

Graduate School of Public Health
Educational Policies and Curriculum Committee
Meeting Minutes | January 5, 2017

Present: Cindy Bryce, Yue Chen, Patricia Documet, Mary Derkach, Ying Ding, Julia Driessen, Jim Fabisiak, Eleanor Feingold, David Finegold, Nancy Glynn, Robin Leaf, and John Shaffer

Absent: Nicole Grant, Marie Hackshaw, and Sarah Minion

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

Continued Discussion of MPH/MSW policy and GRE school-wide requirement

Dr. Documet gave a re-cap of what occurred at the December meeting. The conversation continued to include ways that the school could explore to encourage more applicants who may have barriers to taking and being successful on the GRE exam. The committee would like to know what specific barriers (economic, anxiety driven or diversity biases) are impacting the request from the joint degree program. Since the MSW program does not require the GRE, the committee agreed that we need to know the rigor of applicant screening at the school of social work.

Departments can still implement lower or higher standards for GRE or other standardized testing scores. The discussion continued and included an agreement that if the applicants do not take the GRE then the school has no real way to assess the quantitative skills of our future students.

A proposal of allowing the department to provide a GRE waiver, that stipulates that the student must successfully pass EPIDEM 2110 and/ or a BOST core course provided that the student is already enrolled in the MSW program. Another option was proposed to allow the program to bring applicants to the committee on a case-by-case basis for a GRE waiver.

The committee agreed to review further information and data on what other schools have done away with the GRE requirement and how they have fared at ensuring student success, and on testing biases of the GRE.

The discussion will continue and decision will be made at a later date.

Action – Eleanor will pull and present the GRE/ BOST data at the next meeting. Robin will research how other SPH or other colleges/ universities review applications without GRE scores and to the extent that such a policy has been successful. Also, Robin will research barriers and biases to standardized tests.

3+2 Program Discussion

All departments were requested to alert the school if they wanted to be a part of this program. Cindy has heard back from all of the programs. The school's website is still in need of updating. Some departments have specified additional requirements for admission into this program. All MPH programs, the HUGEN MS, IDM MS, and BOST MS programs will participate.

Cindy notified the committee of some of the frequently asked questions she's received so far about the program.

- The program is only open to Pitt main campus Arts & Sciences students. Not yet any other schools or universities as there needs to be an agreement between the Deans that involves tuition payments.
- Pitt Public Health has meet with in-mass the advisors in Arts & Sciences.
- The program has already started and is a re-named program that began back in the early 2000's.
- The GRE scores are still required for 3+2 applicants.
- Undergraduates can take a course or two whether they are admitted into the 3+2 program yet.
- Please encourage any students you meet to encourage to get more information on the program.

Action – All to go back to their departments to ask whether they have any further questions.

Process for approving minor course descriptions changes in bulk

In October the committee reviewed bulk changes to the course descriptions from EPIDEM. Human Genetics is starting to review course descriptions, and requested clarification on this process. The committee will move forward using the same framework that EPIDEM utilized for the HUGEN courses, and any others that come through. A table to include a brief description for the change, the current description, and the proposed updated description is the manner that the committee is asking for this information to review the changes. This document will include a brief policy statement stating that "when the course descriptions are approved by EPCC the department's student services staff will prepare the paperwork and submit to the Office of Student Affairs for submission on a semester by semester basis when the Registrar's Office will accept the changes."

Action – Robin will create a template to be utilized in the future.

Approve December Meeting Minutes

One minor change will be made to the list of committee members present/ absent at the meeting, a clarification in the BCHS MPH-MSW policy segment to an undergraduate statistics course and the addition of a bullet under the action item area of the MCHS MPH-MSW segment stating that "the departments already have the capability to decide upon required GRE scores for admission." The committee approved the minutes with the corrections.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:43 pm by Dr. Documet.

Our next meeting will be February 2, 1-30-3:30 pm in room 4128 Parran Hall
Items for the agenda: fall 2016 semester student record review, continuation of discussion on GRE requirement.