

BC Environmental and Occupational Health Research Network

Annual General Meeting

November 24, 2006 1:00-2:45 pm

Fairmont Hotel Vancouver

Minutes

1. Remembrance of Dr. David Bates Susan Kennedy

The meeting opened with a remembrance of Dr. David Bates (May 20, 1922 – Nov 21, 2006). Dr. Bates was a BCEOHRN member, lung and environmental health researcher and policy advocate.

2. Introduction of Board Chair Susan Kennedy

Susan Kennedy provided an introduction to Craig Stephen, Board Chair. In response to BCEOHRN's Year 1 Progress Report in the spring, the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR) had recommended a change in governance to include a Chair of the Board of Directors who was not also the Scientific Director. Craig Stephen had put his name forward for this role; the change was ratified by the Board in the autumn.

3. Adoption of the Agenda Craig Stephen

The agenda was approved as presented.

4. What we've done this year, overview Susan Kennedy

Susan Kennedy provided a brief overview of BCEOHRN and restated the Network's vision and mission:

Vision:

- a network of innovative research teams conducting world-class research intended to improve the health of people affected by occupational and environmental risks, who interact with communities so that research results are used to effect change;
- ... a truly provincial network that creates new efficiencies, partnerships and opportunities that will make BC a magnet for training, attracting and retaining top quality researchers.

Mission:

- increase knowledge among researchers of common resources, common questions and shared opportunities;
- help researchers and research users navigate the environmental and occupational health community in BC to facilitate efficient access to information and capabilities; and
- assist in attracting and maintaining a vibrant occupational and environmental health research community in BC by supporting training, research development, and communications.

The Network currently has 370 members from across the province and from many institutions and disciplines.

An overview of the Board was provided:

Researchers / research users (target 9, minimum 6 researchers):

- Caroline Alexander, Northern Health
 - Ray Copes, BC CDC
-
-

- Jack Nickel, Health Canada
- *Rick Gallagher, BC Cancer Research Centre*
- Henry Harder, UNBC (Associate Scientific Director)
- Susan Kennedy, UBC (Scientific Director)
- Craig Stephen, Centre for Coastal Health (Chair)
- *Kay Teschke, UBC*
- Shannon Wagner, UNBC

Research trainees (target 3):

- *Melissa Friesen, UBC*
- Gabrielle McHugh, UNBC
- Carla MacLean, UVic
- Eleanor Setton, UVic

(Italicized retiring at this AGM)

Susan Kennedy reviewed the past year's BCEOHRN activities:

Supporting access to researchers and resources

- Who's doing what, where databases

Supporting networking

- travel support - informal connections/meetings

Supporting trainees, new investigators

- peer to peer support / mentorship program
- research capacity development program – support for investigators

Communications

- website – events, jobs, grant deadlines...
- biweekly 'updates' to membership
- support for web based and face to face seminars, workshops

**5. Who is doing what, where?
BCEOHRN database of
members, projects, grey literature**

**Kathleen McLean
Susan Kennedy**

Susan Kennedy introduced a demonstration of the BCEOHRN database, a database of members and grey literature which is currently under development and nearly ready to be launched. Kathleen McLean and Megan Wiebe, BCEOHRN's student assistants, have been collecting members' CVs and grey literature for the database since the summer months.

Kathleen McLean provided an overview of the database test site. Access to the database will be via the BCEOHRN homepage. The database is an efficient and easy way to find out who's in the province, what they're working on and what their grey literature is. It includes member information such as how students can connect with mentors or who's doing research in a particular area. Grey literature is that which is not searchable through traditional library searches and includes reports prepared for government, industry and other stakeholders that are not in the peer reviewed literature. Some grey literature links are available directly to a .pdf of the document, or are available via a web link.

Kathleen and Megan are still gathering information and entering it into the database. Over future years, to keep the database up-to-date, staff members will be available to continue to update the database, or members can update their own information if they prefer. A brochure was made

available to members in attendance to use as a navigational tool. The database will be available soon.

6. Peers helping peers/Mentoring program

Corinne Ong

Corinne Ong, Chair, reported on the Mentoring Program Working Group, which was struck at the November 2005 AGM. Members include: Pat Atherton, BCEOHRN; Corinne Ong, UBC; Eileen Owen-Williams, UNBC; Cheryl Peters (student), UBC; Eleanor Setton (student), UVic; and Kay Teschke, UBC. Corinne extended her thanks to the Working Group members for their past year's involvement and noted that all have agreed to continue their participation with this working group for the upcoming year.

The Working Group has met three times via teleconference and shared discussions via email to develop a number of tools including: peer-to-peer/mentoring groups; a mentoring handbook for peer-to-peer/mentoring groups; and a webpage of details for members. Peer-to-peer/mentoring groups are being piloted and are developing into micro-networks comprised of senior and junior members or peer members, acting in informal discussion groups. Pilots are being run in the areas of:

Geographic Information Systems Peer-to-Peer/Mentoring Group

Contact: [Eleanor Setton, UVic](#)

9 members

- Monthly conference calls with e-mail communication in between
- Forum to discuss:
 - GIS-related problems and solutions
 - Updates on GIS/health research and health analyses
 - Upcoming funding opportunities, conferences, or other activities of interest

Injury Prevention Peer-to-Peer/Mentoring Group

Contact: [Eileen Owen-Williams, UNBC](#)

6 members

- Support research endeavours in the area of injury prevention
- WebCT site

Water Peer-to-Peer/Mentoring Group

Contact: [Corinne Ong, UBC](#)

6 members

- Group e-mail discussions
- AGM lunch meeting
 - Professional development in Water Research & Industry
 - New collaborative research teams

BCEOHRN funds teleconferences to provide a mode of communication for group members. Members who are interested in joining existing groups or starting a new group are encouraged to contact the [BCEOHRN office](#).

7. Research capacity development/networking support

**Craig Stephen
Recipients**

Craig Stephen provided a brief overview of the BCEOHRN Research Capacity Development fund. Past recipients had been invited to present a short overview of their projects. Presentations were made by the following recipients:

Donna Daines, *Developing and Evaluating a Tool to Examine Quality Workplace Environments for Nursing Faculty in Schools of Nursing in British Columbia*

Anders Erickson, *Spatial Analysis of Industrial Pollution and Chronic Disease Incidence in Aboriginal Communities in British Columbia*

Chun-Yip Hon, *Assessment of the occupational dermal exposure risks of antineoplastic drugs to BC healthcare workers and an evaluation of the associated cleaning protocols for drug-contaminated surfaces*

Annette Muttray, *Interdisciplinary Workshop on Aquatic Biomedicine and Environmental Health: Joining British Columbia researchers in the use of bivalves as models for cancer in humans*

Jane Parmley, *The role of wildlife in the health of First Nations communities in BC*

Phillip Hogan, on behalf of Tanya Wahbe, *Team Building and Proposal Development to Assess Food Security and Environmental Health with Heiltsuk First Nation*

Craig Stephen asked the most recent recipients to stand and be acknowledged:

Silvana Costa, *Fly-in-fly-out Mines: Occupational Health Implications for the Female Aboriginal Workforce in Northern BC*

Chizimuzo Okoli, *Effects of Outdoor Pollution from Smoking Sources at Work on the Health of Hospitality Workers*

8. Spring 2007 Workshop

Hugh Davies

Hugh Davies reported on the BCEOHRN Educational Event Working Group on behalf of the group's chairperson, Glenys Webster. The group was struck in the summer and is comprised of: Caroline Alexander, Northern Health; Pat Atherton, BCEOHRN; Ray Copes, BCCDC; Hugh Davies, UBC; Carla MacLean (student), UVic; Glenys Webster (student), UBC.

The event being planned is titled:

Effective Knowledge Transfer and Exchange **April 19 & 20, 2007** **Vancouver**

A networking reception will be held in the evening prior to the workshop on April 20. Currently confirmed speakers are: Dr. Patricia Martens, Director, Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, University of Manitoba; Dr. Penny Ballem, former Deputy Minister, BC Ministry of Health; and Patty Pitts, Communications Manager, Media Relations, University of Victoria. Sessions include: Communicating Health, Science and Risk Messages to the Media; Communicating effectively with Policymakers; and, Risk Perception/Where's the True Risk: Example topic: West Nile Virus vs. Cryptococcus in BC. The wrap up will be a panel discussion about how to use the Network in knowledge transfer and exchange.

9. Financial Report

Susan Kennedy
Henry Harder

Henry Harder, Associate Scientific Director of the Network and representative of the Network's financial secretariat, the University of Northern British Columbia, provided a report on the first two years' expenditures and reviewed the budget plan for years 3 and 4 of the Network (2007/08 and 2008/09).

Susan Kennedy discussed the complexity of forward planning given the current funding situation. MSFHR has recently conducted an external review of its infrastructure program and will be holding an external review of the eight health of population networks in February 2007. Prior to this review, networks will submit their second progress reports. After the spring review it is possible that funding may increase from \$250K per year to \$500K per year for years 3 and 4, retroactive to January 1, 2007.

Budget plans were reviewed with both scenarios, noting that future planning ties into the original proposal to MSFHR submitted in the fall of 2004. Additional staffing is planned, specifically in the area of knowledge transfer and exchange/communications; this position was originally planned for year 2 but was deleted when it became clear that funding for year 2 was capped at \$250K.

After discussion, the budget plan was ratified by the membership.

10. Members' Input

Members

Susan Kennedy led a discussion, facilitating input from BCEOHRN members.

Issue: Research Capacity Development fund

Susan Kennedy raised the issue that new guidelines from MSFHR stipulate that networks funding more than \$5K in any one award require setting up an external review panel comprised of non-BCEOHRN members, which for BCEOHRN would require seeking volunteers from outside of the province to find expertise in this field. The BCEOHRN Board of Directors deems a need to negotiate this piece, identifying two key areas of concern: that \$5K is too low a cap to do the work required before applying for national funding; and that it would be embarrassing to approach peers to in other jurisdictions to act as peer reviewers for such small awards.

Members discussed this issue. It was observed that this source of funding fills a niche that isn't funded any other way from national funding sources. It was generally expressed that there is a need to measure the effectiveness of such funding, but that it's too early yet to do so, although one of the first two BCEOHRN recipients was successful in obtaining additional funding. There was support for the idea that that \$5K is too small an amount to bring in an external peer review panel, particularly when BCEOHRN already has a peer review process which follows CIHR guidelines. It was argued that to establish such infrastructure would be a waste of resources. It was remarked that members need to get some solid data before putting in an application and this fund allows members to be able to do that, which will likely increase their rates of success.

Issue: BCEOHRN response to CIHR Draft Policy

Susan Kennedy provided copies of documentation regarding CIHR's *Draft Policy on Access to CIHR-funded Research Outputs* and invited comments from the floor, commenting that an email version had been sent to the membership. In discussion, there were concerns expressed that First Nations communities may not want to get involved in research projects with this policy in place. Discussion suggested that the draft policy would negatively impact researchers' careers. A sign up sheet was made available for members who wanted to endorse BCEOHRN's formal response in protest of the draft policy.

11. Board Nominations

Craig Stephen

Two BCEOHRN members had submitted their names for nomination to the Board of Directors: Dr. Hugh Davies, University of BC, and Dr. Tim Takaro, Simon Fraser University. Each was asked to provide an introduction and to speak about their roles and interest in the Network. Craig Stephen called for additional nominations from the floor. There being none, Hugh Davies and Tim Takaro were elected to the Board of Directors.

12. Acknowledgements

**Craig Stephen
Susan Kennedy
Henry Harder**

Before adjourning the meeting, thanks were extended to all members for turning out to the second BCEOHRN Scientific Exchange and Annual General Meeting. Board members were thanked for their interest and involvement in the Network. Craig Stephen thanked Susan Kennedy and Henry Harder for their leadership of the Network. Pat Atherton was thanked for her administrative support of the Network's operations. Susan Kennedy and Henry Harder presented certificates of appreciation to UBC staff member Inger Eakin and UNBC staff member Irma Watt for their support of BCEOHRN operations at their institutions.

13. Adjournment

Craig Stephen

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned in order that members could turn their attention to the poster session component of the day where over 35 posters were presented by BCEOHRN members (full list available at: <http://www.bceohrn.ca/documents/BCEOHRNAGM2006PosterAbstracts.pdf>).