

# EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES COMMITTEE MEETING

DECEMBER 6, 2002

## MINUTES

**The meeting began at 1:05 PM.**

Present: Dr. Liller, Dr. Gulitz, Dr. Rentos, Dr. Abbott, Dr. Sanchez, Ms. V. Wise-Neely, Ms. J. Plazarin, Ms. B. Kennedy, Ms. M. Whaley

1. The committee unanimously approved the September 13, 2002 minutes.
2. Dr. Liller reviewed the SACS Assessment Plan/Report forms that are completed on the web and the College of Public Health's reports for February 2002-September 2002 and future plans (from September 2002-??). Dr. Liller reviewed each set of plans and results for the MPH, MSPH, PhD and MHA degrees and reminded the committee that the SACS team will be reviewing these plans on the web instead of visiting the campus.
3. Discussion took place as to the uniform comprehensive exam that was given to all MPH and MSPH students during the Fall, 2002 semester. A uniform exam provides much more consistency to this process. How to improve the process even more, through the use of multiple-choice questions, was discussed. There was no consensus on this issue, however the concerns of the committee will be taken by Dr. Gulitz to the next meeting of the group of faculty who prepare the uniform exam. Dr. Gulitz will also share the findings of the outcome indicators with this group.
4. There was discussion as to using a capstone course in lieu of the comprehensive exam. This is presently being done in the MHA program. Dr. Liller plans to email Dr. Orban to determine if enough students have taken the capstone course so that more reliable indicators of pass rates can be obtained. No consensus was reached on the use of capstone courses however this issue will be raised with various college committees.
5. While several outcome indicators have been met (February 2002-September 2002), there have been several changes in the plans for present and future use. After meeting with Dr. Gulitz and Dr. Gardner, Dr. Liller altered the plans to remove the more subjective information from the exit questionnaire and the reference to employment upon graduation as outcome indicators (except for employment indicators for the MHA program). The questions pertaining to management and/or executive management employment within certain time periods for MHA graduates will be clarified before the next alumni survey is sent.

6. The first time pass rates on the comprehensive exam will be retained as an important outcome indicator. However, the new plans will have outcomes based on the competencies for each core area as specified by CEPH. First-time pass rates for the concentration portions of the comprehensive exams will be retained.
7. The PhD outcomes will focus largely on the competencies specified on the PhD checklist. Dr. Gulitz reported that the doctoral students responded quite favorably to this checklist at their recent retreat.
8. A concern of the committee was the fact that neither the MSPH students nor the PhD students met their outcome indicators for publishing and/or presenting their thesis or dissertation research. Suggestions for improvement include having editorial assistance provided at the college for students and faculty in preparing manuscripts based on their research. A very interesting suggestion was to have students prepare papers for publication in lieu of a formal thesis or dissertation as is currently done. For example, MSPH students would need to conduct their research and then prepare at least one manuscript that is ready to be published in a peer-review journal. The requirement for PhD students would be three papers ready for publication at the conclusion of their research. Dr. Liller plans to email Dr. Pracht, chair of the Graduate Programs and Curriculum Committee (GPCC), these suggestions and ask that the GPCC address this issue.
9. The committee spent a great of time reviewing the 29 MPH and 3 MSPH student comprehensive exams from Fall, 2002 (all names were removed). As indicated on the Assessment Plans, the outcomes to be reviewed were related to analysis and interpretation of health data (biostatistics) and distribution and determinants of disease (epidemiology). Although the results of the overall exam showed that only one MPH student failed the entire core, the committee reported that seven MPH students failed all or part of the biostatistics questions and three (out of three) MSPH students failed all or part of these questions. This was especially alarming since many MSPH students take additional coursework in biostatistics than do MPH students. Five MPH students failed the epidemiology question. Our findings have no bearing on the actual pass or fail rate of the entire comprehensive exam as recorded by the student's department and/or advisor.
10. The committee was especially alarmed about the inconsistency as to how advisors or departments scored the exam questions pertaining to thresholds for passing or failing. This will be discussed with the comprehensive exam committee and other relevant college committees.
11. The results of the Assessments to date will be included on the Assessment forms and monitored again next semester. The same two core competency indicators will be assessed for biostatistics and epidemiology. It was recommended that the new uniform core questions in these areas focus on what is to be measured pertaining to each competency. For example, the student should not only provide

the name of a particular statistical test but show he/she can interpret health data through examining a table or chart, or through some other interpretative means.

12. The committee plans to meet in late March or April to review the Spring Semester comprehensive exam. However, a meeting may be called in February if the results of the alumni survey are ready. The survey should be mailed the end of January.
13. The meeting adjourned at 3:15PM.