



National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council

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

EHAC Board Meeting Minutes – March 23, 2021 – 1:00pm Pac. Time

Board Members Present: Jason Finley, Don Williams, Tim Murphy, Tania Bush Isaksen

Board Members Absent: Dave Gilkey and Laura Suppes

Visitor: Kim Hall could not attend

EHAC Staff: Leslie Mitchell

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

2.0 Standing Items

2.1 Approval of Agenda: Murphy moved to approve the March 23, 2021 agenda with a second from Busch Isaksen followed by unanimous approval.

2.2 Approval of February 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes: Williams moved to approve the January 19, 2021 minutes. There was a second from Murphy 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.
- Current Income and Expense: Murphy reported on the income and expense sheet. Busch Isaksen enquired about the expenses in 2019-2020 related to Annual Meeting costs. These are costs incurred during the period reflected in the spreadsheet (October 1, 2019-March 1, 2020 – comparison to current). These costs were reimbursed, and this reimbursement will appear in later Income and Loss reports, reflecting reimbursement dates. A question was also asked about a \$250 expense under "Executive Committee" in the current Income and Loss sheet. This is a donation to Eastern Kentucky University in honor of Dr. Carolyn Harvey.

3.2 Chairperson's Report: Finley

- AEHAP Graduate Certificate Review:
 - Concerns were raised about EHAC's role related to the Graduate Certificate and whether or not the word "approved" by is appropriate in the context of the Certificate. Busch Isaksen suggested considering a less impactful word and Murphy supported with defining and comparing the terms "approval" vs "support". The Board felt more comfortable with "supporting" rather than approving as the term is associated with less responsibility. Murphy suggested that there is little liability associated with approving the certificate because no actual credential is being conveyed. The certificate is simply an acknowledgement that a student has graduated from an EHAC accredited degree

- program and highlights some of what has been achieved – e.g., 180 hour internship, etc.). It would provide an additional benefit for students seeking first destination EH jobs.
- Concerns were raised about offending NEHA with issuing this certificate. Murphy explained that NEHA is not excited about the certificate but that Dyjack will take no action on creating an EHAC graduate related credential until directed by the NEHA Board. Bush Isaksen expressed concern about the potential for slow erosion of our good relationship with NEHA. Finley suggested that the certificate might strain the relationship but doesn't think it would break it. Finley pointed out how many past NEHA Presidents are or have also been involved with AAS and EHAC, as well.
 - Finley raised concerns regarding potential perceived bias on EHAC's part and asked if this is an appropriate thing in which EHAC should be involved? Williams voiced no bias concern. Murphy suggested that he is deeply entrenched in the many issues involved in this topic and may not be as objective as others regarding a decision on this topic.
 - Busch Isaksen asked if the Board has authority to grant approval or support on behalf of the Council. Finley pointed out that the document currently reads – EHAC BOD – not EHAC Council. Murphy submitted that the Council elects the Board to make these kinds of decisions in their stead. Finley asked if students are AEHAP or EHAC students and Busch Isaksen replied that they are both, while Finley felt there is a separation to be considered. Finley would like to stay somewhat separated as EHAC/AEHAP work in a parallel fashion. Busch Isaksen emphasized that it would be prudent to let Council members as well as Program Directors know about this new effort prior to its release in order to provide an opportunity for comment. The certificate program is a new undertaking, a big program, and a big shift in thinking (and has been designed that way Finley pointed out) and Busch Isaksen feels that it would be most appropriate for AEHAP to invite comment from the EHAC Council and from Program Directors – in case there are major objections or ideas for improvement. It was felt that getting buy in and providing an opportunity for reflection would significantly increase the success of this effort.
 - **Actions:**
 - **Mitchell will communicate the following to Chuck Treser and AEHAP:**
 1. **The document needs a good “scrub” for continuity and grammar – Mitchell will provide some initial edits suggested by the Board.**
 2. **EHAC Board requests that the certificate idea be shared with both the EHAC Council and EHAC Program Directors prior to release in order to provide an opportunity for comment, concerns, questions and/or suggestions.**
 3. **Mitchell will request a brief narrative outlining the purpose and the development of the certificate idea – e.g., to help EHAC graduates get EH jobs – to be included with this initial communication to the Council and Program Directors.**
 - **Based on response from EHAC Council and PDs, the EHAC Board will decide on whether to support the certificate program.**
 - **May Board and Budget Meetings:** combine for 2 hour meeting?
 - **Action: May 2021 Board/Budget meeting will be 2 hours in length.**

- **BGC/ABIH:** update/(non-disclosure agreement NDA):
 - Finley and Mitchell met with BGC last month. BGC had updated their agenda from the last meeting with items that were discussed and agreed upon regarding student benefits and credentialing process. BGC has requested EHAC sign an NDA, as well. Board was uncomfortable signing an NDA, especially as a nonprofit entity. Murphy submitted that BGC wants to assume the credentialing for a number of EH practices – Industrial Health, Occupation Health, Food Safety, etc. Murphy also submitted that his students already can sit early for most of the credentialing exams in which they are interested in taking. Murphy further suggested that based on the NDA requirement, particular, he does not see the benefit with BGC, especially when this action will likely erode relations with NEHA. with potential problem of working with BGC. Busch Isaksen agreed.
- **NEHA AEC offer:** offered to provide a platform for EHAC annual meeting, but we will use Zoom instead (thanks to Busch Isaksen).
 - Murphy offered Univ. of Findlay’s platform as a backup if necessary.
- **NEHA AEC - option to host a 20-30 minute lunch time session on EHAC topic of choice during one of the AEC’s 3 sections.**
 - Board was in favor of taking a spot and made the following topic suggestions:
 - Hiring the “right” person for entry level EH jobs = EHAC graduates – they get the job done.
 - AEHAP graduate certificate roll out opportunity.
 - **ACTION: Mitchell will let NEHA know that EHAC would like a lunch time space.**

3.3 AEHAP Update (Kim Hall was absent. Mitchell read provided updates)

- AEHAP will be hosting a virtual student symposium on May 11 from 12-3pm EDT. Dr. Dyjack will be providing the keynote address and students who submitted abstracts for the SRC/NSF International competitions will be presenting their research. The symposium will also promote the Student Environmental Health Association (SEHA) and provide information to assist students and programs in chapter development. Carla Brown included a save the date-type mention of the symposium in the 2020-21 AEHAP program dues invoices that went out last week. Formal information and registration should be out in the next few weeks.
- Program outreach initiatives continue to indicate that programs are struggling with student recruitment. Current promotional materials are outdated and don’t really reflect the diversity and flavor of all AEHAP programs. The AEHAP board is working to update those materials and create a new video for its website. These materials can be personalized for each program, with brochure-type information formatted for printing and distribution or digital signage displays.
- The AEHAP board is working to create a SEHA social media presence. This is in the early stages of development, but the idea is to create parent SEHA accounts to which program SEHA chapters could connect. The goal of this is to connect students within and between programs, as well as to the profession, and to help programs recruit students.

[NEHA REHS/RS prep book – Finley reported that he has been asked to assist with updating the HAZMAT chapter of the REHS/RS exam prep book – to be done in September. Busch Isaksen asked if the prep book will align the prep book any better with what is in the actual exam? Finley submitted that the two resources he has been given are general exam information and current prep book HAZMAT chapter. NEHA is not going to revise exam questions at this point.]

3.4 Undergraduate Program Report (Gilkey absent, Mitchell reported provided updates.)

- **Mentorship update:**
 - State University of NY ESC report has not come back from the program director yet.
 - Continuing correspondence from Bowdoin College in MA – Professor Halko has moved forward by informing leadership of the opportunities in EH and the region. He used the NEHA workforce study (provided by Mitchell) as information to support the program).
 - BYU is having a meeting 4/15 to move forward with curriculum changes to align with EHAC standards.

3.5 Graduate Program Report – Vice Chair Busch Isaksen

3.6 Committee Reports

- Joint Policy and Site Visit Best Practices Committee meeting - Busch Isaksen
 - Committee is finalizing revised and new policy wording for Board review.
- Graduate Guidelines Comm. update (Busch Isaksen)
 - Busch Isaksen is hoping to have a draft for the Council to consider at the July annual meeting and for Program Director review after the annual meeting.
 - Another primary goal is to streamline accreditation criteria documents by removing standard policy procedures and placing them into one document separate from the Guidelines and Requirements documents. She would like this to happen this summer.
 - Also, Busch Isaksen wants to readdress the “Interpretations” currently within the main UG Requirements document and would like to have ample time for this discussion at the annual meeting.
 - **ACTION: Mitchell will add time for discussing Interpretations in the UG Requirements to the annual meeting agenda.**
- Virtual Site Visits Committee Meeting update (Mitchell)
 - Committee met to debrief 2020 and 2021 virtual site visits. While Site Visit leads and others found the virtual visits adequate, they are not the most desirable. All felt that EHAC could provide a virtual site visit option to qualifying degree programs. This will require a new policy, which Mitchell is drafting.

3.7 Office Report (Mitchell):

- **Accreditation Flow Chart – for review/add to website**
 - Board was approving of the flow chart overall. [Post meeting: Busch Isaksen suggested getting comments from recent initially accrediting degree programs]
 - **ACTION: Mitchell will ask Seth Walk and Marri Eggers at Montana State to review the document for clarity and comprehensibility.**
- **Potential Marketing Research Internship idea:** no time
- **Workforce research internship proposal from NEHA:**
 - Busch Isaksen and most of others agreed that NEHA should provide funding for any type of internship like this. Busch Isaksen submitted that EHAC needs to protect student value and reported that UW is strongly encouraging their students to only apply for paid internships. Some Board members felt that the honorarium offer is not sufficient compensation for the amount of work described. Murphy agreed and said that time is valuable and should be at least paying minimum wage. Busch Isaksen – honorarium is

not good enough. Academics do not think that students will do this for free. Board would be happy to advertise this with at least a minimum wage attached. Williams pointed out there a time commitment needs to be clarified along with other expectations.

○ **ACTION:**

- **Mitchell will convey EHAC's desire to publicize this internship with the offer of minimum wage compensation and clarified expectations.**

4.0 Old Business:

5.0 New Business:

6.0 March Board Meeting – April 22, 2021 at 8:30am Pac. Time

7.0 Adjournment Mtg. adjourned at 1 pm Pacific.