



EHAC Board Meeting Minutes – December 13, 2018:

Board members present: Tania Busch Isaksen, Mike Fletcher, Chyla Hunter, Sharron LaFollette

Board Members Absent: Don Williams

EHAC Staff: Leslie Mitchell

Financial Admin. Contractor: Carla Brown

1.0 Meeting Called to order at: Chair Busch Isaksen called the meeting to order at 11:03am

2.0 Standing Items

2.1 Approval of Agenda: agenda approved

2.2 Approval of November 15, 2018 Meeting Minutes: minutes approved

3.0 Reports

3.1 Chairperson's Report (Busch Isaksen):

- Deferred to later in the meeting.

3.2 Treasurer's Report (Mike Fletcher/Carla Brown)

- **Current Financials:**
- **General Liability/Accred. Errors and Omissions Policy discussion:** Busch Isaksen reminded the Board that EHAC has always carried D and O insurance. EHAC also had Errors and Operation Insurance at one time but dropped it due to the expense. LaFollette reported that she lobbied not to drop it at the time. Busch Isaksen explained the importance of this coverage for moving forward and growing EHAC's reach. Brown explained that there is adequate funding for paying for this now and in the future.
- **Motion:** LaFollette moved that the Board approve moving insurance acquisition recommendation to the full Council for a vote by email.
- **Decision – unanimously approved.**

3.3 Undergraduate Program:

- **Montana State University Accred. Questions:**

- MSU had questions around the first graduating class not being considered accredited graduates. UG Requirements require a class to have been graduated prior to accreditation. It does not say that accreditation is retroactive. Finely suggested that the requirements could be reviewed to address this. Busch Isaksen suggested that there is nothing precluding a program from sending a letter to students saying that these first cadre of students have graduated from a now accredited program. She emphasized that EHAC does not accredit students, EHAC accredits programs. LaFollette submitted that programs applying for accreditation need to show that they qualify before they can be accredited – which the point of graduating at least one class from an applicant’s curriculum prior to initial application.
- Busch Isaksen suggested she would entertain a discussion of how to handle that first class of graduates. LaFollette agreed that a letter could be sent to employers showing that a student graduated from an accred. Program (once the program is approved) and submitted that it would not help students who want to sit for REHS exam early – but may help with finding a job. Finley commented that there is risk around the fact that both mentors gave incorrect information (interesting that we are talking about E and O insurance right now). Findlay suggested that they could be given conditional accreditation and lonce they met conditions, students in that period of time could be considered accredited. Fletcher asked if MSU is talking about people that have already graduate prior to accreditation? In MSU’s case – yes – they want coverage for students graduating in December 2018 and May 2019. LaFollette submitted that the answer is no. Busch Isaksen suggested again that Chair of Dept. could write a letter that state that these students graduated under a curriculum that was accredited in 2019.
- Finley playing devil’s advocate – suggested looking at self-study – theirs is a reflection of their current program and potentially past. However EHAC doesn’t have knowledge of how the program was in the past before the year of the self-study. Would be difficult to evaluate each student/validate that every student had gone through the now accredited program and that is not EHAC’s responsibility. Busch Isaksen will emphasize that site visitors should be looking at a sample of their student transcripts to make sure they are all meeting all of the requirements. Finely asked if there a way that we can validate that in the past 4 years that they have had the same curriculum that meets EHAC guidelines and therefor students would have been in a program that is currently accredited (if approved)? Finely wants to make sure EHAC continues to take a hard look at what we are doing and why we are doing it related to course requirements. He asked if there is room for improvement/flexibility. He sees flexibility as an incentive for future program applicants and necessary to move with changes in work force needs.
- Fletcher submitted that it makes no since to accredit students in the program prior to accreditation. The whole point of accreditation is to prove that you meet the requirements now (cannot retroactively do this).

- Finely asked what are the dates of accreditation – when do terms start and end? Busch Isaksen suggested that the timing is a nuance. Will anyone really look at the exact date of accreditation? Fletcher – will date of accreditation even be paid attention to? Does EHAC accred. get put on the degree certificate – yes at some schools.
- LaFollette is firm about requirement to have graduated a cadre of students prior to application for accreditation.
- Busch Isaksen suggested that one place where we could improve website – is to have a clear rationale for why a cadre of students must graduate prior to applying for accreditation and clear explanation for when students can be identified as accredited graduates.
- CEPH has a preaccreditation period – and students enrolled at this time are considered enrolled in an accredited program if they are approved. LaFollette – should EHAC do that? Busch Isaksen suggested that instead of a preaccreditation period, when you submit your self-study – and you are enrolled, students could be considered graduates of an accred. program if program is approved for full accreditation. LaFollette – devil’s advocate – but that would mean that they have not graduated a class. Students within the 6 months of limbo time (between application and accreditation) could be considered graduating from an accredited program. Busch Isaksen suggested this is an alternative that could work as opposed to a pre-accreditation. This would not help current applicants (MSU) because UG requirements would have to be changed and adopted.
- Busch Isaksen suggested thinking about whether Board wants to recommend changing the requirements to address this issue. At this point, MSU will be accredited when and if they meet requirements at annual meeting in 2019.

3.4 Graduate Program Report (Sharron LaFollette):

- WKU is on track for accreditation.

3.5 Office Report (Leslie Mitchell)

- **Staff Report - postponed**

4.0 Old Business: Tania (next meeting)

- **Potential NEHA certification/credential for EHAC graduates:**
 - Fletcher described a proposal for a credential from NEHA for EHAC graduates. Currently EHAC grads are considered TRACK A at NEHA. However, the current REHS exam is difficult to pass for a recent graduate without any experience.
 - Fletcher does not think NEHA will want to stray from their tracks.
 - Fletcher suggest NEHA give a designation (credential maybe) to EHAC graduates – Grad. Env. Health and Safety Specialist (GEHS) that would be given to graduates of accredited schools and who apply to NEHA to get designation

within 3 months. That would convey that they are academically qualified to take the REHS (just do not have the experience yet). Along with the GEHS, NEHA would offer a free year of membership to those grads. That would automatically get them on the rolls and it is likely that they would stay members after that.

- Busch Isaksen like the idea.
- No comments or questions. Fletcher has not bounced idea around yet. Busch Isaksen suggested bouncing the idea off of Tim Murphy and others and see if it is even doable and is NEHA receptive? Then come back to the EHAC board for approval. Fletcher suggested something like this would work because we are not asking them to change their existing program – just adding a sentence to Track A.
- LaFollette asked if is there real data that graduates are not passing the REHS exam – hard evidence vs. word of mouth. Fletcher – even if were not true – this would give graduates a little more recognition and show that an EHAC graduate is qualified to put boots on the ground in EH (academically) and would also serve as a bridge to NEHA from student to professional. Busch Isaksen asked Fletcher to ask NEHA about their pass/fail rate related to the REHS exam of recent graduates.
- Busch Isaksen expressed concern about a movement toward the REHS exam being more practitioner oriented. This present a problem for people in the workforce because when you are hired you are given only 6 months to sit for the REHS or if you want to move up the line. So, this apparent need for more experience will be somewhat inhibitory to new employees.
- Fletcher – assuming that individual graduate from an EHAC program, they would have to apply under an EHAC umbrella or verified list - e.g. EHAC could submit names of graduates to NEHA????
- LaFollette – NEHA will not want to give a blanket membership – so graduates would have to apply for the GEHS.

5.0 New Business (Chair Busch Isaksen):

- ARMY Civil Support Teams – EHAC relationship (Finley) – not discussed (Jason left meeting)
- Continuing Education (Self-supporting) programs/eligible for EHAC accreditation?
 - Send email from CSUN
- Council on Higher Education/DOE accreditation discussion
- Mentorship requirement – make it policy? – not discussed
- Minimum grade requirement discussion
 - Busch Isaksen summarized grade requirement question from UGA. UGA would like support from EHAC requirements regarding a grade point average. At UW, they have a statement that a program has to maintain what the university requires. UGA wanted a statement from EHAC that a 2.0 GPA is required.
 - Currently EHAC does not have a requirement and Board members did not think this would be a good idea.

- Dept. can require a certain grade within their Dept. but it is hard to require outside their program.
- Busch Isaksen asked if any Board member is in support of EHAC taking this on?
- LaFollette submitted that she is in favor of departments handling this issue.

6.0 Schedule Next Meeting – next meeting will be by Doodle Poll – Thursday in January

7.0 Meeting adjourned by Bush Isaksen at 12:20pm