

PAN UNIVERSITY SAFETY POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES

December 14, 1999

Members Present: Elizabeth Carey, Mary Crabtree, Carolyn Elfland, Ray Hackney, Lynn Farley (for Bruce Runberg), Drake Maynard, Richard Miller, Billy Mitchell, Nagui Rizkallah, Don Willhoit

Members Absent: Al Doherty, Susan Ehringhaus, Robert Lowman, Sheldon Wiggins

1. Ergonomic Team Implementation Plan

Ms. Crabtree presented the Ergonomic Program Implementation Plan as requested by the Committee at its last meeting. The Committee accepted the plan.

2. Ergonomics Program Policy

Ms. Crabtree presented the Ergonomics Program Policy. The Committee made some minor suggestions and approved the policy as modified for submission to the Chancellor. The Policy includes sections on the responsibilities of employees, departments, and the Health and Safety Office; medical management; training; and obtaining assistance.

3. Biological Safety Manual Revisions

Dr. Hackney presented the revisions to the Biological Safety Manual. The Manual has been modified to bring it into conformance with the latest CDC and NIH policies. The Manual includes a policy requiring serum collection and optional periodic testing for employees working in research laboratories that culture HIV. It also includes new chapters on laboratory security, safe handling of laboratory animals, shipment and transportation of biological agents, and working with biological toxins. The Committee approved all the draft changes except for the chapter on laboratory security. The approved sections will be submitted to the Chancellor. The Committee requested that Health and Safety convene a meeting with representatives of the Biological Safety Level 3 laboratories, Public Safety, Fire Safety, and Facilities Planning to discuss the proposed laboratory security chapter and report back to the Committee on the feasibility of its implementation and any changes needed.

4. Reducing Mercury Use in Laboratories

Dr. Hackney presented proposed guidelines for reducing the use of mercury in laboratories. The goal is to phase out mercury use by 2005. The Laboratory Safety Committee does not believe that an outright ban of mercury is feasible, since many research protocols would have to be changed. Most mercury spills in laboratories are broken thermometers, but the newer digital thermometers do not work in some laboratory equipment where the thermometer must be submersed. The Scientific Storeroom is stocking mercury substitutes, and will no longer stock bulk mercury. The Chemical Commodity Team has also added mercury to its list of chemicals to be studied for phase out. The new guidelines will be presented in orientation and discussed with all responsible parties when a mercury spill occurs.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.