsible for providing and promoting adequate training of their staff.²

Councils may appoint an Assistant Council Commissioner for training. This person is responsible for the annual commissioner training conference, training recognition, and promotion of the Philmont courses.³

Commissioner service is unique in that the commissioner does not direct—he/she can only offer to help. Successful commissioners establish a good working relationship with those served. They act as friend, counselor, and resource, and know where to get help when it is needed. The goal of the college is to help make unit commissioners successful by providing the tools they need to do the job.⁴

This thesis is intended to assist Assistant Council Commissioners who are responsible for training. The purpose is to help them conduct their first College of Commissioner Science. The “Continuing Education for Commissioners” manual provides only an overview of the college

concept and is rather short on detail in prerequisite planning, preparation, and constructing the program. This thesis will address those short comings.

Objectives

Everyone needs training for a new job. The objective of the thesis is to ensure that a quality college program is available to Commissioners so that Commissioners can perform their primary function which is to make every unit successful. To that end, this thesis will address the following topics:

1. What a College of Commissioner Science is and why have one
2. How to select college faculty and location
3. How to use a backdater to make sure all preparations are done in the proper order and that they are completed on time
4. How to promote attendance at the college
5. What elements of the program need to be considered
6. How to set degree requirements

Chapter 1 - What is a College of Commissioner Science?

A Commissioner Conference should be held on an annual basis and it should be the highlight of the year. The conference should be a highly informative, morale enhancing, and team building event. However, there are several types of Commissioner Conferences. According to the “Continuing Education for Commissioners” manual, about half of the councils run a traditional conference and the other half use a “College of Commissioner Science” program formatted after college courses and degrees.⁵ This thesis targets only the College of Commissioner Science program.

Highlights of the College Program

This program uses the terminology of college courses of study. There are Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate programs and the degrees are awarded at the Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate level. A diploma is awarded to each participant who completes the requirements of the degree. The awards are called degrees:

Bachelor of Commissioner Science

Masters of Commissioner Science

Doctor of Commissioner Science⁶

This format encourages a continuing education experience for all commissioners by offering a number of classes of instruction at each level. Throughout the day, a Commissioner may attend and/or teach a number of classes. The college may be held in a single day or over a weekend. The reason for offering a number of courses is to provide ongoing practical training for all commissioners – Administrative, Roundtable and Unit Commissioners.

The Six Elements of Commissioner Training

For review, the Six Elements of Commissioner Training are:

1. Orientation Video
2. Personal Coaching/Orientation
3. Commissioner Basic Training
4. Arrowhead Honor
5. Commissioner's Key
6. Continuing Education

The College of Commissioner Science is discussed in item number 6, "Continuing Education." Also included in item number 6 are the traditional Commissioner Conferences and summer conferences at Philmont. For more detailed reviews of six elements please refer to "*Appendix A – the Six Elements of Commissioner Training.*"

Chapter 2 – Why a College of Commissioner Science?

Commissioner Service is unique. Commissioners generally do not lead or direct. They provide assistance to leaders in units. Their goal is to make each unit they service successful. To do this, a Commissioner should work to establish a personal relationship with the unit leadership of the unit they support. He/she is a friend, counselor, resource, and information gateway. The role of the college is to help Commissioners build and refine the skills necessary to perform those functions and build those relationships.

The College can also be used as a morale builder. When a Commissioner acquires knowledge, self confidence is enhanced and the Commissioner feels better about the role. More experienced Commissioners can offer help and support to new Commissioners. This gives both the mentor and protégé a feeling of growth and self satisfaction which enhances morale.

The College is also an opportunity for fellowship. Commissioners can share stories and Scouting experiences with each other. And, it is an opportunity to network and meet Commissioners from other Districts within the Council. If the college is held by multiple Councils, it is an opportunity to meet Scouters outside your home Council.

In addition, the College may be inspirational. A dynamic keynote speaker or the awarding of Commissioner Awards may inspire other Commissioners to enhance their level of

unit service, achieve the next degree, or work on the Commissioner Arrowhead or Commissioner Key award.

Finally, it is a way to update Commissioners on the latest information available about changes at the National and local Council level. A keynote speaker may be from a National office or an executive from the local council. The keynote may inform the Commissioners of changes in program or policy.

In summary, the reasons for conducting the college include training and skill development, morale building, fellowship, inspiration for further education or awards, and an update on the latest information.

As stated in “Administration of Commissioner Service Manual, “Training delayed is program denied.”⁷

Chapter 3 – What are the Ingredients for Success

There are five ingredients necessary to conduct a successful College of Commissioner Science.⁸ As listed in the “Continuing Education for Commissioners” manual, the ingredients are:

1. **Faculty** – An adequate number of people must be selected and trained to do their duties.
2. **Preparation** – Work schedules and assignments are followed without shortcuts. Plans for next year’s conference are begun shortly after this year’s conference.
3. **Program** – A dynamic program with carefully prepared courses is the heartbeat of the college. Courses must meet the practical needs of the Commissioners
4. **Facility** – The facility should have special interest and provide the proper training environment.
5. **Promotion** – Commissioners will benefit from all your talent and hard work only if they attend. Be sure that both current and newly recruited Commissioners receive a catalog of courses and registration forms.

All of these topics are discussed at a high level in the manual. This thesis will elaborate on each of the ingredients in the next 5 chapters with emphasis on the challenges of conducting a first year college. The thesis will augment a number of concepts listed in the manual.

Chapter 4 – Selecting the College Faculty

The college is usually administered by an Assistant Council Commissioner, who is selected by the Council Commissioner to serve as the “college dean”. The dean is responsible for the annual college program during the Scouting year and all the business and affairs of the college. The college dean selects Commissioners as members of his cabinet with the approval of the Council Commissioner.⁹

The staff for the college dean may consist of:

- Two assistant college deans – probably not necessary for the first year
- Registrar
- Assistant Registrar
- Dean of the Bachelor’s Program
- Dean of the Master’s Program – probably not necessary for the first year
- Dean of the Doctor’s Program - probably not necessary for the first year

In addition, there are chairmen for the following committees:

- Physical Arrangements
- Special Programs
- Promotion and Publicity – most important for the first year

One of the initial considerations for a first year college is deciding the programs to offer which determines the faculty required. Depending on the Council and the number of Commissioners who transition their membership into the Council, there may not be enough Commissioners holding a degree in the Council to offer courses for higher level degrees.

One of the first orders of business is to determine how many Commissioners may have degrees and what level. Also, consideration must be made for which degrees are still considered valid due to the length of time since they were earned and what will be accepted by reciprocity. Some colleges may not accept degrees or courses earned in other councils.

Therefore for a first year college, the faculty will be determined by the degree offerings. Most first year colleges offer the Bachelors program only. The second year a Masters program is added and in the third year a Doctorate program.

The first year college can be successful with a Dean of the College, a Dean for the Bachelors program, a Registrar, and a Promotion chair. This assumes a Physical Arrangements and Special Programs chair are not needed or that these functions are handled by the faculty.

Considerations in selecting and training faculty

College faculty includes instructors, deans, registrars, and chairpersons.

Instructors

Selecting faculty can be a real dilemma for a first year college. Ideally, an instructor would hold a degree for the level of class being instructed. For example, an instructor for a Bachelors level course should have met the requirements for and completed the Bachelors degree. However, if there are no instructors available that hold a degree, how can the issue be addressed?

There are several approaches to the issue:

1. The dean can conduct a special training session with each instructor to ensure that the instructor knows the material. Even though the instructor does not hold a degree, the dean can prepare the instructor. In this situation, the most experienced Commissioners should be considered for faculty.
2. The instructor can attend a College of Commissioner Science outside the home council and complete the degree requirements there.
3. The dean of the local college can request faculty from the dean of a college outside the home council.
4. The dean could consider a Commissioner who has attended the summer conferences at Philmont as a possible instructor. Some colleges award a degree for attending training at Philmont.
5. A professional could be an instructor. Professionals are usually advisors or assistant instructors. While not an ideal situation, this is an option.

Any of these approaches is satisfactory and will depend on the availability and proximity of other colleges, dates, and the availability of instructors.

Some other considerations for selecting faculty include years of experience in Scouting, years of experience as a Commissioner, presentation style, and the abilities to make a presentation interesting and promote discussion. If a Training Development Conference is available before the college, it would be worthwhile to have the instructors attend the training.

Once faculty has been selected, consider having a review or mock presentation. This will ensure that the instructor is prepared. Be sure to consider the 10 keys to a good presentation when evaluating the instructor.

The 10 keys to a good presentation¹⁰

1. Be prepared.
2. Handle questions properly.
3. Don't apologize for yourself.
4. Be familiar with your topic.
5. Use audiovisuals professionally.
6. Stick to the schedule.
7. Involve the participants.
8. Establish personal rapport.
9. Don't appear disorganized.
10. Start off quickly and establish an image.

Deans

The dean of the college is usually the Assistant Council Commissioner who has the responsibility for Commissioner training. The college dean then selects the deans for each of the degree programs. Factors to consider when selecting a dean are:

1. Does the dean already have a degree for the level of program for which he is the dean? For example, a dean for the Bachelors program should hold a Bachelors degree.
2. Does the dean know the Commissioner staff in the whole Council? Familiarity with the whole Council will allow the dean to select the best instructors and not just select instructors from the home District.
3. Does the dean understand and endorse the Commissioner College training method? The dean needs to know and understand the responsibilities of the position.
4. Does the dean know how to recruit instructors? The dean needs to be successful recruiting the right instructors to teach at the college.

Registrars and Assistant Registrars

When considering registrars, think about those folks who are good at keeping records and have good organizational skills. The registrar and assistant will be responsible for scheduling Commissioners for the classes before the college starts, as well as tracking attendance per class during the college. A lot of pre-work goes into scheduling classes and good organizational skills are required to minimize conflicts and make sure that the classes are not overloaded. Preparation of patches and diplomas to be awarded will be the Registrar's responsibility. Accurate record keeping is essential to make sure that only those who complete the requirement for a degree are awarded the degree. Therefore, make sure that the Registrar selected is detail oriented.

Records must be kept on attendance, courses completed, degrees conferred, who received patches and certificates, and who served as instructors.

Committee Chairs

Physical Arrangements Chair – Select someone who is familiar with the area, knows what facilities might be available, and can make the proper arrangements and the necessary reservations.

Special Programs Chair – If offered, a special programs chair could help arrange food, special award presentations, special discussion groups, “birds of a feather” sessions, or other program effects.

Promotion and Publicity Chair – This Chair should be familiar with all forms of publicity and how to effectively use publicity to increase attendance at the college.

One final thought about the Chair positions. This is an excellent opportunity to involve the professional staff. While the faculty at the college should be volunteer-based and, in particular, the instruction should be conducted by volunteers, the professional staff can certainly support the college by helping with the Chair positions.

Chapter 5 – Choosing the Right Location

Things to consider when selecting the location to hold the College of Commissioner Science:

- Centralized location so that travel is minimized for all
- Adequate number of rooms and appropriate room size to accommodate the number and size of classes
- Adequate heating or air conditioning to provide a comfortable learning atmosphere
- Good lighting and accessible electrical outlets
- Screen and digital projector availability or other audiovisuals, if needed
- Sufficient tables and chairs
- And, if meals are served, a kitchen or dining facility

Assuming that only a Bachelors degree will be offered the first year, the number of rooms could be reduced. However, it is a good idea to establish a tradition and hold the college at the same location for a number of years. Therefore, it may be worthwhile to consider a location that could accommodate the full college curriculum in the future.

Some ideas for locations include:¹¹

- Corporate Offices or training centers
- Military Bases
- College Campuses

- Council Camps
- Historic sites or museums

Chapter 6 – Building the Schedule – Using the Backdater

The initial version of this backdater was copied directly from the “Continuing Education for Commissioners” manual and was used for a traditional conference.¹² For this thesis it has been adapted for a college. Please note that the added items (**in red**) are additions or corrections for a first year college.

Months to College

(Note the minus values at the end of each line)

- Last year’s conference committee completes evaluation. -11 **Ignore this item - there wasn’t one!**
- Council commissioner cabinet discusses last year’s conference and provides ideas for this year’s conference. -10 **Ignore this item - there wasn’t one!**
- Establish date and reserve location. Announce to all commissioners. -10
- Council commissioner and Scout executive appoint **college dean – usually an Assistant Council Commissioner**. -10
- **College Dean** and staff adviser recruit **deans and have them recruit college faculty**. -9
- **College Deans** hold the first meeting to brainstorm objectives, format, program highlights, and broad conceptual schedule; confirm location; and make assignments. These plans may necessitate adding **Chairpersons**. -8
- **College Deans** meet, preferably at the **college** location, to develop *final* plans for objectives, format, program schedule, keynote speaker, use of facility, promotion plan, assignments, etc. -6
- Have **college deans** review promotion ideas on pages 8–9 of the “Continuing Education for Commissioners” manual. -6
- Assign a professional staff adviser to each subcommittee. -6
- Begin designing a distinctive **Commissioner College patch with designations for the degrees earned**.
- Begin designing diplomas, staff certificates, or certificates of completion.
- Begin designing promotional brochure using the patch or theme of the college.
- Possibly begin design of a neckerchief for those who complete the doctorate program (not required for the college, but could be used to incent the Commissioners to complete their doctorate degree).

- Develop budget. -5
- Develop detailed work schedule. -5
- **Meet with deans to determine courses/workshops to be presented.** -5
- Prepare approved list of course/workshop **instructors.** -5
- Obtain a detailed commitment from conference facility on rooms and spaces needed. -5
- Recruit keynote speaker (some popular speakers may have to be lined up closer to a year in advance). -5
- Recruit course **instructors.** -4
- Contract with caterer. -4
- Distribute conference brochures, invitations, registration forms, and other promotional material. -3
- **Make sure the Commissioner College patches are ordered.**
- **Make sure that diplomas, staff certificates, or certificates of completion are ordered.**
- Plan for recreation and morale features. -2
- Arrange for gifts and giveaways. -2
- Obtain commitments for physical arrangements: tables, chairs, stage, PA system, first aid, etc. -2
- Confirm AV requirements and arrange for equipment. -2
- Order special awards, determine recipients, and write citations. -2
- Train **instructors** (preferably at the conference facility). - 1 1/2
- Put aggressive promotion ideas in action. -1 1/2
- **Make sure the Commissioner College patches are done.**
- **Make sure that diplomas, staff certificates, or certificates of completion are done.**

Days to College

(Note the minus values at the end of each line)

- Review final details with on-site location personnel: room setups, final schedule, equipment use, early arrivals, pager or cell phone numbers of on-site staff. -30
- Complete plans for **college** check-in: name tags, registrar, check-in location, etc. -30

- Make room assignments for all **classes**. -30
- Place an article in the council news bulletin or on council Web site. -30
- Conduct final promotion plans for those not yet signed up. -14
- Review program agenda details with all key participants. -14
- Have detailed plans for all ice breakers. -14
- Review a final checklist to be sure nothing has slipped through the cracks. -10
- Write a detailed script and review it with the presiding leader or emcee. -8
- Have the **college** program printed. -7
- **College Dean** meets with professional staff to confirm all details. -5
- Confirm attendance figures with caterer. -1
- Preset and test any audiovisual equipment to be used. -1
- Go over your checklist again. -1
- Set up registration. 0
- Test PA system (be sure mikes are live, sound level is adjusted, etc.). 0
- Set up exhibits. 0
- Workshop/course **instructors** meet on location. 0
- Be sure the facility is open, properly arranged, and comfortable. 0
- Have all props, equipment, and awards on hand and ready to use. 0
- Put up signs, posters, and decorations. 0
- **Registrars** arrive and are in position early. 0
- Speaker's escort arrives and is in position early. 0
- Double-check traffic and parking arrangements. 0
- Mail thank-you letters. +1
- Pay/submit all bills to be paid. Closeout budget +3

The backdater is a very useful tool, especially when conducting the first college. There are several aspects of the college that need adequate time to complete. For example, a patch may be designed in one day, but the patch must go through an approval process at National Council, it must be priced from several vendors, and once a vendor is selected, the vendors need some lead time to produce the patch. In addition, the patch should be done early enough so that if there is a mistake, there is enough time to have it corrected and reproduced. In this backdater, the patch design is listed six months before the college.

Note that this form can be adapted for the needs of any college simply by adding items and slotting them into the form.

NOTE: I have a copy of an Excel spreadsheet that can be used to compute target dates for each task. Just enter the future date of the college and the spreadsheet calculates the target date for each item in the backdater. I would be glad to share the spreadsheet with anyone interested.

Chapter 7 – Program Considerations

“A top notch program brings them back next year.”¹⁴

It is extremely important that the program be extraordinary the first year the college is offered. If the Commissioners do not perceive value after spending a whole day or a weekend at the College of Commissioner Science, they most certainly will not return the following year nor will they be enthusiastic and encourage others to attend. This chapter will review the program elements and offer suggestions and points to consider when planning the college.

To get an idea on how to plan the program, consider attending a college outside your home Council. You can also contact Deans of other colleges for ideas, suggestions, and help. The goal is to make the first year college a rousing success. National Council has no information addressing this topic, thus the need for this thesis.

Schedule

The first point to consider when planning the college is the whether to hold the college as a weekend activity or in a single day. There are advantages and disadvantages to both options. Holding the college over a weekend offers a lot of opportunities for fellowship, interaction, and sharing of best practices. Holding it on a single day may increase attendance due to a reduced time commitment by the participants and it generally requires less planning.

Both formats are acceptable and the decision should be based on which is perceived to work best for the particular Council. Multi-Council colleges seem to work better over a weekend due to the distance some may have to travel. However, weekend colleges are more expensive because of the need for lodging and multiple meals.

Once the decision has been made on a day long or weekend event, the next consideration is the schedule. Either type of college should have at least seven classes to allow for the completion of a degree after attending. See Appendix C for the degree requirements defined by the Doctorate Knot. This makes for a very long day when the daylong event is chosen. If the decision is made for a weekend session, the classes could possibly continue on Sunday morning. This allows more time between classes and time for a roundtable, discussion groups, or “birds of a feather” discussion.

When setting the schedule, allow time for an opening ceremony, a welcome address, a review of college logistics, meals, and possibly a keynote address. No class should be over one hour in length and there should be a break between classes. The opening ceremony and the welcoming address should get everyone excited and enthused about the day. A good keynote speaker can really inspire Commissioners. Consider scheduling the keynote speaker before or after lunch to help break up the day. Appendix B contains a Sample Schedule for both a day and a weekend session.

Who should be invited?

This may seem like an obvious question! Of course, the Commissioner staff of the Council and every District should be invited. However, also consider inviting the following people:

- The National Commissioner
- The National Program Director
- The Area Commissioner
- The Council Executive
- The Council President
- Council Board Members
- Strong supporters of Scouting in the Community
- United Way representative (with professional staff approval)

This list of attendees adds an air of formality and importance to the college. Not all may accept the invitation, but they should be invited. Consider asking one of the people on this list to give the keynote address.

Which Courses should be offered?

An important component of planning the college is determining which courses to offer. Consider courses that could address areas where the Commissioner staff may be weak or may

need additional training. The “Continuing Education for Commissioners” has a list of possible classes that can be considered. Have the Dean of each degree poll the District Commissioners for their feedback to recommend the courses that are most needed. The College Dean and Council Commissioner should have final approval on the course selection.

Elements of for Successful Training¹⁴

From the Training Development Conference, the following barriers of Communication may exist:

1. Pre-conceived notions
2. Age and experience
3. Language
4. Cultural differences
5. Physical
6. Environmental issues

A good instructor can enhance their effectiveness by:

1. Recognizing the barriers and working to overcome them
2. Having the proper attitude to facilitate learning
3. Being prepared and knowing the material
4. Knowing the audience
5. Facilitating interaction – good two way communication

These concepts should be considered and reviewed with each instructor and each class should consider using multiple techniques. The program needs to hold the student’s attention

and facilitate learning. Continual *PowerPoint* presentations can become monotonous. For more information on varying teaching style see Appendix D.

Classroom Size

Classes should be limited to 20 students. However, another way to break up the day and make the college more interesting is to consider a group lecture or a group discussion between formal classroom settings.

Registration Packets

All students should have preregistered for the college. Promotional material should have included a registration form and a form to select classes if options are available. Registration can be completed by mail or by using Double Knot if it is available in your Council.

When students arrive for the college, they are met by the Registrar who checks them in, collects any outstanding funds, and presents them with the registration packet. The registration packet should contain their class confirmations, a schedule for the college, and if applicable, a meal ticket.

Evaluations

Evaluations should be given out with the student's registration packet and they should be encouraged to complete the evaluation at the end of every class.

Awards

At the conclusion of the college, degrees should be conferred on those who have completed the requirements. The students should be given a certificate with their name, the degree completed, and the date. If the college patch has segments designating the degree earned, those should be presented those as well.

Record Keeping

The Registrar plays a very important role in the college. Records must be kept on attendance, courses completed, degrees conferred, who received patches and certificates, and who served as instructors. While the college is in session, the Registrar prepares the diplomas to be awarded and the patches to be distributed. Good record keeping is required to make sure that only those who complete the requirements for a degree are awarded the degree.

Miscellaneous

Patch design – A first year college assumes that the Council currently does not have College of Commissioner Science patch. Therefore a patch will need to be designed. While there are no known guidelines, consider at least having the Council name, the Scout emblem, and the Commissioner wreath. Most colleges design the patch in such a way that segments can be added for the degrees completed. Some colleges also allow for Staff or Instructor segments.

Patch design should begin six months before the college is scheduled to allow time for approval, quotes, and production.

Certificates – Certificates can be acquired through BSA National Supply, Office Supply Stores, or downloaded from the web. Try to find certificates that can be printed by a laser printer for a professional looking certificate with minimum effort. Remember that the registrar will print the certificates during the college, so they should be easy to produce.

Promotional material - Promotional materials need to attract attention. Each commissioner should receive a promotional piece and an invitation by mail. Promotional materials should be available at the Council office and the Scout Shop. When designing promotional material, consider using odd shapes or bright colors that will prevent it from being mixed in with a stack of papers.

Consider displays - Displays in the main meeting room or in the hall between classes can really add fun and interest to the college. The displays can be historical or informational and showcase award promotions or interesting pictures.

Chapter 8 - Degree Requirements

Each Council has the authority to set degree requirements for their college. However, with the establishment of the Doctorate of Commissioner Science knot, it is highly recommended that the Council establish degree requirements that align with the requirements for the knot. This will assure qualification for the knot as well as reciprocity with other councils.

See Appendix C which has the degree requirements spelled out in detail. Remember that additional requirements may be added by the Council, but it is strongly recommended that the knot requirements serve as the minimum requirements.

In addition to setting the degree requirements, reciprocity and longevity guidelines should also be established. Reciprocity guidelines should spell out the criteria for acceptance of another Council's College of Commissioner Science degrees. It is important that these guidelines be written out and followed fairly and judiciously. The intent is to establish guidelines that are equitable and fair yet meet the standards established by the college. It may be that not all degrees receive reciprocity.

Longevity guidelines should also be established. The current Doctor of Commissioner Science guidelines allow a Commissioner who has earned his degree within the past ten years to qualify for the award. This is creating a lot of commotion among some older Commissioners. Again, the local Council has the authority to determine longevity guidelines for their college.

Chapter 9 – Promoting the College

The College of Commissioner Science should be the biggest Commissioner event of the year.¹⁵ Promotion of the College of Commissioner Science for the first year is especially important. Today everyone is very busy and if the value of college is not understood, participation could be dismal. If this is the first time a Commissioner College has been held in the Council, all Commissioners – (Unit, Roundtable, Council) and even District Commissioners may not have an understanding of the program and hence its intrinsic value. The job of the Promotion Chair is to make sure that the college is well advertised and promoted so that all Commissioners want to attend! Building the desire to participate is the number one goal of the Promotions Chair.

Using the backdater as described in Chapter 6, promotion of the college actually begins ten months before the college or even earlier if it is published in the Council calendar. But at least the date should be announced so that everyone holds it on their calendar.

Marketing begins at six months out as final plans for the college are being developed. Three months before the college, all promotional brochures, invitations, registration forms, and other promotional material should be ready and distributed.

Two weeks before the college begins, an additional promotion should focus on those who have not signed up.

There are a number of ways to promote excitement about the college:

- Hold the college at an interesting location
- Have a distinctive badge or gift for those who attend
- Offer a door prize
- Have an interesting or well known key note speaker
- Build enthusiasm using the promotional brochure – make it sound exciting
- Offer an award to the District that brings the most participants

It is also very important to make sure that the college tuition is as low as possible to make sure all can attend.

However, one of the best ways to promote the college is to promote the degree program and get each Commissioner to commit to earning a Doctorate. That commitment brings them back for at least 4 years!

If the local Council Commissioner staff does not fill the classes, consider opening the College to surrounding Councils. Some Councils do not offer a college program, yet there may be a high level of interest by the Commissioners in other Councils for additional training. This is a perfect opportunity to expand the brotherhood of Scouting as well as fill the college classes.

And, finally, remember that the best promotion is the reputation of the previous college. So it is doubly important to plan and promote for the first year. Commissioners who enjoyed the program and fellowship will spread the word that they plan to attend next year.

Chapter 10 - The Big Event

All the planning has been done and you are prepared for the big event. Here are some tips to ensure the college goes off without a hitch.

- Arrive early to make sure the building is open and that you have access to all rooms.
- Double check that audiovisual equipment is in place and tested.
- Have the registrars arrive early and bring the necessary materials – certificates, patches, agendas, registration packets, computers, and printers.
- Check to see that all instructors showed up. Have a backup plan in case someone doesn't show.
- Check that the dean(s) are present.
- Make sure the keynote speaker has arrived and is ready.
- Welcome everyone to the college.
- Introduce invited guests.
- Review the agenda and curriculum so that everyone understands how to move between classes.
- At the conclusion of the college, remember to thank everyone.
- Make sure that evaluations are collected and reviewed.

Conclusion

James E. West, the first Scout Executive was asked in the early days of Scouting to identify the most important needs of the young Scout organization. After some careful thought, Mr. West responded “Training, more training, and still more training.” Training continues to be the top priority of the Boy Scouts of America today.¹⁶

Commissioners perform an important role in the Scouting program and continuing education for Commissioners should be a top priority of the Council Commissioner. Conducting a College of Commissioner Science is an excellent way to enhance and extend their education. While the college takes a lot of planning and organization, the dividends are tremendous.

Commissioners who understand their responsibilities and have been trained on how to carry out those responsibilities will have more confidence, will be more at ease in meeting with their units, will know how to effectively counsel unit leaders, and will know where to find information. In short, they will be better Commissioners.

A Commissioner’s top priority is unit service. Unless units are strong and efficient, the program will not reach the boy. The only reason for having Commissioners is to help units succeed.¹⁷ The college plays a crucial role in giving the Commissioner the tools needed to provide the unit service required for strong healthy units.

This thesis offers assistance to Councils without colleges by providing more detailed planning and best practices. Good luck!

Appendix A - SIX ELEMENTS OF GOOD COMMISSIONER TRAINING

Review the following with your district commissioner and council field staff:

1. Orientation Video

Within 48 hours of their being recruited, have each new commissioner view the video, The Unit Commissioners Orientation Helping Units Succeed, AV-04V001R. Also set a date for a personal orientation session.

2. Personal Coaching/Orientation

Within two weeks, new commissioners should have an orientation session with their district commissioner or assistant district commissioner, discuss the video, and then cover the orientation projects listed in the Commissioner Fieldbook, pages 2-5.

Group orientation is outlined in the Appendix of the Commissioner Administration book. It's most efficient with a large group of new people. Individual coaching with their commissioner leader might, however, be even better. It helps develop good communication that extends far beyond training and can be personalized to the person's specific unit assignments.

District commissioner orientation is usually conducted by the district executive.

3. Commissioner Basic Training

Within two months, a new person must have basic training. The three-session course involves actual supervised visits to units. Some councils and districts run all three sessions in one day with the supervised unit visits taking place just before and shortly after the formal training.

After completion of basic training, the Trained Leader Emblem, No. 00280, may be worn below the badge of office. The commissioner may now be presented with their commission, No. 33713A, at an appropriate ceremony.

Note: The Trained Leader Emblem may be worn only in connection with the emblem of office for which basic training has been completed.

4. Arrowhead Honor

Only commissioners may wear the Arrowhead. It is a symbol of competence. Successful completion is the result of performance and the ability to put training into practice. Commissioners are encouraged to complete the Arrowhead projects **within one year** of taking office.

Requirements for unit commissioners are found in the latest printing of the Commissioner Fieldbook. Requirements for council commissioners and assistants, district commissioners, assistant district commissioners, and roundtable commissioners are found in the Commissioner Administration book.

5. Commissioner's Key

The Commissioner's Key is an important training award for completing Commissioner Basic Training, the Arrowhead Honor projects, and three years' tenure as a registered commissioner within a five-year period. Roundtable commissioners also must complete Fast Start and basic training for Cub Scout or Boy Scout roundtable commissioners.

6. Continuing Education

A dynamic quality of today's society is the need for learning as a lifetime activity. Therefore, commissioners should view learning as an important part of their entire Scouting lives. For all commissioners, training is a continuing process every month, every year.

Continuing Education for Commissioners, No. 33615E, helps commissioners and professional leaders administer training beyond commissioner basic training.

Section one tells how the universal gathering for all commissioners is the monthly commissioner staff meeting in the district. Part of every meeting should be devoted to a brief training topic.

Section two reminds us that the council commissioner should meet regularly with all district commissioners and assistant council commissioners. This meeting is the nerve center of the council's commissioner operation and a training topic should be part of it. The council commissioner and Scout executive (or the Scout executive's representative) select a training topic each month that best reflects the learning needs of district commissioners.

Section three provides the fine points for planning a commissioner conference. Every council should conduct some type of annual conference for commissioners. It is a

wonderful opportunity for significant training.

Section four has additional information for running a college of commissioner science. The college of commissioner science is one optional type of conference used by some councils. This chapter can help you to plan a successful conference.

Section five is the heart of the book. It contains 37 complete one- to two-hour training outlines. Many of these outlines can be subdivided into several shorter training topics. The outlines can be used in all of the above settings and in personal coaching.

Section six tells about national summer courses for commissioners at the Philmont Training Center near Cimarron, New Mexico.

Appendix B – SAMPLE PROGRAMS

One-Day Commissioner Conference

Sample Program from Manual

8:00 a.m. Preopening

- Displays
- Registration
- Refreshments
- Greeters in parking lot
- Welcoming person near registration area
- Cub Scout games

9:00 a.m. Opening general session

- Opening ceremony
- Welcome and introductions
- Morale features
- Keynote speaker/presentation

10:00a.m. Break, coffee, displays

10:15a.m. Period 1—elective workshops/ training sessions

11:15a.m. Break and travel to next session

11:30 .m. Period 2—elective workshops/ training sessions

12:30p.m. Lunch with short program feature

1:30 p.m. Skill demonstrations and involvement

- Scoutcraft skills
- Venturing specialties

2:15 p.m. Period 3—elective workshops/ training sessions

3:15 p.m. Break

3:30 p.m. Period 4—elective workshops/ training sessions

4:30 p.m. Recreation and free time

5:30 p.m. Dinner with musical and/or inspirational program feature

6:30 p.m. Closing general session

- Induction of new commissioners
- Key council program dates for the year ahead
- The annual commissioner service plan—key unit service dates for every commissioner
- Demonstration charter presentation
- Closing challenge
- Presentation of participation certificates by district
- Commissioner awards
- Closing ceremony

8:00 p.m. Adjournment

Fellowship and cracker barrel

College of Commissioner Science

Sample Program with 7 Periods

7:00 AM	Registration Opens
7:30 AM	Opening General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Welcome▪ Introduction of Guests▪ College Logistics
8:00 AM	Period 1 – BCS 103
8:55 AM	Period 1 concludes
9:00 AM	Period 2 – BCS 104
9:55 AM	Period 2 concludes
10:00 AM	Period 3 – BCS 106
10:55 AM	Period 3 concludes
11:00 AM	Period 4 – BCS 102
11:55 AM	Period 4 concludes
12:00 PM	Lunch
12:30 PM	Keynote Speaker
1:10 PM	Afternoon Logistics
1:15 PM	Break
1:30 PM	Period 5 – BCS 114
2:25 PM	Period 5 concludes
2:30 PM	Period 6 – BCS 110
3:25 PM	Period 6 concludes

3:30 PM Period 7 – BCS 113

4:25 PM Period 7 concludes

4:30 PM Closing General Session

- Awards and Thank you

5:30 PM Adjourn

Two-Day Commissioner Conference

Sample Program

Friday Evening

- Registration—pick up program kits and lodging assignments
- Refreshments
- Displays
- Informal discussions with resource people available at designated spots
- Fellowship activities

Saturday

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

9:00 a.m. Opening general session

- Welcome and introduction by districts
- Opening ceremony
- Conference instructions
- Morale features: songs, skits, etc.
- Keynote speaker: "Commissioners for the 21st Century" OR "Commissioners—the District's Frontline Diplomats"

10:00 a.m. Break, coffee, displays

10:15 a.m. Period 1—elective workshops/ training sessions

11:15 a.m. Break and travel to next session

11:30 a.m. Period 2—elective workshops/ training sessions

12:30 p.m. Lunch with short program feature

1:30 p.m. Skill demonstrations and involvement

- Scoutcraft skills

- Venturing specialties

2:15 p.m. Period 3—elective workshops/ training sessions

3:15 p.m. Break

3:30 p.m. Period 4—elective workshops/ training sessions

4:30 p.m. Recreation and free time

- Boating, swimming
- Tennis, volleyball
- Special tour or activity related to meeting facility

4:30 p.m. Conference staff meeting

6:00 p.m. Dinner with music and/or fellowship activities

7:00 p.m. Evening general session

- Induction of new commissioners
- Special skit on some aspect of commissioner operation
- Major presentation on the "lifesaving commissioner"
- Morale feature
- Session challenge—"Measuring a Commissioner's Effectiveness"

8:30 p.m. District commissioner staff meetings

9:30 p.m. Cracker barrel; fellowship and entertainment

Sunday

7:15 a.m. Interfaith service

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

8:45 a.m. General session

- Opening big idea
- Drama/morale event, "The Art of Human Relations"
- Key council program dates for the year ahead
- The annual commissioner service plan—key unit service dates for commissioners

9:45 a.m. Break; coffee, displays

10:00 a.m. Period 5—elective workshops/ training sessions

11:00 a.m. Break and travel to next session

11:15 a.m. Period 6—elective workshops/ training sessions

12:15 p.m. Closing luncheon

- Presentation, "What's New in the BSA"
- Participation certificates presented by district
- Attendance trophy
- Commissioner awards
- Presentation ceremony for Distinguished Commissioner Service Award
- Closing challenge

1:30 p.m. Adjournment



Title	Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award
Purpose	To recognize completion of a standardized program leading to the completion of a thesis or project and the award of the Doctorate of Commissioner Science from a College of Commissioner Science.
Justification	<p>The commissioner is the mainstay for Scouting program administration. It is commissioner service that ensures that units are healthy, productive, and assist in the growth of the program.</p> <p>The College of Commissioner Science program is designed to have a commissioner learn, through a series of training classes, followed by work experiences to ensure a quality program throughout Scouting. This training will take a number of years to complete. The commissioner finalizes his/her training with an approved thesis or project for the benefit of the Scouting program. This assists both new commissioners as they learn, and seasoned commissioners as they train others.</p> <p>A well-trained commissioner staff better serves the Scouting program.</p> <p>The College of Commissioner Science program is a guideline for councils to adapt as they determine will fit their needs.</p> <p>Having a knot award for the program requires that the commissioner complete, as a minimum, a training program standardized for all BSA programs.</p>
Objectives	<p>To further involve commissioners in providing support to units in their delivery of a quality program experience for all youth in Scouting.</p> <p>To provide councils an opportunity to recognize commissioners for their tenured service, their involvement in learning more about delivery of quality Scouting, and their involvement in support of others.</p>

Requirements Minimum Requirements:

Tenure

Serve as a commissioner for a minimum of 5 years. Their service can be in one or more commissioner roles or positions of service.

Training

A. Bachelor of Commissioner Science Degree (BCS)

Prerequisites

1. Maintain registration in any capacity as a Commissioner during the entire training program listed below.
2. Complete Commissioner orientation (Commissioner *Fieldbook*)
3. Complete commissioner basic training.

Course Requirements

Complete a minimum of seven (7) courses of instruction, at least five (5) of the courses at the Bachelor's program level as listed in the *Continuing Education for Commissioners* manual.

Performance

1. Approval of Council or assigned Assistant Council Commissioner
2. Approval of Scout Executive or Advisor to Commissioner Service

B. Master of Commissioner Science Degree (MCS)

Prerequisites

1. Completion of bachelor's degree.
2. Earned Arrowhead Honor.
3. Current registration as a commissioner.

Course Requirements

Complete a minimum of seven (7) additional courses of instruction (total of 14), at least seven (7) of the courses at the Master's program level as listed in the *Continuing Education for Commissioners* manual.

Performance

1. Approval of Council or assigned Assistant Council Commissioner
2. Approval of Scout Executive or Advisor to Commissioner Service

C. Doctor of Commissioner Science Degree (DCS)

Prerequisites

1. Completion of master's degree.
2. Have been awarded the Commissioner's Key.
3. Current registration as a commissioner.

Course Requirements

Complete a minimum of ten (10) additional courses of instruction not used to qualify for other college awards (total of 24), at least five (5) of the courses at the doctor's program level as listed in the *Continuing Education for Commissioners* manual.

Thesis or Project

1. Completion of a thesis or project on any topic of value to Scouting in the local council.
2. The topic and final paper or project must be approved by the council commissioner, or assigned assistant council commissioner, or the dean of the doctorate program and the staff advisor for commissioner service.

Performance

1. Serve on the College of Commissioner Science faculty (instructor or support staff) or work with training support for commissioners for at least one year.
2. Recruit at least three new commissioners at any level.
3. Approval of Council or assigned Assistant Council Commissioner
3. Approval of Scout Executive or Advisor to Commissioner Service

Grandfather or Sunset Clause:

Since the key requirement of this award is tied to an approval of a Thesis (Councils with a Commissioner's College) or Project (Councils

without a Commissioners College) that is only earned once, this award is retroactive for individuals who have completed other requirements prior to the approval of this award. This clause applies for the previous 10 years. Any commissioner who meets these requirements would need to list any courses they have completed previously and then complete their thesis or project to apply for the award.

Appendix D – VARYING THE TEACHING STYLE

The “Continuing Education for Commissioners” lists various techniques for varying the teaching style. Following are some classroom ideas that often prove successful:

- ❖ Posted session objectives
- ❖ *Well-chosen* humor
- ❖ Role playing
- ❖ Case studies and other problem-solving activities
- ❖ Audiovisuals (photos, videotapes, DVD's, slide presentations, Podcasts, overhead transparencies, PowerPoint, etc.) that make their point quickly and clearly
- ❖ Skits and ice breakers
- ❖ Games and simulations
- ❖ Having trainees list questions and concerns related to the session topic
- ❖ Handouts (distributed only at the beginning or end of the session)
- ❖ Having trainees develop personal action plans related to the session topic
- ❖ Small-group discussion
- ❖ Flip charts, either with prepared sheets or with sheets sketched during the session
- ❖ Hands-on review of resource material
- ❖ Charts, scrolls, posters, models, and samples
- ❖ Show and do: the leader demonstrates and the trainees practice
- ❖ Well-moderated panel of presenters, panel discussion, and total full-group discussion with a panel
- ❖ Props and attention-getters
- ❖ Brainstorming

- ❖ Trainee presentations
- ❖ Contests
- ❖ Concise summary—written or verbal
- ❖ Relating subject matter to learners' life experiences and actual back-home environment
- ❖ Chalkboards and flannel board presentations (not used much anymore but some people still do use these methods)
- ❖ Exhibits and bulletin boards
- ❖ Quiz followed by discussion
- ❖ Experiments
- ❖ Lecture
- ❖ PowerPoint presentation

Reference Materials

¹ Preface Page, second paragraph - Continuing Education for Commissioners Manual, BSA, #33615

² Preface Page, first paragraph - Continuing Education for Commissioners Manual, BSA, #33615

³ Page 3, third paragraph - Continuing Education for Commissioners Manual, BSA, #33615

⁴ Page 4, first column under “Why We Train Unit Commissioners” - Commissioner Basic Training Manual, Training, Plans, and Methods, BSA, #33613F

⁵ Page 4, second column under “3. The Commissioner Conference” - Continuing Education for Commissioners Manual, BSA, #33615

⁶ Page 16, first column under “4. College of Commissioner Science” - Continuing Education for Commissioners Manual, BSA, #33615

⁷ Page 21, second column under “Chapter 10 – Commissioner Training” - Commissioner Administration of Unit Service, BSA, #34128E

⁸ Page 16, second column under “4. College of Commissioner Science” - Continuing Education for Commissioners Manual, BSA, #33615

⁹ Page 17, first column under “College Faculty” - Continuing Education for Commissioners Manual, BSA, #33615

¹⁰ Trainer Development Conference Handouts and Notes, “TDC Learning Objectives”, BSA

¹¹ Page 6, first column, 3rd bullet under “Selecting the Right Place” - Continuing Education for Commissioners Manual, BSA, #33615

¹² Pages 10 -11, under “Work Schedule” - Continuing Education for Commissioners Manual, BSA, #33615

¹³ Page 6, second column, under “The Conference Program” - Continuing Education for Commissioners Manual, BSA, #33615

¹⁴ Trainer Development Conference Handouts and Notes, “TDC Learning Objectives”, BSA

¹⁵ Page 4, first column under “What is a Commissioner Conference” - Continuing Education for Commissioners Manual, BSA, #33615

¹⁶ Trainer Development Conference Handouts and Notes, “TDC Learning Objectives”, BSA

¹⁷ Page 10, first column, under “4. The Commissioner Concept”, Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service, BSA, #33261E