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## THE ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

### AEHAP & EHAC Executive Director Says Farewell

It's with a heavy heart that I write my last article for the AEHAP newsletter. My last day as Executive Director of both the Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs (AEHAP) and the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) is Friday, April 8th, 2016.



I leave the organization very proud of the mark I've made in the areas of diversity enhancement, new accredited program recruitment, student recruitment and my contributions to the national effort to raise the profile of the EH profession. I also depart with a sense of pride in the fact that I worked alongside such a dedicated community of environmental health professionals, faculty and students.

I started working for AEHAP & EHAC in December of 2006 when we were located in Portland, Oregon. I came to the organization with an award-winning background in environmental public health advocacy and fifteen years of non-profit management experience. Locally, I am hailed as one of the pioneers of the northwest environmental justice movement. My skills as a non-profit leader came at the right time for AEHAP which was still a very young organization when I was hired in 2006. I was one of 45 people that applied for the position and the board that hired me believed I was the right person to take the organization to new heights. They made it clear that one of my primary roles was to ensure that we achieved the goals of our Cooperative Agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC's support over the years has been crucial to our success and their efforts to support EH workforce development must continue into the future.

Below is a brief summary of my major accomplishments in achieving the goals of the CDC Cooperative Agreement and overall goals of AEHAP:

#### EH Degree & Careers Promotion

- Changed and improved AEHAP's logo and website adding student and graduate of-the-month profiles—putting a face on the community of people that we support.
- I developed a marketing strategy to promote EHAC programs that greatly improved our social media presence, web presence and marketing materials. I upgraded and modernized AEHAP and EHAC brochures, posters, postcards and created an EH Careers website.
- I raised funds to create an EH degree promotional video on the AEHAP website and helped provide the content for the video. As of today the video has been viewed 8,703 times.

#### New Program Mentoring

- My improvements to new EH degree program recruitment efforts such as creating a more streamlined vetting processes greatly increased the number of programs interested in accreditation and led to increases in the number of accredited programs.

#### Diversity Enhancement

- In 2008, I coordinated a successful Minority Serving Institution (MSI) workshop that increased the number of MSI's interested in EHAC accreditation.

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## Fort Valley State University Graduate Program Receives Grant from Morehouse School of Medicine

In 2014, the Master of Public Health program at Fort Valley State University under the direction of Dr. Oreta M. Samples in collaboration with Valley Behavioral Health Services, received a \$7,500.00 Behavioral Health Capacity Expansion Mini-Grant from Morehouse School of Medicine. The grant was utilized to begin an educational program targeting tobacco cessation and abstinence among freshman students throughout the school year of 2015 in recognition of the recent University System of Georgia/Board of Regents mandate of declaring all University System of Georgia Universities and Colleges "Tobacco Free" as of October 1, 2014.

The team of graduate students worked under the direct supervision of Dr. Clarence Riley in taking their presentation to freshman classrooms throughout Fort Valley State University. The presentation was interactive and included power points, pregnant smoking dolls as well as "breathing" diseased lungs on display. The program allowed students to observe first-hand the effects of smoking as well as second hand smoke. The graduate assistantship students who facilitated this endeavor included: Jovy Pitts, Jasmine Williams, Peter Imoyera, Ifeoluwa Johnson and Joel Bright.

For more information, please contact Dr. Oreta M. Samples, Program Coordinator, Fort Valley State University, at 478-825-6424 or [sampleso@fvsu.edu](mailto:sampleso@fvsu.edu).

*Executive Director Farewell--Continued from page 1*

### **Support to Students and Graduates**

I created the AEHAP Student Assembly to support student-led EH clubs student recruitment efforts and the EHAC Graduates Association to support graduates in finding job opportunities. Current students and graduates are our best recruiters. I also initiated a survey to EHAC graduates to get feedback on the type of support they needed and they responded that they would like career enhancement webinars. In response I had our Program Coordinator set up a series of educational webinars featuring guest speakers in the field of EH who shared career advice with EHAC graduates.

### **Support to Faculty**

Interacting with such a dedicated community of people that are teaching our future EH workforce has truly been an honor. I have helped facilitate collaborations with faculty and community colleges, have connected faculty with opportunities to submit articles in various publications and have responded to their need for support to increase student enrollment and stop program closures.

### **Partnerships**

*National Environmental Health Partnership Council (NEHPC):* I represented AEHAP as a member of the NEHPC, a group that serves as a unified voice for increasing

public awareness about the value of Environmental Health services and jointly supports EH initiatives. My involvement helped link students and faculty with information on scholarships and internships, information on EH trends and opportunities for advocacy.

*Employers:* I initiated the creation of a large database of EH employers to share employment opportunities with our graduates. I also promoted the value of hiring graduates from EHAC programs to potential employers.

*NEHA:* Working with NEHA's current and past Executive Director's and staff for the past nine years has been a rewarding experience for me. AEHAP and EHAC's partnership with NEHA has increased student access to opportunities, increased opportunities for EHAC faculty to share their expertise, helped leverage our ability to promote the profession and has provided us a space to have our annual meetings, workshops and student activities. I truly appreciate NEHA's staff and Executive Director David Dyjack for his leadership in supporting the work of AEHAP and EHAC.

In closing, I'd like to thank each and every one of you for believing in me and for supporting me throughout the years. I hope as my footprint fades that you know that I truly and wholeheartedly gave it my all. **If you want to stay in touch please email me at [ysinde@gmail.com](mailto:ysinde@gmail.com).**

## University of Wisconsin Eau Claire Shares Program Updates on Faculty Retirement, Budget and Alumni Honors

The Environmental Public Health Program (ENPH) at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire celebrates the retirement of Dr. Christine Gabel, who taught for more than 20 years in our program. A University of Minnesota graduate, Dr. Gabel's specialty was epidemiology and during her tenure, epi classes grew to several overflowing sections serving students across campus. As a veterinarian, she brought an informed perspective to zoonoses in the pest management course. Particularly effective at advising, Dr. Gabel always put students' interests first in her academic career at UW-Eau Claire.

Despite Dr. Gabel's retirement – part of the state's severe \$24 million biennial budget cut – the program has been growing with now more than 70 majors. Dr. Pierce and his family are providing a new scholarship to current ENPH majors who recognize the vital connections between human health and environmental sustainability.

Alumni Kristen Walters, Zack Kroening and Jeron Jacobson along with Dr. Pierce, were honored to have faculty-student research published on the cover of the November 2015 issue of the Journal of Environmental Health. This work included instrument calibration, field measurements, and data interpretation of airborne particulates around frac sand operations in Wisconsin and Minnesota. This research is continuing with current students setting up new monitors, collecting data, and giving presentations to local town boards and conferences (20 to date).

Assistant Professor Laura Suppes continues to provide swimming pool research opportunities to students, and has expanded UW-EC training programs to include Serve Safe© and CPO certification. Faculty are additionally exploring an REHS/RS preparation course.

ENPH Courses continue to include hands-on practical training for students, with regular on-campus food service, swimming pool, construction, industrial hygiene and surface water quality "inspections." Groups of students in industrial hygiene and toxicology courses developed a home inspection checklist then performed walk-throughs of community housing, providing tenants and owners with checklist results.

Close ties with Shane Sanderson and Elizabeth Bolte (both ENPH grads) at the Eau Claire City-county Health Department provide students with guidance, internships, and often eventual employment in the area. Current courses also give ENPH students opportunities to develop their own projects, recently including a high school woodshop inspection, food and mental health evaluations of a Native American Powwow and Hmong New Year Celebration, and outdoor GPS geocaching exercise.

The program will undergo National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) reaccreditation in 2016, during which contributions from new adjunct faculty Dr. Mel Kantor and Watershed Institute Director Dr. Jim Boulter will be documented.

The Student National Environmental Health Association (SNEHA) continues to host guest speakers such as Cmdr. Tim Duffy (to outline the JRCOSTEP internship), maintain roadside cleanup efforts, and earn first place honors in the non-musical marching division of the 2015 UW-EC Homecoming Parade.

ENPH Alumni continue to demonstrate leadership and accomplishment, with recent graduate Jeron Jacobson receiving his Master's in Environmental and Occupational Exposure Science at the University of Washington. Brittany Whited also just earned her Master's in Public Health (MPH) degree and is now employed with the US Environmental Protection Agency. By Crispin Pierce, UW Eau Claire Program Director



UW-Eau Claire graduate, Brittany Whited, with the Director of the EPA, Gina McCarthy

## 2016 Student Research Competition Update

The deadline has ended for submissions for the 2016 SRC competition and winners will be officially announced in April. Winners will get to present their research at the annual National Environmental Health Association conference which is to be held in San Antonio, Texas June 13-16, 2016. They will also get a poster session and be able to attend NEHA activities and events .

Thank you to CDC for your support for this scholarship opportunity for our students.

For info please visit: <http://aehap.org/student-research-competition>

## Follow AEHAP on Facebook and Twitter!

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## EHAC Welcomes New Accreditation Coordinator Leslie Mitchell

My name is Leslie Mitchell and I am your new EHAC Accreditation Coordinator. After a week and one half on the job, I am happy to say that I am knee deep in the accreditation process and planning for our annual meeting in San Antonio and I am greatly enjoying myself.

A recent move from the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia to the Pacific Northwest is a long-time dream, realized. I am absolutely smitten by the Cascade and Olympic Mountains, Puget Sound, the surprise glimpses of the majestic Mt. Rainier, the dry and crisp wilds of eastern Washington, islands off Seattle and the San Juans to the north, the beautiful Pacific Ocean to the west and the City of Seattle, as well. I've been here only a brief period of time but have tasted and glimpsed so much of the raw and fierce beauty of the PNW, its wildlife and people.

And, I am excited to join the staff of EHAC. My background is in watershed conservation, and I served 10 years as director of a small non-profit

focused on water quality protection in the North Fork Shenandoah River watershed. Part of our education programs included field trips to sewage treatment plants, landfills and water filtration sites, where I was continually amazed by the skills, knowledge and creativity of the individuals running these facilities and very much aware of the need for excellent education and training related to environmental health positions. It

is an honor and a pleasure to facilitate and promote EHAC's accreditation process, as growing and maintaining a high standard of education and training in the environmental health field as well as answering the present and increasing need for well prepared graduates are of utmost importance to protecting our health and the health of our environment.



## EHAC Annual Meeting and AEHAP Events at the 2016 NEHA Conference San Antonio, Texas

Friday June 10, 2016, 6-8pm:  
EHAC Annual Networking Dinner at Saltgrass Steakhouse, 502 River Walk, San Antonio, TX

EHAC Annual Meeting  
Saturday June 11, 2016, 8:30am-4pm, Location:  
San Antonio Riverwalk Hyatt Regency-Rio Grande East

Sunday June 12, 2016, 8:30am-3pm Location: San Antonio Riverwalk Hyatt Regency-Rio Grande East

**NEHA-AEC Begins June 13, 2016**  
Monday June 13, 2016, 2-4pm: Location TBD  
AEHAP Annual Meeting

Tuesday June 14, 2016, 8am– 5pm  
AEHAP Exhibiting

Student Research Competition & NSF Scholar Student Presentations, Location: TBD

*Some events, dates/times may change. Please look for AEHAP for schedule updates or go to the NEHA website for an updated schedule of events: <http://www.neha.org/news-events/aec>*

**Not on our email list? Please email [info@aehap.org](mailto:info@aehap.org) and ask to be added to the general EH email list serv.**

## CDC National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEHIP) Gears up for 2016

Since 2015 AEHAP has collaborated with the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) to link students from National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) accredited programs with summer internships through a program funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The goal of the NEHIP is to enhance the learning experiences of Environmental Health students by providing them an opportunity to work at local, state, or tribal environmental public health departments. Through this internship program, students are provided a good learning experience while health departments are provided with additional help. Students are placed in health departments and related agencies across the U.S.

Students who apply must be from EHAC accredited environmental health academic programs. Selected students receive a stipend of up to \$4,000 (\$400 per week) for an 8 to 10 week internship to cover expenses. An additional stipend is available to cover the costs if the student relocates for the internship.

CDC support to summer internships in Environmental Health is a critical piece of ensuring a well qualified EH workforce. Learn more at: <http://neha.org/internships>

Read about past intern's success stories at: <http://www.neha.org/professional-development/students/internship/2015-student-success-stories>