

Minutes for the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry Safety Committee June 24, 2011

Committee Members Attending:

Faculty: Birney, Boston, Casadonte, Paré

Graduate Students/Postdocs: Mohr, Paladugu, Xue

Staff: Adame

EH&S: Martin, Nix

Committee Members Away:

Faculty: Thompson, Whittlesey

Graduate Students/Postdocs: Hu, Peterson

The meeting was called to order at 1:06 pm.

1. Welcome, and Thank You!

Dr. Casadonte welcomed all of the members of the committee, and thanked the graduate students and postdocs for their willingness to serve on a high-profile committee that is also the only hybrid committee in the department.

2. Announcements

CSB Update: As far as Dr. Casadonte and Randy Nix are aware, the filing of the CSB report due June 15th occurred smoothly. Randy has seen a copy of the report, but a copy of the report has not been provided either to Dr. Casadonte or Randy Nix at this time.

Lab Chairs: Dr. Casadonte showed committee members the two chairs that were up for consideration to be placed in research labs. One has arms and one does not (both can be provided with casters). Dr. Birney indicated that he would like to have some of each, depending on the location and use of the chairs by the students. A brief discussion ensued, and then general consensus of the committee was that faculty should be given the opportunity to indicate how many of each type of chair that they would like for their labs. Dr. Casadonte indicated that he would pass this information along to Dr. Korzeniewski and Linda Rodriguez.

Peroxide Formers and Peroxide Safety Strips (Handout): Dr. Casadonte passed out a multiple-page handout that had been provided to Dr. Hope-Weeks with a list of peroxide forming substances, and ones that needed to be tested every 3 months and every 6 months. Dr. Casadonte also passed out a Tech Buy listing from VWR with the stock number and price for packages of 100 test strips. He then asked the group how to disseminate the information. Jared Martin indicated that since the time that the list was sent to Dr. Hope-Weeks, a much shorter, one-page list had been generated, and that it should replace the longer list. He indicated that he would send Dr. Casadonte an electronic version of the list. Justo Adame also indicated that he would begin stocking

the peroxide test strips in the stockroom as a back up. Dr. Casadonte said that he would send the electronic list and VWR stock number to the faculty as part of a monthly “Safety Notes” e-mail to the faculty.

Findlater Renovations: Dr. Birney and Randy Nix met prior to the safety meeting to discuss various aspects of the renovation of Dr. Michael Findlater’s laboratories with an eye toward segregating the laboratory environment from the area where students will be sitting at desks and working on a computer, studying, reading, etc.

Incident Reports: Dr. Casadonte indicated that incident report forms were available in the main office or in the stockroom, and that they needed to be filled out when a lab accident occurred. Dr. Boston indicated that she has updated the incident report form recently. She also suggested that the form could be put together as a fillable PDF and posted on the website for easy access by the faculty, rather than having physical copies in the main office or stockroom. This also allows for access to the form outside of normal business hours.

Inventory Update: Dr. Casadonte pointed out the procedures that needed to be followed to fill out the EH&S Assistant Excel Template or to place inventory items directly into EH&S assistant. A question arose as to how one could get access to the list for each research group so that the chemicals in each lab could be added. Randy went through the procedure for registering a person to be on a research group’s list. It requires permission from EH&S once the person has filled out the registration form. Dr. Paré asked whether or not all group members could be placed on the research group’s permission list so that all of the students etc. could have access to the inventory. Randy indicated that it would be best if the research mentor asked for permission for each person, and also that a person be removed from the list upon graduation, etc. Although the website is secure, only those people needing timely access to the chemical inventory for a group should be allowed to access it, he explained. It was also decided that Dr. Boston should be set up with the organic prep lab as her “lab” in much the way that other faculty member’s groups are set up. This is the way that LaQuetta is currently set up, and it will provide Dr. Boston access to be able to put the organic prep lab chemical in the EH&S Assistant inventory.

Two questions came up: 1) Dr. Paré asked whether or not research groups could get help changing chemical inventories over to the new template? Dr. Casadonte indicated that he would ask Dr. Korzeniewski about the possible use/payment of undergraduates or graduate students to help with this task. 2) How should information be disseminated? It was decided that the committee would put out a monthly (more frequently if needed, but, in general, monthly) “Safety Note” that would contain timely safety information, protocols, procedures, etc.

Goggle Containers for Labs: Dr. Casadonte indicated that Jerry Walton is looking into procuring containers to hold extra safety goggles for anyone coming into the lab who is not a research group member. Dr. Birney indicated that Dr. Mayer had such containers already in his lab. Dr. Casadonte said that he got a stock VWR number from Dr. Bradley, who also has the containers in his lab.

3. Teaching Lab PPE Discussion: The committee next reviewed two possible replacement lab aprons for the freshman teaching labs. The committee agreed that the blue vinyl replacement apron was sturdier and would provide better protection. Randy Nix indicated that, upon inspection, there was no obvious way to tell one side from the other, and that the possibility existed for students to inadvertently turn them inside out and put them on, which is a contamination hazard. It was suggested that one side be marked “front” with a Sharpie. Dr. Casadonte indicated that he would pass the committee’s recommendation on to Dr. Gellene for implementation this fall. Greg Mohr posed the question as to whether or not a second drawer might be allocated to students, given the thickness of the material for the new lab aprons. Dr. Casadonte indicated that he would bring this suggestion to the attention of Dr. Gellene and the General Chemistry Committee.

4. Peer Safety Evaluations/Schedule: Dr. Casadonte next proposed two schedules for peer safety evaluations, one that had the committee doing surveys twice a semester, and one that had the committee doing surveys once a month. It was felt by the committee that lab situations, in general, do not change rapidly enough to warrant surveys more frequently than once a month, and, as such, plan II was adopted. It was also discussed that the survey teams (consisting of the divisional faculty member, divisional graduate student, and Dr. Boston or Justo (Dr. Boston would be a part of the survey teams for Organic and Biochemistry, while Justo would be part of the survey teams for Analytical, Inorganic, and Physical Chemistry research groups)) would use the EH&S survey as a checklist for the peer surveys. Dr. Birney said that several different versions of the safety checklist were going around. Jared Martin indicated that he would send a current version of the checklist to Dr. Casadonte.

The other items were tabled due to lateness of the hour.

9. Next Meeting/Frequency of Meetings: It was agreed that during the summer the committee would meet every two weeks, and revisit the frequency in the fall. Then next meeting was set for Friday, July 8th, at 1:00 in CHEM 305.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dominick Casadonte