

UNBC LAB SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

DATE: March 18, 2024

Time: 1:00pm – 2:00pm Meeting hosted via MS Teams

Attendees:

Maik Gehloff – Committee Chair, WIDC Lab (FOSE)

Saphida Migabo – ESM (FOE)

Sydney Cruch – NHSRF Coordinator

Oliver Iorhemen – Asst Prof EENG (FOSE)

Kaila Fadock – Sr Lab Instructor (FOSE)

Lukas Dauksas – NUGSS Rep

Angus Modum – Grad Rep

Scott McMillan – Manager of OH&S

Thya Warren – Safety Officer

Mike Bell – Lab Operations & Infrastructure

Jordan Wilbey – Chemical Safety Officer / RSO

Absent:

Alina Constantin – Co-Chair, Sr. Lab Inst (FOHHS)

Hossein Kazemian – Sr Lab Instructor (NALS)

Harpreet Johnson – Recording Secretary

1. Meeting Called to order – 1:04pm

2. Territory Acknowledgement – Maik

3. AGENDA

- Approved by Kaila and Sydney. All in favour.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 2024

- Approved by Lucas and Thya to second. Approved by all.

5. SAFETY OFFICER REPORTS

a) Chemical Safety Report – Jordan

One incident – mercury spill in building 9 on the third floor. Had a mercury thermometer in a incubator and it wasn't secure. The lab monitor thinks that a student was putting something in or taking something out of the incubator and hit the thermometer and it fell to the floor. No student has stepped forward, so she isn't exactly sure when this happened. No bulb was recovered, but the thermometer was recovered with a little bit of mercury in it. Jordan cleaned the mercury up that was on the floor. The lab monitor did have a conversation with the students, and no one stepped forward. There shouldn't be any more mercury thermometers left in building 9 but Jordan will send out an email as well requesting to collect the remaining mercury thermometers, if there are any left.

Kaila: do copies of the inspections go into our folders?

Jordan: there is a copy of the report in Teams under the incidents folder.

Kaila: One major concern is that no one has stepped forward and that leads to concern for future incidents not being reported by students. There seems to be a fear of reporting as something went wrong. Also, that the mercury bulb was not found. It could be broken somewhere on the floor off gassing mercury or that someone picked it up and threw it away somewhere unsafely. What can the committee recommend further than removing the mercury thermometers. How can we promote reporting incidents without the fear of getting in trouble as there seems to be a hesitation from students.

Scott: Students should feel safe to report good things and bad things to their instructor. It will take time to build a culture of psychological safety, but that will be something that we will have to work towards.

Maik: We need to look at what we can do other than reiterating with safety training that there is no fault for being honest for broken equipment and making sure that the supervisors, lab managers, technicians, whoever is contact with students, emphasize this moving forward.

- b) **Biosafety Officer – Mike**
- Nothing to report. No incidents.

6. BUSINESS ARISING

a) **Radiation Safety: Scott**

The Radiation Safety exam went well, and we have an approved license up to 2027. Jordan is the main Radiation Safety Officer and will be trained in April. We will need to look for a backup radiation safety officer. The fee is paid for by the University.

Question: Is there a Radiation Safety committee?

Comment: There is but we are thinking about merging these two committees together.

Mike: The radiation program is very small now. We were going to look into the terms to see if there needs to be a separate radiation committee or if it can be merged with the Lab Safety committee. We still need to look through the terms of reference to see whether it needs to be a stand alone or not.

Scott: If it does need to be a standalone, an option is adjourning the Lab Safety meeting and then doing the Radiation Safety meeting right after. The Radiation Safety committee usually meets twice a year.

Kaila: What is being done to get a back up radiation safety officer?

Mike: Started finding a back up over a year ago and then Conan left and then there was no one as the radiation officer. There's about 3 people that use radiation on campus.

Scott: Doesn't mind taking the training but when Safety goes on a road trip, it is likely that it is Scott, Jordan and Thya that go. There's a good chance that the whole radiation group will be on the road together. Which leaves nobody available.

Kaila: It may be a good idea to sit down with Houssain to see if he has a full time CUPE employees that might add this as an additional task or responsibility as being a backup.

Scott: If there isn't anyone available, chat with the Dean.

Comment: It should be approached with one of the few people that use radiation.

Comment: Regarding the issue with the labs, an option is to have the lab tech/supervisor go around the lab at the end of the day to do a quick check to ensure that everything is good.

Comment: Each supervisor is in charge for their space and the students working in that space are responsible for that space as well. It can't fall on the supervisor to check on the lab at the end of the day, it should be the users that were in the lab. It is a recommendation that we can push forward to the PIs of the lab to nominate a few students or to refresh the students on shut down procedures and the safety of leaving the space.

Comment: a daily checklist where the supervisor chooses a person to complete the list each time. It could be for whoever works in the lab that day.

b) **Mercury Thermometers - Scott**

Question: Can we resupply the thermometers for "free"? Is there an equipment replacement fund? We have about 30 mercury thermometers around the facilities right now. Who would pay the no charge if we put it out there that you can trade your mercury thermometers in for alcohol filled thermometers.

Mike: Would have to check into the type of thermometer that they would want. Alcohol thermometers do dip down to the temperature that we need but they are expensive. It depends on how many we need and the price range. If we can get an inventory of how many thermometers are needed, then we can look at where to pull the funds from. Roughly about \$100 for a thermometer for temperatures -35 to +50 and some people will need that range. Jordan can also help to source out some as well.

Action Item: Mike and Jordan to start looking at options. Send out labs notice as well to see what usage everyone has their thermometers in.

Comment: for the announcement going out to the labs, word it in a way that indicates that we are phasing out the use of mercury laboratory thermometers and then specifically ask to identify if labs have any mercury thermometers and what use they are used for, temperature ranges etc.

c) **NEW BUSINESS**

-No new business.

7. ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION:

Next meeting date: as it is exam week, does April 15th work for everyone still. Everyone agreed that the 15th still works.

8. MEETING AJOURNED AT: 1:37pm

ACTION ITEMS

Item #	Description	Who	Action
1	Options for replacing mercury thermometers. Send out notices to labs regarding usage of thermometers and phasing them out.	Mike/Jordan	Ongoing
2.			
3.			
4.			

NEXT MEETING DATE: APRIL 15, 2024

TIME: 10:00A M – 11:00AM – MS TEAMS - UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

UPCOMING MEETING DATES: TBA