

News Update - Greetings PMI Program Alumni

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I hope you are having a great summer. We've had a busy spring and summer here and it's time for us to update you once again on what's going on in the PMI world.

I met recently with James Wilson, Deputy Director of the PMI program to discuss a variety of issues. Here's the skinny:

1. The Executive Orders have gone forward from OPM to OMB and hence to the President for signature.

- The PMI program becomes the Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF)

- The current hiring cap of 400 finalists is lifted.

- The program is changing to offer sliding scale introductory salaries to qualified applicants, meaning new interns can enter as a 9, and if qualified, move to the 11 and perhaps 13 GS level if they are qualified (Experience, advanced degrees, etc.) at the 6 month and 12 month marks. Details are unclear.

- A second fellowship program, virtually unrelated to the PMF is to be created: The Senior PMF. This new program offers advanced managerial training to GS-13, 14 and 15s, with eligibility for non-competitive appointment to the SES following certified completion of the program. Initially, the program will recruit from within the civil service, but is also targeted to recruit external to the government.

My comments to Dr. Wilson on this were manifold:

A. PMAG was opposed to the name change, based on legacy issues. As well, we had found that few alumni had concerns over the name of the program. It appeared largely to be an issue for incoming finalists.

B. The pay issue, while not large, was welcome - but I reminded Dr. Wilson that agencies were currently 'allowed' to pay higher than GS9, but few chose to.

This opened the discussion to larger issues - I stipulated that name change aside, these were exciting changes to the program. However, they did not address what we perceived to be more fundamental, and indeed more important, issues facing the program. Namely, that after a finalist leaves Shepherdstown, they had virtually no contact with OPM. Regarding pay, training and rotations, OPM was silent - leaving the interns at the mercy of their agencies for enforcement of program guidelines.

Surprisingly, Dr. Wilson agreed - he commented that the existing system had no teeth, and that the coming rewrite of the regulations would include some enforcement provisions - namely that like the SES' CDP Program, the PMF programs would have a certification requirement. This would mean each agency wanting fellows would need to certify with OPM that they were training and rotating them as per program guidelines. Agencies which did not would not be allowed to hire in subsequent years through these programs.

Needless to say, this represents an exciting possible change in the PMI program, and we are encouraged by the attention the program is getting from OPM and by their eagerness to interact with PMAG regarding these changes. When I briefed the Board of Directors, we had a few further concerns, which we've communicated to the PMI program office:

1. In removing the hiring cap, what thought was given to changing the 'exclusive' or 'selective' nature of the program?
2. Will these changes affect the % of students from a given grad school that can apply? Several members commented that they weren't sure that this restriction was enforced.

We look forward to seeing the final Executive Orders and the draft regulations. We will distribute them for comment to the membership as soon as we can.

To further the communication with OPM on the changes, we've formed an OPM Comment subcommittee, led by our co-secretary, Mr. Erick Leklem. He will be the lead for collecting and corresponding with OPM regarding the programmatic changes. The board hopes that by having an identified POC for specific issues, we can more effectively gather information and communicate with OPM. You may contact him through the regular PMAG email address, pmag@prograde.net, just put 'program changes' in the message subject.

That being said, there are two other subcommittees we've formed that you should be aware of. The first will be our Fall Event Planning group, led by our Secretary, Mr. David Radcliffe. He'll be the POC regarding our participation in the events OPM is planning surrounding the launch of the PMF. As the situation evolves, we'll release information via email - in the interim if you have questions or want to get involved, you can contact David via the usual PMAG email address, pmag@prograde.net, just put 'fall event' in the subject line of your message.

Finally, after our extended discussions concerning PMI Alumni, I am leading the Membership Services Subcommittee. We have several goals which include a relaunch of the PMAG web page, integrate and launch a web accessible version of the PMAG contact database, and to work with OPM to manage alumni relations better. Furthering that, we will launch 'The Alumni Project' in the fall. PMAG hopes to partner with OPM to reach out to the PMI Alumni. A project in this direction would further the aims of PMAG, and serve as a stepping off point for OPMs longitudinal examination of the fates of PMIs.

We have relaunched the PMAG website, PMAG.org, and our new web goddess, Rebecca Martino, is preparing to revamp the site and improve it's services to the alumni a great deal - many thanks to Ms. Martino for taking on this task!

Please don't hesitate to contact PMAG for information or with your opinion or concerns.

Respectfully,
Presidential Management Alumni Group
Board of Directors