CAHNRS Safety Committee

Meeting Minutes

December 10, 2013

Present: Daniel Edge-Garza, Rick Rupp, Dory Lohrey-Birch, Bruce Davitt, Mike Costa, Guests: Russ Schaff, Tom Ebeling

Next meeting: January 14, 2014, 11:10 - 12, 409 Hulbert Hall

1. Approval of previous meeting minutes

Minutes from October and November were approved.

2. Discussion

Russ Schaff, OHS Manager at EHS, introduced Tom Ebeling as the new lab safety specialist, replacing Sarah Greer. Tom will eventually be the lab safety manager. He and Russ Schaff are the EHS contact for lab safety questions.

Daniel Edge-Garza asked for EHS’ help as the Safety Committee develops recommendations for Assoc. Dean Moyer on how to effectively enhance the importance of safety within the college. Edge-Garza pointed out three areas of particular concern, 1. Communication disconnects to principal investigators (PIs) that they are responsible for the safety of all employees in labs, farms, offices, and other work areas, 2. For chemical laboratories, the lack of direction provided for PIs to available resources for developing a chemical hygiene plan (CHP) and providing training where necessary, and 3. Documentation of compliance with the CHP and other safety-related training.

Schaffer summarized that OSHA and Washington State hold the PI or Lab Instructor responsible for safety training in their labs. Non-employees (i.e. students) are not subject to these OSHA regulations. PIs must train employees by using standard operating procedures (SOP), and the PI must have substantial influence on developing the SOPs. They cannot hand the task off to a lab employee or grad student without review. EHS will be developing an online system for general safety information that must be available to all employees. CHP’s are still required to be present in each lab.

EHS will be focusing on implementing the Global Harmonization System which is the new international standard for communication of hazardous information, including new safety data sheets. There are several performance deadlines for which EH&S will provide updated continuous information over the next several years to comply with the new standard.

In recent inspections accompanied by WSU auditors, Schaff noted that some SOPs were being standardized at the departmental level. There is no reason the SOP’s cannot be shared among labs carrying out similar work.

Edge-Garza brought up the concern that although the law states that PIs are responsible for the safety of all employees in their work site, there is no law requiring these PIs be competent to acquire and provide that training. Schaffer acknowledged that is a problem. Edge-Garza suggested that PIs, upon hire, be required to attend a training provided by EHS that would direct them all university resources for developing SOPs, training employees, and other safety related information highly recommended for review, and that this training be documented. Schaff thought that Tom Ebeling could put the beginnings
of such training together by the end of January. He also noted that there are currently some self-
inspection plans available on the EHS website, but recognized that these were not adequate for the
training we were discussing.

We also discussed the problems surrounding who is responsible for training for shared facilities which
are on the increase throughout the university. Bruce Davitt commented that he always re-trains students
coming into his lab who work for other faculty. Schaff commented that it is not always clear who is
responsible for shared facilities. However, the PI is always responsible for training their employees.

Schaff noted that the PIs need to have documentation for SOP and for training not only to meet
regulatory requirements; they also need these to avoid unlawful act responsibility.

3. January agenda

   Finalize safety recommendations to Assoc. Dean Moyer.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Rupp