

Safety in the Workplace Committee Annual Report

2012-2013

The Safety in the Workplace Committee met five times during the 2012-2013 academic year. Consistent with previous years, the focus of our work continued to the College's compliance with regulatory requirements and strengthening the College's general safety policies and procedures, with a particular emphasis on monitoring and addressing work place accidents and accident trends.

The Safety in the Workplace Committee serves as the campus umbrella for safety activity initiatives- both implementation and monitoring, and to that end, the Committee agendas include review of departmental reports summarizing safety activities from Dining Services, Facilities Services, Campus Safety, and the Stables. Additionally, we annually review issues and summary reports associated with Hazardous Waste handling and removal, Chemical Inventory, Biohazard and BBP training, Motor Vehicle Accidents, Chemical Hygiene and Security Advisory Committee work.

This year, our focus on monitoring and preventing work place accidents resulted in that topic becoming a standing agenda item at each meeting. We expect that moving forward, this emphasis will continue to require that workplace accidents remain an item requiring attention and monitoring at each meeting.

I. Regulatory Compliance

The Committee addressed the impending OSHA revisions to the Hazard Communication Standard with the creation of a small subcommittee to review the changes and make associated recommendations. OSHA is making some changes in requirements in an effort to bring the US into alignment with international standards. The requirement to provide information to employees through labeling and Safety Data Sheets will remain, but the labeling and reporting will now be standardized- including the use of pictures to assist low and limited literacy workers in the workplace. Some reclassification of chemicals particularly mixes, will also be a result of the revisions. The changes will be phased in beginning 12/13 through 6/16.

The subcommittee, led by Loretta Greenholtz will assess the College's current program in light of the new requirements and outline the steps for ensuring full compliance by the timeline established by OSHA. We anticipate changes in some hazard classification, a revamping of our labeling and SDS sheets, and the need for a revised annual training program for employees, which will begin in fall '13.

The Committee also reviewed the progress on Life Safety violations in the residential halls as a follow up to last years' fire department review and inspection.

Don Hastings joined the discussion and explained the residential life response that included the creation of a new policy, modeled after the AOD policy, which he believes, has been effective in reducing repeat offenders. Additionally, September fire safety training has now been tied to class selection, resulting in 100% attendance compliance.

It was further noted that the residential life contracts and handbook would be amended to clearly state that any student violating the Fire Safety policies could be suspended or dismissed.

II. Policy/Procedure Development

The Committee worked actively on a number of policy updates including the campus' Motor Vehicle Policy, Hazardous Waste training requirements, and policies governing Worker's Compensation accidents.

The Motor Vehicle policy was updated to reflect current practice. Approved driver criteria language was tightened, and clarified. A requirement to complete a driver safety training program was also added to the list of criteria.

The Hazard Communication/Hazardous Waste training program was updated to reflect changing federal requirements for Hazardous material labeling and documentation.

The Committee began some work on addressing a smoking policy for the campus in response to a number of complaints from employees that second hand smoke, particularly in areas where smokers congregate- such as outside the entrance of Case Center, outside of the library, outside of Palamountain Hall, and outside of the Dining Hall, has impacted their health negatively, and causes a dirty and unwelcoming environment on the campus. A subcommittee was formed, and on hearing that the Student Affairs Committee of IPPC was also addressing this issue, it was decided to work collaboratively to look at this issue.

During the spring '13 semester, a student group from MB355/001: Ethics conducted an in-depth study of the current smoking policy and the feelings of the community- particularly the student body on this topic. They looked at other campuses, and discussed the complications of enforcement. They summarized their work in a recommendation that included a short phase in to a smoke free campus. This work is currently being reviewed, and it is anticipated that more discussion and possibly a recommendation will likely emerge during the next academic year on this topic.

III. *Workplace Accidents and Worker's Compensation Claims*

For the last number of years, the Committee has focused considerable attention on identifying strategies to reduce the number of workplace accidents occurring on an annual basis. Our claims experience and the associated costs have continued to escalate at an alarming rate, potentially putting the College's membership in a self-insured NYS Higher Education Trust in jeopardy. This year, we believe that we have made considerable strides in identifying effective strategies to reverse this trend, most notably the recreation of a robust modified duty program that brings injured employees back to work in a modified work assignment when approved by their treating physician. A number of other initiatives have also been implemented throughout the year. We will continue to monitor progress in this endeavor closely, and are hopeful that we have identified initiatives that will make a positive impact to our employees moving forward.

IV. *Departmental /Program Safety Awareness Activities*

As is consistent with our standing agenda work, the Committee reviewed quarterly, bi annual, and annual reports from the following departments and programs:

Workers Compensations Accident Trends

Hazardous Waste Disposal

Hazard Communication and Hazardous Waste Training Compliance

Facilities Services Safety Program

Campus Safety Incidents and Trends

Chemical Inventory compliance/issues

Motor Vehicle Accidents

Biohazard &BBP training compliance

Dining Services Safety Program

Stables Safety Program

Radiation Safety Program

Chemical Hygiene Program