

**St. Francis Xavier University (StFX)
University Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee (UJOHSC) Meeting Minutes
Online in Teams
September 23, 2021 at 12:00 noon**

Present: Employee Representatives: Kris MacSween, Colin Rankin, Patrick Gillis, Jack Irvin, Rod Dunbar, Vernon Boudreau, Tyson Ball, Sylvia Phee, Jamie Braid, Susan MacKay
Employer Representatives: Joe Apaloo, Randy Peters, Krista McKenna, Jacob Burghardt, Leon MacLellan
Advisory: Laurie Reid – Manager, OHS, Janet Beaton – Advisor, HR

The meeting was chaired by Krista McKenna and was called to Order at 12:05 p.m. A quorum was confirmed by having more than five members, with at least 50% being Employee representatives and at least two Employer representatives.

The Minutes were recorded and will be stored in Teams in the UJOHSC folder.

Action Items are in Italics and Underlined. Please take note of those assigned to you or the Committee and be prepared to provide update at the next meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was requested to add Incident Reporting and Investigations and Air Quality/Ventilation under New Business. The agenda for today's meeting was reviewed and accepted by general consensus.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING

The minutes from the August 26 UJOHSC meeting were approved by general consensus and are ready to be posted.

OUTSTANDING ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Fume Hoods

September 23, 2021 – Laurie did not have any updates. *Laurie will meet with the Faculty of Science to discuss fume hoods.* There are no current issues, and the program is still being finalized. This item will remain on the agenda until the program is in place. Joe had a meeting with Moira Galway in JBB and there were no fume hood issues raised at the time.

August 26, 2021 – Laurie said there have been no fume hood updates since the last meeting. Laurie and Doug Campbell, the new FM Maintenance Manager, have been reviewing the programs, including the fume hoods. Leon said there is detailed work being done with the emergency showers, eye wash stations, and fume hoods. Leon confirmed that approximately \$65,000 has been spent on upgrading one fume hood in JBB this summer to get it up to standard. Randy said that fume hood maintenance can be removed from the minutes, but *the fume hood program will remain in the minutes until the program is approved and being followed.*

July 29, 2021 - Yearly re-certification has been done; and everything seems to be working fine, according to Siemens/FM. There were a couple issues that were addressed during Siemen’s yearly inspection. Further discussion is required on the use of the fume hoods in JBB – whether they are brought up to standard or decommissioned. The new Program will be given to the FM maintenance manager for review and implementation.

April 29, 2021 – Dan and Laurie have been working on getting fume hoods certified, reviewed, and assessed to determine which ones are in need of repairs. The fume hoods in the PSC have annual inspections and are all certified. Fume hoods in JBB are undergoing a needs assessment to determine whether they will be repaired or decommissioned. One of these fume hoods is being upgraded and is a good example of what is involved in terms of repairs and cost. Leon suggested that there be an annual review and analysis of the purpose, usage, and chemicals used in each fume hood.

History of this issue has been archived.

Scent Awareness

September 23, 2021 – Prior to the meeting, Laurie circulated the website link and the draft poster to the Committee, developed by a JOHSC subcommittee whose Members include Kris, Colin, Jacob, and Janet. JOHSC Members provided input on the design of the posters (e.g., colourful, eye-catching visuals) and discussed whether the clip art/images should be updated with photos or different images. Colin asked if the residences were included in the scent awareness program and if Student Life had been contacted about the posters. Laurie will follow up with Jacqueline (Student Life) and Margie (Health Centre) about the launch and distribution of posters in residences. Kris suggested the posters incorporate a QR code to direct people to the OHS website. Kris will follow up with Andrew (Communications) about finalizing the design/images and then discuss the final version with the subcommittee before sharing it with the JOHSC. Before the website is live and posters are distributed on campus, Laurie will consult with Randy, Andrew, and Student Services. Since this item has been on the agenda for more than 3 years, the JOHSC would like this item finalized as soon as possible and rolled out within the month. The scent awareness poster will be reviewed and updated annually.

August 26, 2021 – Kris said the scent awareness (SA) website link was sent out earlier and asked if JOHSC Members had a chance to review it. Laurie pointed out that the StFX SA campaign only focuses on employees and asked whether it should be extended to students. Andrew Conde from StFX Communications is working on branding which will be shared with the JOHSC. Randy suggested getting feedback from Student Services. Jacqueline De Leebeek (Student Life) and Margie McKinnon (Health Centre) will be contacted for their feedback and advice. Joe suggested also contacting Elizabeth Yeo. Laurie clarified that the JOHSC is working on a SA awareness campaign/initiative (it is not a policy). Laurie invited Jack to provide feedback on the SA campaign.

July 29, 2021 – Follow-up with Communications required for posters and branded material. Link to draft website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/ohs/scent-awareness>. Posters and branding will be added to the site when ready. It was suggested that someone from Communications become a committee member.

April 29, 2021 – Laurie has not yet received an update from Communications. The goal is to have the posters ready and posted by the fall.

March 25, 2021 – Laurie and Janet are awaiting a response from StFX Communications who will assist with branding.

February 25, 2021 – The website has been drafted and a request has been sent to Communications for assistance with branding and launch. Website will be shared with committee members for their comments.

History of this issue has been archived.

Building Inspections

September 23, 2021 – Laurie provided an update. 3 buildings have been inspected since the last meeting. Laurie will contact JOHSC Members about conducting inspections in campus buildings and will provide a more formalized report to the Committee which includes a concerns tracker.

August 26, 2021 – Laurie confirmed that no inspections have been done since the last JOHSC meeting. Three more buildings have been scheduled with JOHSC Members and these inspections should be completed by the next meeting. Joe said he recently toured campus buildings where science Faculty have offices to confirm who is in which office/room and where there are vacancies. Joe requested that signs be posted on the doors of vacant offices in the PSC. Joe identified that there does not seem to be a process in place to report vacant/occupied rooms and recommended that the identification process be improved across campus. Laurie thanked Joe for bringing this item to the attention of the JOHSC. Laurie will add identifying vacant offices to the building inspection checklist.

July 29, 2021 – No further inspections completed since the last meeting. Will resume in August and September.

April 29, 2021 – Since the April meeting, one building has been inspected for a total of seven. Laurie will contact each JOHSC member about building inspection training.

March 25, 2021 – Laurie and a few members of the JOHSC have completed building inspections for six buildings, which was an opportunity to train members about the inspection process and program requirements. Since inspections are an ongoing process, Laurie will be in contact with committee members to assist with conducting inspections in academic buildings so each member receives training. All data from the inspections will be stored in a separate file for each building in the JOHSC Teams panel. Most issues identified in the inspections will be completed by FM and some by Risk Management. Critical items will be prioritized. Laurie reported the inspections are going very well. Laurie and Susan conducted a recent inspection in 42 West Street. On behalf of building occupants, Susan thanked our FM colleagues for prioritizing repairs and that some have commented the building is healthier and safer because of the ongoing repairs.

February 25, 2021 – Office building inspections are ongoing. Corrective actions will be tracked until completion and reported to UJOHSC on a continuing basis. Corrective actions will be prioritized depending on likelihood and severity of hazards.

December 17, 2020 - Laurie will contact committee members over the next couple of months to start doing building inspections. This will be used as a hands-on training and to establish checklists for specific buildings.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Randy provided an update. We received information from the Province about the proof of vaccination policy and are expecting to move into phase #5 on October 4. When there are events on campus that involve the public, there will be a requirement for vaccine verification and some type of screening process. This change will impact programs such as minor hockey, dance, etc. as only vaccinated people are permitted to be on campus (even to drop off kids). Staffing has yet to be confirmed. To date, there is a high response rate from staff for the vaccine status verification (linked to the mandatory testing program). Students are going through a different vaccine status verification process, managed by Student Life. Since yesterday, there are over 3,000 students and just under 1,000 staff on the vaccine verification list, with over 800 staff who are fully vaccinated; from the list, the campus vaccination rate is above 80%. The verification list will be used to quantify the number of people who will need to be tested to ensure an adequate space for testing (most likely in the KMC-details to follow). The President recently sent an update to the campus that face masks will be required in buildings past October 4. Since there are a lot of people interested in having face masks in classrooms/labs extended for the entire academic year, we will explore it as we go. Kris said the public library will ask patrons to show proof of vaccination before entering and asked how this would impact the university library. Randy responded the University is exempt from the vaccination status policy unless they deal with the public. The library does not request vaccine status from every student/staff/faculty who enters but would have to verify the status of non-students/staff/faculty patrons. To address the challenging logistics of the verification process, Randy suggested some sort of pass for community members may be created for repeat users, similar to the process at the StFX Fitness Centre. If someone does not have their vaccination status, they will be turned away and could be volatile in certain situations. Jack asked if there was a change in the size of gathering limits. Randy responded that gathering limits will be aligned with Public Health recommendations and there could still be face mask requirements. Rod asked for clarification about wearing face masks in residences. Randy said this does need more direct clarification, and that residents in residences do not have to wear masks since these are students' homes. However, when employees are present doing their jobs, then residents need to wear a mask and socially distance. Since this mask extension information has not gone out officially, students may not be aware of this. *Randy said this information will be sent out to students this week or early next.* Colin asked about the vaccination and isolation requirements for new students arriving in January. Randy said January is too far away to give a definitive response and the provincial/federal regulations could change by then; for example, the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in no longer exists.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS / CORRECTIVE ACTIONS UPDATE

Laurie reminded members about the Corrective Actions Tracking Sheet that has been shared with them. The committee should be following up on any corrective actions that are overdue. Krista invited JOHSC Members to raise any issues/concerns they have.

Housekeeping in Residence Hallways

Sylvia requested the issue of hallway safety in residences be escalated to the JOHSC and documented in the minutes. Although students in MacKinnon Hall are responsible for taking out their garbage to the outside bins, there is a significant amount of furniture and garbage in the hallways on the top and 3rd floors; these are tripping hazards and in the event of an emergency (e.g., fire) people will struggle to get out. Krista asked if this is an isolated incident in MacKinnon. Sylvia stated this has also been a problem in other residences, such as Cameron Hall, and this issue has been brought to the attention of the Residence Office for many years.

Colin added furniture in residences must remain in the rooms and, if it is removed, it is a violation of the housing contract. If there is an issue with a piece of furniture that is damaged or not functional, students are to notify Residence Services so it can be removed or replaced. Residence Services receives notification when items are not picked up and then thrown out, resulting in students being charged for the extra garbage removal. Last year the garbage and recycling bins in MacKinnon were relocated from the basement storage to the outside of the building due to the scent/odours.

Sylvia reiterated this issue is about the safety of the people who work in residences. Krista said the corrective action is to take health and safety issues to the FM cleaning supervisors -flagged as requiring immediate attention- who need to meet with the managers and supervisors of Residence Life to rectify the issues. *Sylvia has a meeting scheduled with Gary MacMillan (Manager Custodial Services) and James Tobin (Manager University Housing) in MacKinnon tomorrow (September 24) to come up with a solution. Jack will communicate with the Residence Office and suggested approaching residence hall directors about scheduling house meetings to review garbage disposal protocols. Since this issue has been raised at the JOHSC, it is the Committee's responsibility to monitor the situation. Laurie, Randy, Leon, and Gary will further investigate this issue/concern. There will be a report at the next JOHSC meeting.*

Obsolete equipment in science buildings

Joe brought forth the issue of old or broken equipment left in research labs. Joe asked if this issue was common in science buildings, what can be done about this, and if Laurie notes this during building inspections. Krista clarified if there are large items to be disposed of then Paul Chisholm (Grounds Supervisor) should be contacted to remove them. *Leon said that FM will work with Joe to clean up the research labs.*

TRAINING

Laurie confirmed that two 4-hour JOHSC training sessions, facilitated by a trainer from HSE Integrated, will take place on October 6. This training will review the legal obligations of the JOHSC and is required through the NS OHS Act.

NEW BUSINESS

Air Quality/Ventilation

September 23, 2021 - The StFXAUT Executive Committee (EC) is requesting a meeting with FM and Risk Management to formally address ongoing air quality and ventilation campus safety concerns with Laurie, Randy, Leon, and Doug Campbell (FM Maintenance Manager). Randy said FM has addressed these concerns with several Members. Leon asked if there was a possibility to schedule a special meeting next week. Randy and Leon said they would be happy to meet with the EC. Joe said Leon gave a presentation to the Chair/Coordinators which helped clarify the issues.

New business, Incident Reporting and Investigations, was tabled until the next meeting.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Since there was not enough time to discuss Air Quality/Ventilation, a special JOHSC meeting will be scheduled on Wednesday, September 29th. The next regular JOHSC meeting will be held at noon on Thursday, October 28th.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

Addendum – notes from September 29, 2021 meeting about Ventilation:

Leon: It's better to have a discussion about ventilation than address any questions. The standard bearer is ASHRAE, an international organization that sets guidelines for indoor air quality. They are doing a lot of research into this virus, but they do not have any guidelines for us.

A ventilation system is meant to accomplish a couple of things – indoor air quality and humidity, and it is meant to exhaust air, and it is always meant to introduce fresh air into the building. It does that in a way that has been acceptable to people even using ceiling air mounted air supply and return. There could be short circuiting but mixing happens when there is movement in the room. Those systems work.

When we talk about virus – propagation and mitigation – ASHRAE does not have clear guidelines about how a virus can be controlled. The building Leon is in does not have any mechanical ventilation, but with masking and other protocols we are safe (globally accepted standard).

We could consider a HEPA filter – which is a filter with a fan that's about the size of a chair that would circulate the air in the room and filter out the virus. We have filters that can filter out the virus, but this virus drops out of the air itself. However, if you put it in a room with two people, if you turned on a HEPA filter and one was infected and one was not infected, you probably don't want air circulating in that room, at least in that fan. This is the complication with virus mitigation – the systems that are meant to transfer heat or reduce humidity or introduce oxygen are not necessarily the kinds of systems you want to mitigate virus transmission.

That's essentially where the industry is at, and that's why most universities have not moved to introduce new systems into all their areas. FM maintain ventilation systems, and classrooms with mechanical ventilation are purged at the beginning and end of each day. FM have increased the level of outside air being introduced, not so concerned about energy savings right now.

What we are finding about this virus is that it settles out. Masking, social distancing and washing your hands help. Ventilation is not effective one way or the other or doesn't seem to make a big difference one way or the other. Open to questions:

Susan: Thank you for all your work. AUT would like to learn more about what FM has done to be able to field questions and concerns about ventilation. The more information and the more communication, the better. Could you please clarify how the University is meeting or exceeding NS Health guidelines, as per Andrew Beckett's email (September 3rd), specifically for shared spaces, e.g. labs, offices, kitchens, athletic facilities, food service facilities?

Leon: The memo should have included all spaces on campus. The basic criteria is 10 cu. ft. per minute per person in mechanically-ventilated spaces. To compare to cleaning of surfaces, last year we hired 12 additional cleaners throughout the year to clean surfaces on the campus from September to April even though we knew there wasn't a single case of surface transmission in Canada of this disease. This disease is transferred through shared air, not surfaces. The ventilation systems are working the way they are supposed to work and it not where the disease is know to propagate. Shared air is not the same as a ventilation system. We do not necessarily want to mix air – not known to be a significant factor in spreading the disease. What the industry

has found is that this virus is falling out of the air, and it is not being transferred through ventilation ducts. It is spreading between people less than 6 feet apart and indoors. Our systems cannot control the air in classrooms – natural or mechanical ventilation.

Susan: Data requested for 10 cu. ft. per person.

Leon: That would be a separate project, but we keep the systems maintained. We don't have estimates for all the classrooms or shared spaces. That may be a project in the future, but don't expect any actions required until ASHRAE provides guidance.

Susan: Can you please provide entire list of campus labs and classrooms with and without mechanical ventilation?

Leon: Yes.

Susan: Naturally-ventilated classrooms – how are these spaces compliant with provincial standards?

Leon: They are in compliance with the provincial guidelines. Not an area of concern for transmission of COVID.

Susan: For the AUT newsletter, we might want to include an article – the more information and clarity, the better to reduce anxiety and stress.

Susan: What about indoor air quality (IAQ) testing in spaces?

Leon: Janet or Laurie follow up on IAQ requests. There are no tests to find COVID in the air. IAQ readings are complicated and usually only represent a specific period in time.

Joe: Thank you to Leon for this presentation. I think the issue about people asking for data comes from a statement that was made that an assessment was done last year, so looking for data from that report. I had a meeting with the School of Nursing and Leon gave a wonderful presentation. Since that meeting I have not heard anything.

Leon: Meeting in person is usually better, but open to recommendations about communicating to campus.

Susan: Would you be open to making future presentations?

Leon: Yes, would take approximately ½ hour.