Distinguished Executives Advisory Network (DEAN)
Charter/Concept of Operations

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Appendices:

A. Disclaimer

Approved: Aug 28, 2018

Updated: Jun 11, 2020
I. Purpose

The purpose of the Distinguished Executives Advisory Network (DEAN) is to make the experience and expertise of individuals who have been recognized for their excellence through receipt of Presidential Rank Awards (PRAs) available for the advancement of government effectiveness, efficiency and improvement. This cadre of individuals will be referred to as the "Dean's List" and will include PRA winners who are members of SEA.

II. Background

The SEA recognized that the PRA winners’ extraordinary achievements and documented leadership accomplishments make them uniquely qualified to provide objective, impartial and sound advice on the most pressing government problems and conceived of establishing a network, the DEAN, to utilize their views and advice, as well as enable them to connect with each other.

The DEAN was envisioned as a practitioner advisory and sounding board, and source of constructive change by providing practical, timely guidance and detailed advice on how complex federal challenges can be successfully addressed through improved government management and policy implementation and innovation.

In September, 2014, the Volcker Alliance, which seeks to rekindle intellectual, practical and academic interest in the implementation of policy and to serve as a catalyst for sustained government improvement, agreed to support initial development of the DEAN. Initially, DEAN was only for PRA Distinguished Executives and the SEA agreed to host and maintain the DEAN for 3 years and to cooperate in responding to Alliance requests for advice and information from DEAN's List members.
In 2018, the decision was made by the SEA Board of Directors to expand the DEAN to all PRA executives to capitalize on their vast and diverse experiences.

III. Membership

Due to the expanded eligible pool to include all PRA winners, membership will be limited to those who are SEA members, active and retired. To become a member, your member profile in the SEA database asks if you want to be a member of DEAN. We will use that information and your Community of Practice (COP) to build a database of experts in each COP specialty area. SEA will then use this information to evaluate advisory topics and best matches with DEAN members.

IV. Scope/Objectives

The objective of the DEAN is to advance government effectiveness, efficiency and service by making its members' institutional and experiential knowledge more readily and easily available as a resource that can be used to enhance the operation and success of government. While providing expertise, the DEAN will not put forward a group point of view or take an official SEA or DEAN position. Further, DEAN does not endorse positions taken by individual DEAN members, even when presented in the course of DEAN activities.

Members of the DEAN can volunteer to be available to advise and assist those in government, not-for-profit organizations that advise government agencies, and academia who request assistance for reasons consistent with DEAN’s purpose. This assistance may be given through a number of mechanisms including, but not limited to:

• Roundtables with both career and/or political appointees, or both;
• Agency and outside speaker bureaus;
• Focus groups;
• Working groups set up by agencies and others to improve the functioning of government and the delivery of government services;
• Mentorship and advising programs for senior executives and those who wish to become senior executives;
• Opportunities to share Best Practices;
• Surveys and other methods of academic evaluation and investigation;
• Guest lecturing and brown bags; and
• Response to requests for advisory input/insights, as appropriate.

Further, DEAN provides its members a means to connect both professionally and socially, depending on the interest of the members. We anticipate that appropriate forums for such interactions will arise as the Network matures.

Finally, DEAN will be open to a wide range of requests consistent with its purpose. In order to be effective, it must be able to adjust and consider responses to valid requests, even those not contemplated in the original scope. See Section VI on grade level of requestors for DEAN service.

V. Roles and Responsibilities

DEAN members will provide objective, impartial, confidential, and sound advice and insights, within the realm of their expertise, to advise policymakers, and serve as a resource to researchers interested in producing high-quality, relevant research to improve the workings of the federal government. Each member is responsible for ensuring that DEAN consistently functions in a collaborative manner, adheres to its Charter, and fully supports the purpose and actions of the DEAN. DEAN members will also make themselves available to mentor current SES’s or civilian equivalents and offer mentoring to rising senior leaders.

A Core Planning Group (CPG), reporting to the SEA Board of Directors, and comprised of a volunteer subset of the DEAN, will serve as an advisory group to consider and develop any necessary changes in governance documents for DEAN’s List members’ review, and subsequent approval by the SEA Board, to support the operations, communications, and overall strategic direction of the DEAN. If the SEA Board determines it is necessary, a process for nomination and
selection of Core Planning Group members will be established. The Core Planning Group may also form various subgroups as required to achieve specific objectives of the DEAN (e.g. Communications Group; Request Screening Group, etc.).

VI. Responding to External Requests for Advisory Input/Insight

External requests for DEAN members' advice/insights may be submitted through:

- Direct written requests to SEA via email to DEAN-Request@seniorexecs.org.
- Specific taskings from the SEA Board of Directors.
- Referrals provided to DEAN through SEA Staff.
- Other mechanisms established by the DEAN.

In all cases, requesting organizations and individuals will be asked to submit either a "Request for Advisory Support" or “Request for Mentor” that includes the following information: summary of request; background of requester; statement of need for DEAN advice; timeframe; number of individuals/anticipated level of effort required; and any preferred expertise required.

In the event of travel or in-person requests (panels or boards), indication of whether expenses are reimbursed should be included. Requesters must also certify they have read and agree to a legal disclaimer regarding the responsibilities of SEA, DEAN, requesters and responders (See Appendix A). Requests for **advisory services must** come from appropriate level in the organization’s hierarchy comparable to the composition of the DEAN. Requests for **mentors** for SESs or civilian equivalents can come directly from the member; requests for rising leaders should come from an SES or civilian equivalent in their reporting chain.

Initially, depending on the volume of requests, the CPG will review requests on a bi-weekly basis and evaluate them for suitability for distribution. The CPG will prioritize and filter requests if the number of requests exceeds capacity and determine if the request is beyond the intended scope of the DEAN.
In order for the DEAN to officially respond to a Request, the CPG will accept responsibility for the Request, advise the SEA Board, and will serve as the Request Coordinator to coordinate volunteer advisors as well as evaluate outcomes. The CPG, as Request Coordinator, will handle all correspondence with the requester and the volunteers.

**VII. Communications**

Internal DEAN communications will be accomplished through in-person/virtual meetings, conference calls, and networking events. The SEA will use established DEAN email addresses, maintain a current distribution list for DEAN members, and will facilitate any DEAN meetings, if required.

An appropriate data management and communications tool will be identified to facilitate efficient communications, document deliberations and results, and maintain a repository of internal and external communications. The SEA ACTION Monthly Newsletter will have a section on all news pertaining to DEAN.

**VIII. Member Profiles**

Each member of DEAN will ensure that their profile in the SEA member database is current at all times with their contact information, agency affiliation, background, skills, areas of expertise, and preferred areas of engagement. Policy related to DEAN Privacy and Confidentiality is provided in Section IX.

**IX. Privacy and Confidentiality Policy**

In support of the DEAN, SEA will collect limited information from individuals willing to participate in the DEAN's List and has established the following Privacy and Confidentiality Policy:

1. All information will be collected by SEA by way of direct request and
2. The specific information collected and referenced above is limited to the personal contact information (name, phone number, and email address) of individual members of the DEAN's List, as well as their current and/or former agency affiliations and titles and areas of expertise. This information and the data base will be utilized by SEA to manage the List and to communicate with members of the List. SEA has installed appropriate technology to protect the security of personally identifiable information contained in the DEAN's List.

3. Otherwise, personal contact information and work titles gathered by SEA for the DEAN's List are confidential and will not be shared, sold, offered for sale, or rented to any other entity. Confidentiality provisions of this policy would apply to any subsequent user or holder of the DEAN's List.

4. Individual members of the DEAN's List may choose to identify themselves as such and to permit SEA to do so.

5. Organizations and individuals wishing to consult with and/or survey the DEAN's List will communicate such requests to SEA which, following the process identified in VII, will determine whether cooperation is beneficial. None of the organizations or individuals who are approved to consult with the DEAN’s List will have access to individual personal information, except to the degree that individuals choose to provide it to such organizations and individuals. Procedures will be put in place to circulate requests for consultation or access to the membership to ascertain those members who wish to respond to such requests.

6. In the case of surveys, SEA will determine the appropriateness of the questions/surveys and will directly transmit same to DEAN members. Survey results and findings will be made available to the public, however, the privacy of individual DEAN's List members responding to surveys, and the confidentiality of their individual information contained in the DEAN's List will be protected, as will the confidentiality of individual views and comments.

7. For requests which require confidential conversations with members of the DEAN's List, the members will be contacted to indicate their willingness to participate in, for example, focus groups and requests from individual executives or appointees for conversations or meetings with members. In such cases, no personal information will be provided to individuals but, rather, the DEAN's List
member or members will either be provided contact information of the requestor or asked if the requestor can be given their contact information.

8. The CPG will convene at least annually to review the process and criteria for sharing access to the DEAN's List and to recommend necessary adjustments.

9. An individual member or members of the DEAN's List may be asked to participate in direct discussions with a federal agency or official on issues of interest to the agency. For members agreeing to such participation, information collected and/or maintained by the federal agency in connection with the DEAN's List member's or members' participation may be subject to disclosure by the respective federal agency pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. section 552.

This Policy was established on March 6, 2015 and may be revised or amended in the future. SEA will make available to the DEAN's List members any such changes to this Policy.

X. **Navigating the Potential for Conflicts of Interest and/or Business Relationships Beyond the DEAN**

Potential conflicts of interests should be raised by each member with his/her organization. If the individual is still employed by the Federal government, the agency ethics official should provide that guidance to the individual. It is possible that interactions between DEAN members and requesting or partner organizations could evolve to longer term contractual relationships. However, this ensuing relationship must be pursued through external channels and will not be maintained through DEAN or advertised as a DEAN sanctioned relationship. Exceptions to this policy would be the regular use of DEAN as a source for speakers, panel members and mentors for a periodic (educational) activity that aligns with the purposes of DEAN. The DEAN CPG will evaluate these requests on a case-by-case basis.
Appendix A

Disclaimer

For

DEAN Requesters

I certify that I have read the DEAN Charter and agree to the disclaimers regarding the responsibilities of SEA, DEAN, requesters, and responders. I understand that DEAN members do so in his or her individual, non-official capacity, not while on duty, unless otherwise authorized by his or her employing agency. I also understand the confidentiality arrangement concerning all discussions between the DEAN and my organization.

_____(Signature)____

_____(Title, Grade)____

____(Organization)____