



National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council

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

EHAC Board Meeting Minutes – February 18, 2021 – 1:00pm Pac. Time

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

Visitor: Kim Hall

EHAC Staff: Leslie Mitchell

1.0 Meeting Called to order at: 1:04 pm by Chair Finley.

2.0 Standing Items

2.1 Approval of Agenda: Williams moved to approve the February 18, 2021 agenda with a second from Murphy, followed by unanimous approval.

2.2 Approval of January 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes: Gilkey moved to approve the January 19, 2020 minutes. There was a second from Suppes and the minutes were approved unanimously.

3.0 Reports

3.1 Treasurer's Report: Murphy reported on current financial documents.

- Current Balance Sheet – Murphy reported on the balance sheet . Gilkey thanked Murphy for his work. No questions.
- Current Income and Expense – Murphy reported on the income and expense sheet. No questions.

3.2 Chairperson's Report: Finley

- **ABIH partnership** - proposal language.
 - Finley summarized ABIH partnership goals proposal to explore partnership opportunities between ABIH and EHAC to increase benefits for EHAC graduates. Finley explained that he shared the potential opportunity with NEHA and felt there was no significant push back from either David Dyjack or Sandra Long. Dyjack expressed support for EHAC focusing on efforts to increase benefits for EHAC graduates.
 - **Motion:** Chair Finley proposes that EHAC begin exploring credentialing partnership opportunities with ABIH/BGC focused on the following outcomes:
 1. Enhanced benefits for graduates of EHAC accredited programs (greater recognition of degree qualifications by employers, exclusive job search opportunities, etc.);
 2. Streamlined credentialing exam eligibility process for graduates of EHAC degree programs;
 3. Reduced fees for credentialing exams for graduates of EHAC degree programs;

4. Emphasis on minimizing verification statement/other credential management duties for Program Directors at EHAC accredited degree programs;
 5. Collaborative marketing efforts between ABIH/BGC and EHAC.
- **Second:** Williams
 - **Discussion:**
 - Murphy submitted that he has no problem with exploring an agreement with ABIH more in depth and then returning with a written agreement for the Board to consider. Murphy suggested that an agreement with ABIH along these lines enhances benefits for EHAC graduates. Murphy cited an example – CISP exam at University of Findlay. UF graduates can site for the CISP example for \$25 and after only 4 years’ experience rather than 5 years – so that gives them a slight edge over others. Murphy commented that ABIH is very curriculum driven and they will want to see how much safety and industrial hygiene are involved in EHAC’s curriculum.
 - Finley suggested that an agreement with ABIH may encourage more opportunities at NEHA around changes to the REHS/RS exam or other opportunities for EHAC graduates.
 - Busch Isaksen is concerned about endangering EHAC’s relationship with NEHA and asked if this potential partnership might imperil what is a significant, long term and important relationship. Finley submitted that he has raised the issues with NEHA and Dave several times and support for increasing benefits for EHAC students has been voiced each time. Finley is well aware of the importance of the relationship and wishes it maintained and is confident that the appropriate steps have been taken to avoid any rift. Finley added that he is not certain that it is in EHAC’s power to determine who has the “best” EH credential.
 - Williams submitted that he does not see why there should be an issues at all when the reality is that students either choose a career path in health and safety or public EH and that choice will decide the credential route they take.
 - Finley – suggested that he doesn’t know that it is completely in EHAC’s power to determine what credential is most significant. Bottom line – Jason is confident that we have taken the appropriate steps to avoid any rift between EHAC and NEHA related to a partnership with ABIH. Williams submitted that the reality is that students either choose health and safety or work for the government and Suppes agree. Suppes added that students are trending toward Occupational Safety and health at UW Eau Claire. Busch Isaksen sees a 30/30/30 split among Occ. Health and Safety, Public EH and professional graduate studies for U Washington.
 - **Finley called the question**
 - **Vote:** Unanimously passed
 - **Meeting with WorkCred.org** – Finley summarized meeting. Work Cred. Is working to embed credentialing into college curriculum. Good information and contact.
 - **Meeting with NEHA – Finley provided an update on meeting among Dave Dyjack, Sandra Long, Chair Finley and Leslie Mitchell.**
 - **ABIH** – see above.
 - **REHS/RS** – Finley raised the issue of and noted the EHAC Board’s more practical/less knowledge based current form of the new exam. Finley suggested that NEHA’s Board is aware of the concern and is content to stick with the practical nature of the exam and is

not intending any change from that path any time soon. So, Finley suggested rather than trying to change the credentialing test, EHAC may have to adapt criteria to NEHA's testing scheme.

- Murphy emphasized the importance of NEHA's credentialing subcommittee and especially who Chairs this Committee. Murphy explained that the exam is appropriate for EH practitioners with practical experience as 70% of exam is based upon experience conducting testing and check listing. Murphy suggested that NEHA create a 2nd exam for people entering the EH field with an EH degree so these graduates can break into the field as "credentialed" recent graduates, gain experience, and then sit for the REHS/RS. Murphy suggested informing Dr. Dyjack that there are 350 graduates a year and ½ of those would likely sit for the exam, become members, and likely stay members for life = a recruiting opportunity.
- Busch Isaksen reminded the Board that he and Mike Fletcher made a valiant effort to put forth this suggestion to the committee and suggested thinking more strategically about how to achieve a goal of more EH graduate recognition. Namely, working to seat a new student supportive Chair for the credentialing subcommittee and on the committee itself.
- Gilkey commented on multiple choice nature of exam and suggested that there needs to be a prep course.
- Murphy asked Dr. Hall (AEHAP President) if she had any idea of the REHS/RS pass rate for her students – maybe 50%.
- Suppes wondered if she would be able to pass the exam as a long time academician with prior practitioner experience.
- Finley suggested that EHAC could do better to be more vertically aligned with EHAC criteria and exam. Finley agreed that EHAC could work to get more EHAC support on the committee.
- Gilkey pointed out that many credentialing organizations take pride in a low pass rate.
- EH Branding – Finley explained that his main goal was to talk with NEHA to see what they are doing regarding EH branding efforts and to determine if we can work together on that front. NEHA is working over the next year to come up with a plan to enact. Finley suggested if EHAC wants to move more quickly, we will be on our own for the near future. But communication lines will stay open. Finley will work with Murphy to figure out how to move forward.
- AEHAP Graduate Environmental Health Certificate – Finley reported that this effort is moving forward and will be helpful students.

3.3 Undergraduate Program Report (Gilkey)

- **Mentorship update**
 - Brigham Young University – Gilkey has requested more information from Jim Johnston and for him to complete Table 2 so that Gilkey can more easily determine that all required topics are met by the potential UG degree program. Gilkey reported that Johnston seems committed to applying for accreditation this fall.
 - Bowdoin College – Gilkey reported that Bowdoin's President is a Sanitarian and seems to be very interested in EHAC – an incredible opportunity to pursue accreditation. Bowdoin is a Liberal Arts with great science programs. One concern voiced by Mike

Halko, was whether EHAC would accredit BA degrees (vs. BS). Gilkey pointed out that it doesn't matter whether you call it a BA or BS as long as EHAC's requirements are met. This application for accreditation would be at least a couple of years out.

- Arkansas State – have not heard if this effort is being funded still, or not. [Update – they are moving forward with the new program and are still planning to apply for accreditation – probably in the next year.]

3.4 Graduate Program Report – Vice Chair Busch Isaksen

- **New Graduate Program Director at Eastern Kentucky University - Clint Pinion.**
 - **Motion:** Busch Isaksen recommended approval of Dr. Pinion as the new Graduate Program Director for ECU's Graduate Environmental Health Science Degree Program.
 - **Second:** Finley
 - **Vote:** Unanimously approved.
- **Mentorship Update**
 - **CSU Dominguez Hill** – moving forward with online degree option.
 - **Baylor** – they are going to submit a joint reaccreditation and accreditation Self-study Report. Busch Isaksen suggested the only issue is that they have a 4+1 program so the Board and Council will have to think about the interaction of undergraduate and graduate curriculum and coursework. **This needs to be a consideration during the Grad. Guidelines review, as this is an opportunity for innovation.**
 - Murphy submitted that he would like to see a standalone Self-study for the initial accrediting degree program rather than a combined study for the existing and the new program. He cited the need for there to be great clarity between the two degree programs within the combined document. **Busch Isaksen assured Murphy that she would be very clear that the two degree programs must be specifically delineated within the combined report.**

3.5 Committee Reports

- Joint Policy and Site Visit Best Management Committee meeting - no update
- Graduate Guidelines Comm. update (Busch Isaksen).
 - Busch Isaksen is hoping to have draft revisions for the Council to review at this summer's meeting of the Council.

3.6 Office Report – added after meeting:

- No time for report.

4.0 Old Business:

5.0 New Business:

6.0 March Board Meeting – March 23, 2021 at 1pm Pac. Time

7.0 Adjournment Mtg. adjourned at 1 pm Pacific.