



National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council

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

EHAC Board Meeting Minutes – August 16, 2021 – 10:00am Pac. Time

Board Members Present: Chair Tim Murphy, Grad. Vice Chair Tania Busch Isaksen, UG Vice Chair Dave Gilkey, Treasurer Rania Sabty, Secretary Chad Brown, Member at Large Chris Sparks

Board Members Absent: Member-at-Large Chris Sparks

Visitor: none

EHAC Staff: Leslie Mitchell

1.0 Meeting Called to order at: 10:02am PST by Chair Murphy.

2.0 Standing Items

2.1 Approval of Agenda: Gilkey moved to approve the August 16, 2021 agenda with a second from Sabty, followed by unanimous approval.

2.2 Approval of July 5, 2021 Meeting Minutes: Gilkey moved to approve the July 5, 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
- First AEHAP Board meeting with new Board members is August 18, 2021

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

- No discussion and documents were approved by Board.

3.3 Chairperson's/ED Report: Murphy/Mitchell – tabled for next month

- **Chair's goals for the year**
- **ED Meeting with Dave Dyjack** – summary (Mitchell)
- **NEHA AEC 2022 - June 28-July 1:** abstracts due September 28
 - Submit Poster highlighting the value and benefits of EHAC accreditation - instead of having an exhibition booth? (will also ask AEHAP about sharing a booth.)
- Submit abstract for discussion session/panel around EH workforce needs – building off robust discussion at lunch time session during the 2nd and 3rd 2021 AEC sessions hosted by Dave and Tim.

3.4 Undergraduate Program Report

- **MSSU - new PD practice plan update**

- Gilkey recommended approval of the practice plan and to welcome Boman as new PD at MSSU. Murphy asked if she provided a way that her practice work will be tracked. Gilkey has asked Boman to provide a summary of her experience, to which she has agreed. In the future, **Murphy would like to know if PDs who embark on gaining EH practice experience learn anything from their efforts and if the Board ask for gaining experience is useful.** Busch Isaksen commented that the Board has not required reporting about practice experiences in the past. Busch Isaksen suggested the need for policies that require a summary of experience along with a more descriptive explanation of the type of experience required. Busch Isaksen emphasized the need for the Board to be consistent in its practical experience requests and description of experience. **Acceptance letter will include appreciation of Boman's original practice plan and expect that her experience will reflect those required for student field experiences.**
- Motion: Gilkey moved to approve Dr. Teresa Boman as the new Program Director at Missouri Southern State University.
- 2nd from Busch Isaksen
- Discussion: see above
- Vote: Motion passed unanimously
- **ACTION: Policy committee will add language regarding a summary of an individual's practical experience and with a more descriptive explanation around the type of practical EH experience required of Program Directors.**
- **SUNY ESF accreditation announcement letter**
 - Motion: Gilkey moved to approve the letter
 - Second: Busch Isaksen 2nd Motion carried
 - Vote: Motion passed unanimously
- **Benedict College:** request for reaccreditation extension to 2023 (from 2022)
 - Motion: Gilkey moved to approve request for a one year extension.
 - Second: Brown
 - Discussion: Busch Isaksen confirmed that this is first time request. Brown added that COVID is having a massive impact on employees and administrations everywhere and is understandable and was supportive of the extension request.
 - Vote: Motion passed unanimously
 - NOTE: Murphy asked if Board should send support letter to administration at Benedict? Board was supportive of this idea.
 - **ACTION: Mitchell will write letter to Benedict's President and Provost in support of Dr. Milton Morris' hiring efforts and stabilization of the EHS program at Benedict.**
- **Mississippi Valley State University (HBCU) update:**
 - Gilkey reported that Dr. Kethireddy's Department has received a request from the Provost to teach out the UG degree program. Their enrollment is down by ½ this year and their graduate rate has fallen as well. As a state supported university, MVSU is forced to maintain a base graduation rate – which they've been unable to meet in the past couple of years. Pande and Kethireddy have a meeting next week with the MVSU President for one last attempt to save the program.
 - If unable to gain support for the program, they would like to request a 2 year extension to teach out the program and then submit their Graduate degree self-

study in December 2023. Murphy suggested that Kethireddy write a letter requesting an extension to teach out the UG program that includes how many students need to graduate and when. If they need more than 2 years, that is too much. Kethireddy reported that all UG students would graduate by spring of 2024 = 2 year extension. Busch Isaksen pointed out that EHAC Boards have declined granting a longer than one year extension in the past, so cautioned the Board to be very careful that they are consistent in their decisions. Murphy suggested that none of those programs were facing closing down completely (uncertain of this and Mitchell will check). Busch thinks that ETSU asked for an extension and were in a similar situation and the Board did NOT grant the extension due to the policy of no more than one year.

- **Action – Mitchell will request specifics including number of future graduates and their graduation dates. Board will discuss request and possibly seek advice of the Council.**
- Note: Busch Isaksen asked if it would be helpful to send a support letter to the MVSU administration highlighting the EH workforce need for new professionals – duet to impending retirements and increasing climate change related EH challenges. Busch Isaksen suggested that AEHAP could assist with marketing, etc. Busch Isaksen also mentioned emphasizing that State universities (HBCUS/Land trust institutions) have requirements to pay attention to workforce needs in their localities.
- **Action: Mitchell will write letter of support this week citing workforce situation and demand and potential help from AEHAP.**
- Mentoring update
 - Arkansas State University - slowly moving forward
 - The Ohio State University – interest and email contact

3.5 Graduate Program Report – Vice Chair Busch Isaksen

- **FVSU accreditation announcement letter**
 - Motion to approve FVSU’s letter by Tania Busch Isaksen
 - Second: Gilkey
 - Vote: motion carried
- **EKU - new Program Director: Gary Brown**
 - Motion: Busch Isaksen recommended approval of Gary Brown as PD.
 - Second: Gilkey
 - Discussion: Gilkey pointed out that Brown doesn’t have a lot of practical experience but has a lot of talent in a specific area. Board did not want to get into specifics of the type of practical experience that PDs have.
 - **Vote: motion carried**
 - **Brown may be on sabbatical on 2022-2023: tabled until next month**

3.6 Committee Reports – table until next meeting

- UG Reqs. Rev. Comm. - Internal Advisory Board discussion (Gilkey)
- BGC relationship exploration committee (Mitchell) - moving forward with initial meeting
- New (sub) Committees:
 - Values and Marketing Committee - EHAC/EH Podcast subcommittee - Busch Isaksen and Lewis

- AP Environmental Health Exploration Committee - Lee Newman, Chair

4.0 Old Business:

5.0 New Business:

- REHS/RS Exam discussion (Sabty)
 - Sabty summarized her concern that there were only two academics that were part of revision of the REHS exam (although more academics were on the revision of the review material/study guide). She is frustrated that once again there was little academic involvement in the exam revision process and that is negatively impacting EHAC students as they are not prepared for a practice oriented exam and cannot pass it. Sabty suggested contacting Mike Fletcher to see what he thinks about the situation and to understand what his experience with the revision process was like. Murphy commented that NEHA had lot of good people helping with the study guide but that they never had access to the exam or sample questions to help write the study guide. Murphy is pushing NEHA to create a 2 step exam – 1. knowledge based shorter exam and then 2. Practice based or full RS exam. Murphy has floated this idea with Dr. Dyjack and the REHS/RS committee to no avail. Brown reported that his experience with the REHS is that his employees would pass the NEHA exam but not the Ohio specific exam. Brown added that the pass rate for first time exam takers, at least, the REHS/RS exam is shockingly low and agreed that a two-step process would better serve recent graduates as well as those with experience. Murphy suggested that the best way to make a change may be working through NEHA state affiliates/registration entities to push the two step idea. Bush Isaksen requested a list of all of the SMEs involved in the revision of the REHS/RS exam.
 - **Action: Sabty will send the list of SMEs to the Board and will ask Mike Fletcher about his experience on the REHS/RS committee with the following questions:**
 - **What has been your input?**
 - **Do you feel that academics were properly consulted during the exam revision process?**
- 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): **tabled**
- Need for Online specific accreditation criteria or evaluation criteria – laboratory classes especially?: **tabled**
Indiana University Bloomington: BSPH curriculum aligns closely with EHAC criteria – pursue accreditation interest? How best to do this?

6.0 Next Board Meeting: **Schedule September Board meeting - tabled**

7.0 Adjournment Mtg. adjourned at 11:00 am Pacific.

