



National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council

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

EHAC Board Meeting Minutes – September 13, 2021 – 11:00am Pac. Time

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

Board Members Absent: Rania Sabty (teaching)

Others attending: Ben Ryan – AEHAP

EHAC Staff: Leslie Mitchell

1.0 Meeting Called to order at: 11:00am PST by Chair Murphy.

2.0 Standing Items

2.1 Approval of Agenda: Gilkey moved to approve the September 13, 2021, agenda with a second from Sparks, followed by unanimous approval.

2.2 Approval of August 16, 2021, Meeting Minutes: Sparks moved to approve the August 16, 2021 minutes. There was a second from Brown and the minutes were approved unanimously.

3.0 Reports

3.1 AEHAP Update: Dr. Ben Ryan – new President

- Clinical Assoc. Professor at Baylor - introduced himself. Australian government background in EH. New manager of Baylor MBH program.
- AEHAP updates:
 - October 6, 2021, symposium: 3-5pm Eastern. Planning to have 2 symposium a year. All Board positions are filled.

3.2 Treasurer's Report: Mitchell provided a brief overview of the budget documents as Sabty could not make the meeting.

- Current Balance sheet - no questions
- Current Income and Expenses - no questions
- Murphy commented that increases in dues and fees will create a savings cushion for EHAC, which is a fiscally responsible thing for a nonprofit to do.

3.3 Chairperson's/ED Report: Murphy/Mitchell

- **Chair's goals for the year** - try to avoid losing programs and nurture the criteria review and revision processes.
- **NEHA AEC 2022 - June 28-July 1:** abstracts due September 28

- Submit Poster highlighting the value and benefits of EHAC accreditation - in addition to having an exhibition booth. (Mitchell has asked 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 Gilkey and Murphy.

3.4 Undergraduate Program Report: Dave Gilkey

- **Mississippi Valley State University: special extension request**
 - **Motion:** Gillkey motioned to accept MVSU's request for extension to 2024.
 - **Revised Motion: Gilkey motioned to allow for a one year extension for MVSU's UG program to 2023. MVSU will provide a letter thoroughly outlining the program closure process that directly addresses how students will be graduated under EHAC criteria, particularly the current freshman not scheduled to graduate until 2024.**
 - **Second:** Chad Brown
 - **Discussion:**
 - Murphy outlined options for MVSU's situation: to grant a one year renewal and they can ask for reconsideration in 2023. Busch Isaksen confirmed that degree programs must be accredited at time that the degree is attained for students to claim graduation from an accredited degree program (at time of graduation).
 - Gilkey suggested granting a one year extension and one additional year due to special circumstances; or to apply for a one year extension and also request a second year of special extension.
 - Murphy wants to figure out a way to get students graduated by end of MVSU's accreditation period. Suggested asking MVSU to develop a detailed teach out plan that describes how each currently enrolled student will attain graduation. Murphy suggested that a one year extension would allow EHAC to assist MVSU in developing a process for teaching out after the one year extension is complete.
 - Busch Isaksen commented that the more the Board tries to accommodate one program the more complicated and less clear it gets. Gilkey disagreed and submitted that EHAC should allow for a one year extension and ask them to reapply for another extension and write a letter with the status of remaining students along with providing a complete and thorough closer plan. Gilkey would like to give them some slack due to unique circumstances (COVID) and suggested a case by case consideration of these types of situations. Busch Isaksen suggested this would be establishing a precedent - not great thing to do. And she is not good with establishing a precedent.
 - Murphy thinks the program is done and they are not going to try to revive the program as there are just too few students enrolling and graduating. Murphy suggested that students could transfer to another EHAC program and/or an online accredited program to complete their studies.
 - Busch Isaksen asked why MVSU enrolled students this year - for a 2024 graduation? Gilkey answered - because the closure request was a recent surprise.

- Busch Isaksen suggested allowing for a one year extension and reconsideration after the 2nd year and submitted that maybe the practice community will rally to keep the program open. C. Brown added that this will not be the last time we will have to deal with this type of situation and agreed with Busch Isaksen on her suggestion. Brown commented that the only reason the Ohio University program has survived is because it is accredited by EHAC. Brown suggested creating a process that allows for consideration of closure process over the next year among the EHAC Council. Murphy agreed with a one year extension and with Brown's suggestion, as well.
 - Busch Isaksen pointed out that as accreditation council – we accredit programs/not individuals students.
 - Gilkey proposed granting a one year extension with a detailed letter outlining how they are going to do the teach out specifically along with a request for additional data.
 - **Action**
 - **Gilkey/Mitchell will write a letter to MVSU including the following:**
 - More specifics on the how all current students will graduate – especially the 2 current freshman – how are they going to complete all required classes (especially EH specific courses – option, they could take courses at another EHAC accred. program.)
 - Murphy wants the detailed teach out plan by December 1, 2021 so there is more time to work with MVSU. Murphy will send questions for more data to Mitchell and suggested other Board members contribute their questions as well. Murphy emphasized that EHAC Policy provides no mechanism to grant a 2 year extension.
 - Busch Isaksen would like to include a question about how they have attempted to work with practitioners to advocate for their program
 - **Note:** Busch Isaksen shared that there was discussion in the policy committee about sharing courses. As there has been no specific ask for this from programs, the committee suggested at the least, EHAC should require high level MOUs between/among administrations detailing how core required course would be managed between/among institutions. This cannot be an informal agreement and needs to involve upper administrators committing to provide these course share options, as well as approval of the EHAC Board.
 - **Vote: Unanimously passed**
- **Texas Southern Curriculum Changes:**
 - **Motion: Gilkey recommended approving the changes described by TSU.**
 - Second: Tania Busch Isaksen
 - Discussion: Busch Isaksen submitted that University of Washington is making similar curriculum changes and will be submitting changes to EHAC soon – all in attempt to increase enrollment. There was a suggestion to request that TSU revise Table 2 with changes incorporated into the revised Table. This is to ensure that all EHAC required courses are met. Associated revised syllabi will be requester as well.
 - Gilkey retracted motion and will take action as Vice Chair regarding Table 2 requests.

- **ACTION: Mitchell will write a letter to TSU asking them to provide a revised Table 2 form showing new class/course structure and to provide revised syllabi associated with the changes.**
- **Western Kentucky University**
 - planning to apply for accreditation this year (2021)
 - Gilkey shared Self-studies with WKU

3.5 Graduate Program Report – Vice Chair Busch Isaksen

- Ryan reported that Baylor will be applying for Master’s Degree soon, along with UG program reaccreditation

3.6 Committee Reports

- BGC relationship exploration committee (Mitchell) - initial meeting was held in late August.
- UG Requirements Revision Committee update (Gilkey)
 - Gilkey reported that the Committee decided to stick with required courses rather than moving to a competency based criteria. Murphy asked why committee thought this was the wrong time to move toward competency based criteria. Gilkey described the committee’s discussion regarding this being a difficult period of time to make a big changes – mostly due to the extreme workloads created by the COVID situation. Murphy thinks EHAC should move to competencies because it’s simpler – as X,Y, Z specific course is not required – rather, programs can use a number of different courses to meet a competency. Gilkey commented that the workload would be significant for programs and for EHAC staff. Murphy commented that a competency based accreditation would be more difficult on the paperwork side but thought that it would be easier for those starting a new program. Busch Isaksen agreed with Gilkey citing that competencies based CEPH requirements/accreditation have been a huge amount of work and extremely costly, as well – due especially to creating and tracking the process for reporting to site visitors. Also, Busch Isaksen added that EHAC does not have the office capacity to support a move to competency based accreditation. Data management is hugely complicated and EHAC does not have adequate staff to support this move. Busch Isaksen added that EHAC would have to raise fees, hire staff and train site visitors in order to make a move to competency based UG criteria. Murphy suggested EHAC would create a competency based accreditation from the ground up, suggesting it would not have to be like CEPH. It would be an EHAC process. Murphy added that we keep on seeing programs shut down because specific classes can’t be taught or unavailable but Busch Isaksen questioned whether that was indeed a problem. Chad Brown (on Ohio U advisory board) – from practitioner point of view – it is literally impossible to hire people right now. Brown suggested that if EHAC can make a switch that would result in more practitioners in the field - he is all for it. Administrations at Universities need to understand importance of EH and the need for new hires!
 - **Busch Isaksen reminded the Board of the one communications competency currently in the UG criteria and suggested that EHAC could experiment using a competencies approach for other crosscutting areas. Murphy agreed and called it a hybrid approach. Busch Isaksen suggested that a hybrid approach would allow**

programs to adapt to the idea of competency based criteria slowly rather than having to jump in all at once. Busch Isaksen also suggested adding a stipulation to a hybrid policy that encourages programs that cannot meet course oriented requirements to show how they could meet criteria through competencies.

- Nominations Committee update (Sparks)
 - Discussed creating a letter to Council asking them to consider:
 - asking Council Member leaving the Council to nominate a person(s) to replace their positions, considering ethnicity, geography and gender in their recommendations
- Bylaws and Policy Committee update (Busch Isaksen)
 - Good meeting: created great agenda for moving forward.

4.0 Old Business:

5.0 New Business:

- **Ohio State:** Chad Brown reported that OSU intends to apply for accreditation in 2 years. They are aligning their curriculum to be able to apply. Murphy added that no one from Ohio associated with EHAC will be involved in accreditation decision for OSU.
- **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: October 7 at 1pm Pacific

7.0 Adjournment Mtg. adjourned at 12pm Pacific.