



National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council

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

EHAC Board Meeting Minutes – January 19, 2021 – 12:00pm Pac. Time

Board Members Present: Jason Finley, Tim Murphy, Don Williams, Dave Gilkey, Laura Suppes

Board Members Absent: Tania Busch Isaksen

Visitor: Kim Hall - AEHAP

EHAC Staff: Leslie Mitchell

1.0 Meeting Called to order at: 12pm by Chair Finley.

2.0 Standing Items

2.1 Approval of Agenda: Gilkey moved to approve the January 19, 2021 agenda with a second from Murphy, followed by unanimous approval.

2.2 Approval of December 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes: Gilkey moved to approve the December 10, 2020 minutes. There was a second from Williams and the minutes were approved unanimously. Hall abstained.

3.0 Reports

3.1 Treasurer's Report: Murphy reported on current financial documents, noting that one annual dues payment from Texas Southern University remains unpaid (situation is being rectified).

- Current Balance Sheet – no questions
- Current Income and Expense – no questions

3.2 Chairperson's Report: Finley

- ED Employee Evaluation/2021 Employee Agreement announcement:
 - Finley presented these approved documents to the Board and asked for comment:
 - Finley suggested a review and possibly revision of the ED evaluation process and establishment of a new Employee agreement. Finley suggested that there is a disconnect between the term time (from July to July) for the General Chair (charged with ED evaluation) and the timing of the employee agreement (calendar year).
 - Gilkey asked if the Employee Agreement discussion has ever included consideration of a multi-year contract? Finley submitted that this idea has not been discussed and should be considered. Gilkey suggested that a multiyear contract provides dual stability for EHAC and for the employee. He suggested that a three year contract is the norm.

- Finley suggested there is room for improving the evaluation process and that a multiyear contract should be considered.
 - Mitchell suggested that it might be helpful to include the entire Board in the evaluation process, as well.
 - **ACTION: Finley and Mitchell will discuss the potential for a multiyear employee contract and a restructuring of the employee evaluation and agreement renewal process.**
- P.O. Box location proposal:
 - Finley outlined options to deal with the move of the Executive Director from the Burien, WA area – where the P.O. Box is located:
 - Change the address.
 - Keep the current address and pay for ED to periodically travel to the PO Box to retrieve the mail. Drawbacks to this option include:
 - Losing some productivity with ED travel time
 - Cost - \$100 to support travel.
 - Finley and Williams favored this option.
 - Forward mail from another address.
 - **Motion: Williams moved to provide support for the Executive Director to make 10 or less trips to Burien, WA to retrieve EHAC's mail at \$100 per trip (to cover mileage cost of roundtrip of 164 miles.**
 - **Second: Gilkey seconded**
 - **Vote: Unanimously approved**
 - **Suppes suggested revisiting this topic in the future if a multiyear contract is enacted for the ED, as there would be multiple years of continuity allowing a more permanent address.**

3.3 Undergraduate Program Report (Gilkey)

- SUNY site visit is scheduled for February.
- Initial accreditation updates:
 - Arkansas State - haven't heard back since emailing twice around Christmas.
 - Brigham Young University - possible application in December 2022.
 - Salish Kootenai - haven't heard from since emailing twice around Christmas.
 - American University in Beirut - working but will likely be a couple of years. Next step is to meet with Dr. Sabty and Dr. Gilkey to discuss curriculum alignment with Table 2.

3.4 Graduate Program Report – Vice Chair Busch Isaksen

- Baylor University Update - probable joint Self-study submission for existing UG and new Graduate degree programs in December 2021.
- California State University, Dominguez Hills - possible application in October 2023. Degree program has been converted to an online format in order to adapt to the changing education needs brought on by COVID. Mitchell advised that an online program can be accredited as long as it continues to align with EHAC Graduate Guidelines. Mitchell also provided links to currently accredited graduate degree programs that are online.

3.5 Committee Reports

- Nominations Committee:
 - Policy wording update - re: special elections (Williams)
 - **Motion: Gilkey moved to adopt additional special election verbiage as presented by Williams and provided below:**

“If there is less than half of the original term (18 months) left to serve when filling a Council position via a Special Election, the period served by the former Council Member will not count against the specially elected Council member and the new Council Member will still be eligible to run for and serve two full terms (6 years). If longer than one half of the former Council Member’s term has been served, their term shall count as a full first term and the specially elected Council Member will serve the remainder of that term and will then be eligible to run for a second term only. “
 - **Second: Suppes**
 - **No discussion**
 - **Vote: Unanimously passed**

3.6 Office Report:

- EHAC annual dues increase letter was sent on January 11, 2021. Mitchell has received no comment regarding the increase.
- Call for nominations was emailed January 4, 2021. Two practitioners have submitted their desire to run: Jason Lewis and Jessica Otto. One academic has been nominated – Clint Pinion at ECU.
- AEHAP report:
 - AEHAP Board members have been contacting Program Directors to touch base and to see where and how AEHAP could be most supportive – especially in the areas of student recruitment.
 - SEHA – they will no longer require new SEHA clubs to contact their local NEHA affiliate. Board is removing this requirement to make it easier to create a club. AEHAP will continue to promote and advertise the importance of resources provided by NEHA and of membership.
- Nominations Committee is meeting to talk about growing the list of Council candidates on January 26, 2021.
- Joint Policy and Site Visit Best Management Committee Meeting on January 28 to discuss a check list for identifying reaccrediting programs qualifying for online reaccreditation discussion and Council vote.
- Scheduling Graduate Guidelines Revision Committee meeting for January or early February hopefully.
- WorkCred.org – ED Roy Swift - WorkCred is an affiliate of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) – introduced to this org. by ABIH contractor Lance Welter. Major organizational focus is:
 - Aligning and Embedding Industry Certifications with Bachelor’s Degrees
 - Major goal is to make graduates more marketable to industry upon graduation by ensuring they are credentialed in a specific area; to give degrees “legs” in the professional field.
 - Stackable credentials – “early win” meaning students are motivated by earning a certificate or credential that would be useful for finding jobs – especially if they drop out of school before finishing.

4.0 Old Business:

- **ABIH – potential partnership with EHAC** – Finley asked if EHAC should grow a relationship/partnership with ABIH. Suppes commented that she had thought a lot about this opportunity and couldn't think of any reason against establishing a relationship e.g. she couldn't foresee any negative outcomes.
 - Gilkey – the main thing Gilkey pointed out was that there would be no fees or expenses to accreditation partners related to a partnership in which an ABIH credential would be offered to EHAC Graduates. Gilkey added that everyone is “credential happy” these days and this would likely give EHAC students additional competitiveness in the job market – and, of course, that is the bottom line for Universities.
 - Finley submitted that a potential downside might be the ruffling of other partner feathers. Therefore, it is important that EHAC communicate effectively to avoid misunderstandings. Gilkey also pointed out that EHAC doesn't *HAVE* to act but if the Board decides it would be helpful to students, it is great that there is no cost to EHAC. Gilkey added that his question would be “Why not?” Finley explained that some have mentioned that ABIH is trying to expand its reach very broadly.
 - Suppes suggested EHAC could always back out of a relationship if it starts looking like a bad idea.
 - **ACTION: Finley will develop a motion, based on the above discussion regarding the way forward with ABIH, for Board consideration at the February EHAC Board meeting.**
 - Gillkey asked Finley to touch base with Dyjack again about this ABIH offer to partner. Finley will talk with Dyjack about this, as well as, about EH branding issues. Finley would like for NEHA to lead an EH branding effort.
 - Mitchell asked if EHAC should be advocating for more credentialing or support for credentialing exams within EHAC degree programs?
 - The Board felt that as the guidelines and requirements are reviewed and revised, credentialing within the curriculum should be a prominent consideration.
 - Gilkey answered absolutely, as however one can enhance attractiveness of students by employees is helpful to students and looked upon fondly by administrations.
 - Suppes added that graduates of UW Eau Claire's EH degree program obtain pool inspection certification and certified food safety instructor credentials. Gilkey asked if UW EC used to have a prep course for the REHS/RS exam. Suppes commented that they don't and that the REHS/RS exam has changed becoming more difficult for recent graduates to pass. The exam has become more practice than knowledge based in recent years. Gilkey said that this low pass rate among recent graduates has been reported to NEHA and that with new leadership, there may be willingness to change, as Sandra Long has been an EHAC Council Member in the recent past, and may be interested in supporting a review of the exam.

5.0 New Business:

- East Tennessee State University - EHAC dues payment discussion re: Graduate Program
ETSU's Graduate EH degree program is currently closed to enrollment with no plans to open

in the near future. ETSU is under a five year condition by the state credentialing agency to graduate students from the program. There are 2 years left of the condition period. Mitchell spoke with Chuck Patton and concluded that it would be best for ETSU to continue to pay their dues for at least the next two years on the chance that they would be able to revive the program. This way, they could avoid having to apply for initial accreditation were they to stop paying dues and then revive the program.

- Laura Suppes asked about 2021 internship opportunities and availability of NEPHIP resources, as there is still need for the resources that were available last year and any new resources, as well.
 - **ACTION: Mitchell will send out an internship update letter related similar to that sent out last year in relation to the pandemic. It will emphasize the availability of the resource page.**

6.0 February Board Meeting – February 18, 2021 at 1pm Pac. Time

7.0 Adjournment Mtg. adjourned at 1 pm Pacific.