**UAH Environmental Health & Safety Committee   
AGENDA –Fall 2015**

**VBRH M33, UAH Campus**

**November 12, 2015; 1:00 p.m.**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No | Berbrier, Mitch, Interim Dean | College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences |
| Yes | Gupta, Jeet, Associate Dean/Em Scho/Prof | College of Business |
| No | Cates, John | Compliance Officer |
| No | Mathis, Shannon, Assistant Professor of Kinesiology | College of Education |
| Yes | Mahalingam, Shankar, Dean | College of Engineering |
| Yes | Pendleton, Marcia , Ex- Officio | Office of Environmental Health and Safety |
| Yes | Finnegan, Michael , Associate Vice President | Facilities & Operations |
| No | Hoy, Hailey, Interim Associate Dean, Graduate Programs | College of Nursing |
| Yes | Lindquist, Robert, Associate Vice President for Research | Office of Research & Economic Development - Chairperson |
| Yes | Waddell, Emanuel, Associate Dean | College of Science |
| Yes | Brecciaroli, T.J., Interim Dean | Student Affairs |

1. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve: T. J. Brecciaroli

Second to motion: Shankar Mahalingam

1. Unfinished Business   
   Representatives on the EHS committee should be either the Dean or Associate Dean. The representative should not be a faculty member.
2. New Business
   1. Fire/Life Safety Audits

Pendleton: EHS conducts fire and life safety audits. The audits are designed to identify potential fire safety and egress hazards once a year. Example: If there is furniture blocking an exit, OEHS auditor will address the hazard with the appropriate person. The life safety audits are scheduled for the same month as the lab audits in buildings with labs.

Mahalingam: Concerning fire extinguishers, who is responsible for them?

Pendleton: OEHS ensures maintenance is performed on all campus fire extinguishers annually and visually inspects those in common spaces monthly. Inside labs - the people who own the lab are to check them on a monthly basis.

Lindquist: We want people who are familiar with the labs to be making the inspection. This will mentally reinforce where the extinguishers are.

Mahalingam: It’s a concern that this aspect should be handled campus wide by EHS.

Lindquist: They should know where they all are and have permission (IATR) to inspect them.

Mahalingam: In controlled labs, the lab owner should do the inspection.

Pendleton: People working in the lab should do the fire extinguisher inspection and know where they all are.

Mahalingam: You mean turn this function over to the students? They should have the training but they shouldn’t have the responsibility.

Brecciaroli: Are there other monthly safety checks?

Pendleton: Yes; eye wash, shower station, etc.

Gupta: Who knows when it is to be done? EHS should send a reminder note and then follow up to make sure it is done.

Lindquist: How many are in the common areas vs. labs?

**ACTION**: Find out where all fire extinguishers are; how many are in labs and how many are in common areas.

Pendleton: We have a list.

Lindquist: Having monthly fire extinguisher checks seems like a lot.

Pendleton: Monthly fire extinguisher checks are required by NFPA rules. There are approximately 1,500 extinguishers on campus. This includes those in housing. Housing extinguishers are checked by Housing Maintenance employees.

Lindquist: Not all eye wash stations have a nice drain set up. This is a concern because the water goes on the floor and has to be cleaned up.

Pendleton: Some eye wash stations are plumbed. All eyewashes require weekly flushes to clear debris from the lines.

Pendleton: We are in the process of determining low, medium, or high risk. High and medium risk labs will receive an audit report. Low risk labs are visited but do not receive a paper audit report. If there is a change in the function of low risk labs or an issue, it is noted. There are approximately 130 labs in the med/high risk category and approximately 120 low risk lab. There are no eye wash stations in the computer labs, etc. Laser labs have extinguishers that are specific for electrical hazards.

* 1. Building Safety Personnel

Pendleton: OEHS is tasked with conducting emergency evacuation / fire drills in each building. The drills are to practice getting students, visitors, faculty and staff out of the building and to better understand individual roles. Extensive coordination between various departments is required for the drill. OEHS sends an advance notification to building emergency coordinators. The building emergency coordinators send information to building floor captains. The building coordinator(s) and floor captains share emergency preparedness information with their departments and assist during evacuation drills by accounting for individuals within their respective areas. There is a template on Facilities’ web site for creating a building emergency action plan (BEAP) <http://www.uah.edu/facilities-and-operations/oep/forms>). This template provides guidelines for developing departmental responses during emergencies. Each department and building has unique qualities that must be considered. One plan does not fit for the entire University.

Mahalingam: Does EHS update the plans?

Pendleton: Before an audit, EHS will ask for a copy of the updated plan. This was last done several years ago. OEHS needs the information in the BEAP to effectively conduct evacuation drills. K. Bennett gave Pendleton a list of buildings that had the plan in place.

**ACTION**: Pendleton will email the list to committee members with a timeline showing when the plan needs to be updated. An issue may be that multiple departments are located in the same building.

Lindquist: There was an incident late afternoon and after it was determined to be safe, nobody knew how to turn off the alarm. The people in the building at that time didn’t know where the fire panel was. The building coordinator needs to know where the fire panel is. If there is no smoke/no fire, somebody needs to know where the fire alarm panel is in the building. The fire department will also look at the alarm panel to determine if the alarm was sounded by means of a pull down lever or if a sensor caused the alarm to sound.

Brecciaroli: Does the university have building preplans on site? Do the firemen have preplans for the buildings? Does/will the building coordinator have access to the building plans?

Pendleton: K. Bennett would know that information.

Gupta: Only the building coordinator?

Pendleton: The police have access to building emergency information. There is a PowerPoint on the EHS web site telling what each person’s responsibility is; the floor captain, building coordinator, etc.

Brecciaroli: What about a safety vest or hat; something that would identify them and give them visual authority to others. It would help responders know who was in authority, so to speak, at the incident site. There is nothing in the HR orientation on this topic. They say the department should show the new hire. Could HR incorporate this in their orientation?

Pendleton: OEHS does have a video for HR to show but it doesn’t go into detail of each specific building. GTAs and GRAs get online training. OEHS keeps track of who has taken the training. OHES also gets a list of teaching assistants to verify that those on the list have taken the training.

Lindquist: There is RCR, export control, etc., that is accepted by the government to satisfy audits. Is there an interest in getting something like this for safety training?

Gupta: Is our presentation better or worse than a ‘canned’ prepackaged training program?

Lindquist: In an audit the hand-made training may come under higher scrutiny. A packaged training module may already meet government requirements.

Pendleton: Generalized, at the UA system level, all EHS groups may need to meet to make the decision. This may take some time and may need to get the UA internal audit group involved.

Lindquist: If incidents continue to occur nationwide, the Federal government may need to get involved. Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) is a means of tracking who took various training modules.

**ACTION**: Look into Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative.

1. OEHS Updates (Pendleton)

i. Lab audits

Meet with Deans to update them and to pass information on to their group. Accrediting body asks for safety information as a part of accreditation.

ii. Incident reports

Seven (7) sought medical care. Most incidents in facilities and police. Three (3) occurred in laboratories and sought medical attention (related to chemical incident in Shelby Center for Science and Technology - SST). The EMTs on site told the people to go to the hospital. Huntsville Hospital got to practice their hazardous chemical procedures as did the firemen. All responders involved used this incident as training; they were able to practice their procedures they have in place.

*Incident information*: On September 28 or 29 around 4:15 p.m. an incident occurred in a stock room of SST. Often after an accident, the office shuts down to debrief. An email is going out asking that the departments meet and review. The buddy system should be used; this is a teaching experience. The person was mixing outside the fume hood. Something wasn’t dissolving quickly enough so they put the beaker on a hot plate to dissolve it faster. There was never a fire, just smoke from the beaker. The sensors are very sensitive in that area. (presentation shown with photographs of the incident location after the event.) There was a personal water bottle near a chemical bottle. There were a lot of boxes on the floor impeding the way in and out of the area, which were also a fire hazard. The EMTs, who were in their full hazmat suits, had difficulty finding where the issue was. These empty boxes can be placed in the hallway and they will be picked up “immediately” by the janitorial staff. If there were a fire in the area, it would be difficult to get in and out. There is an ingress/egress issue with all the boxes in the area.

Brecciaroli: Was there a debrief meeting after the event?

Pendleton: Yes; the chemistry department did have one; OEHS was not included. Chemistry did provide a timeline to OEHS; there are no feedback concerns.

- There is a faculty member in ECE that has an issue with their office space. What happens if that person doesn’t clean up after a warning? What authority does the Dean, etc., have to help clean it up.

Pendleton: We can talk to facilities to help clean up.

Brecciaroli: Recommending a fire code violation may work.

Pendleton and Mahalingam: We’ve already tried talking about the fire codes and offering help.

Lindquist: This isn’t just a hazard issue; offers have been made in the past to assist with cleaning up the office. There is an emotional/hoarding issue that needs to be addressed.

Brecciaroli: In the housing area, UAH has the authority to go in and remove items that are causing code violations from students’ rooms.

Mahalingam: Can this office issue be addressed by OEHS?

**ACTION**: Research who has authority over removing office items from the facilities (paperwork, lectures, exams, etc.) that are a fire hazard. Items would need to be disposed of properly since they may have confidential student information on them.

Pendleton: OEHS can draft a policy indicating that when OEHS deems a safety issue problem, OEHS has the authority to remedy the situation including removing the items. There is a liability issue when we know there is an issue and we don’t do anything. There is an obligation to faculty, staff, all employees, and students.

Concerning the issue in SST, did the person have on safety glasses?

Pendleton: Yes, they were wearing safety glasses. There are issues of open containers and improper labeling. The students need to learn to clean up after themselves and not just walk away.

- Can cleanup be made a part of their grade?

Mahalingam and Waddell: That would be one way to make sure the area gets and stays cleaned up.

Brecciaroli: Even in electrical, they should clean up, put wires, cables, tools, etc., back in their proper place.

??? - there is a higher probability of a problem in Chemistry.

Pendleton: We will create a 5-slide PowerPoint to disseminate to the chemistry organization. We had one mistake, but it can be used as an example to teach, train, and learn from.

Waddell: There is an issue with labs in the SST and faculty in MSB. The GRAs tend to work in the SST and they are the only person in charge there; the professor works in MSB. Things tend to tighten up when the professor shows up either on schedule or unannounced. The faculty members aren’t always on site and things tend to loosen up then.

Brecciaroli: Is there an opportunity for security cameras in the labs? Students should be accountable for the lab and its condition even if cameras aren’t available.

Pendleton: OEHS doesn’t have the authority to tell anyone to leave the area but if the professor, dean, chair, etc., wants someone to leave, OEHS will handle that on request.

Brecciaroli: Concerning the SST issue, was there any formal follow up? Any information from the fire department, police, or hospital?

Pendleton: Nothing formal. We should have joint training events rather than wait until there is an actual issue.

Brecciaroli: There were a lot of opportunities missed.

Waddell: The building wasn’t fully evacuated; nobody notified at least one faculty member other than the siren and lights (they may have thought it was a mistake or false alarm). No one went around the building and checked to make sure everyone was out.

Pendleton: The liability is on us to tell those in our immediate areas to leave the building. The floor/building captain shouldn’t be the one to go around and tell every person to get out. Everyone should self-police their area and check on the way out. Nobody is required to risk their life to ensure all people are out of the building during an evacuation. Floor captains should account for all people that they can and alert professional emergency personnel of those who may still be inside buildings.

1. Safety Timeout

Parking lot lighting:

Mahalingam: The external lighting in the ENG and VBH parking lots needs to be addressed. This is a huge safety issue; people feel unsafe when the parking lot lights are off and it’s dark outside.

Brecciaroli: There is a lighting committee whose function is to make sure parking lots and walk way lights work

Gupta: We need more lights. Talking to the police may get a better response than going through facilities.

Sidewalks/crossing walks:

People don’t use the crosswalks. Four students were hit while crossing the street.

1. Adjourn