A. New Business:

1. Pre-proposal from BIOST department regarding changes to BIOST courses (including core courses), Rob Krafty

2. Update on administering mid-term evaluations, Kimmy Rehak

3. Approval of January Meeting Minutes, All

Upcoming meetings:
March 1, 1:30-3:30pm, room 1149 Parran Hall | NOTE: Deadline for modifications to fall 2018 courses
April 5, 1, 1:30-3:30pm, room 1149 Parran Hall | We will be needing to move this meeting to March 29
Current issues that have been brought to our attention:

A) BIOS 2041 (Introduction to Statistical Methods 1) is currently very large (>160 students) with a highly heterogeneous student population. There is a push in all master’s programs to increase enrollment, so this problem will only get worse.

B) We received feedback from students across many disciplines that BIOS 2041 did not meet their needs.
   • Can be more technical than some students might want, need or have the skill set for.
   • Does not provide enough technical motivation for BIOS MS students.
   • Historically: these has been some dissatisfaction with at least one of the core biostatistics courses (2011, 2041 and formerly 2042) for many years. Previously there was high dissatisfaction with 2011; changes were made to address this, including changes that directed students who would have previously taken 2011 to 2041.

C) There is a large amount of overlap between courses that form the core of the MS in Biostatistics curriculum and that are taken by a large number of other students across the School:
   • BIOS 2042: Introduction to Statistical Methods 2
   • BIOS 2049: Applied Regression Analysis
   • BIOS 2046: Analysis of Cohort Studies
   • BIOS 2066: Applied Survival (to a lesser extent)

D) Credits for required courses for most master’s programs is high, limiting number of electives a student can take.
   • Example: BIOS MS students currently only can take 3 credits of electives (i.e. 1 course).

E) (smaller problem) Current course numbering is not necessarily ideal (e.g. 2049 is a prerequisite for 2046).

Proposed changes that address these issues:

1) Create a version of introductory methods course that is calculus based. This will be required for biostatistics students, but others who meet the calculus requirement can of course take it as well. There will then be three levels of introductory methods:
   • BIOS 2011 that focuses on interpretation
   • BIOS 2041 that is intended for practitioners
   • The new course that will be for practitioners who require a deeper understanding of foundations.

2) Reorganize the material in 2042, 2049 and 2046 into two courses:
   a) Applied Regression (3 credits): ANOVA; linear, logistic and Poisson regression; GLM
      • Currently 2049 only covers linear regression.
      • Prerequisite will be 2041 or the new calculus based course
   b) Dependent & Longitudinal Data Analysis (2 credits): mixed-effects models; GEE; conditional logistic regression
- Prerequisite will be Applied Regression
  
  c) Note that 2042 will be eventually phased out, but taught in 2018-2019 to allow current students to finish. All of the material covered in 2042 will be covered by these two courses and 2066.  
  
  *Update and topic for discussion:* It seems that there is no need to teach 2042 in 2018-2019.  

  3) Relax other requirements so that BIOS MS students take 9 credits of electives (3 courses):  
  a) Make 2066 a 2 credit course as opposed to 3 credit.  
  b) Require only 1 semester of seminar as opposed to 2.  
  c) These, plus the changes in (2), will result in an additional 6 credits of electives.  

  4) While we are at it, make sure courses are numbered in a logical manner.  

*Update – Current and Proposed Schedule of Courses:*  

**Current:**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2041 – Intro to Stat Methods I</td>
<td>2011 – Principles of Stat Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2046 – Cohort Studies</td>
<td>2042 – Intro to Stat Methods II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2049 - Regression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Proposed:**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2041 – Intro to Stat Methods I</td>
<td>2011 – Principles of Stat Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New – Intro to Stat, Calc Based</td>
<td>New – Regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New – Dep &amp; Longitudinal Data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Present: Jessie Burke, Yue Chen, Mary Derkach, Ying Ding, Jim Fabisiak, David Finegold, Robin Leaf, MonaLisa Leung Beckford, Chantele Mitchell-Miland, Kimmy Rehak, and John Shaffer.

The meeting was called to order at 1:33pm by Dr. Patricia Documet, chair.

Increase to Credit Cap | Jessie Burke

Dr. Jessica Burke informed the committee on a school-wide effort to increase the maximum number of credits that can be taken in a semester from 15 to 16. Currently, only MHA students can enroll for 16 credits. Jessie explained that this increase would allow for more flexibility, so that, for instance, students could take additional elective courses or enroll in a certificate program. She explained that the HPM department had feared that a credit increase could lead to students overloading their schedule in order to graduate in fewer semesters, resulting in a loss of revenue. In contrast, she added that the Epidemiology department welcomed the increase in credits so that students could graduate in three semesters. Dr. Patricia Documet expressed concern about students’ grades and/or quality of work that could result from an overloaded schedule, and Dr. Jim Fabisiak suggested that perhaps students could be prevented from overloading their schedule in their first semester or year of graduate school. The committee decided to allow such scheduling decisions to be made by departments and/or advisors.

ACTION: Dr. Jessica Burke will find out what details are needed from departments in order to prepare the paperwork for submission to the Office of the Provost.

Update on DrPH Program Curricular Revision | Jessie Burke

Dr. Jessica Burke explained that in response to CEPH’s new DrPH competencies, the committee should expect to see applications for one new course and one modified course that are being designed to accommodate said changes in competencies. One class would be a DrPH “boot camp” that is comparable to the Foundations course that is being designed for the MPH curriculum and another one will be a modification of an HPM class. She explained that the classes are intentionally being designed to follow a cohort model to allow for interdisciplinary collaboration between BCHS and Epidemiology DrPH students, adding that HPM is considering the addition a DrPH degree program but that would not happen for some time.

ACTION: No action necessary.

Grade Student Unionization Update | Jessie Burke

Dr. Jessica Burke told the committee that a vote happened in December 2017, which would effect GSRs, GSAs, TAs and TFs should unionization occur. She said that there are resources available on how to talk to graduate students about a union (https://provost.pitt.edu/faculty/faculty-guidelines-and-processes/guidance-faculty-and-staff-talking-graduate-students-about), and that the status quo will remain in effect for the time being. Jessie also said that Nate Urban is engaging and reaching out to students, too.

ACTION: No action necessary.

Review of Fall 2017 Term Core Course Evaluations, All
Committee members reviewed three years of MPH core curriculum course evaluations. Evaluation scores from two years prior were also provided for background. Concern was raised over the overall effectiveness score for BIOST 2041 for fall 2017, a course that had a new instructor from the Department of Statistics/outside of PITT Public Health. The evaluation from this course was not unexpected, as the department was aware of issues raised by students earlier in the semester and had already taken steps to make changes for future iterations of this course.

The topic of administering informal, anonymous mid-term evaluations was raised in response to the topic of course evaluations so that other instructors can circumvent similar issues with future courses. Dr. Patricia Documet wondered whether tips for how to administer a mid-term evaluation and/or a bank of questions that can be used in mid-term evaluations could be posted on the EPCC webpage. Additionally, a suggestion of having faculty do peer observations to ensure that student concerns were being addressed was also made.

**ACTION:** Educational Programs staff members can compile information on mid-term evaluations and questions as well as how to administer OMET evaluations for the EPCC website.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.

**Upcoming meetings:**

February 1, 1:30-3:30pm, room 1149 Parran Hall | NOTE: Deadline for modifications to summer 2018 courses
March 1, 1:30-3:30pm, room 1149 Parran Hall | NOTE: Deadline for modifications to fall 2018 courses
April 5, 1, 1:30-3:30pm, room 1149 Parran Hall