



# College of Commissioner Science Basics

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## PREFACE

“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.”

The information within this document is offered as a guide for your council to help you adequately provide your council’s commissioners with an opportunity to update their commissioning skills with the most up-to-date information in order to serve their units.

This guide helps to maintain consistency from one college to another while allowing each college to maintain its own character and identity.

***Commissioners wrote the curriculum for commissioners.*** Attend any college in the United States and you will find the same courses, objectives, and teaching methods.

Councils may offer additional local courses to address specific topics of interest for their area. If your council wishes to share any such course, you are free to do so.

## Introduction

As in any task, the first step is to become familiar and educated on the subject and then learn the operations. Therefore, it is advised that you read and review all sections of this College of Commissioner Science Resource Folder to obtain a good overview about a college and its structure.

It is recommended that you, and members of your team, attend a college of commissioner science and talk with the college dean and the staff to learn as much about the process as possible. It is a good idea to request copies of their planning and operation documents. Examples are: college catalog, registration forms, marketing information, and items used by the registrar. Attend several of the classes and take note of instructor techniques and materials available. Register for the classes if you want course credit.

Have a meeting with your staff upon the return to your council to share this information, and to make decisions concerning your college.

## What is a College of Commissioner Science?

The college of commissioner science is an annual training event for registered commissioners. It is an opportunity to have a continuing education experience in a college environment. It helps the commissioner stay current in policy, techniques and application of commissioner service to units.

The college borrows the structure and terminology from higher education institutions. The college will have deans, assistant deans, instructors, a registrar, and designated curriculum for undergraduate and graduate degrees.

The Bachelor Program consists of courses that will augment commissioner basic training. Basic training should be completed before beginning the bachelor program. The courses cover some of the same topics but they are all covered more in depth and with more student interaction.

The Master Program offers more advanced courses. These courses will be most beneficial to an experienced or an administrative commissioner. Again many of the topics are familiar but are explained in more detail with more student interaction.

The Roundtable courses provide training specific to roundtable commissioners and staff.

The Doctorate Program consists of the courses required to write an approved thesis or complete an approved project. In addition, there are some advanced courses available for the very experienced commissioner.

The Continuing Education curriculum was created to encourage those with a doctorate to continue to learn new topics, and for those who hold a master degree but do not aspire to complete their doctorate.

The local council determines the degree courses offered, and councils have the option to add courses or discussion panels on topics that are related to commissioner service in their area. While each council can substitute or add classes of a local need, the degree requirements for the prerequisites and number of courses at that degree level must be met and that they are commissioner related courses.

Offering standard courses eliminates issues when transferring course credits to other colleges or applying for the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot award. Note that the knot award has additional requirements beyond the Doctor Degree of Commissioner Science.

## Why do Commissioners Need the College?

The mission of the commissioner is to help the unit succeed and the way to accomplish this mission is through education and practical learning experiences. Just as every Scout deserves a trained leader, every unit deserves a trained commissioner!

A trained commissioner is an effective commissioner. Training materials are being updated on a routine basis. Therefore, to stay up to date, commissioners should view learning as an important part of their entire scouting lives.

Even though updated training materials are available on the BSA Commissioner Training web page, holding a college gives commissioners the opportunity for interaction with other commissioners, and a better understanding of the material during a group discussion.

The college provides an in-depth knowledge of the essential aspects of the commissioner's duties and responsibilities. The final result is a stronger and more knowledgeable commissioner corps serving units.

The College offers the opportunity to:

- Learn the information essentials to provide the best service to scouting units
- Provide fellowship amongst the commissioner corps
- Reinforce and expand on the lessons learned during previous training
- Provide updates on commissioner service and scouting

## Types of Commissioner Colleges

There are three types of colleges and the type is dependent on the size of the council or councils and the extent of the geographic area.

### The Single Council College

A single council may offer the college when it is large enough to support sufficient staff and instructors as well as a population from which to draw students. Each district contributes staff and instructors and promotes student participation. It can offer the full range of required classes for each degree and can easily be held in one day or two days without the necessity of long distances to travel and the cost of a motel room.

A medium or small council can also sponsor a college, but the determining factor is the availability of qualified staff and instructors across the entire college curriculum. The student population may also be a limiting factor.

### Cluster of Councils College

Contiguous councils form an alliance to pool their resources and conduct a college with a more extensive curriculum. The responsibility of the host council may be rotated among the participating councils. The advantage to this approach is that pooling resources allows for a fully qualified staff, instructors, and many students. The disadvantage is that the non-host participants may have to travel greater distances and have the added cost of food, gas and lodging. Most commissioners would like to attend colleges rotated among the councils rather than having a permanent location.

### Electronic College

The participating councils may be widely dispersed geographically. Using electronic technologies can be helpful. This college type can bring together people from multiple councils across a large geographic area without anyone leaving their home council. Using “Webinar” or “Go To Meeting” or other types of web based meeting programs to conduct a college remotely is a possibility. With a council acting as the hub you can conduct several classes simultaneously in multiple sites. If one site has the expert on a topic, control of the class can be shifted to this alternate location. This method will allow small councils and very remote councils to receive the full benefit of the college curriculum. See the “Electronic College” subfolder.

## College Schedules

College schedules can be a one-day, two days, or multiple day. The selection is based on size of facility, the instructor corps, and course curriculum.

NOTE: A sample class schedule is available in the “College of Commissioner Science Resource Folder.” It is an Excel spreadsheet, which you can modify to fit your college’s needs.

### One Day

The one-day format is used when the chosen facility is large enough to accommodate multiple (4-10) classrooms so that many simultaneously conducted classes can be offered per each scheduled period. A full college curriculum may be offered. It also

means that the College has sufficient qualified instructors. This format could also be used for partial or limited curriculum colleges. It can be modified to meet the particular college needs. This particular college will most probably be conducted on a Saturday.

#### Two Days

This format will use a full day and a partial day. The full day is usually a Saturday with the partial day being either Friday evening or Sunday morning. The advantage with this format is that more class periods may be available or additional activities can be planned. Another advantage is that the student can take enough classes to qualify for a degree as well as take classes for credit toward the next degree. The disadvantage would be to students who have to travel long distances to attend the college. It requires the students to obtain lodging in the local area. The one-day schedule can be used for the Saturday activities with a possibility of adding a social event or cracker barrel on Friday evening or continuing classes on Sunday.

#### Multiple Day

The multi-day event is used if most of the participating councils are connected electronically through the internet. It can also be used for councils that have a large geographic area.

## College Organization

Setting the initial date and other key dates for commissioner college.

This is one of the easiest steps for most councils, especially if there is a history in that council of holding commissioner colleges. For councils starting their first commissioner college, there are some considerations when setting the date.

Are there other events in the council that could conflict with the availability of a particular date or location to hold the commissioner college?

Are there events in adjoining councils that could limit the number of participants on that particular date?

#### Backdating Timeline Tool

One of the most important steps when planning your council's commissioner college is using a backdating timeline. This timeline starts on the day that the commissioner college is scheduled to take place and is used to determine what needs to be done and when prior to the day of the commissioner college.



Following this type of timeline will ensure you will have all the supplies, food, approvals, and faculty members needed to have a successful college. It is important for you to personalize the backdater to your own college needs. Add all the program items, critical dates and meeting dates to the backdater to have everything on one document.

NOTE: See the “Sample Planning Guides” subfolder. Enter the date of your college and the calendar math will be calculated.

## College Faculty and Staff

Staffing is divided into three main functions: administrative, instructional, and support. See “Typical Job Descriptions” subfolder for additional information.

### 1. College Dean

The dean of the college is responsible for selecting all of the college staff. This is one of the most critical items for the dean. The dean selects the program deans, registrar, and any other support staff needed.

### 2. College Registrar

The college registrar is responsible for the records and registration of all attendees at the college, safeguarding the records of course completion, certifying courses completed to ensure proper acknowledgement of a degree or participation, preparing and awarding of the appropriate certificates, and performing other duties of an administrative nature assigned by the college dean.

In addition to these records, this person could maintain progress on thesis and projects toward the Doctorate Degree within their own council.

To ensure accurate records, create an attendance sheet for each class period. The instructor or helper will be able to take attendance and report back to the registrar for an overall attendance record. This in turn gives valuable information for a transcript issued at the end of the college.

A college transcript should contain at least the following information: Title and date of the college, participant name and BSA ID#, classes attended, and if a degree was earned.

### 3. The Dean’s Cabinet

The dean’s cabinet is an administrative body, which is responsible for the overall management and administration of the college, with the college dean as the chair. This group provides policy, guidance, and direction for the operation of the

college. Members may include all of degree deans, the council commissioner, the professional liaison, and support staff chairs.

The professional liaison represents the council to make sure that the policies of the Boy Scouts of America policy are followed.

The college dean should schedule multiple meetings of this cabinet, and provide the meeting agenda for each.

The dean's cabinet also has the responsibility for final decisions in academic matters.

#### 4. The Program Deans

These deans are responsible for picking the courses for their program and faculty to instruct those courses. There may be a dean for the bachelor, roundtable, master, doctorate and continuing education programs courses.

##### **Availability of Deans during College**

Deans and assistant deans should not be scheduled as instructors, and only utilized in that capacity should an instructor is unable to attend.

- Have the deans and assistant deans in strategic locations throughout the college.
- During the orientation and opening remarks, let the attendees know where they can be found, such as the dining area, near the coffee pot, or the administrative area.
- They can assist participants in finding their next classes.
- They should be readily available to address the immediate concerns of the participants throughout the event.
- They are encouraged to observe and audit classes to ensure they are going well. This helps identify any problems or hazards before they become serious issues.
- They can also be utilized in other administrative functions.

#### 5. Faculty

This includes the instructors and classroom assistants as chosen by the program deans. The instructors must have knowledge of the subject matter and have excellent presentation skills.

The program deans need to mentor their faculty and review their preparations for the courses.

## Things to consider

### 1. Class Sizes

Class sizes are a function of how many classes you are going to offer, the size of the rooms available and the number of students enrolled in a particular class. If you have an enrollment for a class that exceeds 25, consider offering the class in two or more time slots. Large classes are not conducive to the learning environment. Consider dropping a class if very few people are registered. (Small classes foster greater interaction among the instructor and participants).

### 2. Teaching Methods

Instructors should use a variety of teaching methods during a college course session. Course outlines are provided so that the instructor knows what information to cover in the presentation. Teaching methods used may include white board, chart pads, discussion groups, buzz groups, role-playing, games, and case studies.

Using Power Point presentations as the only method is to be discouraged. Most courses should be interactive and involve the student.

NOTE: Each course within the college of commissioner science curriculum is available to download at <https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/training/> .

Within each of the degree curricula, bachelor, roundtable, master, doctorate, and continuing education, there is a set of “Zip” file for every course containing information as follows:

001 – List of the most current documents that should be in the file set

002 – Course Outline

003 – Teaching notes for the suggested primary and secondary teaching method

These notes assist the instructor by providing suggested methods of engaging the participants. It is a teacher manual of sorts.

004 - A listing of materials needed for the class (chart pad, markers, Post-It notes, index cards, digital projector, laptop, printouts, support materials (manuals), etc.

## 010 – PowerPoint presentation of the course

This is a secondary method of presenting the course material.

PPT should be used sparingly as this teaching method does not engage participants as effectively as guided discussion and activity learning

011 – 025 – Handouts, data sheets, manuals, or other materials used for the class instructor to prepare for and present an effective learning experience for all participants

## **Support Staff**

This group includes several departments: college facility, technical support, marketing and advertising, food service, and ceremonies.

## **College Facility Staff**

### 1. Staff Responsibilities

The college classes need to be presented in a clean inviting facility that can adequately support the needs of the college activities and for participants, staff, and invited guests. Technical support is important to ensure that all electronics are operating properly.

### 2. Facility Requirements

See the “Sample Facility Guides” subfolder. The criteria can be modified to fit the needs of your college requirements. Internet and telephone service are critical for the operations if the “Webinar” format is to be used. Each room needs to have sufficient electrical outlets to support the electrical equipment.

The next critical requirement would be to have a laptop computer, computer projector, or a large screen monitor, and a good sound system with microphones.

Classrooms should also have either white boards, black boards, or standup easels for writing down student ideas and discussion points.

### 3. Other considerations include

- facility location
- parking
- enough classrooms to fit course schedule, and a large group meeting area
- support food service

- environmental controls
- sufficient electrical outlet power

Classroom requirements can include: student desks or tables and chairs, small tables for electronic equipment with a display screen of some type (standard school screen, white board, paper screen or large monitor).

The large group meeting area needs to accommodate all participants, staff, and guests. It should also have a speakers' platform or podium, and a good quality microphone and sound system.

## **Technical Support Staff**

This is a very important position. Responsibilities include working with the facility to obtain approval and instructions for both Internet access and computer or projector needs. They have the huge responsibility to make sure all is in good working order prior to and throughout the college.

## **Promotional (Marketing) Staff**

### **1. Creating the College Catalog (Optional)**

NOTE: Set up the registration process prior to a general announcement. The college catalog provides the student with detailed information about the college, the staff, and courses provided with description of each course. The catalog should be available in both electronic media via either the council or college website as well as in hard copy. Encourage the use of the internet for registration, as well as downloading the catalog. The hard copy version needs to be available for walk-in registration, if permitted. Examples would be at the council service center, commissioner meetings, and/or roundtable meetings. (See "Sample Catalog Ideas" subfolder)

### **2. Promotion and Advertising - PROMOTE, PROMOTE, PROMOTE**

As with any council training activity, the commissioner college must be marketed so that the event generates interest and creates a desire to attend the event. To generate a large group of attendees, there is no such thing as over promoting the event.

Suggested methods of promotion – determine which will be productive in your council

- Announcements and handouts at roundtable and commissioner meetings
- Brochure or flyer for commissioner to share with those interested in joining corps
- Electronic announcements via email or council newsletter
- Email information to commissioners and unit leaders
- Invitation to neighboring council commissioners to share with their team.
- Request a listing on the national webpage of upcoming colleges:  
<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Commissioners/training/Colleges.aspx>
- Personal invitation by phone
- Separate section on council website
- Use of social media

All promotional materials for any event have similar goals in common – they seek to generate excitement and a desire for the viewer to make a conscious commitment to do what is being offered to them. All promotional materials should contain images, summary of what is being offered, contact information, and how to register for the event.

### 3. Creating promotional literature for your commissioner college

Be careful when selecting fonts to use in promotional materials. The font(s) used in promotional materials should be clean, easy to read, and when used as a heading, of a color that is bold but pleasing to the eye. For more information on the preferred fonts for scouting publications, download the BSA's current edition of the "Brand Identity Guide" at

<https://scoutingwire.org/bsa-brand-center/brand-identity/>

Care should also be taken to comply with the "Language of Scouting Guide."

<https://www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/los/>

### 4. Using electronic media – Internet websites and social media

These methods have opened new avenues that can be used to promote your council's commissioner college. Unlike mailings and e-mail messages, social media and websites have a reach far beyond what was regarded as the "traditional" target group. The

Internet has now made it possible for anyone and everyone globally to access any information on your event published to the web. Social media sites have multiplied in recent years, with the most popular being Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google Plus, and MySpace. Some allow creating a webpage, while others only share messages.

When creating a page on any social media site, the national council's marketing division requires that the page be moderated constantly for inappropriate comments, any comment that suggests a sexual abuse issue be reported to the council's Scout executive, and to qualify as an "official" page, the site must have multiple moderators (these are those responsible for the content of the page) and one of the moderators must be an official staff member.

### **Food Service Coordinator**

There are typically three options: hire a catering service, pick up or have prepared food delivered, or establish a food preparation and serving committee. Consider cost and convenience for each type of food service. Catering handles all preparation, serving, and clean up, but is expensive. The pick up or delivery option is less expensive and less work. Doing it all yourself is less costly but requires more planning and labor. If you elect to establish your own food preparation and serving committee, then you need to start planning all aspects of the job as early as possible. Start the process by getting an estimate from the registrar on how many people are expected including students, guests, staff, and instructors. Then plan the menu for the number of people and days that the college will operate. The key planning points are breakfast period, lunch, afternoon snacks and maybe a dinner meal. Ensure that health codes are followed when preparation is on site.

### **The Opening and Closing Ceremonies**

As with any Scouting event, opening and closing ceremonies are extremely important parts of the event. They can make the difference between a well-remembered and great event, and an event plagued with disaster.

At the opening ceremony, one of Scouting's long-held traditions has been the flag ceremony. Scouters, Eagle Scouts, a troop that has agreed to provide support, or even a community service organization such as the American Legion or the Veterans of Foreign Wars can conduct this. Both the opening and closing flag ceremonies need to be done as professionally as possible and in full uniform.

It is your option to have a **keynote speaker** at the opening ceremonies to set the tone, or perhaps during lunch, as you feel appropriate.

At the closing ceremony, as a means to promote attendance at next year's commissioner college, announce the dean for the college, if the decision has been made.