



Safety in the Workplace Committee

Annual Report – 09/10

The Safety in the Workplace Committee met five times during the 09/10 academic year. Consistent with previous years, the Committee's work is supported by the work of subcommittees formed around a particular topic or issue, and whose work and recommendations are prepared for full Committee review. Additionally, as a part of its standing work, the Committee reviewed a number of quarterly, biannual and annual department and program reports to identify trends, potential safety issues and emerging challenges and opportunities.

A summary of the Committees' work this year is as follows:

1. Workplace Accident Reduction:

The Committee continues to focus considerable attention to reducing workplace accidents. Unfortunately, the accident numbers continue to climb, with 2010 YTD recording an all time high for the number of lost work days. New initiatives such as the reward program for departments who don't experience lost work days within a 90 day period have been largely unsuccessful in stemming this tide. A subcommittee has been created to look at this issue in depth and to identify other actions that can make an impact. The subcommittee has begun reviewing each accident and its root cause in detail, looking for trends and patterns that may have been previously missed. Safety training and emphasis at the department level has been reinforced. The subcommittee is looking at other recommendations including a more aggressive and robust return to work program, a stronger pre-employment physical assessment program that is more consistent with the physical requirements of a particular job, and continuing to strengthen the departmental safety educational efforts. Additionally, employees who appear to have multiple accidents will be meeting with a loss control expert in one on one meetings to determine if there are issues that are causing a tendency to be accident prone. Employees who are discovered engaging in unsafe work practices will be disciplined related to job performance as appropriate. Reducing accidents will remain a strong focus for the next academic year.

2. Policy/procedure review:

Several policies and procedures were addressed by the Committee this year including PPE-Respiratory protection, space heater and electrical extension cord use, and procedures for the clean-up of fluorescent light bulbs.

The PPE/Respiratory Protection policy was finalized and approved by the Committee. The space heater and extension cord policies remain open, to be revisited in Sept, 2010 in anticipation of the heating season. Implementation and communication around these policies remain at issue.

The housekeeping protocol for removing shattered fluorescent light bulbs was reviewed and revised following an anonymous complaint to OSHA that the shattered particles and the subsequent removal of them created a health hazard from mercury exposure. OSHA did not choose to make a site visit given significant documentation that indicates that the amount of mercury in one shattered bulb is so small that it has virtually no impact to health. They did however request a review of our policies. A review of the current EPA requirements related to fluorescent light bulb use and disposal did indicate the need to revise our method of clean-up in such circumstances. The policy was revised and employees re-trained by December 15th, 2009.

3. Program Reports/Initiatives

Several programmatic changes were initiated by the Committee during this academic year. It was noted that the Stables did not have a formal safety program, and given the nature of the work and the number of workplace accidents that have occurred in the recent past, the Committee determined that a more robust emphasis was needed in this area. Working with the Director, a program was initiated that included specialized training in six job task areas. Additionally, safety awareness was added to the monthly staff meetings, ensuring that safety remain a priority. The Committee received its first annual report from the Stables in May, 2010.

Additionally, this year brought some additional risk management practices added to the Leadership activities office. Given the level of exposure that some student activities can bring to the College, this work to strengthen policies and procedures will serve the College well moving forward.

The Committee, as a part of its standing work also reviewed the following program summary reports:

Radiation Safety, Hazardous Waste Disposal Annual Report, Hazard Communication and Waste Training statistics, Chemical Hygiene Plan Annual Report, Skidmore Security Advisory Report, Emergency Management Planning updates, Bio Hazard Training, and Workers' Compensation Accidents and Motor Vehicle Accident trending.

4. Departmental Reports/Updates

The Committee also reviewed a number of departmental safety reports in its role to ensure a robust safety program departmentally. They included Facilities Services who continues a heavy emphasis on training and education, Dining Services, who also heavily supports training and education, including for its student work force, Campus Safety which includes a summary of incident trends, and the previously mentioned Riding/Stables Program safety initiatives.

Additionally, the Committee received a summary of the NYS Fire Inspector Annual report and an update on a DEC Fuel Audit.

5. Miscellaneous

A subcommittee was formed to assess and ensure our current compliance with the EPA standards for which the College was fined during its visit in 2003. At that time, the College was cited in a number of areas, and fined \$65,000, which was subsequently reduced to \$ 50,000. At that time we initiated a corrective action plan and a number of initiatives to move the College to compliance.

Grapevine has indicated that the EPA has begun to revisit campus's to assess sustained compliance. The subcommittee determined that the majority of the corrective action plan remained in place, but that a change in partner for our printing operations had over looked a need to ensure that proper rag disposal was being followed. Additionally, it was discovered that the print shop staff had not yet attended the College's Hazardous Communication/ Hazardous Waste Training. A change in the rag disposal procedure was initiated immediately, and training has now been completed by that staff. We believe that the College is compliant in all of the areas previously cited, and that we are well prepared for any return visit.

Dorm Safety Video Viewing

The Committee also spent a portion of a meeting viewing a video received from United Educators- the College's insurance underwriter. The video entitled "When every minute counts... Dorm Fire Safety" was created by Middlebury College and demonstrates how quickly a typical dorm room can turn into smoke and fire. The Committee felt the video very valuable, and asked D. Conway to include a showing in his fire safety training for students.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Kaczmarek, Chair

09-10 Safety in the Workplace Committee Membership:

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| Christine Kaczmarek | Chair |
| Paul Davis | Art Dept/ Dean of the Faculty Office Rep. |
| Bonnie Rolon | Dining Services |
| Dan Rodecker | Facilities Services |
| Dennis Conway | Campus Safety |
| Rosanne Sammler | Support Staff Rep. |
| Alena Llorens-Myers | Human Resources |
| Marlene Williams | Local 200 United Rep. |
| Pam Houle | Health Services |
| Christine Kopec | Management & Business/ Faculty Rep |
| Loretta Greenholtz | Academic Safety Officer |
| Kim Bombard | Recording Secretary |