THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE KNOXVILLE

Laboratory Safety Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2025
SU 362

Attendance (in person):

Member	Department	Pres.	Abs.	Member	Department	Pres.	Abs.
Doug Aaron	MABE	☐	☒	John Kobza	ISE	☐	☒
Michael Allen	TCE	☐	☒	Mariano Labrador	BCMB	☒	☐
Pamela Andrews	KRSS	☐	☒	Bryan Lord	Facilities	☐	☒
Chris Baker	EHS (Lab)	☒	☐	Grace Loy	IAMM	☒	☐
Michael Blum	A&S	☐	☒	Elysia Mann	Art (2D)	☐	☒
James Cantu	EHS (OHSS)	☒	☐	Bob Martin	EECS	☐	☒
Carolina D. Carter	EHS (Lab)	☒	☐	Kristen Massey	ORIED	☐	☒
Christine Cheney	Physics & Astronomy	☒	☐	Larry McKay	**Vice-Chair:** A&S	☒	☐
Matthew Cooper	Psychology	☐	☒	Natalie Metzger	EHS (Lab)	☒	☐
Steve Crouch	UTIA Safety	☐	☒	Sarah Mobley	**Chair**: CEE	☒	☐
Paul Dalhaimer	CBE	☒	☐	Katie Morgan	Nursing	☒	☐
Ampofo Darko	Chem	☒	☐	Chris Morris	IAMM	☒	☐
Brad Day	ORIED	☒	☐	Scott Moser	EHS (Lab)	☒	☐
Emily Deem	EHS (Lab)	☒	☐	Allan Patchen	EPS	☐	☒
Mark Denavit	CEE	☒	☐	Brian Payne	EHS (AD)	☒	☐
Taylor Do	EHS (Lab)	☒	☐	Jacob Payne	UTIA Safety	☐	☒
Bill Dunne	Tickle COE	☒	☐	Brian Ranger	EHS/Lab	☒	☐
Gerald Egeland	MSE	☒	☐	Michael Ratliff	NucEng.	☒	☐
Jennifer Ferris	GSM	☐	☒	Darcy Rathjen	ORE	☐	☒
Jason Fogarty	Theatre	☐	☒	Tim Rials	UTIA	☐	☒
Billy Garner	EHS (Lab)	☒	☐	Anujit Sarkar	Nursing	☒	☐
Adrian Gonzalez	CEE	☒	☐	Ryan Setzer	EHS (IWS)	☒	☐
Linda Hamilton	EHS (Lab)	☒	☐	Marsha Smith	EHS (Rad)	☒	☐
Terry Hazen	CEE/EPS/Micro	☐	☒	Timothy Sparer	Microbio	☐	☒
Sally Horn	Geography	☐	☒	Daniel Thomas	EHS (Lab)	☒	☐
Randy Huelsman	Facilities	☐	☒	Joseph Williams	EEB	☐	☒
Anneke Janzen	Anthropology	☐	☒	Ling Zhao	Nutrition	☐	☒
Daleniece Jones	Public Health	☐	☒				
Jennifer Kirkpatrick	Art (3D)	☐	☒				

Other Guests:	Department	Pres.	Abs.				
Bailey Tutor	EHS	☒	☐			☐	☐
Alisun Smith-Bryant	EHS	☒	☐			☐	☐
Katie Condon	EHS	☒	☐			☐	☐
Melissa Weaver (proxy for Jennifer Ferris)		☒	☐			☐	☐

Agenda:

i. Opening Welcome!
ii. Approval of Minutes
    a. Thank you, Emily!
iii. Safety Culture Minute
    a. Carolina Carter
iv. Committee Reports
    a. Lab Safety Culture Awards (Carter)
    b. Institutional Biosafety Committee (Thomas)
    c. Instructional Labs – (Mobley)
v. Special Topic Discussion
    a. Lab Commissioning Process Overview and Discussion (Mobley)
vi. Incidents/Concerns
    a. Eye-wash water flood incident (Thomas)
vii. LSS updates (Hamilton)
viii. Items from the floor?
    a. Experience Provider Report Out
ix. Next meeting February 13, 2025

Attachments and References:

- Agenda
- November LSC Meeting Minutes

Topic Summaries

I. **Introductions/Opening**

The LSC Chair, Dr. Sarah Mobley, opened the meeting.

II. **Approve Minutes from Last Meeting** (November 14, 2024)

The LSC Meeting minutes from 11/14/24 were approved with two abstentions. Emily Deem was thanked for her work on the LSC Sharepoint site organization.

III. **Safety Minute**

Carolina Carter presented a Safety Minute about UV protective eyewear using two kinds of protective glasses, one with a label "+U6", and one without. She used a UV-identification card and a UV light to show that when the light is shone through the glasses, both glasses provided protection against UV light waves. Without the use of glasses, the UV light is identified on the card as exposure. Carolina showed that we can test if unlabeled eyewear is UV protective before using. This technique was employed when a PI moved into a space where the previous PI had donated their UV transilluminator with a protective sash over it. In the absence of markings, the PI was unable to establish if the sash was protective or not. With the technique Carolina described, they were able to verify that shield was protective. Additionally, they identified a part of the UV transilluminator that was not generating UV light as expected.

IV. **Committee Reports**

- Carolina reported that the Lab Safety Culture Awards Dinner, hosted in December, was a success. Members of the LSC, such as Adrian Gonzales, Larry McKay, Grace Loy, and Chris Morris were honored. Other LSC members such as Linda Hamilton, Brian Ranger, and Bill Dunne were instrumental in hosting the event. The Lab Safety Culture Awards will continue in 2025, but the categories have not yet been announced.
- Sarah Mobley reported that the Instructional Labs Subcommittee met for its first meeting. An initial conversation took place about resources. The subcommittee will meet once a semester.

V. **Special Topics Discussion**

<u>Lab Commissioning Process Overview</u>

Sarah Mobley presented the idea that the Lab Commissioning Process is an opportunity, and she wants to evaluate how that opportunity is currently being used. Members of the LSC were given copies of the Lab Commissioning checklist, as used by EHS. The members broke out into small groups to give a first impression of the document or share their recent experience with commissioning.

An initial suggestion to improve the process was to include a one-page summary of the commissioning process to explain why commissioning occurs. The member proposed that the commissioning process should be a collaborative group event to include the faculty member, relevant students, EHS, the LSA, and Facilities Services. This could be included in the onboarding process as an introduction to safety and safety culture at UTK. Another member suggested that in the chemical section, the limitations of the PI's specific space and overall building in terms of chemical storage should be discussed. The member also recognized that there are elements of the commissioning process that will need to be worked on over time as opposed to the one or two meetings with EHS (such as the development of the Chemical Hygiene Plan); timelines should be discussed. Once the checklist is completed, the member also noted that there are three separate locations that the document is stored, but none are identified as the official record.

A member noted the shared space commissioning presents some difficulties, particularly with the timing of the commissioning of the areas within the shared space. It is possible that shared space commissioning should be its own process. Questions that arose include: what should be shared between the groups within the shared space, such as the risks or dangers associated with each research? How should that information be shared? Whose responsibility is it to communicate risks (e.g. the PI)? A member of the LSC that is also an LSA shared that they feel it is their responsibility to encourage communication between PIs who share spaces. However, the LSA is not an authority figure, and may need outside support to establish expectations of what is shared between PIs.

Another member described their impression of the commissioning checklist as a project management tool. It outlines the responsibilities of some of the people involved in a lab space. Some PIs may be under the

impression that the commissioning checklist is the full process, when it only represents part of what is needed to begin working in a space. Others agreed with the sentiment that the checklist is a conversation point, not the whole picture; it is a tool used to engage with PIs. A gap that occurs with focusing on the checklist is that the conversation becomes space-focused when commissioning occurs. A re-focus of the commissioning process may turn into a process better known as "Research Commissioning".

Shared spaces again present issues of responsibility and communication. In addition to shared spaces, another gray area is field operations. A cultural shift is needed to see EHS as a resource, not an obstacle. A member pointed out that the checklist being a physical copy might present hardships. The member also noted that the checklist does not have a space for discussing the research activities that will be occurring in the space. It is unknown if some elements on the checklist happen consistently, such as meeting with Facilities Services. Another member suggested that a move-in checklist could complement the commissioning checklist to give PIs a chance to inventory what was left behind by the previous PI as a way to ensure that the decommissioning process occurred correctly.

Physical hazards are absent from the commissioning checklist, which a member pointed out is relevant for shop spaces that do not have biological or chemical hazards present, but they do have physical ones. Another member pointed out that it may be hard for EHS to get specific on what would be required in the physical hazard space since that is not an area of expertise. However, they emphasized that the absence of specificity of the checklist also serves as a conversation point, which is what the checklist should be.

The conversation recentered around the need for the commissioning process to occur at onboarding of a PI. In the current commissioning process, a discussion about research and safety culture is missing. A member suggested that commissioning should be required prior to starting research in a space. In some cases, it may be possible to begin the onboarding process prior to a PI starting at the university. However, for many cases this may not be feasible. As part of onboarding, a member suggested that space planning for equipment and instrumentation is best to do as early on as possible. The key takeaway is how important collaborative communication is and how we can use the commissioning process to achieve that.

VI. **Eye Wash Incident**

Daniel Thomas presented an incident that occurred in a microbiology teaching lab in Hessler Building in early December. An undergraduate student was handling a weak acid while wearing a lab coat, but no gloves or eye wear. At one point, the acid got onto the student's hand. Some time later, the student rubbed their eye. The TA present instructed the student to rinse their eye under the sink. There was an eyewash in the lab that was operational; however, it was not used. While the student was rinsing their eye, the TA went to inform the lecturer that was in charge of the lab of the situation. While walking back to the lab, the TA and the lecturer encountered the student, who had stopped rinsing their eye, in the hallway. The student was then instructed to rinse their eye in the hallway eyewash. It was discovered that the 4th floor eyewash had apparently dirty water, so the 5th floor eyewash was used. The student was sent home after rinsing their eye for 15 minutes with instructions to follow up with a doctor; there were no lasting symptoms or injuries. The student's parent raised concerns about the quality of the water from the initial faucet that was used; the concerns were addressed and resolved.

The hallway eyewash is not plumbed. Due to the rinsing, this caused water to spread onto the floor and into adjacent spaces. Facilities Services was contacted to clean up the water. They cleaned the water from the hallway and in one of the labs, but when they encountered a biohazard symbol on another lab, they contacted EHS. It became unclear if the concern from Facilities was biological from the biohazard symbol, or about potential chemicals in the water. The lecturers tried to assure the Facilities representatives that it was safe to enter the lab, but they insisted on verification from EHS.

LSC discussion focused on evaluating the workspace and headspace of the situation. Positive components of the headspace include that there was a sink, a hallway eyewash, and a lab eyewash to assist in an incident. The negative components of the workspace were the lack of gloves leading to the chemicals on the

hand, the 4th floor eyewash with dirty water, and the crowded lab leading to logistical issues of using the eyewash use within the lab (leading to the use of the sink initially). The lab manager will provide gloves and assess if eyewear is needed in the future. Headspace considerations include what led to the absence of gloves and eye protection and how to go about starting a cleanup for the water for hallway eyewashes. A further discussion about risk assessment is needed with Facilities Services.

VII. **Next Meeting**

Due to time constraints, not all agenda items were covered during this meeting and will be covered in February. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 13th, 2025, from 1:30pm – 3:00pm EST.

[Meeting Adjourned at 3:05pm]