EHAC Annual Meeting of the Council*

July 13, 2024 - Hybrid Meeting Minutes

*__Abbreviations used in these minutes:__ Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs (AEHAP), Board of Global Health Credentialing (BGC), National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC), Environmental Health (EH), Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC), Graduate (G), Graduate Environmental Health Certificate (GEHC), Junior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (JRCOSTEP), Program Director (PD), National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), National Environmental Health Internship Program (NEPHIP), Undergraduate (UG

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1. **Call to Order:** Chair Tania Busch Isaksen called the meeting to order at 9:07AM EST.

1.1 Welcome and Introductions: EHAC Chair Tania Busch Isaksen

- **Invited Board, current and elected Council Members to introduce themselves**
- **EHAC 2024 Council Attendees:**
  - Onsite: Chair - Tania Busch Isaksen, Anne Marie Zimeri, Michele Morrone, Rania Sabty, Tim Murphy, Jason Lewis, Mike Quinn, Welford Roberts, Wendell Moore, Priscilla Oliver, Laura Suppes, Sandra Long, DeBrena Hilton, Mari Eggers, Lee Newman
  - Virtual: Treasurer - Cindy Weckwerth, Lok Pokhrel, Nominations Committee Chair - Chris Sparks, Clint Pinion, Kai Elgethun, Swat Kethireddy
  - **Council Members Absent:**
  - **Guest attendees:** 2024-2025 Council Members Elect: Sunny Wesey - FVSU, Timothy (Matt) Albright, Volunteer Site Visitor: Dave Gilkey
  - **EHAC Staff:** Leslie Mitchell
- **Zoom Logistics**
- **Approval of Agenda:**
  - Agenda Unanimously Approved

2.0 Officer Reports

2.1 Executive Director's Report: Leslie Mitchell

- Mitchell provided an update on accredited programs, work activities for 2023-2024 and plans for 2024-2025

2.2 Secretary's Report: Dr. Laura Suppes

- Suppes reported on Board meetings held in the 2023-2024 EHAC Fiscal Year

2.3 Treasurer's Report: Mitchell and Cindy Weckwerth presented the financial documents

- FY 2023-2024 Financial Report: October 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024
  - **Balance Sheet:**
    - Total Bank Accounts: $73,748.13 as of June 21, 2024
  - **Income and Expense Report as of June 21, 2024:**
    - Gross income: $103,180.55
    - Income from Accreditation: $91,100
    - Net income: $20,658.01
  - **2023-2024 Approved Budget and Office Overhead Adjustment Explanation**
    - Mitchell and Weckwerth explained an adjustment and payment of back taxes related to historic office overhead paid to Mitchell.
  - **Proposed EHAC Budget for 2024-2025 (fiscal year from October 1 - September 30):**
    - **Motion**: Lewis moved to approve the 2024-2025 budget as presented.
    - **Second**: Oliver
    - **Discussion:** none
    - **Decision: Motion carried unanimously**

2.4 Vice Co-Chairs for Undergraduate Programs Report: CDR Jason Lewis and Dr. Tim Murphy

- **California State University - Northridge - 50th anniversary of accreditation**
  - Sabty presented a 50th anniversary plaque to Northridge in April via a video presentation. She reported being very happy to do so, as she was faculty at CSU Northridge a few years ago.
  - The plaque was presented at an April CSUN Annual Technical Symposium and was very well received.

- **Updates of Decisions of the Board:**
  - **New Program Directors approved by Board in 2023-2024**
    - Dr. Rod Handy at East Tennessee State University
  - **Baylor University - 2022 conditions review - chemistry and advisory committee issues**
    - Lewis explained that Baylor addressed the chemistry issue and also held one advisory committee meeting, thus complying with conditional requirements.
      - Lewis emphasized how critical the advisory committee is to a program and their students in his explanation.
    - **Motion: Lewis moved to remove the 2022 conditions placed on Baylor University's BS Environmental Health program and accredit the program for the remaining four years of their six-year term (2022-2028).**
    - **Second:** Newman
    - **Discussion:**
      - Lewis and Gilkey emphasized the importance of having an advisory committee and how it can well serve the program and its students.
      - Morrone expressed concern that Baylor would go on condition for one lab for one chemistry class that they don't control within their department.
    - **Vote: Unanimously approved**
  - **2023-24 degree programs up for reaccreditation:**
    - **East Carolina University**
    - **Eastern Kentucky University**
    - **University of Findlay**
    - **University of Georgia**
    - **University of Washington**
  - **2024-25 Programs up for Reaccreditation:**
    - East Tennessee State University
    - California State University San Bernardino
    - Central Michigan University
    - Illinois State University
    - Montana State University
    - Texas Southern University

2.5 Vice Chair for Graduate Programs Report: CDR Kai Elgethun

- **2023-2024 Reaccrediting Degree Programs**
  - East Carolina University
  - Eastern Kentucky University
  - Mississippi Valley State University
  - University of Findlay
- **2023-2024 degree programs up for reaccreditation 2024-2025**
  - University of Illinois, Springfield

[NOTE: Self-Study Reviewer and Site Visitor Signups for both undergraduate and graduate programs]

3.0 Nominations Committee Report: Chris Sparks

- **2024-2025 newly elected Academicians:**
  - Dr. Gary Brown
  - Dr. Kim Hall
  - Dr. Clint Pinion
  - Dr. Lok Pokhrel
  - Dr. Sunny Wesey

- **2024-2025 newly elected Practitioners:**
  - CDR Timothy (Matt) Albright
  - CDR Jason Lewis
  - Dr. Priscilla Oliver
  - Cindy Weckwerth

4.0 Accreditation Actions:

4.1a Accreditation Action: Eastern Kentucky University - Undergraduate

Strengths:

- Students are prepared for entering the workforce - as was reinforced by folks that hired the students
- Internship opportunities
- Strong & well-connected advisory committee

Challenges/Recommendations:

- Obtain general education status for the EHS-280 Introduction to EHS

Program Director Comments:

- Dr. Gary Brown thanked the Site Visit Team for a great visit.

Motion: The Site Visit Team moved to grant EKU's Undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Environmental Public Health full accreditation for six years with no conditions.

Vote: Unanimously approved

Letter:

- Congratulate program on effectively preparing students for the EH field, for their quality internship programs, and robust advisory committee.
- Add general education status for any of their courses and particularly the 280 course.
- Grow the program with additional faculty.
- Continue to recruit more students.
- Keep EHAC informed about faculty status due to instability of faculty - faculty are young and may be searching for different positions.
- Be proactive about new faculty training so that everyone is on the same page about EHAC requirements (for BOTH Grad and UG).
- Announce quarterly Program Director meetings held by EHAC and the importance of attending.
- For combined or split classes, make sure that both UG and Graduate objectives are being met.

4.1b Accreditation Action: Eastern Kentucky University - Graduate

Strengths:

- Internship opportunities
- Strong & well-connected advisory committee

Challenges/Recommendations:

- Hiring of additional faculty
- Update websites

Program Director Comments:

- Dr. Gary Brown thanked the Site Visit Team for a great visit.

Motion: The Site Visit Team moved to grant EKU's Master of Public Health in Environmental Occupational Health & Sustainability program full accreditation for six years with no conditions.

Vote: Unanimously approved

Letter: same as UG letter plus:

- Eggers suggested providing recruiting practices that have worked for other programs.

4.2 Accreditation Action: University of Pittsburgh - Graduate

Strengths:

- A long history of preparing environmental and occupational health professionals
- Powerhouse of collaborative research
- Faculty with practice-based experience and wide external connections
- Robust practicum experiences ---> employment opportunities
- Interdisciplinary graduate certificate opportunities

Challenges:

- Leveraging a new and growing BSPH degree --> graduate education
- Increasing student opportunities for hands-on field equipment experience
- Increasing in-depth occupational health and safety coursework
- Incorporation of field trips into appropriate EH topical coursework

Program Director Comments: Dr. Nesta Bortey Sam, Dr. Maureen Lichtveld, Dr. Sally Wenzell

- Dr. Lichtveld reported that they are close to finalizing a BSPH 4+1. The Provost heeded Busch Isaksen and Elgethun's suggestion to make foundation courses available online so regional campuses can participate. Bortey-Sam reported increasing the number of hands-on experience and field trips and that five meetings have been held since the Site Visit to discuss OC Health and Safety, to address needs of students, as well as Site Visitor's suggestions.
- Strong ties with Dept. of Civil Environment and Engineering = opportunities for students.
- P2 grant awarded that is student and practice focused.
- Dr. Wenzel reported the P2 grant provides potential for more interaction with NIOSH, including field trips to Morgantown. This is a great partnership and the adjunct faculty are very excited. Unique opportunity for students to interact with NIOSH and can serve as a direct career route to NIOSH and to public health.
- U Pitt has partnership with state DOH as well, providing more student practicum opportunities and job pipelines.

Motion: The Site Visit team moved to grant the University of Pittsburgh's Master of Public Health in Environmental and Occupational Health degree program full accreditation for 6 years with no conditions.

Vote: Unanimously approved

Letter:

- Ensure that the pipeline of BSPH program meets requirements of the MPH.
- Inform Program Director about new graduate guidelines.
- Support and encourage regional collaboration – specifically with NIOSH and other universities.
- Thank the Provost as well.

4.3a Accreditation Action: East Carolina University - Undergraduate

Strengths:

- Small class size
- Well supported by administration
- Valued program
- Supportive faculty and staff
- Diverse faculty expertise and backgrounds
- Faculty supported in teaching and research – they negotiate annual workload %
- Faculty strongly connected to local health/ state departments + across university
- Resources: classrooms, libraries, labs
- Active advisory committee- members provide survey feedback

- Variety of EH topic options in curriculum
- Required courses, exposure to: Air Quality Control, Food Protection, Occupational Health & Safety, Solid & Hazardous Waste Management, Water & Wastewater, and Zoonotic & Vector borne Diseases
- Required to take 18+ credit hours for in-depth knowledge of at least 4 of the EH technical areas
- Curriculum change underway to reinstate concentration options in Industrial Hygiene/Occupational Health and Public Health Protection Science
- Students prepared to enter the workforce
- Internship opportunities - many, well communicated
- EH Blog- info and opportunities communications
- Inconsistencies with EHAC UG Criteria:
  - Starting with the 2020-21 catalog and currently in the 2023-24 catalog, EH majors are required to take CHEM 1120 and CHEM 1130, constituting 8 hours of chemistry and no chemistry labs.
  - At the last EHAC accreditation, in 2018, and up until the 2019-20 catalog, BSEH majors were required to take CHEM 1150/1151 (General Chemistry 1 with lab, 3/1), CHEM 1160/1161 (General Chemistry 2 with lab, 3/1) , and CHEM 2750/2753 (Organic Chemistry for the Life Sciences with lab, 4/1).
  - Since the last accreditation, curriculum changes have been implemented, without EHAC's knowledge. This has led to the fact that some students have not been taking EHAC Chemistry requirements, since the 2020-21 catalog and through 2023-24.
  - Communications with the EH program after the site visit indicated that a curriculum change is under way to substitute CHEM 1120 with CHEM 1150/1151 and CHEM 1160/1161 in the next catalog and, to update the EH curriculum accordingly. Once this revision occurs, this would be 8 credit hours of general chemistry with labs and 4 hours of organic chemistry (CHEM 1130) without lab.

Recommendations:

- Add full-time fixed faculty position (EHST 2110)
- Ensure that every course syllabus contains learning objectives and how objectives align with BSEH program outcomes.
- Increase enrollment.
- Identify potential for students to attend conferences + other professional opportunities + paid internships.
- Increase engagement with External Advisory Committee members.
- Diversify their External Advisory Committee and consider additional industry representatives.
- Inform EHAC of current/ potential curriculum changes.

Program Director Comments: William Hill

- Mr. Hill explained that the removal of the organic chemistry with lab course was due to a school wide reduction in credits needed to graduate.
- Making moves to go back to chemistry courses with labs (either a food lab or wastewater lab or food lab)
- ECU is notifying students who have missed chemistry labs in the past so they can get necessary skills and knowledge from other labs.

Motion: The Site Visit Team recommended a 2-year conditional accreditation pending the organic chemistry Issue resolution of chemistry issue for the Bachelor of Environmental Health at East Carolina University.

Vote: Unanimously approved

Letter:

- Document that the program complies with EHAC chemistry requirements – either via letter from Chemistry Department or through changes in catalog.

- Complete a brand-new Table 2 that addresses the natural science deficiencies and a link to the general education requirements
  - Include learning outcomes and outline of topics in the course - Including chemistry and biology.
  - Remove all courses that are not required from Table 2.
- Add Administrative law course and provide syllabus.
- Two electives (including EHST3500 that are not in online)

[NOTE – EHAC will have to address AI]

4.3b Accreditation Action: East Carolina University - Graduate

Strengths:

- Well supported by administration
- Graduates prepared for careers in environmental and occupational health practice and research
- Curriculum provides preparation in advanced problem solving and critical thinking
- Resources: classrooms, virtual spaces, labs, field experiences (van)
- Most students are working professionals - courses offered on campus, blended, and online.
- Each student selects from either a research thesis or applied professional paper option.
- Each student takes a comprehensive exam to test general EH technical knowledge.
- Students do an oral presentation of their work accompanied by thesis defense or poster.
- Thorough and high-quality theses and professional papers

Recommendations:

- Increase enrollment
- Additional tenure-track faculty
- Additional GSRs
- Review and revise learning objectives to emphasize Bloom's Taxonomy (with higher cognitive levels stressed for graduate [5000- 6000- and 7000-level] courses)
- Indicate in syllabi how course learning objectives align with MSEH program outcomes, EHAC competencies, and course learning assessment tools.
- Develop overarching EHAC competencies - map to program goals, program learning objectives, course learning outcomes, and learning outcome assessment tools .
- Determine where the Comprehensive Exam fits in assessing learning objectives and outcomes and how it may be better utilized to assess these objectives.
- Consider AI and integration of awareness about it in coursework and culminating experiences (papers, comprehensive exam, and theses).

Program Director Comments: Dr. Stephanie Richards

Motion: The Site Visit Team moved to grant East Carolina's Master of Science in Environmental Health Program full 6-year accreditation with no conditions.

Vote: Unanimous Approval

Letter:

- Align syllabi with Blooms taxonomy for 5000 and 6000 level courses.
- Map learning objectives back to department mission and EHAC criteria.
- Site Visit team – formulate recommendations into sentences that can be put into a letter.
- Continue to develop tenure track lines with GSRs.
- Include relevant recommendations from Site Visit Report.
- Determine where the Comprehensive Exam fits.

5.0 Protocol Visits

NEHA - President Tom Butts, President Elect CPT Anna Khan:

- Tom Butts – NEHA is honing support of career and profession.
- Internship programs important – NEPHIP – paid internships are of primary importance. Hope to fund into the future – getting a more diverse population in the NEPHIP program.
- Rest of the career – big lift around education – 1,200 registered – 280 education options at NEHA AEC
- Grand Rounds
- Continuing education efforts
- Regional FDA Food Safety Education grant – had for the past 3 years and applied again this year. NEHA is getting money out to state and local level for voluntary safety standards work in communities. FDA is retooling their food safety approach.
- South Pacific and Virgin Islands – lead detection training, basic EH training that communities haven't had for a while
- NEHA = looking at bylaws and structure – revising.
  - Added a COO this year - Kelsey Long
- EH workforce act update – sponsor left the House and a new sponsor hasn't been found.
- NEHA took local reps to Hill visit this year rather than just Board Members
- Promotions in Ohio and Iowa – swipe right campaign and targeted messages to elected officials
- Sabty - is NEHA looking at how we can generate more practitioners and create a straight forward pipeline into the profession – similar to what other professional orgs are doing – e.g. Occupational Environmental Health and Safety (Larry Sloan) working strategically to appeal to students and early employers. What is NEHA doing?
  - Butts - retirements - projected to lose 40% of workforce
  - Butts - not producing enough graduates of accredited programs
    - There are a ton of folks with great knowledge and experience that can be effective in the practice (without accredited degrees) - side door into the profession.
    - Khan – communication issue – how do we say who we are and what we do? EH needs a tag line similar to "doctors save lives!".
    - Internships are being provided for high school students in EH in Guam – to introduce students early.
    - 14,000 Marines moving into Guam to help with EH issues.
- Brown – reported that NEHA is developing an EH career advising guide for teachers - biology, chemistry, etc. – tool for instructors, career counselors and college advisors. Khan is working with Mitchell to come up with personal stories. Murphy suggested starting with high school freshmen. Curriculum – make curriculum that meets national science standards that INCLUDES environmental health – teachers will use it if it's free and user-friendly.
- Contact Anna Khan with their ideas regarding curriculum and tag lines! akahn@neha.org
- Pay is a huge problem - pubic vs. private

COSTEP - CAPT Michael Quinn provided an update on COSTEP related activities:

- CPT Timothy Jiggens wants to talk with Council later.
- There has been a big contraction in EH Officers from 6,500 to 5,000 - hard time to attract people to come to the service in the past many years.
- New variation of retirement system for USPHS - shifted from 20 years to a blended retirement system:
  - Military pension with a thrift saving plan – opportunity for person to have some earnings withheld with a government match and can leave anytime – don't have to stay for 20 years.
  - Way for folks to try the job out rather than having to stay for 20 years.

- Change in application dates for JRCOSTEP - August 1 – September 1 for 2025 positions.
- Senior COSTEP - for graduate students - authorization exists for EH but just have never used it. May get this started because they can't find qualified people. Apply between first and second year of college and then govnt. would pay for second year of graduate program.
- Student career experience program - non-competitive appt. - could go in as a GS11 and move to a GS13 quickly.
- Opportunity to work with ED of AIHA - Larry Sloan
- Growing desire to do future planning as most of workforce is getting ready to retire. Forced to hire people not trained in the EH field – then takes a long time to train.
- Tim Albright – will be having a webinar on September 4, 2024 with ABET for HIS Civil Internship, COSTEP with ABET and EHAC schools. Does not include occupational safety and health positions.
- Elgethun is trying to get a formal way for USPHS officers to act as adjuncts – talking with Timothy Jiggens.
- Murphy - body weight mass index – any change on this? Relaxation in tattoo policy at USPHS, also can do 'tapering" (measurements – neck, chest, waist, etc.) to get by weight situation.

AEHAP - President Michele Morrone

- Sunsetting
- NEHA will take over the Student Research Competition.

4.4 Accreditation Action: Mississippi Valley State University - Graduate

Strengths:

- Well supported by Administration
- Only accredited EHS Program in the State
- Environmental Health Science is in the name of the Department, Department of Natural Sciences and Environmental Health (NSEH)
- Faculty, especially Dr. Spencer, students and alumni love support of faculty
- Value of Program
- Provides springboard for success
- Laboratory and classroom space
- Critical thinkers.
- Ability to Problem Solve

Recommendations:

- Low student enrollment
- Lack of field equipment
- Provide annual budget for equipment calibration, repair and replacement
- Develop more of an applied field lab focus for existing classes
- Faculty turnover
- Succession planning for EHS practitioner Dr. Spencer
- Need for additional internships
- Increase partnerships with local & regional government & private agencies

Program Director Comments: Dr. Matthewos Eschete

- **MVSU has already acted on some of the Site Visitors recommendations::**
  - Changing name of department
  - Hiring faculty with more practical experience
- Morrone asked if there are 4 concentrations within the degree? Yes, but focus on only 2 of these options.

Motion: The Site Visit Team move to grant Mississippi Valley State University's Master of Public Health Program full accreditation for 6 years, with no conditions.

Vote: Unanimously passed

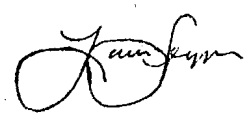
Letter:

- Program Director - clarify current faculty and plans and notify EHAC of new hire.
- Formalize External Advisory Board.
- Notification language about what tracks within the accredited MPH degree program are active and which ones are not (Council does not want student to show up expecting a track to be taught that is not active.).

6.0 Adjourn until 8am Sunday July 14, 2024

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Suppes, 2023-2024 EHAC Secretary



Leslie D. Mitchell, Executive Director