Minutes of the Memorial University &
Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty Association
Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee (JOHSC) Meeting

Tuesday, February 17, 2009

2:30 p.m.
Inco Innovation Centre, Room IIC-1004

Present: Dr. Robert Gendron, MUNFA Representative and Co-Chair; Dr. George Jenner, MUNFA Representative; Dr. Barbara Neis, MUNFA Representative; Mr. Ian McKinnon, MUN Representative and Co-Chair; Dr. Ramachandran Venkatesan, MUN Representative, Ms. Sheila Miller, Director of Department of Health and Safety

Apologies: Mr. Craig Boyd, Manager, Department of Health and Safety

Minutes taken by: R. Kelly

1. Approval of Agenda - motion by G. Jenner, seconded by R. Gendron.

2. Approval of Minutes from the October 7, 2008 meeting: Accepted by R. Gendron and G. Jenner

3. I. McKinnon introduced Ms. S. Miller as Director of the newly created department of Health and Safety here at Memorial University.

4. Update on previous Action Items
   a) G. Jenner reported that CUPE are meeting on Friday, February 20 about having Laura Lozanski from CAUT visit. All the unions are looking at a structure to see how it will come together. Will look to CAUT administration for information to have things work better, looking at after this semester.
   b) The Communicator had an article in the December issue on B. Neis. In the next Communicator edition the Department of Health and Safety will be featured.
   c) There was one (1) report in late December about air quality at the Health Science Centre in the same areas but the smells were of different kinds. Keith Bowden was notified and did a check, he could not find where it came from. The smell was more organic and the people that were affected stayed at home to work. I. McKinnon indicated to Ms. Miller that this is an issue and has been on-going since May 2008. The Health Science Centre building is maintained by Eastern Health and MUN maintains the exterior of the building. I. McKinnon, R.
Gendron and G. Jenner met with Pharmacy and drafted a memo to all user groups that no particular unit is to blame for the smell. Keith Bowden’s group ruled out that any smells were coming from Pharmacy. The major problem is that the building does not have the capacity to support the needs of everyone. The only fix would be a new or renovated building. The air flow on the roofs of the building is being looked at. I. McKinnon mentioned that a lot of remediation has been done as a result of the odour problem.

d) B. Neis has agreed to sit on the Scent Free Committee. Ms. Miller – to follow up on the status of the Committee

e) B. Gendron indicated that Facilities Management takes care of the waste disposal for the different departments in the University and that some of the labs are backlogged waiting for pickup. There is an understaffing problem for this issue and Donald Wood at Facilities Management has come to do the pick up for the waste disposal. S. Miller said that Mr. Wood is now with her department and her office will be reworking the policy after she has completed research to understand more about it. Newalta Industrial Services will be charged with pick-up of the waste.

I. McKinnon asked about the Hazardous position. S. Miller said that the position was on hold at the present time. She said for now Newalta will do the pickup until she has her research done involving how often pickups are carried out.

R. Gendron mentioned about the lag in records of active Radioactive Materials and that any issues are documented through Facilities Management. Ms. Miller indicated that an inventory of what people need and any issues need to be given to John. G. Jenner asked whether Memorial University would become part of that system with the hospitals. B. Gendron mentioned that Eastern Health have an outside firm hired to do chemical inventory. G. Jenner enquired in regard to faculty where do they store materials in the interim when they do not have the expertise to deal with this and who would they go to. R. Gendron indicated that the labs have too much waste for disposal. Ms. Miller mentioned that Mr. Wood is working on the radioactive materials issue and will have something for the next meeting. Her office is looking at having a software process to track these and to have it on the Health and Safety website for people to use.

Ms. Miller indicated that her department is looking at May month to start lab to lab inspections. G. Jenner said that inspections have only been done when a complaint has been made. He also enquired would there be any training for faculty if needed to explain issues. Ms. Miller said that the information would be communicated to the faculty or people involved about the inspections.

4. New Business

i) I. McKinnon asked Ms. Miller to give an overview of her department. Ms. Miller said her department is located in Spencer Hall in rooms 4004, 4005, 4006 and
4008. Mr. Donald Wood is the Bio-Safety Officer, Mr. Craig Boyd is the Manager, however his role is that of a Health and Safety Advisor, Mr. Robert Guest is the Boating/Diving Safety Officer and he is on contract until the end of April. There is one position on hold. Ms. Louise Green is the Administrative support for the department. Ms. Miller is also, planning to hire an Asbestos Coordinator (a person with a 3 – 4 year program from SWGC) who will develop an asbestos management plan for the University. Regulations specify that a plan be in place and yearly audits are required to be updated and reconciled yearly. B. Neis asked about Hygiene training and Ms. Miller responded that her department was looking at a more cost effective way to have someone on staff as opposed to using a consultant. She is looking at other universities to see what they have. Her goal is to have an Occupational Hygienist on staff. The mandate of the Department is to develop a Health and Safety program for the University.

ii) Bio-Hazard Committee

R. Gendron mentioned that there are protocols to follow when working with vectors. Advanced vectors to pathogenic have to get ethics approval come from Kevin Kean and then Donald Wood. The faculty do not have a comfort level to handle this. Ms. Miller indicated that she is meeting with Ray Gosine, Vice-President (Research) pro tempore, on Friday, February 20. She has looked at the Terms of Reference with Karen Mearow, Associate Dean for BioMedical Sciences, and will be reviewing this. There is a Bio-Safety Committee of 10 people, at the present time there are six people, hoping to invite two and two people have agreed to be members. R. Gendron indicated that Mr. Wood had come up with a type of training but they need groups involving viral vectors.

iii) Course Enrolment Sizes

An issue about a faculty members concern about their class sizes was discussed whether this issue was more about workload stress level and work-life balance than an occupational issue.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.