

Standing Committee Annual Report

Name of Committee or Council:

Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair

Krissy Spicer, PhD

Meeting Dates in Current Year:

8-23-2012; 10-31-2012; 12-5-2012;
2-13-2013; 4-24-2013

Major Actions or Accomplishments:

- Developed / Reviewed the university guidance documents for compliance with the OSHA lab standard for Chemical Hygiene Plans
- Discussed MSDS online and trained users (The university now subscribes to MSDS online in order to obtain Material Safety Data Sheets for chemicals used on campus. All products submitted to EHS in the annual chemical inventory has been added to the online database.)
- Fall session hazardous waste training was conducted in Aug.
- The committee was divided into teams which audited science labs and art studios. Approximately 12 lab/studio spaces were audited.
- The committee reviewed and approved lab door signs which contain information for emergency responders in the event of an emergency incident. These signs will be implemented in each department with science labs during the next academic year – 2013-2014.
- The committee discussed in detail an incident in which one of our faculty members came into skin contact with a potentially harmful substance and followed the recommendation on the MSDS, which suggested seeking medical attention. In response to this incident, the committee would like to meet with President Hall and/or the Provost as early as possible this semester. I have attached a narrative of the faculty member's experience for your review.

Meagan Mann, faculty member in the Chemistry Dept., came into dermal contact with Acrylamide, a known neurotoxin, while teaching a Biochemistry lab exercise. She followed the recommendations on the Materials Safety Data Sheet, which included washing the affected area using a safety shower immediately after contact and proceeded to seek medical attention at the Gateway Hospital Emergency Room. Dr. Mann's experience was eye-opening as to the lack of training and knowledge of both emergency response personnel as well as staff at the hospital. She called 911 to let the hospital know that she was on her way and the details of the chemical with which she came into contact. She was told to pull over, off the road. The City of Clarksville's Hazmat team responded as well as Clarksville Police Department and EMS. After Dr. Mann explained to the fire department that there was no hazmat spill to clean up, they left the scene. Clarksville Police and EMS questioned her exposure and asked to see the chemical burns. Dr. Mann explained that this chemical is a neurotoxin and wouldn't show signs of a burn but could be affecting her brain. She was finally transported to Gateway ER via the ambulance. She was met at the ER entrance by a female in a full chemical hazmat suit and was not allowed to enter the ER until she had been decontaminated. She waited a full 30 minutes outside while Gateway staff cleaned out their decon shower, as it had been used as a storage area. Once she was finally allowed into the ER, she waited another 2 hours for a doctor to assess her. No one knew what to do with her. They did not know how to evaluate her for signs of exposure. Finally, someone figured out that they should call Poison Control, where they received the information that she needed to ensure she was ok. Based on the chemical and exposure information she provided, poison control determined she had nothing to be concerned about because she washed the affected skin within 10 minutes of contact. It was close to 3 hours after her initial exposure that she finally received a diagnosis and was released. The Environmental Affairs Committee would like to meet with President Hall and the Provost regarding this situation. Dr. Mann will provide more specific details of her experience. This could have been a much different outcome had it been a more toxic chemical involved or a less knowledgeable person, such as a student.