



## National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC)

### EHAC Board Meeting Minutes – October 29, 2019 – 9:30am

**Board Members Present:** Tania Busch Isaksen, Chyla Hunter, Mike Fletcher, Sharron LaFollette

**Board Members Absent:** Don Williams and Jason Finley

**EHAC Staff:** Leslie Mitchell

**1.0 Meeting Called to order at:** 9:32am PT by Busch Isaksen

#### 2.0 Standing Items

**2.1 Approval of Agenda:** Agenda approved with move of new business items to old business.

**2.2 Approval of September 29, 2019 Meeting Minutes.**

- Minutes approved for the Sept. 29, 2019 meeting minutes.

#### 3.0 Reports

**3.1 Chairperson's Report** – postponed to later in meeting.

**3.2 Treasurer's Report** –

- **Current financials**
  - Year-end wrap up – in good shape and actually came out ahead of budget this year – added to financial buffer (savings).

**3.3 Undergraduate Program Report** – no report

**3.4 Graduate Program Report** – Vice Chair LaFollette

- **CSU Dominguez Hills** – LaFollette reported that CSH DH's proposed Master's Program Degree curriculum looks good. LaFollette and Mitchell are having a phone call with Shannon Roback to discuss how their competency-based evaluation (e.g. comprehensive exam which tests for competencies and/or masters research evaluation strategy) aligns with EHAC's Graduate Guidelines.
- **University of Illinois, Springfield** – LaFollette reported that the EHAC Program Chair, Josiah Alamu, is leaving the first of November. LaFollette reported that Lenore Killam will be the temporary Program Director (she is not a full Professor - only instructor at this point). Josiah Alamu is the only faculty with EH experience which leaves the program without someone to teach biostatistics and epidemiology. LaFollette also reported that the UIS EH Program is in financial deficit of 1.5 million dollars, so she doesn't know if they will be hiring a replacement.
  - LaFollette suggested that if they do not inform EHAC soon of the changes, then Mitchell should send a letter letting them know that we have learned that they have lost a significant faculty member and the Board would like to know the direction the program is heading and if EHAC can be of any assistance/support for the program.

### 3.5 Office Report – Mitchell

- Mitchell reported on EH Coalition Workforce Workgroup and NEHA Student and Young Professionals Workgroup activities.
  - EHAC Coalition – Mitchell volunteered to work on questions for a survey to collect data from member organizations about where they are seeing shortages in the EH field. She will work with Busch Isaksen on this effort.
  - NEHA Student and Young Professionals Committee – reorganized into subcommittees. Mitchell will team with Clint Pinion and Chuck Treser to ensure an EHAC/AEHAP presence on each committee.

### 4.0 Old Business:

- **Dyjack's Executive Message – October 2019 JEH** – game plan and messages to move forward with. Solidify and repeat.
  - Fletcher asked that in addition to the STEM based focus of EHAC accreditation that strong emphasis be placed on the fundamental knowledge and skills focus of EHAC accreditation requirements. LaFollette also emphasized the lab based and significant hands-on experiences that are required throughout EHAC approved curricula.
    - Busch Isaksen commented that CEPH will likely argue that their culminating experience is hands on – but Busch Isaksen pointed out that there are no previous or additional requirements for hands on activities (prior to the culminating experience). Busch Isaksen confirmed that there is no requirement for CEPH accredited degree programs to have foundational environmental health coursework, or other STEM oriented sciences.
    - LaFollette also pointed out that EHAC requirements are geared to meeting criteria for EH practitioner licensure – (e.g. EHAC requirements are specific to EH employment needs) (Fletcher pointed that one can meet these criteria with a biology degree as well in most states but not in CA or FL).
    - Busch Isaksen submitted that CEPH accreditation has a purpose and place but is not a replacement for EHAC accreditation. Their criteria do not touch on any of the foundational areas of EH. Fletcher submitted that based on the Uncover EH article in JEH, EH employees are working in food, water quality/swimming pools, emergency preparedness, hotels/motels, vector control. CEPH does not require any of these topics to be covered. Busch Isaksen pointed out that CEPH has a One Health requirement (for Masters Programs only) that is EH related. Fletcher added that the only thing EHAC doesn't really cover in EH is body art – EHAC covers pretty much all of the other EH needs.
  - Fletcher suggested that in response to Dyjack's editorial – **EHAC should continue to focus on workforce needs in arguing in support of EHAC accreditation.** Busch Isaksen suggested using the Uncover EH article to make the point that CEPH does not ensure that any of the EH employment needs cited in the article are requirements of CEPH accreditation.
  - **Action: Mitchell will get back with Hisel and Pinion at AEHAP to find out the timeline for article submission to JEH. EHAC will craft some arguments that can be used in their article that focus on:**

- EHAC accredits the foundational knowledge and technical skills required for STEM based Professional EH jobs;
- The fundamental EH knowledge and skills focus of EHAC accreditation requirements is unique and necessary, as is the lab based and significant hands-on experiences that are required throughout EHAC approved curricula.
- EHAC accred. requirements prepare graduates for ALL of the major EH programs/topics that practitioners address at U.S. Health Departments - cited in the Uncover EH Article in the JEH (June 2019 pg.31): food safety and protection public swimming pools, emergency preparedness and response program – see below for more

**TABLE 3**

**Percentage of Environmental Health Professionals Working in Various Programs in Health Departments in the United States (n = 1,735)**

<b>Environmental Health Program</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Environmental Health Program</b>	<b>%</b>
Food safety and protection	76	Healthy homes	20
Public swimming pools	57	Mobile homes	18
Emergency preparedness and response	47	Radon control	17
Schools	46	Animal control	16
Onsite wastewater (e.g., septic systems)	44	Hazardous waste disposal	16
Private or onsite drinking water	43	Land use planning	16
Hotels/motels	39	Pollution prevention	14
Vector control	38	Health-related facilities	13
Body art (tattoo)	36	Outdoor air quality	12
Day care/early child development facilities	34	Hazardous materials response	11
Special events/mass gatherings	31	Tobacco retailers	8
Campgrounds and recreational vehicles	30	Cosmetology businesses	6
Public drinking water systems	28	Noise pollution	6
Lead prevention	25	Collection of unused pharmaceuticals	5
Solid waste	25	Injury prevention	5
Smoke-free ordinances	24	Radiation control	5
Children's camps	22	Occupational health	4
Indoor air quality	22	Toxicology	4
Other recreational water (e.g., beaches)	21	Milk processing	3
		Poison control	2
		Other	28

- **Discussion of Alternative Degree Program – e.g. Accelerated Graduate Degrees.**
  - Bush Isaksen suggested that it might be in EHAC’s best interest to review these proposals case by case (e.g. MVSU) rather than creating a policy to try to address alternative degree structures. And to advertise that EHAC is open to creative designs.
    - LaFollette agreed. Busch Isaksen wants to make this a priority for the next Board and create a open space for alternative ideas that encourage enrollment and create competent EH graduates.
    - LaFollette suggested simply advertising on the EHAC website that the Council is open to new and innovative degree program strategies that universities are developing to meet the needs of a broader student population. Fletcher and Chyla

agreed with this option. The Council can then consider programs on a case by case basis.

- **Action: LaFollette will work with Mitchell on language for website that reflects the Boards welcome of creative degree program structure strategies.**
- LaFollette reported a question from a student regarding lack of EHAC accreditation in the Middle East. This hasn't been pursued due to travel restrictions and lack of program interest.
  
- **Board Succession Plan** – table this topic for next time.
  - Mitchell asked Board to consider how they want to maintain continuity and history. Board suggested that there needs to be a Past Chair at minimum and a requirement for the new Chair to have served on the Board prior to becoming Chair.
  - **ACTION: Mitchell will prepare comparison document for December Board meeting.**
  
- **AEHAP Letter to COSTEP – Response**
  - Mitchell reported a generic response to AEHAP's letter.
  - Busch Isaksen has asked professors in her Dept. to prepare students for JRCOSTEP option early in the spring as there will likely be a summer-time application period in 2020.
  - **ACTION: Mitchell will encourage PDs to prepare their students earlier in the year (Spring) for the JRCOSTEP application process that will like be during June as it was in 2019.**

**4.1 New Business** – none

**6.0 Schedule Next Board Meeting** – December 5 at 10am PT

**7.0 Meeting Adjourned** at 10:30am