



National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council

*Enhancing the education and training of students
in environmental health science and protection*

EHAC Board Meeting Minutes – October 7, 2021 – 1:00pm Pac. Time

Board Members Present: Chris Sparks, Chad Brown, Rania Sabty, Tim Murphy, Dave Gilkey

Board Members Absent: Tania Busch Isaksen

Others attending:

EHAC Staff: Leslie Mitchell

1.0 Meeting Called to order at: Murphy called the meeting to order at 1:04pm PST

2.0 Standing Items

2.1 Approval of Agenda: Gilkey moved to approve the October 7, 2021, agenda with a second from Sabty, followed by unanimous approval.

2.2 Approval of September 13, 2021, Meeting Minutes: Brown moved to approve the September 13, 2021 minutes. There was a second from Sabty and the minutes were approved unanimously.

3.0 Reports

3.1 AEHAP Update: Dr. Ben Ryan – new President - absent

3.2 Treasurer's Report: Sabty provided a brief overview of the budget documents

- Current Balance sheet - no questions
- Current Income and Expenses - no questions
- Sabty asked how much should you have in reserve? Murphy answered up to 2 years of cushion.
- **ACTION: Murphy requested Mitchell produce a table that shows EHAC bank account balances at the end of each fiscal year for the last five years.**

3.3 Chairperson's/ED Report: Murphy/Mitchell

- Self-study/Site Visitor Training – total of 5 programs to visit. Mitchell submitted that there needs to be a volunteer site visitor and reviewer training in late November or early December. Mitchell has asked Busch Isaksen to conduct the training. Murphy agreed emphasized that training results in rigor and consistency. Murphy also highlighted the importance for Self-study reviewers to explicitly identify concerns with program self-studies in order to help site visit team focus on priority issues of concern. Gilkey reiterated the importance of training and affirmed that Busch Isaksen is a good choice to conduct the

training as she has produced many of the review and visit related documentation. Gilkey suggested that revisiting the Site Visit Protocol document should be a priority.

- **ACTION – Mitchell will communicate with Busch Isaksen about the training and schedule.**
- Site Visits – Virtual/Hybrid/Onsite? The consensus of the Board was to conduct onsite site visits if at a possible. Extenuating or limiting circumstances will be deal with on an individual basis and Board will work with Council Members to address any concerns or restrictions.
 - Colorado State site visitors: Sabty and Murphy volunteered.
 - Baylor University accreditation: Sabty and Murphy selected.

3.4 Undergraduate Program Report: Vice Chair Dave Gilkey

- Texas Southern University: Dr. Yousefipour submitted documentation regarding recent curriculum changes as requested by the Board of Directors.
 - Gilkey: described sound changes and recommended approving their changes.
 - **Motion:** Gilkey motioned to approve TSU’s recent changes to curriculum for their EHAC accredited EH program.
 - **Vote:** Unanimous approval
- Western Kentucky University:
 - WKU has submitted an application for initial accreditation and paid their fee and plan to submit self-study by December 1, 2021. Gilkey reported that ECU has been a resource for WKU.

3.5 Graduate Program Report: Vice Chair Busch Isaksen (absent)

- Murphy reported on an email from Vince Radke related to internal discussion regarding the lack of EH competency requirements in their criteria:
- CEPH EH Committee: Many faculty are trying to get EH competencies back in the criteria because they are losing students/not getting students due to lack of science and subsequent difficulty finding an EH related job. CEPH is trying to position themselves along with the EH Workforce Act as well. EH subcommittee is pushing this effort. They are encouraging major changes during the 2026 review and revision of CEPH criteria.
- 2020 NEHA AEC CEPH/EHAC session: Murphy reminded the Board that USPHS representatives pointed out that science is necessary and they don’t know what they are getting from CEPH accredited programs when they hire CEPH graduates. EHAC graduate are a known and valued quantity.

3.6 Committee Reports

- **BGC Exploratory Committee update – Mitchell**
 - Mitchell reported that the BGC Exploratory Committee is in favor of moving forward with the BGC partnership and that they approved of the draft letter of agreement.
 - **Action: Mitchell will request a formal recommendation in writing from the Committee.**
 - Murphy, Gilkey and Samples have volunteered to serve on BGC’s education/exam development committee.

- **Board will review the draft agreement and vote on the recommendation of the Committee at the November Board meeting. Upon approval, Board will make a recommendation to the full Council. Board has the option to call a special meeting of the Council to consider this proposition or it could be an email discussion/vote.**
- Murphy added that students understand that credentialing is important and EHAC involvement can be helpful in this arena. However, Board wants to be certain that the quality of EHAC accreditation is not impaired by this kind of a partnership.
- **UG Requirements Rev. Comm. Meeting update**
 - Competency discussion (Gilkey): Gilkey explained that he reviewed committee's desire not to go the competency route at the last Board meeting, however, Murphy wanted at least an incremental step towards competencies and the Board decided to go that route (Requirements p. 14, 2). Gilkey explained that the Committee was reluctant to go the competency route but was willing compromise in the cross cutting areas of EHAC requirements. Murphy praised the committee's direction. He reiterated that Findlay has had both ABET and EHAC accreditation and expressed the benefits of going the ABET (competencies) and EHAC (course based) route could be useful for initially accrediting programs.. For hard sciences – course based is fine. For cross cutting areas – may be easier for programs to meet criteria with competencies
 - Gilkey added that the Committee felt that it is important to provide guidance for meeting criteria as well – guidance rather than interpretations perhaps.
 - Murphy sees the move toward competency based criteria as a long term effort that will benefit programs in to the far future.
 - Sabty submitted that programs with CEPH and/or ABET accreditation are likely more aligned with competency based criteria and would have an easier time meeting competency based criteria than those that are not – especially at the UG level. Murphy agreed and suggested that it is EHAC job's to train programs on how to meet competency based criteria.
 - Sabty also pointed out that the Board concluded earlier that the Graduate Guidelines would be revised in the competency direction prior as an experiment that UG Requirement could build upon. Murph agreed and added that he hopes the two Committees will work together toward a competency based end.
 - **Action: Murphy suggested that the UG Revision Committee has a couple of programs “write” to the proposed changes to determine their effectiveness and pragmatic impact (difficulty of describing/measuring/defining). Programs can then comment on the experience.**

4.0 Old Business:

5.0 New Business:

- **REHS discussion**
 - Sabty – expressed ongoing concern about how NEHA put together the latest REHS exam with the inclusion of very few academics. Sabty is worried that the exam will continue to be practice based and the review materials will not be very helpful because they are not aligned with the exam.

- Murphy explained that he has been pushing Dyjack to create a 2 step exam for the REHS/RS exam (similar to other credentialing agencies) with an exam appropriate for seniors/graduates and then a final exam appropriate once some experience is gained. There has been support for a 2 stage process at NEHA but the effort was voted down by the most recent committee (called a vote without all committee members present).
- Brown emphasized that the major theme for his health department is to keep places open rather than shutting down a location - helpers rather than police.
- Sabty questioned that if students cannot pass the REHS/RS exam straight out of college, what value does EHAC accreditation provide. She cited the State Dept. requirement for an EHAC accredited degree but also pointed out that new hire must pass the REHS exam within a year of employment and most time they are unsuccessful and lose their jobs. Having a 2 tiered credential would great enhance the value of an EHAC accredited program.
- **ACTION: Murphy will meet with Brown and Sabty to develop a plan to approach individuals within NEHA in order to gain support for a two tiered credential/exam.**

- **IUPUI update (Mitchell): tabled**

- Restructure of EH program is leading to impending accreditation loss. What does the future of EH education look like? How should EHAC respond? What data do we need?
- Potential workforce study: building upon UNCOVER EH effort = EH Workforce Skills Survey (this type of effort is part of the EH Workforce Act as well(Representative Brenda Lawrence, MI):
- Need for Online specific accreditation criteria or evaluation criteria – laboratory classes especially?:
Indiana University Bloomington: BSPH curriculum aligns closely with EHAC criteria – pursue accreditation interest? How best to do this?

6.0 Next Board Meeting: November 9 at 12 pm Pacific

7.0 Adjournment Mtg. adjourned at 1:16pm Pacific.