

College of Life Sciences

Health and Safety Management Committee Meeting

10th May 2011

Present

Professor Doreen Cantrell (DAC; Chair), Irene Blair (IB), Professor Alan Fairlamb (AHF), Dr Rob Ford (RF), Letty Gibson (LMG), Lisa Grayson (LG; Minutes), Dr Nick Helps (NRH), Zoe Hirons (ZH), Monica Lacey (ML), Ian Leith (IRL), Dr Vasso Makrantonis (VM), Dr Jonathan Monk (JM), Professor Tracy Palmer (TP), Dr Deena Pedrioli (DP; on behalf of IM), Dr Ian Scragg (IGS), Professor Roger Soames (RS; attending on behalf of SB and DC)

Apologies

Professor Sue Black (SB), Professor David Coates (DC), Professor Mike Ferguson (MAJF), Professor Irwin McLean (IM), Professor Kate Storey (KS)

ACTION

1. Welcome and Apologies

DAC welcomed everyone to the meeting and ran through the list of apologies.

2. Revised Committee Composition & Remit and Welcome to New Members

DAC welcomed the new Committee members - LMG, ZH, DG, JC, VM and AZ - all former members of the recently dissolved CLS H&S Committee. See CLS H&S Policy document, Appendix 2, for details of the personnel groups these individuals represent. Revised composition and remit of the CLS H&S Management Committee approved.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes were approved.

Matters Arising

Item 5: DAC informed the Committee that a memo detailing Group Leaders' H&S responsibilities has been drafted and will be issued to all new Group Leaders upon induction and annually to all existing Group Leaders. LG to take this forward. AHF noted that Human Resources have confirmed that employees are contractually obliged to adhere to H&S policy but, from the disciplinary point of view, the issue is too complex to pursue. AHF also suggested that bookmarks to important H&S sites are installed as standard by CLS Computing on all new computers. JM said this was doable under Windows 7 but he was not sure if it could be done on Macs. JM to consult his team. LG reported that, in addition to the new memo, she has made arrangements with CLS HR to meet with new Group Leaders as part of their induction process and brief them on their H&S responsibilities. DP commented that the issue of H&S responsibility appears to be very Group Leader centric and asked if each individual had H&S responsibility. IGS clarified that every employee has a duty of care placed upon them by H&S law but those in a management role automatically assume a greater degree of responsibility. IGS added that H&S responsibilities within the University are clearly documented and all employees are contractually obliged to fulfil them.

LG

JM

Also under Item 5: DAC was pleased to announce that a record 100% attendance amongst new recruits was achieved at the April CLS H&S Induction Seminar. DAC thanked the Lab Managers for their role in achieving this, especially their relentless chasing up of reluctant attendees.

Item 6: DAC proposed that the decision on whether to have laboratory doors locked constantly, as opposed to outwith normal working hours only, is made at Divisional level. There were no objections from the Committee members. RF confirmed that the new build will make all laboratory areas accessible via ID/proximity card only. DAC expressed concern over the possibility of personnel becoming trapped in the WTB/JBC link area if they enter without their ID/proximity card when the door locks are on. LG explained that, even if the offices on the upper floors are all locked, there is a phone in the Wash-up Facility in the JBC basement that can be accessed at all times.

Item 7i: LG highlighted the three major changes to CLS Visitors Policy & Procedures. LG to email cls-all highlighting these changes. DAC asked Heads of Division to raise this at their next divisional meeting

**LG
HoDs**

and make sure PIs are aware of the key points.

Item 7ii: LG made it clear that the Committee must come to a decision on the castors versus glides issue. The email survey showed 92% of those who responded were in favour of castors on lab chairs for a variety of reasons. 8% favoured glides. There was some discussion over the options available. It was agreed that a combination of castors and glides will be tolerated on the basis that personnel are advised of the risks and instructed how to get on/off lab chairs safely via a poster or SOP. H&S Working Group to action.

H&SWG

Item 9: LMG informed the Committee that Beckman are providing practical training for end users as required and that Lab Managers have been advised to report *all* centrifuge accidents/incidents to give a clearer picture of exactly where the residual problems lie. DAC was satisfied that the Lab Managers are dealing with this issue.

All other matters arising were dealt with under the 10/5/11 agenda.

4. Review and Approval of Updated H&S Policy

There were no comments on the revised document. Version 12 of the H&S Policy was approved. LG to make the new version available to all personnel.

LG

5. CLS Annual Report /Return

LG explained that a draft return from the School of Research had already been submitted to University Safety Sub Committee (USSC) on Monday 9/5/11. The return from SLSLT has still to be compiled and submitted. This will be done by LG by the end of the week. There were no comments from the Committee on the SR draft. Document approved. LG to confirm to the USSC that this is the Research School's finalised return.

LG
LG

6. Lab Coats

LG drew attention to the latest lab coat policy compliance check figures (paper H) and noted that, overall, there had been no improvement between July 2010 and April 2011. LG asked the Committee whether it was worth continuing with the compliance checks. DAC requested that an annual check is carried out just prior to each H&SMC meeting. LG to ensure this is scheduled in.

LG

DAC stressed the importance of managers at all levels enforcing the lab coat policy. LMG commented that some Lab Managers are frustrated because they get no support from the PIs. AHF was adamant that Division Heads should be giving Lab Managers their full support. DAC added that any rudeness towards those doing their duty in implementing the lab coat policy will be taken very seriously. LMG to relay these messages to the Lab Managers.

LMG

AHF informed the Committee that it is now SLSLT policy to remove undergraduates from projects if they are found to be working in laboratories without wearing appropriate PPE. ML confirmed this.

AHF suggested that compliance with H&S policy and procedures should be factored into the appraisal process for PIs and HoDs. DAC agreed and asked the Committee if there were any objections. There were no objections. DAC to ensure this is communicated to all HoDs.

DAC

AHF enquired about the different versions of the lab coat sign (see paper H, page 2). DAC decided the signs should be left as they are at present and, in addition to the signs, the CLS policy on lab coat wearing will be communicated via the screens at Reception. LG to liaise with CLS Computing on this.

LG

The issue of inadequate lab coat storage, especially in Hot Rooms, was discussed. DAC said assessing and finding a solution to this problem should be devolved to the Lab Managers. LMG to relay this at the next Lab Managers' meeting.

LMG

AHF expressed grave concern over Containment Level 2 facility users on JBC2 not wearing lab coats, despite very clear signage, and said he had challenged several individuals who were wearing gloves but no lab coat. DAC said she would ensure this was addressed at the next CSI meeting.

DAC

7. Policy on Wearing of Personal Stereo/MP3 Player Headphones

DAC questioned the need for a College policy on the wearing of personal stereo/MP3 player headphones while at work and suggested that the decision should be made at Divisional level. AHF pointed out that wearing headphones within the lab areas is banned in BCDD but people from other areas coming into the Division bring their sloppy practices with them, and this is an unfortunate

consequence of devolving H&S policy decisions down to the Divisions. TP agreed that leaving such decisions up to each Division does not work. DAC commented that issuing directives from the top does not work either, as the lab coat saga clearly demonstrates. IGS informed the Committee that although there is no documented University policy, his own opinion is that headphones should not be worn in laboratory areas. However, IGS added that there are bigger issues to tackle before getting into a debate about headphone wearing. DAC agreed and asked each Division Head to discuss the issue at their next Divisional meeting and minute their decision.

HoDs

8. Lone & Out of Hours Working

DAC directed the Committee members' attention to paper J and the dismal results of the lone and out of hours working survey conducted amongst the PIs in March of this year. DAC asked for suggestions on how we increase awareness of, and achieve compliance with, Lone & Out of Hours Working policy and procedures. There was much discussion and various suggestions were put forward. LMG wanted it noted that the Lab Managers bring lone & out of hours working policy and procedures to the attention all new recruits and visiting workers upon induction.

TP asked whether undergraduate project students should be working in the research labs outwith normal working hours. DAC proposed that this should not be allowed and the Committee members agreed. LG to amend policy accordingly.

LG

DAC recommended covering lone & out of hours working during PhD Thesis Committee checks to ensure the PhD students were fully aware of the policy and procedures. TP suggested it could be part of the Supervisor checklist too. TP also asked if the policy could be posted in areas where it will be highly visible. DAC asked JM if the screens at reception could be used to show H&S information out with normal hours, rather than the usual seminar timetable. JM said this was doable. LG and JM to meet to discuss.

LG/JM

The pros and cons of filling in the lone & out of hours workers' questionnaire by hand (current method) or on-line were discussed. LG pointed out that CLS Computing have been unable to get on-line forms working on the H&S web site thus far. JM said he would arrange a meeting with LG and Andrew Millar to look into this. LMG pointed out that it is important to have dialogue between the supervisor and the worker while the questionnaire is being completed and filling the form in by hand lends itself better to this. LG agreed and suggested that the completed questionnaires are copied to her for logging in the staff/training database. This will allow monitoring of how many questionnaires are being completed and by whom. DAC agreed that this was the best way forward. LG to action.

JM

LG

NRH informed the Committee that MRCPPU has its own policy and procedures that he covers with new recruits upon induction. However, NRH is happy to look at the CLS documentation to see if a common system can be adopted. NRH to meet with LG and IB to discuss.

NRH/IB/
LG

IGS asked what the current situation was in terms of out of hours security guard cover. RF and ZH said this was currently under review. IGS and DAC were both of the opinion that there should be a constant security presence within the Complex out with normal working hours. RF/ZH to pursue this objective.

RF/ZH

9. Enforcement of No Smoking Policy

DAC reaffirmed that CLS is committed to enforcing the No Smoking policy but acknowledged that it is impossible to completely prevent cigarette smoke entering the building when members of the public are free to walk through the campus whilst smoking. A smoke free campus may be desirable but the open plan design and busy, central location makes this unachievable. IGS underlined the fact that there is no law against smoking outside buildings. DAC informed the Committee that she has been doing her own patrols and challenging anyone caught smoking close to the building perimeter. All members of staff should feel empowered to do the same. RF stressed the importance of reporting instances of smoke entering the building immediately. DAC noted that the MSI front entrance appears to be a favourite spot for smokers, especially undergraduates on their way to/from the Large Lecture Theatre. ML agreed to remind SLSLT undergraduates of the No Smoking policy. DAC called for CAHId staff based in the MSI foyer area to take a firm line with those smoking at the MSI entrance and report any problems to her.

ML
CAHId

10. Inspections: Liquid Nitrogen Facilities Equipped with O2 Depletion Monitors

DAC asked what the major issues were. LG said the problems with the WTB Stores LN2 dispensing room were of major concern. Several issues have gone unresolved for many years despite being highlighted by CLS H&S in reports and emails. RF suggested he and LG meet with the Stores Manager to address all outstanding issues. DAC said she would be happy to attend this meeting too. LG to

LG

arrange.

11. Items Arising From Divisional Meetings

No items were raised by the Divisional representatives.

12. Accidents/Incidents

IB summarised the accident/incident statistics for the period March 2010 to March 2011 and highlighted the key issues. LMG drew attention to the problem with the strip light diffusers in WTB coming loose. E&B have put a temporary fix in place while a long term solution is identified. NRH commented on the Bunsen burner incident on WTB Floor 3 south and informed the Committee that MRCPPU personnel have been instructed not to use burners with pilot lights and to check that tubing on burners is of the correct type. DAC asked if all CLS Lab Managers could be instructed to stop buying burners with pilot lights and ensure that only suitable tubing is used. LMG to relay this to CLS Lab Managers at their next meeting.

LMG

13. AOCB

There was no other business.

14. Date of Next Meeting

To be arranged at a time that does not clash with particularly busy periods for SLSLT personnel.

LG