



** UNITED CONFEDERATION OF INTERSTELLAR PLANETS **

** XO Course GUIDE **

** Version 1 **

** By Rear Admiral Suzanna Blokpoel **

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

1. Introduction

Welcome to the XO training course! In this course, we will go over what it means to be an XO, the bigger picture up from being a Department Head, and also look at what is needed to become a CO in the future. We will build on the material covered in the Senior Officer Training course and continue that to the next level.

The reason to also cover the basics of COing is simple, as XO, you may need to step in and run the SIM in case your CO is on LOA. As many have said, theory isn't everything, and that is very true. At the same time, you need to know what you can and can't do, what you should and shouldn't do both as XO and as CO, so that when it becomes necessary to step in for your CO on a temporary basis, or even move up into the CO spot, you know at least in theory what it takes. As a result, this guide will draw heavily on the Command Course guide and will in many sections refer to that.

To pass the course, you will need to score 80% or higher on a theory exam and pass the practical portion of the course. And as a reminder, this is not a pass or fail course, if you do not make it to 80% on the first attempt, we will work with you on the issues that need more work until you do make it to the 80%.

Although throughout the guide we refer to CO and XO, the concepts are also valid for non Trek SIMs and in those cases, just substitute CO with Game Master and XO with Deputy Game Master.

2. What is an XO, and what are the duties of an XO

This is in many ways varied, we can write an entire book about this, and often for each CO it will be different. What will be covered here are some of the basics of what is expected of an XO.

2.1 What is an XO.

Above all, the XO helps run the SIM. The XO is the right hand of the CO. That means assist in all the duties that the CO has, both IC and OOC. The difficulty is in knowing when to step in and when not. Some COs have difficulty in delegating some of their responsibilities, others are more than happy to delegate. This includes logging / IRC Participation, SIM reports, welcoming new SIMmers, running parts of the plot, maintaining the website, keeping in touch with the crew, helping the Department Heads and other crew members where necessary, keeping track of the log count and (if used on the SIM) promotion points.

An XO is a jack of all trades, who communicates well with both the CO as well as the crew. The XO is someone who is supportive of the CO and the plot and through that to the SIM. Also, an XO should be proactive, in logging and in contact with the CO. A regular question to the CO should be: "Anything specific you want me to do?" A regular question to members of the crew should be, "Is everything ok? Are you having fun? Anything we can do to help or make it better?"

Every SIM command team is different. It's possible for a new CO to have a former CO or Division Commander as an XO just as likely as it is for an experienced CO to take over a SIM and name XO who's only been with the

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

SIM/organization a short while. Dynamics of each team change and can change over time.

Only when you keep asking those questions, will you get an idea of when you can and should step in and when not. Those are the questions that will see you get to know your CO and crew on a SIMming basis.

1.2 Duties of an XO

On the IC side of things, let's look at what is expected, taken for the majority from the Command Course guide.

As a character in the simulation, the First Officer is the Captain's hypothetical third arm and second mind. Thus, the job covers a complex set of in-simulation responsibilities. When on the bridge (if a ship-based SIM) with the CO, the XO should offer courses of action and advice by asking for information from the bridge officers, and making expected command orders (eg. going red-alert when encountering hostile threat) which the Captain needn't worry about. Unless ordered or expected otherwise, the First Officer's place is on the bridge with the Captain, (this is even more true on an IRC SIM).

Another duty is commanding the SIM in place of the CO (unless the Captain is incapacitated or unavailable, this should be an explicit order). In this situation the XO takes on most responsibilities, notifying the CO if his attention is required. Notification should be given to the Commanding Officer about incoming communication, security alerts, and other important issues; minor problems need not be reported to the CO if the XO can handle the problem. If the CO is incapacitated or unavailable, then the XO takes all responsibilities until the CO is available and fit to resume command.

There are some Non-bridge duties which are common or expected of the First Officer. These include, but are not limited to, advising the Captain during diplomacy, leading away teams, ensuring the Captain's safety when he must leave the ship, and keeping tabs on how the crew feel about the Captain. It is also common for a CO to have the XO personally oversee important tasks elsewhere on the ship, eg. moving critical supplies into storage.

From an IC perspective, the XO often deals with the personnel specific issues before giving recommendations to the Captain (remember Riker and Troi doing crew evaluations?) In Email SIMs, an XO can do follow up logs with Department Heads following a CO log with orders, and IC talk to them to find out how they are doing with their tasks.

On an OOC basis, in IRC, one of the out of character duties of the XO include bringing the crew to attention before and after the simulation. The XO usually plays the characters on the view-screen (preferably changing nicknames before doing so) that the ship encounters. Simulations are different in the respect of what OOC duties are assigned to the XO and what duties are not. As the Executive officer, it is key to talk to your Commanding Officer and find out exactly what is expected of you, before you step onto the bridge for the first time.

As mentioned before, it is always important to keep in touch with the CO on an OOC basis. Talk in email or in a chat medium, about the current (for email) or up coming plot. The CO needs to make sure that the XO

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

knows what the overall direction of the plot is so that the XO can help run the plot. If you, as XO, feel you do not have enough information, keep asking the CO and making contact with the CO about it.

Another key thing to remember is that as XO, you are part of the Command Team, and you have to lead by example, at all times!

3 Specific Command topics

In this section, we will cover some of the basics of command, and for a large part, these are taken straight out of the Command Course guide with additional comments and guidance. I am not going to cover all of the topics of the Command Guide, just the key ones that you are likely going to have to assist with. Once you have completed reading this guide, I do recommend you go through the Command Guide as well, so you can see the even bigger picture.

3.1 Chain of Command

In any organisation, especially one that is based on a military structure like the various fleets are, there is a Chain of Command to the top level President.

Dept. Head -> XO -> CO -> Section Manager-> Divisional Director -> Vice President ->President

Those Sims that have either First Force Teams or a Full Unit, Marine Detachments or Civilians or all three have to account for those sub-chains. While the Marine Cmdr or Civilian Governor can run separate plots for their respective people, they ultimately report to the CO/XO of the SIM they are a part of and should provide the courtesy of informing the CO/XO of their plot plans so the Command Team knows what's going on and whether anything might clash. Ie. Marine Cmdr may want to run 'war games' off ship/planet but CO/XO wants to use the Marines in the main colony plot...they need to keep each other informed.

Marine -> Marine Cmdr -> XO -> CO -> Section Manager-> Divisional Director -> Vice President -> President

Operator -> Team Leader/Unit CO -> XO -> CO ->Section Manager/FFCO-> Divisional Director -> Vice President ->President

Civilian -> Civ. Governor -> XO -> CO ->Section Manager-> Divisional Director -> Vice President ->President

That means that an assistant with a problem should first go to the Dept. Head, if it can't be resolved, it goes to the XO. From there if unresolved it will go to the CO, Section Manager, Divisional Director etc. In the case where for instance, the Subfleet Commander is also the CO, the matter will be automatically deferred to the Deputy. When you are asked to deal with an issue, it is good to keep the CO informed and CC or BCC emails to the Command list of the SIM.

The chain of command will be enforced and not bypassed. There have been instances that a CO, for instance, has bypassed a Section Manager and gone straight to the Divisional Director. The opposite has also happened and people up the chain have gone straight to COs rather than work through the Chain of Command.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

If you do jump the chain of command, don't be surprised if you are told to follow the chain, and to take it to the right person. Anybody found jumping the chain of command will be referred back to the right person in the chain. There is a major effort going on in the UCIP to improve our communications, and we need your help in doing so. Jumping the Chain of Command does not help our attempt to improve communications; it also shows a lack of respect to the officer being left out in the chain.

3.2 Setting the Example

As you can see, there are a lot of things for a leader to do. Each leader is going to do these things a little but different from another leader. And that is all right. Still, there is one thing that every leader of a simulation wants to do and that is set the example!

Setting the example is the most crucial part to your job descriptions. Often the crew you lead will learn most of what they know about Simulations and Command from your example. You are their model of what a Commanding Officer or Executive Officer is. Your ideals will become their ideals, your skills you will pass along to them. If it looks like you think you can do things in a sloppy fashion, the crew will soon think they can too. If you're always talking about how a plan you have won't work, that's what your crew will think as well. However, if you are enthusiastic, they will be enthusiastic as well!

3.3 Edification and Respect

Linked closely with setting the example is that Command Team Officers are expected to have a professional and respectful attitude when dealing with our peers in UCIP. Yes, this is a game, but we still need to bear professionalism in what we do in mind, regardless of personal feelings, especially when you get to the level of XO, CO and higher.

It's a simple concept: treat people the way you want to be treated yourself. Your Divisional Directors expect you as Command Officers to set an example and to lead by this example. We can not ask people to do what we are not prepared to do ourselves.

This also has to do with edification, talk positive about people. The dictionary definition of 'to edify' states: To instruct, especially for moral and personal improvement. What does it mean in practice... Talk positive about those on your level and your superiors to those under your command and treat everyone, regardless of status or who they are with respect. Think about it... if you were to talk negative about your superiors to your crew. It not only makes the superior look bad, but also the UCIP and you, yourself, will look bad... But what is there to stop your crew from talking equally negative about you to their peers and those under their command? They will do as you do, not as you say.

We all need to blow off steam at times and are unhappy about things happening. That is understandable, but don't complain down the chain of command, to your crew. If you feel the need to blow off steam, talk and complain UP the chain of command.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

3.4 Potential Problems

Below are some potential problems you may encounter while running a SIM and ways to compensate/adapt to them.

3.4.1 SLOW simulation (How to keep it alive)

At times, a simulation may run slowly. Primarily, this is due to key officers not having much to do, being incompetent in playing their role, or experiencing networking/Email or OOC RL trouble. When the simulation is going slowly, and network trouble is not suspected, prompting key officers into getting more involved is a first step. Asking for more input from them, or ordering them into doing a long-term activity like keeping watch for certain conditions, going to a part of the ship to fix something, etc. The XO should be watching for occasions such as this and should handle them personally if possible.

In Email, this can be done by posting a log, specifically asking them for, or ordering them to do the above mentioned suggestions, or doing a joint log with them. It is not advisable to create a completely new subplot in an attempt to speed up the plot in these circumstances. This could only cause (more) confusion with the officer involved and even the rest of the crew. Remember to leave enough time for the existing subplots to develop in Email.

Also check whether an officer that seems quiet or hesitant is such because of their incompetence in playing their role. They may need coaching in what they need to do, or in a more extreme case, asking them to yield their post to another crewmember.

Part of the job of the Executive Officer is to make sure that the crew is able to do their duties. The CO may flag out a specific individual to the XO so that the individual may be instructed in message on what to do in IRC, or in email SIMs with OOC Emails or IC interaction. The XO is an extension of the Academy in the effect that it is their responsibility to ensure the training at the academy took hold and that individual is ready to do their job; if not... train them.

In case a crewmember or crewmembers seems to be experiencing network troubles in IRC, A CO can wait until they recover, or re-assign someone to take their place if possible. The main thing is to make sure the simulation continues despite the trouble of one officer, unless of course that officer is singularly important to the simulation. If a key officer is incapacitated in some way, and the CO feels that the situation will be resolved, it is appropriate to either use ACTIONS or PAUSE the simulation until they are able to recover.

In Email cases of a crewmember or crewmembers seemingly experiencing OOC problems that prevent logging, the CO can wait until they recover by speaking for that character in the mean time in your logs if required, or re-assign someone to take their place if possible in an acting position if the problems last longer. As in IRC, the main thing is to make sure that the plot continues despite the trouble of one officer, unless of course that officer is singularly important to the plot. A lot of this is learned through experience, so pay attention to your CO and observe how he / she paces the plot.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

3.4.2 LOSS OF CONTROL (How to keep it in-line)

Inexperienced members who freeze up during an IRC simulation, or stop logging in Email, are one thing, but one that causes loss of control is another. When faced with a situation where the plot is going where it's not supposed to, the CO / XO must determine why. In IRC if a particular officer is at fault, they need to be contacted in private, or if need be, in the channel with double brackets << >> to re-direct their playing to be more on the correct course of the plot.

In Email, if a particular officer is at fault, they need to be contacted in a private Email asking them what they had in mind for this subplot and pointing out that subplots with major implications to the main plot need to be cleared before being posted to the listserv.

If a log introduces a sub plot that is totally away from the plot direction you have in mind, a CO can send an OOC message over the listserv to retract the whole log, or part of the log. This should only be used as a *total LAST RESORT*, for instance in case of fleetplot where this log would impact on other SIMs in a major way. Generally speaking the CO and XO need to incorporate as much as possible from that log and only changing the very bare minimum of the details from the 'wayward' log in their own log to steer the plot back in the direction it needs to go. This shows not only leadership on command team's part, but also the ability to improvise and adapt to the circumstances. Because, if it has been posted IC in a log... it has become fact and has happened and it needs to be dealt with. The key of doing this is in the creation of a sequence of events, doing this you can make nearly anything fit into your plot.

Retracting a log should be AVOIDED at all cost and as said above, only ever be a LAST RESORT because the retraction of a log over the listserv not only crushes the self-confidence of the officer involved, he/she may not have been aware of the implications of their log, it also sends a message to the rest of the crew that will stifle their creative endeavours and their willingness to add to the plot for fear of a public retraction. If a log needs to be retracted or changed because it is impossible to 'fix' it in your own log, it would be better to contact the officer in question in private explaining the problem and asking them to change their log themselves, assuming that the circumstances in the plot allow for this of course.

In IRC, if it seems the loss of control is due to no one particular person, private notes to key officers, or an ACTION:, are likely what's needed. If the CO feels the need for a total stop in the simulation, at last resort the CO may use a PAUSE in order to calm a situation down and enable your crew to re-focus on the simulation. In Email, private emails to key officers, or a log from the CO or XO are likely what's needed to steer the plot back into the desired direction.

Note that there is potential for one member of the crew (or a guest) to intentionally attempt to crash the simulation. Don't tolerate it! In IRC, kick and ban the offender from the channel if they do not yield to warnings. If the crew all have Ops or Voice, Moderating the Channel (+m) is another way. In Email, remove the person from the listserv and change the setting of your listserv so only people subscribed to the listserv have posting access. In both cases report their behaviour to their CO if they belong to another simulation.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

3.4.3 TIME LINE ISSUES

In Email SIMs it's important to keep track of the timeline and regular time skips are necessary. Email SIMs do not use the ACTION command as such, as IRC SIMs do, to speed up the plot. It's up to the CO and XO to pace the plot in your logs and any necessary time jumps need to be made clear in your logs. Unlike IRC SIMs, OOC time is very rarely the same as IC time. Different crew members can be logging about the same thing at different points during the week. And in general it is best to avoid too many direct references to time in logs.

Care should also be taken as it's very easy to get stuck logging about events that take IC only a few days for several weeks of OOC time when that was not the intention. If this has happened, the CO needs to make sure that a time jump happens before the new plot starts.

Although the duty logs come first, the crew on Email SIMs needs time to do personal logs, and for that to happen IC time needs to pass. The crew needs time off duty to sleep and handle personal matters. Personal logs are very important in Email SIMs as they build the characters, they give an insight into them which will make it easier for other crew members to interact. As such, personal logs, promotes interaction among the crew, which in turn will help make them feel part of the team and that improves the overall quality of the SIM.

Crew members on IRC sims, can also log if they wish. It allows them to add in extra detail or to work on character development - Off duty time, convey something about their personality/background. While not essential, do add to the overall quality.

4. IC related Command Team issues

4.1 Beginning and Ending a Simulation

4.1.1 IRC:

This outline is used by most UCIP IRC SIMs, with some variations.
Starting: Procedure to begin a simulation

Call for attention (usually done by XO). This is normally done with:

```
<CmdrKeen> ATTENTION ON DECK!
```

All crew should respond with ::attn::, then if it is the XO that called for attention, then (s)he should say:

```
<CmdrKeen> The crew is at attention, Sir ::attn::
```

Assign absentee and guest positions (optionally have everyone report their positions for the guests). Give mission, then ask for questions.

Start simulation. Usually like this:

```
<CaptKangaroo> ***** BEGIN Simulation *****
```

Pausing: Procedure to stop a simulation in the middle (A pause is a very handy tool for a Commanding Officer to use however should only be used

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

when an ACTION can not resolve the conflict. A pause disturbs the flow of the simulation and should only be used in emergencies where private messages and IC actions can't resolve the conflict or if too many crew are lost in a netsplit to continue)

Pause simulation and call for attention. Example:

```
<CaptKangaroo> ***** Pause Simulation *****  
<CmdrKeen> ATTENTION ON DECK!
```

Then, the following:

CO makes comments to resolve the situation which stopped the simulation A brief re-cap of what has occurred up to the pause. Crew is asked for questions.

Un-Pause simulation and continue with simulation. Example:

```
<CaptKangaroo> ***** Resume Simulation *****
```

Ending: Procedure to end the simulation for the day

End simulation and call for attention. Example:

```
<CaptKangaroo> ***** END Simulation *****  
<CmdrKeen> ATTENTION ON DECK!
```

Then, the following in whatever logical order: (most of them optional)

- CO makes comments
- Request for comments (NOT OPTIONAL)
- Promotion ceremony (if any are due - this is sometimes done at the start of the SIM by some CO's)
- CO reports what is planned for next week
- Crew is dismissed

Requesting for comments is NOT optional. There has also been a slight trend for making promotions before the simulation than afterwards; it is the decision of the CO to decide to do it then rather than after a simulation.

4.1.2 Starting and Stopping an Email plot

It's the CO's, or in the CO's absence the XO's, responsibility to start the plot. This is done by posting a 'plot starting log'. This log should contain enough background information and orders to set the scene, such that the rest of the crew has an indication of where the plot will be heading and they can then start logging accordingly.

Email plots don't always have a clear ending, as one plot sometimes rolls into the next. But where possible a concluding log, which has a short overview of the events that have happened, and perhaps a mention of the performance of the crew is advisable. An example would be to use a 'Captain's log, Stardate:...' for this purpose.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

4.2 Mission Briefings / Mission Statements / Plot Starters

There should be no need to introduce Mission Statements, or briefings to an experienced IRC simmer. In Email however, the plot doesn't start without a 'plot starting log' from the CO, or in the CO's absence the XO, it's their responsibility to start the plot. This log should contain enough background information and specific orders to set the scene, such that the rest of the crew has an indication of where the plot will be heading and what they need to do to get started in the plot. The plot starting log should paint a picture of the situation as it is at the moment and give a good indication of what can be expected, ie, what sort of direction the plot is going. The latter is done by issuing specific orders to all Department Heads. They will then log accordingly, adding to the plot themselves as it develops. Remember, unless they are told IC in a briefing or other way, via message or comm badge.. they do not know things. The CO (or XO) needs to talk to your crew to get them started in the plot.

Remember that the CO has to look at the bigger picture, and needs to ensure that **all** your department heads are involved in the plot and are given information and orders in your plot starting log. They will then involve their assistants. If it is not possible to involve all the department heads, a small subplot can be created for them (or allowing them to create their own, discussing it with you of course) until they can be involved in the main plot.

It may be worthwhile to note that there are several types of missions, depending on what the CO (or XO) want your crew to simulation on a particular week or during a particular plot. The different kinds can be broken down into this list:

Exploration - Going to "uncharted sectors", and the like.
Scientific - Investigating scientific phenomena, like "polarized nebula".
Rescue - Investigating why a ship/outpost is experiencing trouble.
Tactical - simulation involving combat, or military-related missions.

At times two or more Sims (or an entire fleet) may band together to a common plot, and often this may call upon more of one type of simulation than another. For instance, when a fleet-wide plot has many simulations fighting off an invading force, many simulations during this situation will be Tactical simulations.

Afterwards, there may be some Rescue simulations for fallen comrades. Two Sims that agree to become a two-ship mission of voyage on the outer rim of known space will have a lot of Exploration- and possibly Scientific-type simulations. And so on. On the whole and during times when the SIM is acting alone, however, a good mix of all types is a good idea in general. If you have any trouble knowing what each of these types involves, ask the instructor for examples.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

4.3 Away Teams

Unless an Away Team mission is completely safe, e.g. dining on another secure ship, or going to a diplomatic gathering, the Captain should never lead an away team. Instead, this is the responsibility of the First Officer and (s)he selects the members of the team. The CO advises the XO on the selection of members of the away team in critical missions (taking OOC into account as well as the IC need for certain people). It is suggested that the XO be allowed the control to select his or her team as the XO will be the one working closely with the individuals.

When preparing for an Away Team, make sure to select the appropriate officers for the teams needs. Almost always take a Medical officer (preferably the CMO) along in case illness befalls the Team. Tactical and/or Security officers (and, a "team" of NPC security personnel if wanted) are a good idea for potential combat. Science, Chief Ops and Engineering are appropriate for situations that require scientific investigation or technological study/fixing.

As for equipment: Hand phasers and tricorders are usually appropriate for any situation where the Away Team is going into unknown situation, even if encountering hostilities doesn't seem likely. Type-III Phaser Rifles, on the other hand, are expected in case of an away mission where there will be hostilities. Environmental suits are needed for radiation, non-breathable (or complete lack of) atmosphere, and zero-gravity environments. You might even want to bring transporter beacons in case you need them to come back to the ship.

Once the team is ready, the away team leader should contact the bridge (or a transporter chief, if your ship has one) to transport the team, then notify the ship once you successfully materialize. Keep it in mind to notify the ship often as the mission unfolds. As soon as the away team leaves the vessel, the away team leader is in command, regardless of rank.

During the Away mission, the command team needs to make sure to stay focused on accomplishing the goals, as opposed to concentrating too much on one find. Away missions have a tendency to prolong an IRC simulation beyond its normal time, which for some members puts a kink in their real-life schedule, or some may have back-to-back Sims since it may be the only day they have to sim. In addition, sometimes concentrating too much on fine details in a simulation simply produces a lesser-quality simulation than if it were kept moving.

As an away team leader you take on the functions and responsibilities for that team, that the CO has over the entire ship. As the leader you control the activities of the crew assigned to you. You must keep the plot moving along and be able to keep the team on task.

Like in IRC, in Email, Away missions have a tendency to prolong the plot, too. This can cause problems if the outcome of the Away Mission is crucial for the plot and takes too long to complete, resulting in the crew back on the ship not being able to move the plot forward. It's then the CO's responsibility to ensure that both sub-plots, the away team and what happens on board, keep enough pace and don't run too far apart in the time line.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

4.4 Directing the plot

In Email, after the plot has been started and the crew has started logging based on the 'plot starting log', the CO will need to post logs as and when the plot requires it. Please remember that the general logging requirement is only one log a week and the crew will need *at least* 24 to 48 hours to respond to logs. In your logs, as CO, you need to clarify situations, make decisions, and in doing so steer the plot in the direction you want it to go.

It's the CO's and XO's responsibility to ensure that the logs posted by the crew are tied into the main plot line and story. This is done by creating a sequence of events from the crew logs, confirming details established in those logs from the crew and on a regular basis establishing an overview of what has happened in your logs (the latter can be achieved by reflecting back briefly over what has happened in the last few hours/days for example) before moving the plot forward again. This is to make sure that the logs posted by the crew make sense within the plot, creating cohesion and become a story rather than stay loose and 'bitty'.

You can, and at times, will need to speak for some of your officers in your logs to ensure that your orders are carried out and for the plot to be moved forward. Care should be taken though that when you do, you portray the character correctly. Play it on the side of caution if you are unsure, and keep the conversation to a minimum without harming the log or the plot.

Attention to the *DETAILS* in the logs from your crew is *CRUCIAL*, and whenever possible you should use them. The logs from the crew need to be confirmed in the logs from the CO and XO. Not necessarily by quoting them literally, but by using the information given in those logs to move the plot forward and dealing with the situations in the subplots created by the crew. The crew wants and *NEEDS* to have the freedom to add to the plot, move it forward with their own ideas as well. They will become disillusioned and eventually drop out if they can't or if they *feel* they can't, and if they are always only filling in the bits after the event so to speak. They each have a great imagination, let them help you write the plot and unfold the story.

Having said that, the crew should be made aware that major changes to the plot should be cleared by the CO and/or XO before being posted to the list.

Extra subplots should only be introduced by the CO if the crew are not doing so themselves, or if the plot needs to be guided into a specific direction.

Unlike IRC SIMs, Email SIMs have more depth rather than width, and creation of subplots by the CO for the sake of it, is not encouraged. Too many subplots make the plot too complicated and confuse the crew. They won't know what to focus on and the result is half finished subplots that haven't had the opportunity to be properly developed because of time constraints and the possible confusion. This in turn will harm the overall quality of the plot and the SIM.

Also, be aware *NEVER* to end your log with a cliff hanger, it may look good for a general non-participating reader. But unless someone else in

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

the crew knows how you want to move the plot forward and will do so within 24 hours of your cliff hanger, such an end of the CO or XO's log will stop the plot dead in the water until one of you logs again and move the plot forward.

Email SIMs move slower than IRC SIMs, they are generally less 'action packed' in the sense of direct interactive action, but they more than make up for that in having more depth and background. Allow at least 24 to 48 hours for the crew to respond to logs and as CO you should not expect more than one log per week from each of your crew members.

It should also be noted that an Email CO has less *direct* control over the plot than an IRC CO. If something has been posted in a log, it *has happened* and you as CO and XO need to deal with it. It can not just be ignored. It requires the ability to improvise and adaptability on the part of the Email CO to be able to deal with the things your crew will add to your plot. Everything fits, otherwise we'll make it fit... and doing exactly that is half the fun of Email COing ;-).

5. Administrative Tasks - OOC Duties of the Command Team

This section contains information, examples and options on ways to maintain the OOC requirements expected of a CO (or XO) in UCIP, while recognizing that all CO's will develop their own unique way of accomplishing the same goals. Again, this section for a large part has been taken from the command guide and only been slightly edited for this guide.

Some duties can be passed to the XO or 2XO to take care of. It helps them to understand what's involved in the background with running a SIM, and is something that should be encouraged. You, as XO should also ask your CO to help with the OOC side of the SIM. Having said that:

"You can delegate Responsibility, but you can't delegate accountability". This means a CO can pass on tasks to other members of the crew, but ultimately the CO is responsible for making sure they are done in a timely fashion. That does not mean that the XO or 2XO can just leave things be, if they realise that the CO is struggling then volunteer to help, and also, let the CO know that if YOU are unable to do something that you normally do for the SIM and do so before the CO asks why it wasn't done ;).

Tasks such as rosters, welcoming new crew whether they be new cadets or transfers from other SIMs. Promotions, especially those to LtCmdr and above, should only be done and authorised by the CO. Whether the CO does all of these or the XO takes part depends on the CO.

As you gain experience and confidence in the Command positions the Command Team will find what works best for them. There is no right or wrong way to these duties, but in some cases there are certain requirements of information which must be included.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

5.1 Personnel Duties:

5.1.1 Roster:

It's surprising how often such a simple but important list can be neglected for months. Keeping a list of crew and their assigned position is important because your crew must know each other and what position they SIM in without having to guess; outsiders may also want to know who is in your simulation as well.

Given this importance, the roster should be kept accurate. The crew should receive regular updates via email, and it should preferably be accessible to others via a webpage. Don't rely on your crew to look up the roster on a webpage if you have it there already -- they can't be bothered enough -- so DO send them regular updates. Also, as a CO, make sure that your XO has an accurate roster even when the rest of the crew haven't received an update in a while; at some time they will need to become an ACO, and having an out-of-date or no roster is unhealthy to that week's simulation when that time comes (this is especially true for IRC SIMs).

Simply put, to make and keep a roster, make a list of all posts in your simulation, and fill in the name of the officer and their current rank next to that post. Add more details if you wish (species and gender are good to include). Then, make changes whenever something occurs -- a new recruit joins, a promotion, replacement/removal when a crew member leaves the simulation or goes AWOL for too long, etc.

When a cadet resigns, transfers, goes on an extended LOA, or even goes AWOL, they should be removed from the active roster but save all the information should be saved. There is always a chance you will be asked for that information in the future, and it might come in handy.

Also keep extra roster information in addition to what is published to your crew and the world -- last promotion dates, whether a cadet has gone through Academy, attendance/logs-done, and possibly other data. This data assists the CO in doing their job as a commander of a simulation.

What you use to keep this information is up to you... Some programs you could use to keep this information up to date could include:

Wordpad, Word, Excel (or some other version of spreadsheet). If you feel you can, even a database could be established to contain all the information. Remember though, make sure both you as the CO and your XO have the same program if you want to have a backup copy and the other is kept with an up-to-date copy.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

The first two could look something like this:

CREW ROSTER:

Position	Name	Rank	Contact Email
Captain	Kangaroo	Captain	bouncy@toomuch.tv
First Officer	Michael Keen	Commander	peewee@football.net
Tactical	Dana Sterling	Lieutenant	dana@distraction.com
Operations/Ops	Zatharos	Lieutenant	humpback@notre.ac.uk
Navigator/Helm	Ro Laren	Ensign	striking@dangerous.net
Chief Engineer	Rebo of Bab	Cadet	rebo@quack.com
Asst-1 Engineer	Zooty of Bab	Cadet	zooty@zoot-zoo.net
Asst-2 Engineer	- open -		
Chief Medical	Musica Masters	Ensign	musica@robototechnology.com
Asst-1 Medical	- open -		
Asst-2 Medical	- open -		
Chief Security	Jenifer Riley	Ensign	badgirl@aliens.com
Asst-1 Security	- open -		
Asst-2 Security	- open -		
Chief Science	John Galen	Lt. JG	professor@startrek.com
Asst-1 Science	- open -		
Asst-2 Science	- open -		

An advantage of Excel (or some other version of spreadsheet) is you can use a tab for each crew member, recording the information required including attendance records. With this method, you can create a template then make enough copies for you current crew. Make sure you keep one blank to make a new tab for a new crew member. If someone leaves, you can move the tab to the end maybe using the template tab as the break between current and past crew.

5.1.1.1 Rosters and Transfers

This is the prime reason for keeping accurate and detailed records - eventually a crewmember may transfer to another SIM and like it or not, sometimes they don't keep their bios up-to-date. And it'll be Murphy's Law that the one that wants to transfer off is one of those that doesn't keep their bio updated.

The information needs to be provided to the new CO. Below is a very basic text record, (you could use other programs to record the information), but everyone has a text editor of some kind.

If you use a different program to record the information, you may need to convert it to a text form to send to the new CO via email.

A Simple text Crewmember record:

Name: Dana Sterling
Rank: Lieutenant
Post: Tactical
Email: dana@distraction.com

Promotion Dates:

240207.30 Lieutenant
240204.23 Lt Jnr Grade
240202.05 Ensign
240201.01 Joined as Cadet

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

Awards:

240207.23 Purple Heart
240207.02 Meritorious Service Medal
240203.12 Golden Shield Award
240202.19 Purple Heart

Academy Courses:

Basic IRC
Tactical
Engineering
Senior Officer Course

Attendance:

Either a copy and paste of the spreadsheet, or a written summary based on the record of the crew member in question.

5.1.2 Accepting New Personnel

A simulation needs new people from time to time. If this process of adding new officers doesn't occur, eventually degradation will happen as each crewmember becomes either temporarily or permanently unable to attend anymore. So, it is vitally important to respond positively to new applications, assuming you're not receiving too many. Either the CO or XO can handle this process; which one will be a decision by the CO. Be sure that, if you're the one doing the personnel duty, your other-half is kept updated on happenings with personnel, and for the records, it is good practice to CC the command team list.

Sometimes you can not simply rely on applications from personnel as being your only source of incoming cadets. It is suggested that if you need crew that you go out and recruit your own people. Recruitment can be done in many ways, just keep in mind to be friendly with everyone you meet. As you recruit you represent UCIP.

How to accept a new recruit (step-by-step):

Send a "welcome" reply to the application. Simply hit "reply" to the application letter, in your email program, and be sure to replace the TO: header with the cadet's email address. (Your mailer may automatically choose to reply to the personnel officer that forwarded the application; they do not want your reply.) In this response, include:

- + That their application is accepted,
- + That they are assigned the post they requested, a different (eg. an assistant) post, or if they need to choose another (and list the ones that are available),
- + Note that their current rank is Cadet, and
- + Information about your simulation including a brief summary of current plot and the fact they need to attend the Academy's simulation-Guide course (and information about how to attend).
- + Give them info about the SIM, the URL of your website, how and where to find the channel in IRC.

Note also that your Divisional Director(s) may also wish to be CCed on cadet replies; please check this with them.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

Have the cadet attend 3 of your simulations (or produce 3 weeks of Email logs). At the end of their 3rd simulation-week, if they already finished their training (if they go to the Academy, you will receive a note when this happens), promote them to Ensign. Please note that a new member to UCIP can not be promoted to Ensign if they have not completed the Basic SIM guide course in the Academy

Some COs follow the rule that, when a Cadet turns Ensign on a simulation, that an email is sent to the entire crew officially welcoming them to the ship/starbase/SS unit/colony. You may wish to follow this as part of your procedure for initiating Cadets as part of your crew.

5.1.3 Accepting an existing UCIP officer (Transfers, New Characters)

Sometimes an existing UCIP officer wants to either drop their simming with another simulation and sim with you instead (or the other way around), or may decide to be on your simulation in addition to being on another simulation.

The procedure for both is simple:

Transfers:

The former case, dropping their character from the previous simulation, is called a transfer. Preferably, a member should use the online transfer form found on the UCIP website. Both the previous and next COs of the transfer will receive notice of the request.

When an officer of yours is transfer out, you should reply to the transfer request -- TO: the new CO, CC: your officer and the personnel officer forwarding the request, and including:

- + Your acceptance or rejection of the request (and give a reason as to why)
- + If accepted, details about the officer -- full name, rank, last promotion date, and any other information. The more you can provide to the new CO the better.

(see 3.1.1.1 Rosters and Transfers)

When you are receiving a transfer, you reply confirming your acceptance or rejection of the transfer, and acknowledge receipt of the data from the previous CO.

Once both sides have confirmed the transfer, the member is officially a member of the new simulation. Be sure to note the addition to your next simulation report.

New Characters:

All new characters will start at a rank no higher than Ens/2Lt or Spec/LCpl. The rank of Cadet/Cfc/Pfc is issued to new members of the UCIP, who have not completed the basic Academy for their SIM format. A rank up to LtJg/1Lt or PO3/Cpl may be granted to UCIP members who have higher ranked characters, however, this is not a given right, this is subject to the COs discretion and simmer's completion of the relevant basic course to the type of SIM format. Characters from other groups may request a rank transfer from their previous group but this is subject to discretion of the Division Commander.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

In the latter case, creating a new character on your simulation, it is a simple matter of accepting the officer into your simulation. The new character must start at Ensign or equivalent -- they cannot use a rank they have already earned, as this is a new character. You may record their first attendance / log as their last-promoted date for consideration when they are promoted to LtJG (or equivalent).

Finally, note the roster change in your next simulation report for personnel to see.

Traps: when accepting an existing officer's new character, check that..

..that they are not using the same character on two (or more) simulations. This conflicts per the UCIP-Internet bylaws. If they already have that character on another simulation (and not transferring), and ask them to create a new one -- it will help add creativity to your simulation.

..that they are not on too many simulations. When this occurs, simming ability can be thinly stretched; it can take away from your simulation, and may prevent new members arriving if your ship is nearly full. Talk with your officer if you know they are on multiple simulations -- it may be wise to refuse, or observe their performance just in case.

5.2 Promotions:

5.2.1 Promotion of positions

When faced with crew leaving, especially at XO and Senior Officer level, be it for RL reasons a person no longer having the time to SIM, or be it for a transfer to another SIM. Always look INSIDE your own SIM first for a replacement, and do not be put off by a 'low' rank. I've seen COs look outside their SIM for these positions and when I questioned why not promote from within the SIM, I heard the answer 'they are not ready'.

They may not be ready at this moment in time, but give them a chance. You show not only to the officer in question that you have confidence in their potential, you also show the rest of your crew that you believe in them and their abilities. You show that you are prepared to train and invest time and effort in your own crew. Sometimes all a junior officer needs is a little push, be challenged or given the chance to show what her or she is capable of.

"To give an indication, I was assigned as IC XO on an email SIM 4 weeks into LtJg, when I had barely figured out what I was supposed to do as Chief Science. I didn't think I was ready. But the CO had seen the potential that was there and threw the challenge at me. I was given direction and clear orders IC and OOC hints as to what was expected and within a few weeks I started to grow into the position and the rest is history ;-). "

[Suzanna Blokpoel]

(Division Director of Starfleet Nov 2400 - Feb 2402, Chief Commandant UCIP Academy)

Don't ever be put off by a low rank or someone being in an assistant position, I have seen several Cadets who started out in Assistant

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

Positions or Department Head positions go on over time to XO and CO positions.

If a Senior Officer leaves your SIM, assign an Assistant in an acting Capacity for a period of 4 weeks and give them a probationary period during this time. Advise them to take the Senior Officer course during that time and that you will review their performance during this time. You catch more than one bird with this stone, it solves your immediate problem of the vacancy in a key position. It sets a positive example to your crew and if it doesn't work out you will know within two weeks, and you have bought yourself some time to look at alternatives

5.2.2 Rank promotions

Promotions are relatively straightforward on most simulations. Once a crewmember has reached the minimum number of simulations, and has shown acceptable attendance and SIMming quality for their level, hold a promotion ceremony in which the officer is promoted. As a CO, you may make additional requirements to the minimums, eg. "A Lieutenant must show willingness to help newer officers before becoming LtCmdr."; these are at your discretion. We try to be friends with the crew, however promotions must reflect what you expect to see in the rank you are promoting that individual to. Even if the individual meets the basic requirements it is up to you to decide if they reflect what you believe a person of that rank should be.

Promotions on the minimums are for exceptional officers, if individuals are always promoted on the minimums there may not be a maturity progression over the period of time. Ranks reflect the maturity of an individual within the organization, it is a reward for acting as someone should who holds that rank. We are trying to mould the command generation which will follow us... so be careful how you promote, it is a serious matter.

Please remember that Cadets need to have completed the Academy before they can be promoted to Ensign.

In Email promotions and awards are **always** handled IC and in a log. The CO should post a log in which he/she 'physically' hands out the required pips and/or IC medals/ribbons **individually** to the officers involved. In Email, things only happen if it has been written out in a log. The officers on your crew work hard for their promotion and an IC ceremony is the least they deserve. As far as promotions and awards are concerned, it is nice to surprise your crew by promoting them IC in a log if the plot allows for it, before it is announced OOC in the SIM report.

The minimum time requirements for promotions can be found on various websites and in the Command guide. Below are some important points:

- (*) All mentioned time periods are **bare minimums** only!
- (*) All promotions will be considered on a character basis.
- (*) All senior promotions (above LtCmdr) follows the promotion form which goes up through the chain of command, ending at the office of the respective Cmd level (either Subflt, Flt or President depending on the rank being requested). Command readiness, maturity, superior officers' opinion, need and SIM-ship position status are each reviewed. You

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

need to use the Promotion Package to fill in the relevant form. It can be found at www.ucip.org/logistics. For Email SIMmers in Starfleet, also include 2 logs of the officer up for promotion, for review.

- (*) In special circumstances and the approval of the Commander in Chief, Internet Division, certain promotions may avoid the Promotion Policies set limits.
- (*) Where there are two requirements noted for the minimum time # length for promotion, namely SIMs and months, be aware that both conditions apply. In the case of email SIMs, the number of SIMs equates to the minimum number of logs.

Differences to the previous method:

LtCmdr -> Cmdr promotions are now approved by the Section Manager (Subfleet CO) rather than going to the President.

Cmdr -> Captain are now approved by the respective Divisional Director (ie Starfleet Cmdr approves promotions to Captain within Starfleet ISD Division Director for the equivalent rank in ISD.)

5.2.3 Senior Promotion Form:

For Senior Promotions (above LtCmdr or equivalent) a special procedure and form is used, a copy of which can be found at www.ucip.org/logistics. This form goes up through the chain of command, ending at the office of the President (or other Cmdr as required).

Command readiness, maturity, superior officers' opinion, need and SIM-ship position status are each reviewed. The CO of the Officer in question, or XO/Section Manager if the Officer to be promoted is a CO, will initiate the procedure. (S)He will fill in the appropriate details and give comments on the performance of the officer to be promoted and a recommendation. The form is first sent to Logistics (logistics@ucip.org), who will then send it on to the Subfleet Cmdr if in SF or the Division Director in ISD. For Email SIMmers in Starfleet, include two logs for review. Each person should send a copy of the form to the person *before* and the person *after* them in the Chain of Command so verification of receipt, and action can be confirmed and traced back.

Final Report with Acceptance or Denial will be sent to all members in Chain from the approving officer, at the time of writing, have exact rank equivalents.

Please note that the senior promotion for is your opportunity to 'sell' the promotion up the Chain of Command. Elaborate as much as you can and give good reasons why you think the officer deserves a promotion as generally those further up the chain are very likely not to know the officer in question and you need to convince them that the promotion is justified.

5.3 Reports:

Running a simulation can seem like paper shuffling at times, but is quite helpful to you and other administrative volunteers. For you and your crew, it summarises the plot each week and your crew know how attendance is going, it also acts as a published reference into past attendance and a plot history. For email SIMs, the best plot summaries are when you summarise the logs for each crewmember in one sentence. That way it shows

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

that you have been paying attention to their logs and what is going on in the SIM. For your Divisional Director, it lets them know what's going on within their command. For personnel, the attendance and roster notes gives the information they need.

Some Section Managers include in their weekly or fortnightly report a list of the main items that should be included in the SIM report, and some like it in that order so that it's easier for them when it comes time for the Subfleet Report. All the information is in the same order in each of the reports so is easier to find.

The crew roster and attendance/log counts can be combined if you wish. It relays the same information while at the same time reducing the size of the report.

The main items for a simulation report are a plot summary, and adding to that the stardate, a list of attendance/logs-done, promotions or awards, and roster updates.

Stardate/Week of logging it covers
Plot summary (what happened in the simulation)
Attendance for IRC simulations:
 Who attended
 Who was absent
 Guest simmers

or
Attendance for E-Mail simulations:
 Number of logs for each crew member
 Guests logging that week
 Promotions (if any)
 Awards (if any)
 Roster list & changes

CO's are free to add other information such as servers to use, and other information for their own crew.

Personnel recommends that simulation reports include a full roster in addition to changes made to it since the previous posting. This is a generally good idea, as it gives the crew an update on what is happening among their ranks. Do note that it is required that, when listing promotions, you must include (in whatever format you please):

Name of officer
The old rank
The new rank
Time they have held the previous rank (date of last promotion)
Comments (optional)

Adding some comments as to what the officer has done to deserve this promotion is a good way to say thank you to the officer in question and encourages your other crew members to follow the example.

After this is written up, of course you have to send it. When emailing this, send it to your (sub)Fleet listserv and logistics as well as your crew.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

Note, however, that in the case of Starfleet simulations, your direct superior may be the Section Manager relevant to your simulation, and so your reports should go to Subfleet listserv.

Example: on 240010.31, you're writing a simulation report for a Starfleet simulation in the Alpha Subfleet. You would send your report to:

To: your crew
CC: Fleet Report List

Example: on 240007.16, you're writing a simulation report for a Home Fleet simulation. You would send your report to:

To: your crew
CC: home-reports@ucip.org

5.3.4 Multiplatform Sims and Reports

The Multiplatform sim is one in which IRC and Email run side by side. The CO, XO and all Dept Heads are required to both log as well as attend sim, they act as the link that connects email and IRC simmers. From there, all assistants may choose to be either email or IRC. Each of these is represented by a 'shift' - Command Shift, required to attend IRC sim and put out 1 log a week, Alpha Shift, Required only to attend IRC Sim, Beta Shift, Log once a week.

Now, as a CO/XO of a simulation like this, there are a few things you must do to keep all parts able to work together. After the normal IRC SIM you must send a copy of the IRC SIM Log and must send a summary of the IRC SIM to your simulations list no later than 24 hours after SIM, this' so those on Beta Shift can log and stay caught up on events.

From: Captain Kangaroo
to:enterprise@ucip.org
Subject: SD240901.13, USS Enterprise Sim Log

<CaptKangaroo>::hits the deck hard and pushes up::report!

<EnsOps>::pulls herself back to her station::sir, we've hit some kind of anomaly, all systems appear to be draining

<LtHelm>sir, no response from helm

As you can see above, each line is double spaced. This is because it makes it easier to read the log and pull out all the needed information.

From: Captain Kangaroo
To:enterprise@ucip.org
Subject: SD240901.13, USS Enterprise SIM Summary

Enterprise encountered an unknown anomaly that stopped the ship in its tracks. Though there was no physical damage, all systems experienced a severe energy drain causing some systems not to function. Engineering along with Helm tackled the problem and worked together while Science and Ops scanned the anomaly and went through sensor scans to figure out what they'd hit. Security disseminated through the ship to help any wounded back to sickbay and get those trapped in lifts, jefferies tubes, etc out.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

Above, the summary includes not only key points, but also what orders each department received. This can allow for logs to start fast from the Beta Shift simmers and help find where they would be faster.

How you record the information in your report is up to you, one possible way is as follows. It also shows a very thorough summary.

5.4 Resigning/Taking a permanent CO position

It's not often that the command of a simulation changes hands, but it's important that such transitions are smoothly handled. A CO resignation should be sent to the Section Commander. Section Commanders then appoint an ACO. Please note that in email SIMs the CO will either have to write him/herself out of the plot IC or the new ACO will have to do that.

Here is a checklist of things a resigning Captain should transfer to their successor:

- + An up-to-date roster list.
- + Last-promotion dates for all officers of rank Ensign and above.
- + Information about current cadets - if they have gone to the Academy, and the number of simulations attended thus far.
- + Access to the simulation's website, or a copy of the website files if giving access is not reasonable. (sometimes the site may be maintained by a crew member)
- + If you can arrange the transfer of Listserv ownership, Sim Menu control to the new CO. If it's not practical the Subfleet CO can arrange this.

After this information is turned over, the new Captain should be ready to select a First Officer. In an ideal case, the Second Officer, or simply the next most experienced member of the simulation, will qualify and be willing to take the position. Per the bylaws, though, no one person may have two Command-level positions within UCIP. If your favourite candidate is already a Captain or First Officer of another simulation, you must choose someone else, or look to other SIMs for a willing and capable candidate.

All COs and XOs are on the captain's list. When the ACO selects an AXO, (s)he should send an email to the captains list to inform everyone of the change of command. If there is a CO change, the Section Manager should send a message over the appointments list to inform everyone of the change of command so that the Academy, Logistics and Personnel knows. At the same time letting the Database team know so that the SIM menu and listserve can be transferred to the new CO.

Handling all of this quickly is the easiest way to make the transition between COs with as little disruption to the simulation. If this will be you in the near future, then good luck, and may Great Bird of the Galaxy have mercy on your soul...

5.4.1 Assigning/taking an Acting-CO position As a Captain:

It is rare that anyone who becomes a Commanding Officer will never miss a simulation while they are the CO. And when they do, they should give notice to the XO at the very least. It is inappropriate to miss that step except when it can not be helped (ie: the computer completely crashed, you had to take a family member to the hospital, you are in the hospital,

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

etc.). Giving notice to all of your crew is also required with a brief note of who is left in charge . If you require your crew to notify you if they are going to miss a simulation, it is not optional to notify them in the same way as required of them, unless it was an emergency. During the CXO's leave, the XO, is assigned as ACO, or if they can not make it, the Second Officer is assigned to take command of the simulation. They are given the mission briefing, where to take the simulation (i.e. your goal for the simulation, if any), and instructions for making the simulation report. It is also a good idea to request a log of the simulation which you missed so that you are totally informed and capable of running the next simulation.

XOs, be warned about assigning an acting-XO; many times this temporary assignment creates reluctance with the officer to go back to their normal duty. To avoid this sort of situation, select a "second officer" who you know to be capable of being an Acting First Officer; then, try to only assign them this post unless the plot would really warrant it, eg. away missions. On the other hand, an extended absence (3 or more simulations) warrants a formal AXO post.

5.4.2 First Officer as ACO:

In IRC:

When taking over for your Captain, you should endeavor to run the simulation as smoothly as your Captain would, from its beginning to its end. This means adapting his/her habits, such as the order in which you prepare for the simulation (calling for attention and giving the mission statement), carrying it through its mission, and cleaning up after it (bringing crew to attention, asking for comments, dismissing, and doing the Sim Report).

The officer who was put in charge of the Sim must follow the plot as ordered by the CO and make all efforts to accomplish that goal. Unless specified by the CO no drastic changes may happen to the ship and the plot may not be altered beyond the COs directives.

If a mission has not already been selected for you, be sure to make one that does not interfere with the simulation's ongoing plot. A holo-simulation is often a good idea, as it discredits any deaths and damage incurred during that week's simulation.

As said in the previous section, avoid formally assigning an Acting- XO unless the situation warrants it, as it is best to keep other crew at their normal posts during a one- or two-week absence of the CO.

In Email:

When taking over for your Captain, you should endeavour to run the plot as smoothly as your Captain would. If the leave of absence is a short one and expected, then run the plot assuming the CO is still actively IC onboard, speaking for the CO as his/her character, as and when required. If the leave of absence is unexpected or for a longer period (more than 2 weeks), then it would be better to have the CO in sickbay, temporarily off duty or off the ship, which ever fits best in the current plot line, and the XO running the plot as ACO until the situation is sorted out.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

In both cases (IRC/Email), the XO is responsible for the OOC duties like welcoming cadets and doing the SIM report during the entire absence of the CO. Be sure to keep in touch with your Section Manager in cases like this, they will be able to provide you with OOC advice as and when you need it.

5.5 Mission Briefings/Plot Starters: Creating

Mission Briefings/Plot Starters are an essential part of commanding, although you can and should allow and encourage other crew to develop plots to run you as CO have the final say in what plots run when. They can be plots that run for two - three weeks (IRC) or months even.

While some like to plan plots out well in advance and have most of the details prepared, others like to prepare an outline with some simple goals and let the crew fill it in and be willing to adapt what you have to what the crew adds to it.. Adaptability.

There will be some plots which need to go a certain way and need to be steered to the appropriate goal 'markers' you've set down.

Some Ideas to Consider when Creating your plot:

Types: Exploration, Scientific, Tactical, Rescue

Advanced Plot Creation:

Some Cos/Xos who have the knowledge, choose to use literary devices in their creation of plots..

Plot Elements:-

Symbols: (Examples)

- Red, to foreshadow rage and revenge. Red walls, the red beams, the red collars of the men
- Darkness, to symbolize despair and isolation. The dark Ship, the dark station, the darkness of the nebula.
- Bright light, to symbolize hope. Bright lights appear when the station is restored with power. A bright beam of light appears when the Jem'Hedar fighter bay is opened. The flickering lights cease to flicker and become brighter

Aphorisms:

- A tersely phrased statement of a truth or opinion; an adage.
- A brief statement of a principle.

Cliches:

A trite or overused expression or idea

Anachronisms:

- The representation of someone as existing or something as happening in other than chronological, proper, or historical order.

UCIP XO Course guide - Version 1

- One that is out of its proper or chronological order, especially a person or practice that belongs to an earlier time: "A new age had plainly dawned, an age that made the institution of a segregated picnic seem an anachronism" (Henry Louis Gates, Jr.).

- Something that cropped up first (to my knowledge) in Shakespeare when he had a large clock in the town square in the play Caesar. Basically, it means something that exists in a time that it should not yet exist in.

Themes: Revenge; destruction; the future; wisdom; relics

Used correctly these tools can add atmosphere, and additional intrigue to plots. A lot of the crew may not know what they are but should enjoy the effects which they add to the sim.

(Some of the examples above are from Capt R Trolious)

It is important to remember, while creating a plot then running it, that you don't skip to the end or try to jump to the solution. The crew should be given the chance to do what they are here to do, SIM. It's hard at times to not have your character find the solution, but it's very important you don't. IE-If you running a medical plot, don't have your medical department start researching then suddenly be handed a cure or have security on a mission to secure a site and suddenly have both sides be friendly.

By doing things like in the above examples, you not only cut your crew out of the plot but you take away the fun for them of SIMming that plot and being a part of finding the answers.

6. Credits

Senior Officers Training Guide Version 2.0 by Instructor T'Parik

TFE - Senior Officers Training guide version 1.0 by Capt Suzanna Batenburg

UCIP-Internet Academy's Command Officer's Guide, Version 4.1, by RAdm Jason Roberts

Command Guide v 3.1.2 by Prof. Suzanna Blokpoel (Commo.)