

**Graduate School of Public Health
Educational Policies and Curriculum Committee
Meeting Minutes | February 13, 2014**

Present: Joyce Bromberger, Cindy Bryce (remotely), Robert Coulter, Mary Derkach, Eleanor Feingold, Candace Kammerer, Marissa Kaplan, Anil Ojha, Sarah Pugh, Wesley Rohrer, Varun Sharma, Martha Terry, Orrin Tiberi, and Abdus Wahed.

Absent: Julie Barry, Patricia Opresko, and Jane Clougherty.

Meeting called to order at: 1:34 p.m. by Dr. Martha Terry, Chair.

Commonwealth Scholarships

Dr. Cindy Bryce explained that she would like to start sending nomination letters to Commonwealth scholarship nominees at an earlier date. She hopes that this will give accepted applicants greater incentive to come to Pitt. Commonwealth scholarships are aimed at helping disadvantaged or underserved groups of students. The school is allowed to define what “disadvantaged” or “underrepresented” means. Students with physical and military disabilities and LGBT students are among some of the people who are currently eligible for this scholarship. This list is not exhaustive, however, and Dr. Bryce encourages members to send suggestions for additions to this list. Each department can award one Commonwealth scholarship. Award amounts will probably range between \$1,000-3,500. Departments are highly encouraged to contribute what they can to this base award amount. Dr. Bryce mentioned that department contributions will be matched (or close to it), increasing the amount of the award that will eventually be given to the student of the department’s choosing. Scholarship recipients are to be chosen by the department, according to the department’s own standards. If the department’s first nominee rejects their offer, the department can continue to submit applications until the offer is accepted by a student of their choosing. Commonwealth scholarships cover one year of study. Departments will have the opportunity to apply for another Commonwealth scholarship at the end of the first academic year and can choose to have the funds awarded to their current Commonwealth recipient or to a new student. If there are leftover funds after all of the funds have been allocated for the second year, Dr. Bryce said that the excess funds might possibly be given to scholarship recipients from the previous year. Funds for this year’s scholarships are guaranteed. Funds for next year are not.

Action: Dr. Bryce asked department representatives to let their Admissions committees and student liaisons know about this opportunity. She also encouraged the departments to send the names of their nominees to her by the end of February so that award notification letters could be sent out to scholarship nominees as soon as possible, giving them the opportunity to attend Accepted Applicants day.

New Course Request

Dr. Elsa Strotmeyer proposed a new one credit course for the Department of Epidemiology: EPIDEM 2950, *Epidemiology of Aging Workshop*. Masters and PhD students will be asked to attend the workshop during both fall and spring semester. This course will be supplementary to the rest of the course work that students are doing for the concentration in Aging. Students will be graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory based on attendance and completion of assignments. Dr. Strotmeyer stated that it is important that students be allowed to take part in the class on a non-credit basis, taking into consideration students who have credit caps and students who cannot afford to add another course. A vote was proposed by Dr. Terry. A motion to approve was made by Dr. Anil Ojha. Dr. Kammerer seconded. There were no objections.

Action: The course was approved with the following stipulations: Dr. Strotmeyer will shorten the course description so it is more in line with the length of descriptions from the Pitt Public Health course catalog and will set a maximum number of students for the course. She will revise her new course approval paperwork and send a copy to Marissa Kaplan. Marissa will keep a record on file and will send an approval letter to Dr. Strotmeyer.

Modified Course Request

The EPCC reviewed Dr. Patricia Documet's course modification request for BCHS 2528, *Integrative Seminar in Minority Health and Health Disparities*. Dr. Terry gave an overview of the changes that Dr. Documet would like to make and explained that she is changing the title and description of the course so that it is more in line with changes that have been made and approved for the BCHS certificate. Dr. Terry proposed a vote. Orrin Tiberi motioned accept. Dr. Joyce Bromberger seconded. There were no objections.

Action: Marissa will draft and send a letter of approval to Dr. Documet.

Accuplacer/ Writeplacer

Dr. Feingold asked if committee members would like to begin administering College Board's Writeplacer test to incoming students with the purpose of identifying students who need help with their writing. The test will most likely be deployed like the Academic Integrity Module in that students will take it at their leisure, by a certain date. Dr. Feingold suggested that for the first year, we refrain from requiring/suggesting that struggling students get writing help. After the first test, when we have a better idea of what results to expect, we might compile a list of writing help resources to hand out to struggling students. A communication plan needs to be formulated so that the responsible parties know what to say to these students and how to address their needs. It is unclear how non-native speakers score on this test, if copies of the students' essays can be sent to the school for additional review, if scores can be sent to the students at a later time, rather than instantly, and if there is a grading rubric that we can review in order to understand how the essays are graded. Members were in support of administering the Writeplacer test but would like more information about how tests are scored before an official vote is proposed. Dr.

Feingold mentioned that should the EPCC choose to go forward with this decision, Council will need to approve it as well.

Action: Members will speak to students, faculty, and staff in their departments to see if they support using Writeplacer. Based on the overall feedback from the departments, the EPCC will vote on using Writeplacer at the next EPCC meeting in March.

Instructor's Manual for Pitt Public Health Faculty

Dr. Feingold suggested that an instructor's manual be created for Pitt Public Health faculty (new and veteran). The School of Dental Medicine's (SDM) current instructor's manual was provided as an example for EPCC members' review. It was agreed that the SDM manual is much too long for Pitt Public Health's uses. The Pitt Public Health version will need to be shortened and targeted to the needs of our faculty. It was agreed in general that an instructor's manual would be a useful tool for Pitt Public Health faculty. The goal would be to make the instructor's manual available to all, but to target it specifically to new faculty so that it becomes part of the teaching culture here at Pitt Public Health. Dr. Feingold suggested that members refer to the current Academic Handbook for ideas of what include in the manual. The CIDDE TA manual was also suggested as a possible source for ideas. Dr. Feingold asked what format the manual should come in (Web page or PDF), and members agreed that it should be in PDF form for easier readability and printing. Dr. Feingold wants to know who is going to help with the drafting of the handbook and how. She offered to start a draft and then send it out for review, but noted that she did this for the current Academic Handbook and got limited feedback.

Action: Members will bring two to five items they would like to include in the manual to the next EPCC meeting, at which point the process of drafting the manual will begin. Student representatives will email Marissa their items since they will be away on spring break during the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

The next meeting is March 13, 1:30-3:30p.m., 110 Parran Hall. This during spring break. Students will not be required to attend.

Future items for discussion/ action at upcoming meetings: Accuplacer; items for the Pitt Public Health instructor's manual.