

**Graduate School of Public Health  
Educational Policies and Curriculum Committee  
Meeting Minutes | September 5, 2019**

Present: Jessica Burke, Mary Derkach, Ying Ding, Patricia Documet, Jim Fabisiak, Eleanor Feingold, David Finegold, Nancy Glynn, Robin Leaf, Karrie Lukin, Giovanna Rappocciolo, Kimberly Rehak, and John Shaffer.

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

**Review of member terms of service, Patricia Documet**

The committee reviewed the terms of service for members. There are two updates to the EPCC alternate representatives. Mary Hawk cannot be backup for BCHS as she is now the president-elect for FSEC. Thistle Elias will now be the BCHS alternate. Also, Elsa Strotmeyer is the Epidemiology department alternate as opposed to Catherine Haggerty.

**ACTION:** Educational Programs will update the Web pages and inform Laura Schmid in Human Resources of the updates.

**Accreditation Update, Eleanor Feingold, Executive Associate Dean**

Eleanor Feingold informed the committee that the school will need to start thinking about reaccreditation. This concerns the EPCC committee with regards to advising data at both the master's and doctoral level. CEPH wants precise data on how many faculty are advising how many students, which has never formally tracked at the school-level before. The committee will need to figure out how to collect this data, whether it be formally through PeopleSoft or collected from departments at accreditation time.

**ACTION:** The committee will continue this discussion at a later date.

**Enrollment Initiatives, Eleanor Feingold, Executive Associate Dean**

Eleanor Feingold raised the issue of the enrollment decline for the 2019-20 school year and notified the committee of actions that are being considered to counteract the downswing, including:

- Discussions, currently being held up at the Provost's office, to potentially add an undergraduate program. While this program could be an income generator, there is potential that it could hurt the burgeoning accelerated program that has grown over the past few years;
- Evaluating the effect of current marketing and recruitment initiatives, such as the use of the Student Recruitment System (SRS) and increased presence of Pitt Public Health's social media accounts;
- Hiring a professional recruiter/ marketer;
- Doing away with the GRE requirement for accelerated students; and
- Taking the time to engage with and/or prepare incoming students

Patricia Documet also suggested that the school should advertise the fact that they have a holistic admissions process as a way to attract students to apply to the school.

Ying Ding addressed the fact that there are no international students in Biostatistics this year and asked if other departments were witnessing the same trend. Eleanor said that international student numbers are down across the United States and that the lower number of international students could also be a result of the fact that University of Pittsburgh's ranking has gone down.

**ACTION:** No action needed. The committee will continue this discussion at a later date.

### **GRE Updates, Patricia Documet and All**

Patricia Documet summarized the discussions that had occurred in the EPCC meetings over the course of the last academic year regarding the GRE test. The committee had considered dropping the GRE as an admissions requirement in an effort to increase diversity as the test has been shown to be prohibitory to underrepresented groups due to its high cost and bias. After months of discussions, the EPCC committee voted to keep the requirement at the school-level, with the caveat of revisiting the issue should any changes occur. The vote to keep the GRE requirement was justified in large part because all other aspirational schools were keeping the GRE requirement.

Currently with enrollment low, and, therefore, less diversity, and considering the fact that Boston University, a reputable school of public health, has recently established a three-year trial period for dropping the GRE admission requirement, the committee revisited the discussion on whether or not to require the GRE test.

Some committee members, primarily Nancy Glynn from Epidemiology, expressed concern about admitting large numbers of students with low quantitative ability as those students would most likely struggle with EPIDEM 2110 and their Biostatistics requirement. This prompted Ying Ding to ask if the school had a math bootcamp or online course held prior to the start of the fall term and whether that could be a way to help students who needed a mathematical refresher.

Robin Leaf reiterated that BU's dropping of the GRE requirement was for a trial period and if the committee decided to follow suit, it was possible to track student performance in core courses to look for any trends with regard to students' comprehensive quantitative performance.

**ACTION:** EPCC committee members are to discuss the issue with their departments and report to the committee next month

**Report from the MPH (formal EPCC sub-committee), Martha Terry, MPH Committee Chair**  
Martha Terry, chair of the MPH committee, provided a summary of MPH committee's initiatives from the previous academic year, including:

- Revising the school required core course exemption forms to satisfy CEPH's competency requirements;
- Reaching a consensus for all eight MPH programs on a process for which forms have been created (and a portal is in the process of being built) to track student practica performance and competency attainment;
- Creating five unique advanced competencies per program;
- Administering a soft launch of the practicum e-Portfolio;
- Supporting the annual Practica/Internship Symposium with 55 students and helped to leverage relationships for 12 agencies to participate,
- Meeting with Educational Programs staff to revise syllabi for the CEPH compliance report in January 2019;
- Assisting the Educational Programs staff with information for the Career Outcomes report;
- Reviewed a practicum readiness handout for distribution to potential practicum sites

**ACTION:** No action required.

### **Review of summer core course evaluations, Patricia Documet**

Committee members commented on the improved score for the instructor who took over PUBHLT 2034 for summer 2019 (2197).

**ACTION:** No action required.

## **Approval of June 2019 Meeting Minutes, All**

**ACTION:** The committee approved the June 2019 minutes.

### **Additional issues**

Patricia Documet asked for updates on two topics discussed at length at previous EPCC meetings: what the school plans to do regarding inclusivity, specifically with regards to transgender students, and discussions on the review of core course syllabi with a lens on health equity.

Jessica Burke reported that the University of Pittsburgh's Teaching Center is providing a series of resources, including a teaching workshop called "Teaching Inclusively" on September 26, 2019, which will also be promoted around Pitt Public Health and in the Things to Know biweekly e-newsletter.

In a future meeting, Noble Maseru will share process and recommendations about how EPCC can consider health equity issues when reviewing syllabi.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:48 PM.

### **CLOSED SESSION:**

1. Student academic record review for the summer term, Mary Derkach

### **Upcoming Meeting(s):**

October 3, 2019 – 1:30-3:30 p.m. (1149 Public Health) | Deadline for spring 2020 course modification proposals

November 7, 2019 – 1:30-3:30 p.m. (1149 Public Health) | Deadline for spring 2020 new course proposals

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