

Texas Tech University Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry
Safety Committee Meeting
2 December 2011

Members Attending:

Justo Adame, David Birney, Amanda Boston, Dominick Casadonte, Garrett Mohr, Brandon Mount (EH&S), Sunil Paladugu, Paul Paré, Geneva Peterson, Bruce Whittlesey

Absent: Justo Adame, Yunli Hu, Jared Martin, Randy Nix, Geneva Peterson, Jon Thompson (teaching a regularly scheduled class)

The meeting was begun at 13:05.

Agenda Item 1: Announcements

Dom Casadonte reminded everyone to continue peer laboratory safety inspections.

The November cumulative exam for graduate students tested safety knowledge. The average grade was 74%.

Safety committee members are encouraged to submit comments concerning the draft Emergency Action Plan for the Chemistry Building.

Chemistry Room 230 will be used as a temporary deposit point for chemicals to be removed. Justo Adame noted that if a researcher has a chemical container that is deteriorating, please call him or EH&S and they will be glad to remove it.

Dom Casadonte asked for suggestions for items to be addressed in the next issue of the departmental Safety Notes bulletin that will go out next week.

- 1) Prof. Birney mentioned that Prudent Practices and current university CHP recommends that strong acids and strong bases can be disposed of by first neutralizing them, then diluting them, and finally pouring them down the drain ONLY if there are no heavy metals in the mixture. Brandon Mount said that EH&S is concerned that everyone may not follow the full procedure before disposing the residues down the drain. He will check with others at EH&S and report back.
- 2) Waste bottles should be rinsed three times before being used as waste containers.
- 3) Used Thin Layer Chromatography (TLC) plates should be disposed of in the glass trash receptacles.

Agenda Item 2: Recent Visit by the Laboratory Safety Institute

The Laboratory Safety Institute (headed by Jerry Kaufman and Jack Breazaele) was on campus over the past week to meet with EH&S for the purpose of doing a chemical safety assessment for the TTU campus that will be delivered approximately six months. Their main focus is to advise administration about safety issues and procedures. They will return 9 January 2012.

LSI Recommendations:

- 1) Undergraduate students should be included on the safety committee.
- 2) Faculty membership on the safety committee should rotate frequently, i.e. every three months.

The safety committee consensus opinion was that it would be a good idea to include two undergraduate students on the committee. The students should be nominated by faculty and should be students who have long term involvement, as many undergraduates are highly transient. Several names of students were proposed as prospective members – Dom Casadonte will contact them to see if they are interested in serving.

The committee felt that frequent rotation of the membership could be counterproductive, in that the members would not be aware of previous information and issues that had been discussed. However, more involvement by faculty would be beneficial. Dom will circulate meeting agenda and will schedule open “brown bag lunch” forums to allow faculty input.

Agenda Item 3: Debriefing Regarding Safety Surveys by the Laboratory Safety Institute (LSI)

LSI conducted unannounced laboratory inspections last Sunday, and the results were circulated to the supervisors of those laboratories and the safety committee. Faculty members expressed vigorous objections at the meeting with LSI representatives yesterday (Thursday 1 December) to the way the inspections were carried out. The LSI inspection checklist contains items that are not included on the TTU Department of Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) list. One of the faculty objections was that faculty members have not been informed as to what the safety requirements are, and therefore are not able to meet the requirements ahead of the inspection. Faculty members also pointed out that surprise inspections may cause the inspectors to enter the lab when a critical procedure is being carried out, causing possible disruption of the procedure and possible exposure of the inspectors to potentially hazardous situations.

- 1) The Chemistry & Biochemistry departmental safety committee (CBSC) will review the EH&S checklist and recommend which items should be flagged as critical violations, moderate violations, and minor violations.
- 2) The committee recommended that faculty be given 24 hours notice before an inspection so that someone can be in the lab and involved procedures can be rescheduled.

Agenda Item 6:

Next Meeting will be held on Friday 16 December at 13:00 in Chemistry Room 305.

The meeting was adjourned at 14:10.