

**Graduate School of Public Health
Educational Policies and Curriculum Committee
December 5, 2019
1:30-3:30pm
1149 Public Health**

1. Proposal to nullify GRE vote held at NOV meeting, Patricia Documet [vote required]
2. Review of EPCC Bylaws, Patricia Documet
3. Associate Dean for Diversity Report on Syllabi Review, Noble Maseru (at 2pm)
4. Syllabi Collection & Process by Departments, Jessica Burke and Robin Leaf
5. Approval of October Meeting Minutes, All [vote required]
6. Approval of November Meeting Minutes, All [vote required]
7. Set spring meeting schedule, All

Upcoming Meeting(s):

6. EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE (EPCC)

Committee Type and Composition

The EPCC is a Standing Committee of the Pitt Public Health Council. It is composed of one elected faculty member from each department, Associate and Assistant Deans who are responsible for academics and student affairs, and the Director of the MMPH Program. Four student representatives from the student body, two doctoral and two master's level students.

Faculty members elected by each department and are full voting members of the committee. The Associate and Assistant Deans, and the Director of the MMPH Program are ex-officio, non-voting members.

Student members are selected annually from student body in a process organized by the Office of Student Affairs. One student at each level is identified as the primary representative, while the other student is identified as the back-up representative. Student representatives are full voting members of the committee. Only one student at each level can cast a vote in meetings.

The Chair of the EPCC must be selected from the elected faculty representatives currently serving on the committee at their first meeting of the academic year (September). The outgoing chair will conduct this meeting. The election will be by secret ballot. The committee staff person will tally the results immediately. The President of the FSEC will inform the Pitt Public Health Council of the results.

TERMS OF OFFICE FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The elected faculty members of the EPCC serve three-year staggered terms. Elections to replace members whose terms have expired are held annually (see Section 9). Faculty elected to the EPCC may serve two successive terms and, thereafter, only following an interval of three years after the completion of the second term. Once the Committee Chair is elected, their term of office continues until the individual's term of office as a faculty representative to the EPCC expires. An individual can serve repeated tenures as Chair as long as they are a faculty representative of the EPCC.

Because of the time-sensitive nature of much of the work of the EPCC, it is critical meetings have a quorum. In order to achieve this quorum, each voting member will identify a second (back-up) representative who can attend meetings and vote on behalf of the department or student body when the primary representative is unable to attend.

Charge of the Committee

The specific charge of the EPCC includes...

- Establish academic policies and procedures for the school.
- Maintain and make available to all faculty the policies and procedures document that contains the guidelines or criteria that relate to Pitt Public Health educational or curriculum matters.
- Update the policies and procedures document, as appropriate, with full review and re-approval at least every five years or when major changes in Pitt Public Health or University policy occur.
- Review and recommend action to Pitt Public Health Council on all curriculum changes.
- Assist the Dean and Associate Deans in the integration and coordination of the school's curriculum.
- Review and evaluate the school's educational courses and programs; core curriculum subcommittee of the EPCC also reviews and evaluates the school-wide core curriculum.
- Make recommendations to the Pitt Public Health Council on the implementation of educational policies.
- Review student academic performance three times annually; student representatives are excused from these meetings, as the material is confidential.
- Establish and interpret admissions policies.
- Form ad hoc subcommittees, as may be necessary, to accomplish its charge effectively. Chairpersons of subcommittees normally should be members of EPCC but members of subcommittees can be drawn from the faculty at large.
- Meet on a monthly basis, or more often as necessary, to accomplish its charge. The Chairperson may call interim meetings at any time or do so on request of three or more members or of Pitt Public Health Council.
- Provide feedback and consultative services to the Office of Student Affairs regarding recruitment and admissions practices, and other functions the office conducts.
- Make regular oral reports to the Pitt Public Health Council and provide a report summarizing its activities at least once each year at the school-wide faculty meeting.

**Graduate School of Public Health
Educational Policies and Curriculum Committee
Meeting Minutes | October 3, 2019**

Present: Matt Borkowski, Cindy Bryce, Jessica Burke, Mary Derkach, Ying Ding, Patricia Documet, Jim Fabisiak, Eleanor Feingold, David Finegold, Nancy Glynn, Robin Leaf, Karrie Lukin, Noble Maseru, Josh Matilla, Susanna Qiao, Giovanna Rappocciolo, Kimberly Rehak, John Shaffer, Martha Terry, and Yi-Chuan Yu.

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

Welcome new student members, Patricia Documet

Dr. Patricia Documet, EPCC chair, welcomed the new student representatives to the committee:

- Doctoral-level primary representative: Susanna Qiao, earning a PhD in Epidemiology
- Master's-level primary representative: Yi-Chuan Yu, earning an MS in Epidemiology

ACTION: No action necessary.

GRE discussion and next steps, All

Dr. Patricia Documet recapped the EPCC committee's past discussions on whether to eliminate the GRE requirement at the school-level. The main arguments for eliminating the requirement were to diversify the student applicant pool and to remain competitive with other schools of public health. The committee voted in favor of keeping the GRE requirement at the school level but to revisit the conversation if any of those conditions changed.

As Boston University School of Public Health has dropped the GRE requirement on a three-year probational period and as student enrollment at Pitt Public Health was lower this year than in previous years, the EPCC committee decided to reopen the discussion of the GRE requirement. Committee members were to discuss the issue with their departments and report their findings.

Dr. Noble Maseru, from the Center for Health Equity, reported that 60-80% of diversity candidates decline admission to Pitt Public Health. He said he suspects that lack of resources is a big reason for that.

Dr. Martha Terry said that, as the BCHS MPH program director, she finds GRE scores helpful for predicting performance for MPH core courses in biostatistics and epidemiology. For doctoral students, there were some BCHS faculty who thought that the school could drop the GRE, as they use a holistic admissions process. However, whether the department would vote to keep the GRE as a requirement was unclear.

Dr. Ying Ding reported that Biostatistics thinks that the quantitative GREs are important for establishing a threshold for admissions, especially for doctoral applicants. For master's-level students, Biostatistics faculty were not averse to dropping the requirement at the school-level. However, if the school decided to drop the GRE requirement, Biostatistics thought it was pertinent to find some other way to assess student quantitative ability and support students who may struggle with more quantitatively rigorous core courses.

Dr. James Fabisiak said that EOH faculty thought that the GRE's were useful for showing quantitative abilities for master's-level students, especially those with foreign education or those who attended smaller institutions in the US. For PhD students, the EOH department could be more flexible with requiring GRE quantitative scores.

Dr. Nancy Glynn stated that the Epidemiology department would retain the GRE regardless of whether the school keeps the requirement. Also, she mentioned that the number of students in

her department are not down and suggested that financial aid packages might help with regaining numbers at the school-level.

The HPM department wanted to market holistic admissions but keep the GRE requirement, with 70% of faculty voting in favor.

Dr. John Shaffer reported that faculty in the Human Genetics department were split as to whether to require the GRE. There was some ambivalence about forcing the requirement at the school level, but other programs definitely wanted to keep it.

The IDM department thought that the GRE test was a good resource for evaluating international applicants but realize that test scores do not correlate with success in departmental programs and can sometimes be a hindrance for recruitment.

Student committee members said that they thought the GRE requirement could be kept but without a strict threshold. Additionally, keeping the requirement for international students but not domestic applicants raises the question about whether the requirement would be waived for international applicants with an American education. Karrie Lukin, Pitt Public Health's admissions and recruitment manager, said that it would be difficult for her office to manage multiple GRE requirements and that certain candidates can already have conditions where, if met, the GRE can be waived.

ACTION: Pitt Public Health faculty will discuss the GRE requirement at the faculty retreat on October 21, 2019, and EPCC representatives will report back with a summary of the discussion. Additionally, the committee will review how financial incentives and recruitment efforts pan out with the next admissions cycle.

Accelerated bachelor's/master's degree program credit limit, Cindy Bryce

Dr. Cindy Bryce, associate dean for student affairs, presented concerns regarding the accelerated bachelor's + master's degree program, for which the most recent cohort of students totals 7. In August 2019, the accelerated program switched from a 3+2 to a 4+1 program, providing a nice tuition discount for students, but complicating issues with regards to credit limits as undergraduate students can take up to 18 credits per term. One student in the current cohort will earn the necessary credits for the MPH degree in three semesters. The main concern with allowing accelerated students to take more than the 15 credits allowed for Pitt Public Health graduate students is that accelerated students will lose out on the graduate student experience, including opportunities to network, participate in leadership roles in student groups, and certificate programs. Pitt Public Health would need to come up with a credit limit policy for these students and pass it to the undergraduate institution for implementation.

ACTION: The committee voted to approve a policy in accelerated students are limited to 15 credits per term (with a 16th credit permitted if approved by the program director of the student's graduate degree program) for their fourth year of undergraduate study.

Modified Course – IDM 2040: *Scientific Communication*, Josh Mattila

Dr. Josh Mattila presented an application for a major course modification for the IDM 2040: Scientific Communication course. Suggested modifications were based on feedback received after two iterations of the course and scheduling conflicts that IDM students experienced at the School of Medicine. Moving forwards, the course will be offered in the spring term as opposed to the summer. Ethics content will be added to the scientific communication syllabus, changing the course from 1 credit to 2—which raised concern from EPCC committee members regarding program credit and scheduling requirements.

ACTION: The committee members agreed that the changes submitted in the proposal were significant enough to constitute a new course. Dr. Mattila should submit a new course

application and present at a future EPCC meeting. Additionally, he should talk to IDM program directors to gauge whether the extra credit requirement will limit options for students.

Preview Epidemiology Course Restructuring, Samar El Khoundary and Maria Brooks

Drs. Samar El Khoundary and Maria Brooks presented a preview of and explanation for an upcoming restructuring of the epidemiology methods courses and course progression/sequencing, motivated in large part by the restructuring of the biostatistics' curricula as well as changes to EPIDEM 2187. Gaps in the EPI methods sequences, particularly in parametric longitudinal analysis and survival data analysis topics.

Upcoming curricular changes are, as follows: change the name to EPIDEM 2180—from Epidemiological Methods 1 to Epidemiological Methods 1/ Intermediate Epidemiological Methods—and make minor content changes; remove EPIDEM 2187: Epidemiological Methods 2 and replace it with two new 3-credit courses—Epidemiological Methods 2/ Epidemiological Methods of Longitudinal and Time-to- Event Analysis (Primary instructor: Samar El Khoundary) and EPIDEM 2191: Epidemiological Methods 3/ Advanced Theory and Methods for the Analysis of Epidemiological Data (Primary instructor: Ashley Naimi); change the title of EPIDEM 2230 from Advanced Topics in Epidemiological Methods to Secondary Data Analysis and make a minor change in emphasis.

ACTION: The committee approved the pre-proposal.

Modified Course – EPIDEM 2220: *Introduction to Environmental Epidemiology*, Evelyn Talbott (at 3:15pm)

Dr. Evelyn Talbott presented an application for a modified course motivated by the implementation of changes to its companion course (EPIDEM 2221). Geospatial analysis has been removed from the syllabus, which changed the total number of credits from 3 to 2. However, some introductory lectures on ArcMap will be included in the syllabus for EPIDEM 2220 along with the main course content that involves the association between environmental risk factors and disease.

ACTION: The committee members voted to approve the changes provided they list Ravi K. Sharma as Adjunct Assistant Professor, remove “be able to” from Learning Objective #1 and “At the end of class, the students should be able to” from Learning Objective #6, and delete the departmental information for the instructor and co-instructor from the semester schedule. Additionally, the change in credits requires that this course receive a new number.

Approval of September Meeting Minutes, All

The committee members voted to approve the minutes, provided that a typo in Dr. Patrica Documet's last name was fixed.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.

Upcoming Meeting(s):

November 7, 2019 – 1:30-3:30 p.m. (1149 Public Health) | *Set spring term meeting schedule*

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

**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)