Graduate School of Public Health
*Educational Policies and Curriculum Committee*
Meeting Minutes | August 14, 2014

Present: Marissa Kaplan, Ada Youk, Zsolt Urban, Robert Coulter, Mary Derkach, Cindy Bryce, Wes Rohrer, Robin Leaf, Martha Terry, Eleanor Feingold, Anil Ojha, Patricia Opresko, Varun Sharma

Absent: Joyce Bromberger, Sarah Pugh, Abdus Wahed; David Finegold

Meeting called to order at 1:35 p.m. by Dr. Martha Terry.

**Approval July Meeting Minutes**
Dr. Terry proposed a vote to approve the July EPCC meeting minutes. Dr. Wes Rohrer motioned to approve the minutes. Robert Coulter seconded the motion. Dr. Zsolt Urban abstained from voting. There were no objections. The motion was carried.

**Action:** Marissa Kaplan will post the approved minutes online.

**Plunge and Orientation Schedule of Events**
Dr. Cindy Bryce gave an overview of the events for this year’s Plunge into Public Health and Pittsburgh event. She mentioned that there will be a few new events this year: Pathway to Success (hosted by Career Services) and a visit to the Free Store in Braddock, PA. She is open to other suggestions for new Plunge events. Dr. Rohrer suggested that a partnership be made with the food bank distribution center in Braddock as this might serve a good Plunge event and as a good monthly service projects for our students. Dr. Bryce also went over the schedule for this year’s New Student Orientation. She would like know what departments plan to talk about during their department sessions so that Student Affairs can cover the material that isn’t covered during that time and/or avoid over-repeating information.

**Action:** Members were asked to send Dr. Bryce a few bullet points summarizing what their departments plan on discussing during their department sessions.

**Update on Doctoral Independent Development Plans and Related Initiatives**
Dr. Eleanor Feingold gave an overview of the new IDP initiative and explained that the University of Pittsburgh will be implementing IDP policies soon, in compliance with a recent NIH mandate. IDP policies may also be extended to Master’s students.

**Action:** Dr. Feingold will share more details as she gets them.

**Self Study Timeline**
Dr. Feingold also announced that a new, abbreviated accreditation timeline will soon be published and sent out. She mentioned that students, faculty, and staff will have to review the final draft of the self study and that the EPCC will play a big role during this review process.

**Action:** Dr. Feingold will send members the new accreditation schedule. Members will remind the appropriate people in their departments to continue sending Dr. Feingold their parts of/documents for the self study.

**Proposal to Reconstitute the Core Curriculum Committee (which is a subcommittee of the EPCC) as the MPH Program Committee**

Dr. Feingold gave an overview of what the CCC does and proposed that the EPCC dissolve and reconstitute it as the MPH Program Committee. It would be comprised of core faculty, MPH directors, and two student representatives, would meet on a monthly basis, keep meeting minutes, and would have a chair. Its aim would be to make small curricular changes. Dr. Bryce suggested that the minutes from MPH Program Committee meetings be sent to the EPCC for review, so that EPCC members are kept up-to-date. Dr. Terry proposed a vote to approve the dissolution of the CCC and the constitution of an MPH Program Committee. Dr. Rohrer motioned to approve the creation of this new committee, as presented. Dr. Urban seconded the motion to approve. There were no oppositions or abstentions. The motion was carried.

**Action:** Actions will be discussed in further detail during a later meeting.

**EPCC Representatives, 2014-2015 Academic Year**

A list of the new EPCC representatives for the 2014-2015 academic year was distributed to current members for review. Dr. Terry will chair the beginning of the next EPCC meeting so that a new Chair can be voted in.

**Action:** Members must verify that the EPCC alternates for their departments are in fact the people mentioned in this list.

**Action:** Mary Derkach will send a list of new student representatives to EPCC members sometime in mid-September.

**Certificate Termination Request, Certificate in Public Health Preparedness and Disaster Response**

It is possible that a qualified candidate was found to direct this certificate. Members agreed to further postpone the vote to terminate this certificate. A vote will be taken during the next EPCC meeting, pending further review of this new candidate.

**Student Survey Results**

Dr. Terry commented that she had some concerns about the feedback about advising. It remains to be seen whether or not students are dissatisfied with their advisors’ technical
advising abilities (e.g. telling students what courses they should be taking) or whether students are in need of a different, more abstract kind of support (e.g. career/life planning) and how these issues can be addressed on a school-wide level. Dr. Rohrer mentioned that HPM is taking a new competency-based approach to advising (e.g. IDP’s, portfolios). He also mentioned that it might be helpful if a best practices guide of sorts was shared with anyone who acts as an advisor. Members also have concerns about the consistency with which TA’s are given access to TA orientations and about whether or not TA’s are adequately taught about their rights and responsibilities. It was suggested that TA’s have access to a TA ombudsman. Robert Coulter suggested that TA’s use the IRB student liaisons or their department’s student services liaisons. If Mary Derkach is to act as this official TA ombudsman, her rights and responsibilities will need to be clearly defined. Other concerns included low student organization participation and the seeming lack of knowledge about Career Services.

Action: Dr. Feingold will talk about advising best practices during the faculty retreat. Members were encouraged to send her other topics to cover during the retreat.

Action: Dr. Feingold will review what the GSR policy has to say about the issues surrounding TA rights.

Action: Further comments on survey results should be sent by email to Marissa Kaplan, Dr. Terry, and/or Dr. Feingold. If decisions need to be made, they will be brought back to the EPCC for review.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m. as the EPCC Special Session was scheduled to begin at 3 p.m.

The next meeting is September 11, 1:30-3:30p.m., 110 Parran Hall.

Future items for discussion/ action at upcoming meetings: MPH Program Committee; Verification of EPCC Alternates; EPCC Student Representatives; Certificate Termination Request, Certificate in Public Health Preparedness and Disaster Response; Instructor’s Manual