



## 2010 Meeting Minutes

### Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Project Committee Meetings

- September 14, 2010
- August 10, 2010
- July 13, 2010
- June 8, 2010
- April 13, 2010
- March 9, 2010
- February 9, 2010

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**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
VITA Project Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
September 14, 2010**

**Designated Federal Official (DFO)**

Nancy Ferree, DFO

**Members Present**

Justin Axelrod  
Raymond Buschmann  
Gary Iskovitz  
John Kim  
Eboni Moss  
Jeffrey Steinberg  
Stephen Vanderver  
Marilyn Young

**Members Absent**

Richard Coonradt  
Ken Donnelly  
Anne Fitzgerald  
Edward Johnson  
Matthew Kosanovich  
Timothy Oetken

**Staff Present**

Anita Fields, Secretary  
Donna Powers, TAP Analyst

**Guest(s) Present**

None Present

**Welcome/Announcements**

Stephen Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting. Anita Fields conducted roll call and quorum was met.

**Review of Previous Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes for July and August were approved by consensus.



**Program Owners**

None

**Subcommittee Report-Out**

**VITA Quality Review (QR) Subcommittee**— Ray Bucshmann reported that their subcommittee completed the write-up and the recommendation has gone through Quality Review (QR). It is now ready for Joint Committee (JC) QR. Bucshmann also reported that they also completed a Site Self-Review Form (Form 6729 SR). Donna Powers shared both recommendations with the entire committee in its final form prior to this meeting.

Powers stated that she sent to the program owners and have the go ahead to send to the Joint Committee. She made the changes and she is just waiting on the consensus from the whole committee to forward to JC.

**VITA FEAB Subcommittee**—Justin Axelrod reported that nothing changed since last month except that Buschmann and his team took the time to look at both proposals. The recommendations been through QR and is ready to forward to JC. Axelrod wants to know, once the committee votes on will they make the JC agenda for this month.

Vanderver asked; if the committee agrees, submit the following project issues to the JC.

Project Issue #16832, FEAB Partners, Project Issue #18667, FEAB Training Issue, Project Issue #18629, VITA Quality Proposal, and Project Issue #18664, VITA Self Review Proposal.

**The committee agreed to send the four completed recommendations to JC by consensus.**

John Kim asked that because the assigned project are complete, he wants to know if we can cancel the last two scheduled meetings.

Powers responded, by saying that because the Federal Registers is already complete, we have to hold the call and just in case the JC come back with minor revisions, we can use that call to discuss and make revisions.

The committee agreed that no subcommittee calls will take place, due to the committee completing all assigned projects.

**Meeting Close**

Powers thanked the committee again for all the quality work that the committee put in to complete the assigned projects. Vanderver echoed her comments. Vanderver thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Meeting adjourned.

**The next meeting scheduled is a teleconference October 12, 2010@ 2:00pm EST.**

\*Certification: These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on October 12, 2010.



**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
VITA Project Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
August 10, 2010**

**Designated Federal Official (DFO)**

Nancy Ferree, DFO

**Members Present**

Justin Axelrod  
Raymond Buschmann  
Richard Coonradt  
Ken Donnelly  
Gary Iskowitz  
John Kim  
Matthew Kosanovich  
Eboni Moss  
Jeffrey Steinberg  
Stephen Vanderver  
Marilyn Young

**Members Absent**

Anne Fitzgerald  
Edward Johnson  
Timothy Oetken

**Staff Present**

Anita Fields, Secretary  
Donna Powers, TAP Analyst  
Roger Burton, SPEC Territory Manager  
Nan Ellen Fuller, SPEC Project Development Team

**Guest(s) Present**

None Present

**Welcome/Announcements**

Stephen Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting. He made some opening comments. He also informed everyone that he would be on vacation until 20 August. Anita Fields conducted roll call and quorum was met.

**Review of Previous Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes for July were not ready for review.

**Program Owners**

Roger Burton, SPEC Territory Manager

**Subcommittee Report-Out**

VITA Quality Review (QR) Subcommittee—Ray Buschmann explained that his subcommittee was responsible for evaluating the quality process the IRS SPEC has in place and make recommendations for improving the accuracy of the returns being made by the different volunteer groups like VITA/TCE. The subcommittee came up with a dozen recommendations and they put it in Project Committee project proposal report. The subcommittee reviewed it and the documents have been through several refinements. The team submitted it to the quality review, adhoc committee appointed by Vanderver. There were no changes made by the adhoc committee. The subcommittee is waiting for approval of the entire VITA Committee. The committee agreed by consensus to accept and elevate the subcommittee's recommendation.



Buschmann discussed the site self review. There are two separate documents that he is going to discuss. One is a write-up on it, explaining that there is a fair amount of non-adherence to the quality site requirements including, intake sheets, quality review and the IRS can only do so much to monitor compliance. The subcommittee is suggesting that the site coordinator take a more active role and do a self-assessment. The subcommittee thinks that will help improve the quality at the site.

The second document is to provide the tool to do the self-assessment. The tool is a form 6729-SR (Site Self-Review) it is modeled after the IRS form 6729. The IRS developed this form for their agents to go out and review the quality site requirements at the volunteer sites. The subcommittee tried to tailor the form from the use that the IRS makes of it for what they feel the site coordinator should make of it. That has resulted in some good simplification of the form.

Buschmann only has one comment to share with the committee. In the site self-review form, there are 25 items that basically ask questions. The last item is basically a summation of what has been reported earlier. It asked if the site adhere to all the VITA/TCE quality site requirements. The comment states: measurement of this question is based on the answers that were given earlier except for question 13. Buschmann and the committee members discussed if this last questions is necessary. After the discussion, the committee feels that the last question is not necessary. John Kim suggests that the committee modify the question so that it is not so redundant. Kim suggests the question read: does the site coordinator require outside assistance to comply with all quality site requirements. There was more discussion on question 26, whether to leave it in, change verbiage or take it out all together. The committee agreed by consensus for question 26 to read: Is any follow-up action required to achieve adherence to all quality VITA/TCE site requirements?

**VITA FEAB Subcommittee**—Justin Axelrod reported that the FEAB subcommittee partner’s referral is complete and they have made approximately seven recommendations. Ken Donnelly stated that Matthew Kosanovich did a great job in drafting the referral form for FEAB. The recommendation is to change the process by providing a checklist to the taxpayer on their financial concerns. Once they complete the list, they can discuss it when they meet with the volunteer. Keeping with the scope, they are not trying to put more pressure on the volunteer. The goal is to find out what the taxpayer is interested in, instead of just giving them brochures that they will probably throw away anyway. Burton asked, what would be on the checklist? Donnelly said that was a good question, but they have not yet determined what will be on the checklist. He stated that the next step would be to work with the partners to put the checklist together. Burton shared that he asked that question because last year the FEAB subcommittee developed a checklist and it has approximately 67 questions on it. He said that he was thinking about five or six questions (i.e. Do you have a checking’s account? Are you interested in getting a savings account?) And so on. Burton said if you leave that open and send that referral to the IRS, the IRS will be responsible for developing the checklist and it will probably be astronomical like the previous year. Vanderver suggested putting together a 10-question checklist to send with the recommendation. There was discussion on whether to develop a checklist or just use the lifecycle brochures to each taxpayer that comes into the site. The FEAB subcommittee has a call tomorrow to discuss further.

Powers will send the two FEAB documents out to the Quality subcommittee for them to review. Axelrod discussed the partner provided proposal and shared that the statement of issue is with limited resources and guidance. Not all VITA partners are willing and able to offer expanded FEAB services to the VITA/TCE site. The subcommittee found a way to best engage partners in offering and delivering FEAB products and services as it relates to the program. Here are a few that we are recommending. Educate the partners on everything FEAB is offering, close conference and workshops with selected partners, and build strong relationships with partners that are already offering FEAB in the communities. We want to let the partners know what SPEC is doing and what SPEC offers and at the same time, we do not want to force anything on them.

Nan Ellen-Fuller gave an update on the different teams of the Product Development Team. Last week they sent out information for the Beta Test and they have already began seeing feedback on the Beta Test. The test team will return to Atlanta next week to review the beta testing results and make some



last minute tweaking to the test. They are expecting to have an okay to print by 15 September; currently they are ahead of target. The 4012 Team is another team, they only had one face-to-face and everything else is done by conference calls and emails. They have received two looks on that already and are waiting for a third review. They are expecting to have an okay to print by September 7, as well. The third team is the Quality Review Team and they are reviewing the 4491. They have gotten feedback and incorporated the changes. The 4491 is schedule to print on September 7.

Fuller stated that they have removed the extenders (tuition and fees deduction and the education expenses along with several others) that Congress has not passed. Once they pass, we will have to provide a supplement that will come out in December.

#### **Meeting Close**

Burton and Powers both stated that they are impressed with the progress that both teams have made. Vanderver thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Meeting adjourned.

**The next meeting scheduled is a teleconference September 14, 2010@ 2:00pm EST.**

\*Certification: These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on September 14, 2010.



**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
VITA Project Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
July 13, 2010**

**Designated Federal Official (DFO)**

Nancy Ferree, DFO

**Members Present**

Justin Axelrod  
Richard Coonradt  
Ken Donnelly  
Edward Johnson  
John Kim  
Jeffrey Steinberg  
Stephen Vanderver  
Marilyn Young

**Members Absent**

Raymond Buschmann  
Gary Iskovitz  
Matthew Kosanovich  
Eboni Moss  
Timothy Oetken  
Swarna Vallurupalli

**Staff Present**

Anita Fields, Secretary  
Donna Powers, TAP Analyst  
Roger Burton, SPEC Territory Manager  
Kate Lett-Deathe, SPEC Territory Manager  
Nan Ellen Fuller, Product Development Analyst

**Guest(s) Present**

None Present

**Welcome/Announcements**

Stephen Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting. He made some opening comments and stated that he intends to stick to the agenda. Anita Fields conducted roll call and quorum was met.

**Review of Previous Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes for May and June is approved by consensus.

**Program Owners**

Roger Burton made comments on behalf of Fred McElligott, Cindy Jones and himself. He stated that McElligott sends his apologies for not making the call due to travel. He is pleased with the progress the Quality and FEAB subcommittees are making. Burton mentioned that Ray Buschmann chaired a couple of productive calls for the Quality subcommittee. There is another call scheduled for July 27, this is to get coordinated and finalize what the subcommittee wants to do. They have some wonderful ideas and the team is putting some final changes on some products that the team feel can be implemented immediately and some that might not be implemented this filing season, but some that will have a good bearing on next filing season.

Kate Lett-Deathe stated that the team met this morning they have already received a draft write-up for one of the proposals. The other part of the FEAB team is working feverously on the other proposal. The next subcommittee call is scheduled for August 3 and the goal is to have both proposals fully



developed and ready to go into a final edit. The FEAB subcommittee plans to have everything completed by the end of August.

Nan Ellen Fuller gave a progress report for the Project Development Team. She shared that there are three teams with TAP participants. The first team is the Test Team, Jeffrey Steinberg and Marilyn Young is on the test team. The first meeting was the first week in June. Project Development already received the first turn back. Young and Steinberg will travel to Atlanta for the second face-to-face the week of August 16.

The 4012 team is the second team. This team consists of the Tax Wise Tab (blue and yellow tabs in the 4012). Timothy Oetken is participating on that team. They had their first face to face the week of 14 June and they received some information from the vendor, which they are currently reviewing and making another turn.

Ray Buschmann is leading the Review Team of the 4491, (training guide). Project Development received some feedback from Buschmann's team a few weeks ago. Last week Fuller sent him some feedback on the changes Product Development was making in the 4491.

Fuller stated that the Product Development appreciate all the help TAP is providing.

### **Subcommittee Report-Out**

VITA Quality Review (QR) Subcommittee— Vanderver reported the Quality Review subcommittee had a list of approx. 12 items that were broken down amongst the team. John Kim also shared the subcommittee did not meet prior to this meeting. They will have a teleconference in two weeks. Buschmann's intention is to have all 12 recommendations re-done, edited and he was going to put it together in a coherent document. The quality subcommittee will review and make final changes so that in the August meeting it will be ready for approval to go forward.

Burton asked if the review form was completed. Kim stated that the form is complete; he just had problems with adding or deleting check boxes. Burton shared that he knows someone that can assist him in getting the form completed with the check boxes.

**VITA FEAB Subcommittee**—Ken Donnelly reported that the FEAB subcommittee is moving in the direction of putting the draft together. They discussed having the draft quality reviewed within the committee before it goes to Joint Committee. The goal is to have everything ready to go before August 3.

Vanderver shared that because VITA does not have a quality review team, each subcommittee reviews the other subcommittee's product.

Vanderver and Kim volunteered to look at FEAB's output. Coonradt, Axelrod and Donnelly volunteered to look at the Quality's output. Burton also agreed to make Lett-Deathe and himself available for any questions during the review.

### **Product Development Team**

Steinberg gave feedback from his first face-to-face meeting. He stated that it is incredible, but is a lot of work. It is amazing how many people are involved from various aspects. Steinberg said that along with the face-to-face in June, they have had several teleconferences and email correspondence. The team submitted the first draft to the vendor and now the team is looking at the review. Early this week the team received a draft of the proposed new tax schedule, tax rates, and earned income credit. The team has to go back and change some questions and answers. It is a lot of good work and it is amazing how many people have to be involved to put out a good product.

Vanderver inquired about Beta Testing. Fuller stated that they are still on target for the beta testing. They will be sending the information out on 3 August and there is a quick turn-around for the people that are participating. Maria has asked all the members of the test team to submit the names of the



people that will be beta testing. They will not get a copy of the revised 4491, but they will receive the test, the tax tables, etc. They will use their old 4491. The people that are beta testing the Health Savings Account (HSA) and the Cancellation of Debt (COD), since it's new they will get a word file or PDF copy of the 4491 in their package.

Burton asked as far as timing is concerned, once Young and Steinberg complete their week in Atlanta is there any other expectation from them. Fuller responded that will be the last time they need to travel. They may have to participate in some conference calls or email traffic asking for feedback, but that is the last face- to-face travel. Burton inquired when is the drop-dead date when the final changes are made to the testing materials. Fuller said that 7 September is the okay to print date. Anything else will be vendor misses. The final will post on IRS.gov 5 October.

Coondratt mentioned that the partner profile Lett-Deathe sent out did not include anyone in Nevada. Lett-Deathe stated it is likely that at that point in time not everyone had his or her information in the system. Coondratt asked that if she has that information available to send to him by email. He also asked if there has been an attempt to put together an analysis in partner profile details in terms of the levels of knowledge and awareness. Lett-Deathe stated that the information has been pulled, the team at the IRS is looking at writing the training material, incorporating brand new changes to the forms making it easier to capture as well as to incorporate a no level of engagement.

Coondratt asked what type of guidance the SPEC personnel has in terms of hands on with the partners in terms of showing them how to deliver FEAB services. Lett-Deathe shared that in the next round of training discussing the fact that primarily a partner's involvement in FEAB is only based upon their interest and their resource availability. If they are not interested in doing it, then we are not going to say this is one more program you have to deliver. This is to help our partners deliver program.

Coondratt asked if the FEAB lifecycle brochure been finalized? It has been approved and sent to publishing and is waiting on a proof back. In addition, the outreach product team is in house and they are reviewing it to give feedback. The product will not be ready to distribute until around September.

### **Meeting Close**

Vanderver thanked everyone for their participation and he is going to send out a reminder about the review of the opposite party's output.

**The next meeting scheduled is a teleconference August 10, 2010@ 2:00pm EST.**

\*Certification: These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on September 14, 2010.





**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
VITA Project Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
June 8, 2010**

**Designated Federal Official (DFO)**

Nancy Ferree, Acting DFO

**Members Present**

Justin Axelrod  
Raymond Buschmann  
Richard Coonradt  
Matthew Kosanovich  
Eboni Moss  
Timothy Oetken  
Stephen Vanderver

**Members Absent**

Ken Donnelly  
Gary Iskovitz  
Edward Johnson  
John Kim  
Jeffrey Steinberg  
Swarna Vallurupalli  
Marilyn Young

**Staff Present**

Anita Fields, Secretary  
Donna Powers, TAP Analyst  
Roger Burton, SPEC Territory Manager  
Kate Lett-Deathe, SPEC Territory Manager

**Guest(s) Present**

None Present

**Welcome/Announcements**

Stephen Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting. He made some opening comments and stated that he intends to stick to the agenda. Anita Fields conducted roll call and quorum not met.

**Review of Previous Meeting Minutes**

Not approved, quorum not met.

**Program Owners**

Roger Burton—stated that the face-to-face meeting was very successful. He stated that the Project Development Team is now nailed down. Burton thanked Ray Buschman for the very detailed minutes from the Quality Subcommittee meeting.

Burton also listed the different teams and their dates of travel.

Team A: Jeffery Steinberg (June 7-11)

Team A: Jeffery Steinberg and Marilyn Young (August 16-20)

Team B: No participant

Team C: Todd Oetken (June 14-18)

Team D: Review team, Ray Buschmann is the lead. The team consists of Ken Donnelly, John Kim and Steve Vanderver.

Kate Lett-Deathe—stated that the team met this morning and now they are back on track and Justin will discuss more during the report-out section.



### **Subcommittee Report-Out**

**VITA Quality Review (QR) Subcommittee**— Ray Buschmann said that after the subcommittee teleconference on Jun 1. He developed a draft called the project committee proposal. There was one suggestion that everyone agreed to, the suggestion is to make things more specific and make sure each item is separated, that makes it easier to deal with as it get processed through the IRS. The proposal was categorized in three groupings. 1). Training 2) Site/Local Coordinator 3) Miscellaneous, Marilyn Young and Steve Vanderver is reviewing paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 those deal with training. Jeffery Steinberg and Ed Johnson is reviewing paragraphs 7,8 and 9 deals with the site coordinator and John Kim and Gary Isowitz is reviewing paragraphs 5,6,10,11 and 12 deals with miscellaneous. These teams are going to polish and add bullet points to these paragraphs. Buschmann is pushing the teams to get their information back to him NLT July 13. He will then make the document flow cohesively. The July subcommittee conference call is rescheduled for July 27, 2010.

Buschmann shared that there is one Burton is trying to button nail down what the quality statistical survey showed in terms of failure to comply with site requirement, what the percentage was. The team thinks it is about a 25% failure. Burton reported that he has sent numerous follow-up emails and have not received an answer he is going to solicit the help of Cindy Jones to get the answer.

The subcommittee also worked on the Site Coordinator Module and a special form that the team is looking to create to allow the site coordinator to do a self-review of the site. The site review is going to be modeled after the form that the IRS uses in its USF reviews. Buschmann made some suggestions to try and simply the form and not go into the detail that the IRS does on there review. They hope to have this completed for final subcommittee review on July 27.

**VITA FEAB Subcommittee**—Axelrod reported that the subcommittee was broken up into two committees. He also mentioned that they moved their subcommittee teleconference to the second week of July. Axelrod said that each group is going to be writing up a recommendation. The entire project should be complete by mid to late of August. Axelrod said that the subcommittee is on track and they should have something more to report on the next call.

Burton recapped the teams participating in the Project Development Teams. Vanderver asked when the review is going to be sent out. Burton answered said that they should be coming out sometime in July.

Powers wanted to say thank you to everyone for everybody jumping through hoops to help get the Project Development Teams together.

### **Meeting Close**

Richard Coonradt shared with Burton that he appreciated the invite of Ron Smith at the VITA face-to-face meeting. Burton said that he is going to try to have them participate at each face-to-face meeting and possibly the Annual Conference. If they cannot be there, he would have them provide Burton and team an update.

Vanderver closed the meeting and reminded everyone the rescheduling of there subcommittee calls. Powers will send out a TAP Space reminder of the changes.

**The next meeting scheduled is a teleconference July 13, 2010@ 2:00pm EST.**

\*Certification: These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on July 13, 2010



**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
VITA Project Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
April 13, 2010**

**Designated Federal Official (DFO)**

Nancy Ferree, Acting DFO

**Members Present**

Justin Axelrod  
Raymond Buschmann  
Richard Coonradt  
Ken Donnelly  
Edward Johnson  
John Kim  
Matthew Kosanovich  
Jeffrey Steinberg  
Stephen Vanderver

**Members Absent**

Gary Iskovitz  
Ebony Moss  
Swarna Vallurupalli  
Timothy Oetken  
Marilyn Young

**Staff Present**

Anita Fields, Secretary  
Donna Powers, TAP Analyst  
Roger Burton, IRS Program Analyst  
Kate Lett-Deathe, IRS Program Analyst

**Guest(s) Present**

None Present

**Welcome/Announcements**

Stephen Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Review of Previous Meeting Minutes**

The committee approved the March meeting minutes by consensus.

**Program Owner**

Roger Burton reported that we are in the last 48 hours to close out filing season. He said that the Quality Team and the FEAB team are moving right along. The program owner will need a close out report NLT September 15, 2010.

During the face-to-face meeting, Burton will give more details on the Training Subcommittee. Burton shared that the Director of SPEC will be in Atlanta during the face-to-face meeting and would like to open. He is also going to try to get Darryl Lloyd to come over and give an overview on what they are looking for as it relates to training.

Vanderver informed that the both subcommittee meetings are still on for May 4, 2010.

**Subcommittee Report-Out**

VITA Quality Review (QR) Subcommittee— Ray Buschmann shared that Burton gave a report on quality statistical sampling from the filing season this year at the VITA/TCE sites. The quality of the



limited sampling returns seem to be much improved over prior years and it was also confirmed from the initial results being reported by TIGTA with accuracy rates of approx. 90%.

Burton said that since the last report, the TIGTA shopping rate has increased to 91% and Quality Statistical Sampling (QSS) is at 85%.

Buschmann shared that although QSS's that are being conducted at the VITA sites are good and the tools seem to make a lot of sense. However, awareness seems to be the problem.

He also shared that the subcommittee discussed that one aspect of this subcommittee review is to look at everything we have seen – is there anything that doesn't add value at all or can it be tweaked? With the five different levels of certification, should the courses be combined to get a more qualified preparer?

Topics discussed by the Quality Subcommittee. It is found that new volunteers and new site coordinators seem to generate for problems. The level of experience, should there be some requirement for a level of experience for a site coordinator?

The subcommittee was concerned that Interactive Tax Law Pilots of Tax Law are being done at some sites– maybe something down the road they will be in every site to help the preparers. The tax law information should be available to the public on [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

Buschmann feels that Awareness, Comprehension, Utilization, and Implementation of the tools at each site might be a problem.

John Kim suggested, since the accuracy percentage rate is high – (Management Effectiveness) – maybe the subcommittee should actually take a look at the management of the sites – (the coordinators) and focus on the coordinators instead of the preparers.

Most training is done with a mixture of face to face and internet training. Ninety-five percent of the military volunteers are new each year, so training starts all over from the beginning.

The subcommittee discussed if they visit sites, that maybe visiting the actual training courses as they are being taught is a possibility.

Some other questions and suggestions is that:

One problem is that errors occurring the seasons are not always communicated back to the sites until after the season is over. Should the recruitment website more adequately describe what is needed for the volunteers in terms of hours/time in training, etc? AARP makes volunteers pass all three levels. Maybe you get a better quality and a more dedicated person if they go through all three training levels. Site coordinator may be the key to quality preparers. Making sure they are qualified, how well they complete the intake form, and the quality review process. State tax returns are prepared in some states. Training varies by state. The VITA program is strictly federal tax returns.

Buschmann ended his report by stating that they will discuss these ideas further during the face-to-face meeting next month.

**VITA FEAB Subcommittee**—Justin Axelrod reported that they are on the right track and they are moving along. They have separated the subcommittee into two groups, and those two groups will start working on projects and at the end, they will put it all together.

Axelrod and Kate Lett-Deathe stated by the end of the face-to-face meeting the FEAB subcommittee would definitely have something on paper. Lett-Deathe said everything is broken down by objectives and recommendations that were set forth. One focus is going to be around partners and another focus is going to be around materials and training.



### **Meeting Close**

Anita Fields informed the committee that the rooming lists have been sent to the hotel and she will provide confirmation numbers shortly. Donna Powers asked for availability to discuss Agenda for face-to-face meeting. John Kim reported that last year during the training piece of VITA, he had to review the full document and the turn-around was one week to a week and a half. He generated volunteers both in the Area and VITA committees to help review the training documents. It began mid-June and it had to be completed by the end of July. Vanderver thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He reminded everyone of the next meeting date and time.

**The next meeting scheduled is a Face-to-Face meeting in Atlanta, GA May 6-7, 2010 @ 8:00am EST. \*Certification: These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on May 6, 2010.**



**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
VITA Project Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 9, 2010**

**Designated Federal Official (DFO)**

Nancy Ferree, Acting DFO

**Members Present**

Justin Axelrod  
Raymond Buschmann  
Richard Coonradt  
Ken Donnelly  
Gary Iskowitz  
Edward Johnson  
John Kim  
Matthew Kosanovich  
Timothy Oetken  
Swarna Vallurupalli  
Stephen Vanderver  
Marilyn Young

**Members Absent**

Eboni Moss  
Jeffrey Steinberg

**Staff Present**

Anita Fields, Secretary  
Donna Powers, TAP Analyst  
Roger Burton, IRS Program Analyst  
Cindy Jones, IRS Program Analyst  
Kate Lett-Deathe, IRS Program Analyst  
Fred McElligott, IRS Program Owner

**Guest(s) Present**

Sallie Chavez

**Welcome/Announcements**

Stephen Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Review of Previous Meeting Minutes**

The committee approved the February meeting minutes by consensus.

**Program Owner**

Roger Burton reported that the program owners, TAP employees and panel members had a meeting to ensure clarification on the subcommittee assignments. Burton also introduced Kate Lett-Deathe as the new program owner for the VITA Financial Education and Asset Building (FEAB) subcommittee. She is a SPEC Territory Manager from Kansas. She has been involved in FEAB since its inception.

**Subcommittee Report-Out**

VITA Quality Review (QR) Subcommittee—Vanderver reported the subcommittee discussed the tools for quality used by the preparers. He had the opportunity to share with the VITA committee some actual forms that were filed for an Indiana AARP site. He said that the forms are excellent and the tools are there, and if they are all used properly, there is no issue. That is what the quality team needs to ensure. Vanderver said there seems to be a problem with the site coordinators not following the training.



John Kim commented that there seems to be a problem with site coordinators being compliant. The training is good, and the panel needs to find a way to make the coordinators compliant. Gary Iskowitz shared with the committee that there are very distinct and different programs out there. It seems that the training materials are dummed down and it may be hard to get it accredited because it is not being taught at a college level. Iskowitz thinks there should be different training programs; one for university level and what we currently have. It was also mentioned on the Form 13614 there was no box for head of household. Vanderver explained that questions are on the form to help determine if the taxpayers are head of household or not.

Donna Powers informed the committee that the notes from the Quality Subcommittee call are posted to TAP Space.

Burton said that during the subcommittee call they shared year-to-date cumulative numbers from last filing season and where some of the problematic errors were. They also shared cumulative numbers from this filing season, cutting off around mid-February. Burton also sent out a link to everyone with the most prominent error reject codes for this year with the definitions.

**VITA FEAB Subcommittee**—Swarna Vallurupalli reported that the subcommittee did not meet in February due to the committee going through changes. Now that she has a little more direction, she has sent out information to the members of the subcommittee and plan to hold a meeting after April 15, 2010.

Justin Axelrod said that the committee is getting on track; they are waiting on Kate Lett-Deathe to send Vallurupalli some information. Once the information is out to all of the subcommittee members, which will be their basis where they start. He feels once they meet in April and discuss and plan where the subcommittee is going they will be on track and have something completed by the end of the summer.

Vanderver asked to be copied on information sent to FEAB.

Donna asked that she be copied on everything sent out.

Richard Coondradt asked Lett-Deathe to give a summary of where the FEAB subcommittee is going. Lett-Deathe gave a little background as to where they are in SPEC, she stated that the ultimate goal is that every VITA/TCE site, of which there are over 12,000, would offer some form or fashion a financial dissertation to every taxpayer that walks through their door.

The goal now is trying to figure out what the partners are currently doing. Figure out how we can share best practices from one partner to another, and how as SPEC employees we can help our partners become involved if they have no involvement whatsoever or more through to the highest level of involvement. The primary measure is the percentage of sites that have FEAB activities, they have workload indicators that include direct deposit percentages and various other indicators to include partners involved. There is a new form we are asking all the employees to prepare based on an evaluation at a partner level at this time. SPEC is hoping that TAP can help on several different levels. How do we leverage the model, how do we get FEAB activities and services drilled down to site level. We also like feedback if SPEC has chosen the right goals and measures. After the committee has looked at the training, we would like feedback, if we were on track with the training, is the training is going the right way, are we off base, and are there other ways we can improve the education of employees as well as the working relationship with our partners on FEAB.

### **Meeting Close**

Vanderver thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He reminded everyone on the next call date and time.

**The next meeting scheduled is a teleconference April 13, 2010 @ 2:00pm EST.**



**\*Certification: These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on April 13, 2010.**





**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
VITA Project Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
February 09, 2010**

**Designated Federal Official (DFO)**

Sallie Chavez, Acting DFO

**Members Present**

Raymond Buschmann  
Richard Coonradt  
Ken Donnelly  
Gary Iskowitz  
John Kim  
Matthew Kosanovich  
Timothy Oetken  
Jeffrey Steinberg  
Stephen Vanderver  
Marilyn Young

**Members Absent**

Justin Axelrod  
Edward Johnson  
Eboni Moss  
Swarna Vallurupalli

**Staff Present**

Anita Fields, Secretary  
Roger Burton, IRS Program Owner  
Cindy Jones, IRS Program Owner

**Guest(s) Present**

None

**Welcome/Announcements**

Stephen Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Review of Previous Meeting Minutes**

The approved meeting minutes from December by consensus.

**Administrative Recap of Annual Meeting**

Vanderver recapped the Annual Meeting. During the annual meeting, we discussed protocol, quorum, setting calls and dates for committee meetings. We also heard from the Program Owners about the program and the direction that we are headed. We broke into subcommittee groups and reported out. We also discussed other things that we can do to increase advertising and promotions for VITA services.

**Program Owner**

Roger Burton apologized for Fred McElligott for not being on the call today. Burton and Cindy Jones will represent McElligott's interest on today's call. Cindy Jones is on the call today she will be handling FEAB temporarily until we get a permanent analyst in position. They are trying to get someone that is a field territory manager. The VITA office want that someone to step up and assume the role of program owner or technical expert in the FEAB community. They have solicited someone that was involved on the internal side of FEAB working with procedures and policies relative to Financial



Education and Asset Building. Hopefully, we will know before the end of this week. Jones is going to remain a part of the program at least in a full committee capacity.

Burton said his observation from the first meeting is that we can always improve on communication. Burton stated that the confusion about calls and information needed for meeting has been corrected. He stated that he believes we got all the learning curves out of the way.

### **Subcommittee Report-Out**

VITA QR Subcommittee—Ray Buschmann reported the committee is focusing in on the committee issues by first trying to evaluate the quality process that is currently in place at the volunteer site. We are also evaluating tools that the IRS is using to review the sites to ensure compliance. The more difficult task is to make recommendations for improving the process. To help with the evaluation, Burton provided the subcommittee with forms 6729, 6729C, 6729R. There are job aids that go with each of the forms. The volunteer intake form, Form 13614C, which we are using at all the VITA sites. Vanderver commented that the 13614C is a great tool, but the volunteers are not using them. Buschmann stated that the Quality Subcommittee would be reviewing the following:

1. Roger will provide additional information on the usage and certifications in Link & Learn for the SC and the 13614-C modules, and on the results of the 6729C IRS reviews in '09
2. Further review of the Forms 6729, 6729C, 6729R and 13614C forms, the related Job Aides and the 10 Quality Site Requirements. The focus is not so much on word-smithing but are these the right tools? How can they be improved?
3. Evaluate the Link & Learn modules as a tool for quality improvement.
4. Are these tools of the IRS being effectively utilized? Is better education, communication, implementation needed?
5. What else should be considered by the IRS to improve quality at the volunteer site?

Burton stated there are some wonderful tools, but how do we let everyone know that the tools are there for them to use. Maybe the IRS should focus on improving the tools in the quality process. Vanderver stated that in his area they are trained to utilize the intake sheets. The training in certain area are getting lax and just not taught how to use it. Burton said that is going to help as well, if there are best practices out there it would be great for the subcommittee to hear that and try to encourage the IRS to have a vehicle for outreach education and communication to try to get the word out.

Cindy said that now that you are looking at the tools and marketing of them, some of the reports they get from the quality team could give the subcommittee of information on if they are actually using the tools.

Bushmann stated that the quality subcommittee consists of half of the members of the full committee. He said if any other of the committee members has thoughts or ideas on ways to improve the quality at the sites with way the IRS can help the process in monitoring and improving accuracy at the volunteer sites. Please speak up and you can to join the subcommittee call, which is held the Tuesday before the full committee call.

VITA FEAB Subcommittee—Matthew Kosanovich reported that Swarna Vallurupalli apologized for not being on the call, she was confused on the time and date. Kosanovich asked Burton to clarify what exactly the program owners want the subcommittee to do relative to FEAB.

Burton stated once a permanent program owner for the FEAB committee is in place you will get more of an understanding. During the Annual Meeting, in the issue proposal, at the 30,000 foot level relative to FEAB its to evaluate how SPEC engages the partners to effectively link FEAB to VITA/TCE sites, access the goals and objectives, how we measure outcomes, how we measure success relative to SPEC involvement in the FEAB support efforts. Then the expectation is to provide suggestions/feedback on we can engage partners, on existing goals and objectives that SPEC has in place relative to FEAB, on communication and training products relative to FEAB and lastly to



physically develop any FEAB related communication in training, products or tools. Burton stated that he sees it more as an outreach and education kind of task group with the sharing of best practices. The committee agreed by consensus to hold their face-to-face meeting May 5-7 in Atlanta Georgia. Travel on Wednesday, meeting all day Thursday and ½ day on Friday and travel Friday afternoon.

### **Meeting Close**

Vanderer thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He reminded everyone on the next call date and time.

**The next meeting scheduled is a teleconference March 09, 2010 @ 2:00pm EST.**

**\*Certification: These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on March 9, 2010.**