

**Graduate School of Public Health
Educational Policies and Curriculum Committee
Meeting Minutes | November 7, 2019**

Present: Matt Borkowski, Cindy Bryce, Jessica Burke, Mary Derkach, Ying Ding, Patricia Documet, Jim Fabisiak, David Finegold, Sam Friede, Nancy Glynn, Robin Leaf, Catherine Potter, Susanna Qiao, Giovanna Rappocciolo, Kimberly Rehak, and John Shaffer.

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 by Dr. Patricia Documet, chair.

Course Modification: BCHS 3503 Implementation Science in Public Health, Robert Coulter and Kelly Gagnon (at 1:30pm)

Dr. Robert Coulter presented an application for a modified course that involves a name change and updated course description. The course previously was titled *Prevention Science*; however, because its content involved implementation science, some content and assignments in addition to the name and description had been updated. Because the course modification is significant enough to require a new course number, Dr. Patricia Documet said the application should be resubmitted as a new course and asked that Dr. Coulter ensure that the BCHS 3503 is no longer available in the course catalogue.

Additionally, the EPCC application will be edited to make the footnote indicating the registrar's rule regarding new course numbers more visible.

ACTION: The committee voted to approve the course provided that the application is resubmitted as a new course with a new course number.

HUGEN Re-Structuring Courses, Candy Kammerer (at 1:45pm), Meeting Documents Contain: cover memo, HUGEN 2060 *Chromosomes – Structure & Function*, HUGEN 2061 *Cancer Genetic Counseling*, HUGEN 20XX *Genetics of Complex Diseases II*, HUGEN 2090 *Genetics of Complex Diseases I*

Dr. Candace Kammerer presented a series of curricular changes in the department of human genetics. These changes were instigated by the addition of a new MS in Bioinformatics in summer 2019, which caused the department to think about their curricula and how they could reorganize it to create courses that would serve both the overlapping and diverse needs of their students in various programs. Human genetics holds focus groups with students twice a year and talk to employers to ascertain various changes in the field. Recently, the department found that genetic counselling students wanted more cancer-related and clinical content and the rest of their students wanted less clinical material and more bioinformatics. Thus, they submitted four new course applications for spring 2020.

HUGEN 2060: *Chromosomes – Structure and Function* is a new version of a previously-taught course. As the professor who taught the course has retired, the department took the opportunity to make some changes to the course, including: changing it to a 10-week course and moving clinical material to HUGEN 2061: *Cancer Genetic Counseling*.

ACTION: The committee voted to approve the course without changes.

HUGEN 2061: *Cancer Genetic Counseling* is a new 5-week companion course for HUGEN 2060 for genetic counseling students. The course will provide cancer genetic counseling coursework prior to students' commencement of clinical rotations. Dr. Jim Fabisiak commented that there seemed to be a number of assignments for a 1-credit course, but Dr. Kammerer said the assignments are based on what students get in their rotations.

ACTION: The committee voted to approve the course provided that the application is resubmitted with the instructor's percentage of effort added to question #6.

HUGEN 2090: *Genetics of Complex Diseases I* is a new two-credit course meant to give students an overview of molecular and biochemical genetic approaches used to determine the underlying genetic architecture of common diseases, such as: cardiovascular disease, neurodegenerative diseases, and mental health diseases. A similar 3-credit version of this course was previously taught by Dr. Kamboh.

Dr. Sam Friede asked whether there was a list of readings assignments by section for the course as it was listed as N/A on the EPCC application form. Dr. Kammerer said that since the readings are updated each term to reflect changes in the field, they are usually listed on CourseWeb as opposed to the syllabus.

ACTION: The committee voted to approve the course provided that the application is resubmitted with the instructor's percentage of effort added to question #5 and that the N/A be switched to Yes for the "Reading and Assignments by Session" field. Additionally, the committee asked for Dr. Kamboh to list the course readings on the syllabus OR include a statement on the syllabus informing students that the course readings can be found on CourseWeb and/or Canvas.

HUGEN 2091: *Genetics of Complex Diseases II* is a one-credit course, 5-week companion course to HUGEN 2090. This course will provide an overview of the genetic and molecular basis of complex human diseases with primary focus on immune-mediated conditions, autoimmune diseases, and common eye disorders. However, the specific diseases studied in the course can change as needed in the future.

ACTION: The committee voted to approve the course provided that the application is resubmitted with the instructor's percentage of effort added to question #6.

PhD Area of Concentration (AOC): Public Health Practice, Jim Peterson (at 2:15pm)

Dr. Jim Peterson presented an application for a new Environmental and Occupational Health PhD area of concentration (AOC) in Public Health Practice. As the department's existing DrPH program did not align with the recent compliance changes required by CEPH, they plan to offer their previous DrPH curriculum as the proposed AOC. The main differences between this Public Health Practice AOC and the EOH PhD program are that the AOC will require the GSPH core courses, 12 core credits that vary from the PhD core, and a 200-hour minimum practicum. The MPH thesis would serve as the qualifying exam for this AOC.

Dr. Peterson said that the department was concerned that students would prefer a DrPH over a PhD in Public Health Practice. After petitioning students, they found most favored the rebranding. EPCC committee members were unsure if an AOC application with rebranding language would raise concerns at the provost's office, especially as the DrPH programs are not yet terminated. Dr. Jessica Burke will look at how much information needs to be shared as the proposal moves forward. Dr. Jim Fabisiak asked if there is an AOC for the PhD in Public Health Practice whether there would need to a separate application for the existing PhD program; a PhD in Research, for instance. Committee members also wondered what process there was for students to switch between the PhD and the PhD in Public Health Practice, but Dr. Peterson said that they had that process under control as students have switched from MPH to MS/PhD tract.

ACTION: Dr. Jessica Burke will find out what needs to be included for submissions to the provost's office, including how to delineate from existing and new programs with regards to admissions, qualifying exams, switching between degrees, etc.

Continued GRE Discussion: Post Faculty Retreat Presentation & Discussions, All

Dr. Patricia Documet explained that holistic admissions, scoring rubrics, and the GRE exam were discussed at the faculty retreat in October. At the retreat, a representative from the School of Education provided data across different demographics and disciplines, which showed that the GRE most disadvantaged women, African Americans and Latinos. Dr. Documet said that the GREs were only one piece of information used in the applications process and that it was more important that the school uses a holistic admissions process.

Dr. Jessica Burke reported that the provost polled the graduate schools across the university and that the trend across the university is eliminating the GRE as an admissions requirement. There was some discussion about what would happen if students want to transfer to a department that requires the GRE as an admissions requirement after being admitted into a different Pitt Public Health program that did not require test scores; in which case Karrie Lukin, admissions manager, said the student would have to submit GRE scores with their application for the desired program. Similarly, if the GRE is not required at the school-level, new criteria for the dean's tuition scholarship would need establishing.

Dr. Sam Friede entered a motion to eliminate the school-level requirement at the school-level with the caveat of stipulating a trial period and working out the timing of when the information would be released. Dr. John Shaffer seconded the motion. This motion sparked a debate on whether the school was merely following the latest trend by getting rid of the school-level GRE requirement and whether competition between programs would result if some decided to keep the requirement while others did not. The MPH student representative and representatives from HPM, HUGEN, IDM, and BCHS voted in favor of the motion. Epidemiology and EOH voted no, and Biostatistics voted to abstain as they want some other measure to evaluate applicant quantitative abilities. Dr. Nancy Glynn raised the question on whether the vote could be postponed until after the current application cycle because presumably the GRE requirement would not be dropped before then.

ACTION: The EPCC chair will create a document with Pros and Cons for requiring the GRE at the school-level and a plan to proceed.

UPDATE: Dr. Nancy Glynn requested to annul the vote. Dr. Documet agreed and suggested doing so. This would require a vote.

Approval of October Meeting Minutes, All

EPCC members offered two edits to the October minutes:

- 1) changing "diversity" to "minority" when discussing student candidates
- 2) amending the HUGEN faculty opinion regarding the GRE. Some HUGEN faculty were ambivalent about forcing the requirement for HUGEN programs but were in favor of dropping the requirement at the school-level.

Due to time constraints, the minutes were not voted on at the November meeting.

ACTION: The October 2019 minutes will be added to the agenda for the December 5, 2019 EPCC meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45pm.

Upcoming Meeting(s):

December 5, 2019 – 1:30-3:30 p.m. (1149 Public Health)