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

Tuesday, May 19, 2009

2:30 p.m.
Inco Innovation Centre, Room IIC-1034

Present:      Dr. Robert Gendron, MUNFA Representative and Co-Chair; Dr. George Jenner, 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; Ms. Nicole Corcoran, Co-op Student, Department of Health and Safety

Apologies:   Dr. Barbara Neis, MUNFA Representative

Minutes taken by: R. Kelly

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

2. Approval of Minutes from the February 17, 2009 meeting: Accepted by R. Gendron and G. Jenner

3. Update on items “for Action” from February 17 meeting:

   a) Ms. Laura Lozanski from CAUT visited and held a three day training session from April 28 to 30th. G. Jenner introduced the minutes from the CAUT visit to the committee. R. Gendron will look over the minutes to see if any revisions are required and then he will circulate the minutes. I. McKinnon and R. Gendron thanked Dr. Jenner for arranging the visit of Ms. Lozanski and on how well it went. R. Gendron and S. Miller will meet on Friday, May 22, to discuss the reorganizing structure around the committees regarding Occupational Health and Safety.

   b) I. McKinnon confirmed that B. Neis is a member of the Scent Free Committee. S. Miller indicated at present there is not much going on with the Scent Free and the Smoke Free Committees and if possible it would probably be better if the two committees were rolled into one. I. McKinnon added that it would be good to combine the two committees and to make the one policy and have it adhered to.

   c) Waste Disposal – S. Miller pointed out that a chemical inventory software system will be able to track all inventory in individual laboratories and that
her office will look at tenders once the type of system is determined to utilize. Any unlabelled inventory will go for disposal and a new policy will be set up to maintain the disposal of chemicals. Ms. Miller had met with the Director of the Office of Research and discussed that the disposal of chemicals will become a billable item in research grants for the disposal of chemicals used during research. R. Gendron asked when people will know about this. S. Miller indicated as soon as the Vice-President (Research) gives confirmation. This will not be a problem in Medicine. S. Miller replied that the law requires her department to have a list. There are about 160 labs that have fume hoods. QuadraTec will inspect these labs to establish that they are equipped with eye wash stations and emergency showers. The Health and Safety department will be implementing a laboratory management program. R. Gendron brought up that there may be resistance to the idea of people having to pay for the disposal of chemicals because grants are less nowadays. R. Gendron asked if a system could be created to keep track of this and he also indicated that many ASMs and staff have a Mac or PC system and that some systems are not compatible for this inventory.

d) Biohazard Committee – S. Miller indicated that the Biohazard committee have met and are trying to establish and complete their Terms of Reference. Bill C11 will come into effect and a Terms of Reference will be needed. At present Mr. Donald Wood is responsible for the minutes from these meetings and the required documentation for issuing Biohazard Certificates. R. Gendron commented if it would be more productive to have a package sent to each member before hand and than deal with all the certificates at once instead of intermittently.

4. New Business

i) Chemistry building was evacuated on May 6 due to an incident in a lab on the fourth floor. G. Jenner and I. McKinnon carried out an inspection on May 15 into the incident. {A synopsis of their visit is attached and will be forwarded to pertinent departments.} The chemical involved was unidentified and thought to be sulphur base. By placing the beaker in the fume hood it caused the smell to go throughout the building via the vent system. G. Jenner pointed out that the buildings are old and are not designed for the ongoing laboratory functions. S. Miller reiterated that QuadraTec will be inspecting for all of this, noting how many eye-wash stations and emergency showers are in these labs. I. McKinnon mentioned that the BIRT team met about this incident and fire alarm testing has begun in the building. S. Miller asked who called the BIRT meeting regarding the Chemistry building incident. I. McKinnon mentioned that Mr. David Head from Enterprise Risk Management did. S. Miller indicated that the OSH division should have been notified. It was discussed as to whether the grad student is salaried or not, or if an
employee or not. Is the student covered under WCC or not. S. Miller mentioned that she would check with different groups (WCC, the General Counsel and a few different outside offices) and hopefully have the best answer 3 out of 5. S. Miller pointed out that the committee should have a copy of the accident/incident report. I. McKinnon asked who filled out the incident report. S. Miller pointed out that her department had not received a report and did not know if an accident report had been completed. She indicated that she would check with the Dean of Science office to see if they have one.

ii) Room: SN-1069 Inspection - R. Gendron and I. McKinnon visited the ASM’s lab on May 7 upon her request. S. Miller indicated that she was called about the lab and asked if an inspection to analyze the different odours, plumbing issues in regards to dilution pits will be done. R. Gendron pointed out that the ASM’s lab may have multiple issues. I. McKinnon indicated that the ASM would like to have an air quality test carried out.

iii) Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety – S. Miller pointed out that she always avails of this website because it is a good resource for anyone who has concerns and would like to check other counterparts about similar issues. The website has some really good list servers and that she could pull together some web sites to visit. The United States, Australia and Britain have a big list. Britain is of interest to us because of the Harlow campus. R. Gendron mentioned that it would be good to have link to this site via the department of Health and Safety website.

5. Other Business

G. Jenner brought up on how to file a complaint on the University website but could not find it. In actual fact that there were three (3) sites for filing accidents – the Health and Safety website, Facilities Management and Enterprise Risk Management. He indicated that there should only be one (1) site to report this.

R. Gendron and I. McKinnon thanked Dr. Venkatesan for serving as a member on the OH & S committee as this was his last meeting with the group.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.