

SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE*
December 14, 1992
Minutes of the Meeting

- PRESENT:** Paul Sackett, Albert Yonas, Tony Potami, Sara Evans, Daniel Feeney, John Basgen, N.L. Gault, Eric Klinger, Essie Kariv-Miller
- REGRETS:** Signe Betsinger, Anne Petersen, Susan Markham
- ABSENT:** Robert Jones, Jonathan Wirtschafter, V.S. Mangipudi, Khahn Nguyen
- GUESTS:** Fay Thompson, Mark Brenner, WinAnn Schumi

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Professor Sackett expressed his thanks to Professor Yonas for presenting the Academic Misconduct Policy to the Senate on December 10. Professor Sackett commented that the Policy was passed by the Senate and will be forwarded to the Board of Regents.

The group discussed possible dates for future meetings. Members agreed that Thursdays were a good meeting day and proposed 11:30 - 1:00 as the time. Individuals were encouraged to contact Vickie Courtney if this time does not work.

Professor Sackett introduced Fay Thompson, Director, Environmental Health and Safety. Ms. Thompson came before the Committee to discuss OSHA laboratory safety requirements, which applies to all laboratory employees who use hazardous chemicals. The standard requires that all employees receive training, including faculty/principal investigators.

Ms. Thompson asked for the Committee's input relative to devising a system of information delivery to faculty that will be flexible, will meet the spirit of the OSHA rule, will keep the University in compliance, and can actually be implemented.

A generic Chemical Hygiene Plan was prepared in 1990 and is annually updated by the Department of Environmental Health and Safety, reported Ms. Thompson. Individual departments and colleges have modified this plan to fit their specific needs, she added. Back in 1984, faculty/principal investigators were exempt from right-to-know standards. Evidence of safety training for laboratory faculty has not been formalized (as it has been for laboratory staff), she said, and this must be done now to achieve compliance with the standard.

Ms. Thompson went on to say that there are three important parts in meeting the requirements: 1) to ensure that everyone has the information they need; 2) to ensure that we can document that everyone has the information required; and, 3) to ensure that faculty understand their responsibility regarding the training of their students.

*These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

Over the past two years, colleges and/or departments were responsible for providing information and training to their employees in this area, she said. As an example, she cited the Department of Chemical Engineering where a day is set aside each year for employees to attend a training session. The training is mandatory. Other departments, she said, are not as knowledgeable about the requirement to maintain records of the training session.

To ensure that there is some reasonable compliance with the training requirement, the Department of Audits looks at the training records when it does its financial audit. To date they have not checked for training records for faculty, but this will not need to be done.

Referring to the handout, Ms. Thompson reviewed the options for "training" faculty. She emphasized that since maximum flexibility is desirable, all four options can be adopted, plus any others that are helpful. The options are: 1) Faculty can attend training sessions given to staff; 2) Faculty can participate in presentation of training sessions to staff; 3) Faculty can read relevant information; and, 4) Faculty can declare that they do not work with chemicals.

One member asked what standard would be followed if the faculty member had supervisory responsibility but did not work in the lab? Ms. Thompson responded that from a morale responsibility those individuals should participate in the training session. Another member inquired whether the rule would apply to individuals who have potential for exposure. She indicated that it did.

The penalty for noncompliance varies, she said. It can range from a warning to a financial penalty of several thousands of dollars. The penalty is paid by the department. This is monitored by OSHA.

The group turned to the handout "General Recommendations for Safe Practices in Laboratories," from the National Academy of Sciences. Ms. Thompson indicated that her department is considering putting together something similar along with a one page description of the law. Along with the summary and description a sign-off sheet would be included that indicates that the individual reviewed the information. This form would then be filed with their department.

Members discussed what might constitute a lab. Ms. Thompson indicated that the departments that have "traditional" laboratories would be most involved, such as the sciences and health areas. Members also discussed the issue of individuals who leave the University and leave unknown materials in their laboratory.

Ms. Thompson asked for the Committee's input regarding ways to circulate the information. An annual newsletter is now being considered, she said. One member suggested utilizing the Bulletin Board. Another member suggested that this issue be addressed at departmental meetings. The fact that the department must pay the penalty for noncompliance ought to be highlighted, suggested one member.

After considerable discussion the following was supported by the Committee: If a faculty/principle investigator supervises students and/or staff they can not claim an exemption from the training session required by OSHA's Laboratory Safety Standard.

The Committee endorses the notion of the flexible approach to the system to assure that faculty as well as staff have information regarding hazards associated with laboratory use of chemicals and that Fay Thompson

will keep the Committee apprised of the developments of the system of information delivery.

The Committee moved on to discuss future agenda items.

The Committee will consider the following:

1. At the January meeting the Committee will revisit the ICR (Indirect Cost Recovery) issue. Mark Brenner will review how funds are allocated and Marilyn Surbey will review how funds are collected.
2. Vice President Anne Petersen to discuss strategic planning - to be considered as an agenda item for a Spring Quarter meeting. The ad hoc Committee on Strategic Planning may be asked to report back to the Research Committee.
3. Discussion of the broad set of issues in the area of the climate for research.
4. Review of Human Subjects Committee.
5. Impact of fiscal restraints on research efforts.

The next meeting of the Research Committee will be January 7, 1993.

- Vickie Courtney

University of Minnesota