

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee – MRU

October 21, 2021 1300-1430

Location: Virtual

Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Crystal Koch (employee Co- Chair), D. Scharie Tavcer, David McLean, Rachelle McGrath (employer Co-Chair), Amy McCarthy, M Helena Myllykoski, Rob Siklodi, Joe Frazao, Stephanie Zettel, Amanda Smith (administrative support)

Regrets: Mark Friesen

Discussion:

Membership introductions invited by employee (CK) with introductions shared. Membership reviewed as noted below as many new members.

Joe Frazao (MRSA)

Amy McCarthy (MRSA)

Crystal Koch (MRSA/Employee Co-chair)

Helena Myllykoski (MRFA)

Scharie Tavcer (MRFA)

Stephanie Zettel (MRFA)

Mark Friesen (Mgmt – AVP Human Resources)

Rachelle McGrath (Mgmt Co-chair – Director Wellness Services)

Dave McLean (Mgmt – Director, Marketing and Acting Director, Communications)

Robert Siklodi (EH&S)

Amanda Smith (Administrative support)

Additions to Agenda Invited:

I. Employee (CK) to add item 5 d. Remote working mandate

Previous committee minutes: Minutes were approved and posted on the EHS website on (September 28, 2021)

New Business:

Employee (CK) informed the committee that the employee representatives would be meeting as a group before JOHSC meetings to discuss employee concerns.

II. **Reports:** Employer (RS) provided a summary of the incidents that have been addressed since September 16, 2021 outlined to this point as follows below. This information is available for JOHSC members in the incident spreadsheet.

September 16-October 20, 2021	
Incidences (EH&S)	30
Slip Trips	
Slip Trips "Time off"	1
Injury`	2
Injury (time off)	
Student/ Visitor	18
Other	2
Close Call (EH&S)	3
Hazardous Condition (EH&S)	6
AHS/OHS	8
Violence/Harassment (HR)	1
Incidences (Security Services)	28
Medical	8
Safety	14
Other	6

September 16-October 20, 2021	
Covid Positive Total	56
Staff Positive who were on Campus Note: There has been no community Transfer	7
Students Positive who were on Campus. Note: There has been no community Transfer	14
Staff Rapid Testing Positive	0
Students Rapid Testing Positive Note” since the start of the program.	10

Employee (ST) asked why there are no harassment numbers being reported by HR to employer (RS) and JOHSC? We know for a fact that there are several harassment complaints and investigations that have taken place over the last year but there are no numbers to reflect this reality. Concern is that we are not hearing these numbers, including outcome of investigations and discipline for substantiated complaints (no personal details, just numbers). **Action:** Employee (CK), Employer (RS and RM) will ask HR to explain.

- a. An employee had a serious slip & fall in parking lot 3 due to exposed tree roots. The employee was treated at MRU Health services. Grounds removed the roots. The employee will be off work to recover from their injuries.
- b. One report of hazardous conditions relating to headaches in office space has not been assessed since the employee is not on site. This incident will be reviewed once the employee returns back to campus.
- c. An incident report was made regarding the lack of waste disposal containers in the class rooms for students to dispose of disinfectant wipes. The university has disposal systems in place throughout the campus and will not be adding waste disposal containers back to the classrooms.
- d. There have been several incident reports in the library related to Public Health Order compliance not being adhered to. Measures not being complied with in regards to physical distancing, masking and vaccination verification have been reported.

Employer (RS) explained how this has been rapidly changing throughout the month of October. The library is now a non-eating area. Everyone entering the library should now have their vaccination status verified by an employee from a temporary employment agency. They are dressed in yellow shirts with an identification badge. They will be at a table with signage at the library entrance. It has been noticed that individuals that enter the Barrow door can skip the verification process so the Barrow door is no longer accessible. There are announcements throughout the day to remind attendees that masking is required. Security and EHS officers are patrolling the area throughout the day to ensure compliance.

- e. Hazardous conditions reported that there are no masks available in the classrooms. Large numbers of masks were being stolen from classrooms and so masks are now available for pick up at security and department offices only.
- f. Security reported 28 incidents that they responded to. Of these 8 were medical, 14 were safety issues and 6 were others.
- g. Employer (RS) was unable to get a report regarding the Violence and Harassment incidents for today's meeting.

Action: Employee (CK) and employer (RM) to contact employer (MF) regarding this item for accurate reporting for the minutes. Employee (ST) asked how it is decided what is reported under this heading? In her work she is aware of several MRFA grievances that are current. Are these included in the numbers?

- h. All JOHSC members are encouraged to complete the training but it is mandatory for the co-chairs.

Action: Employer (RS) will post the FOAP on the JOHSC member list in the Google drive to avoid any delays in payment.

- I. To date 16,300 vaccine verifications have been approved.

III. Employer (RS) informed the committee that there have been 3 OHS complaints, 5 AHS complaints and 1 work refusal. Employer (RS) summarized the conversation with OHS and that the relaunched committee will be working to ensure that it is meeting the legislative requirements. It was acknowledged that during the pandemic, committee activity had slowed down but that the committee has been re-established. The outcome of the OHS contacts is that the OHS Officer, Jennifer Allore, will be provided a copy of the October committee minutes to ensure that the reported concerns are being discussed. The following are the three OHS complaints:

- MRU not following the Covid protocols. - This issues was closed by OHS
- Anonymous concern regarding only requiring testing of unvaccinated workers and students - This issue was closed by OHS

- Concerns regarding protection of public-facing workers and health and safety committee activity - **Action:** Employer (RS) will email the completed minutes to the OHS investigator once they are approved.

AHS complaints:

- 1- Person feels unsafe on campus due to the university not checking vaccination status, students sitting less than 2m apart in classes. - This complaint came in before restrictions were announced. Closed by AHS
- 2- Person said that the campus was not shut down after restrictions were announced and library classes were occurring. - This came in just after 10pm. Called for more clarification. - Closed by AHS
- 3 -The classes of the university do not allow for all students to be in compliance with the new regulations. There are space restrictions, seating restrictions, as well as overpopulated classes that did not reduce in size after returning. Also issue with the work from home mandate not being followed - AHS Educated complainant and closed complaint.
- 4- Social distancing is not occurring in classrooms- AHS educated claimants of the exemption for this. Public and students coming into the library, admissions office and advisory office without masks. Concerned that this was not being policed and that they recently had anti-vaxers harassing admissions staff. Said they had put in a request for security in this area. – AHS Discussed with employer (RS) the phone library will be controlled access. Discussed that the concerns with admissions and advisory offices have not been reported. AHS action- police masking in complaintent's area and follow up with anti anti-vaxxing issues. These areas are being addressed and constantly reassessed. Concerns that there are no barriers in library, admissions and advisor office for staff that would come in contact with the public. If 2 is resolved barriers would not be necessary . Concerns that a director is not taking complaints seriously- EHS has followed up and is working with the department.
- 5- The library is not enforcing social distance of 2 metres. There is a lot of furniture that is close together. They say there is no eating but they do not enforce that either. The staff do not have plexiglass and kids stand really close to them. AHS requires controlled access for this to occur.

The work refusal has been closed as the employee has since received an accommodation through Wellness at work.

Student Covid reports are received at Early Student and employees are reported to Wellness at work, then the sanitized cases are reported to EH&S. Employer (RS) is tasked with reviewing the reports and determining the protocol to be followed. Employee (CK) asked what that involves? Is there deep cleaning completed? Are close

contacts informed?

What is MRU's number of reported positive cases that would result in closure?

Employer (RS) is not aware of whether or not this risk assessment has been completed or who would be responsible for it. The MRU protocol, in short, is that if there are two positive cases in a classroom or office space / Department that triggers the investigation. Employee (CK) shared that U of C has on the public facing website that if there were 30 cases for campus in one week or 5 cases in one building that this would result in those areas being closed. The webpage link will be provided for reference.

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/risk/emergency-management/covid-19-response/covid-19-dash-board>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/risk/sites/default/files/Covid-19%20Folder/Response-Procedure-to-Positive-19-test-result.pdf>

IV. Employer (RM) spoke to the need to update the Terms of Reference for the committee. This work has been started but needs to be reviewed and completed. This is necessary to align with the change in OHS legislation.

Action: All committee members have until Friday, Nov 12, 2021 to add their suggested edits.

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V. Public Health Order compliance

- a. Discussion started with an update on the Vaccine Verification and checking process. Most of the submitted vaccination submissions have now been verified. There are some submissions going through a more rigorous review. Vaccine checking is now taking place at the Library, Student Recruitment and Academic Advising.
- b. Mask compliance is an ongoing issue. Employee (CK) mentioned how there is an outdated sign stating that masking is “strongly recommended” rather than mandatory and employee (AM) stated that the EHS website states the same thing. It is possible that some signs have been missed. The Covid 19 webpage is the most current information. Physical distancing is required everywhere except classrooms, labs and learning environments. This includes outside areas. A question was asked if the restriction of 20 people for an outdoor gathering applies on campus? Employer (RS) is not sure if the PSI exemption permits larger outdoor gatherings. **Action:** The group will work at getting the message out to the community and if anyone sees an outdated poster to inform Communications with the location so it can be updated.
- c. Employee (CK) shared that the MRFA and MRSA president's are advocating for clearer, consistent Public Health directions from the government. Along with this

is a request to restart official AHS contact tracing. In absence of the government fulfilling this necessary control the employees would like to see positive Covid 19 cases reported to the community.

- d. In regards to the Government order for Remote Working, it was asked how MRU determined which employees are operational necessary to be working on campus? Employer (RM) responded that the management team took into consideration the requirements of the office when deciding who could work remotely and who must be on campus. There are many employees working on campus that could be doing their jobs remotely. It is concerning for the community that there are individuals on campus that do not need to be there. It would be helpful if there was a consistent directive to all employees. Currently it seems that decisions of who is working on campus appear to be arbitrary and to individual managers discretion regardless of the actual work. It was shared that MacEwan University has around 30% of their employees on campus at one time. This is for employee safety and business continuity. Employee (HM) requested that it be noted that, how the university responds to this pandemic can be used to inform future public health emergencies. It is helpful to learn and develop preventative measures and have them in place before things become an emergency. Whether it's another wave of the current pandemic or something new it is important to learn and adapt and utilize the hazard prevention tools we have effectively. The current data coming from the UK is concerning and we may need to respond to a serious situation again sooner rather than later.
- e. The issue of plexiglas was brought up in that plexiglas are not being installed due to HVAC requirements and employer (RS) suggested Grant Sommerfeld be invited to explain at future meeting(s). This is supported by the employees with the understanding that the Government of Alberta's OHS documentation regarding controls and hazard protection for Respiratory Illness states that barriers are an effective safety measure. Employee (CK) reported that some employees have been told that it has not been installed due to budgetary constraints or that a decision has been made for no more plexiglass due to government orders. From a financial perspective, employee (JF) volunteered that all requests for plexiglas have been installed as requested with the exception of some in The Taylor Centre (which have been approved but not yet installed as per user request) and in E102, which was on the initial list of areas for plexiglas but didn't received a Work Request for. **Action:** Employee (JF) to share the list of outstanding areas with employee (CK) and employer (RS). Employee (CK) to add any additional areas the employee group would like reviewed. The timeline for this is one week. If the employer does not review and install plexiglass where needed for front facing employees the employee representatives will file a formal recommendation. How is this done? Should a formal recommendation just be

completed now? There is [a form](#) that is to be completed which is then submitted to the AVP HR with the employer having 30 days to respond by either completing the action recommended or responding in writing to the rationale of why the resolution suggested is not necessary. This form is also being reviewed to be updated. Employees think public front facing areas should be reviewed again for plexiglass. These include B156, D101, EB2105, and the library service counter. Employee (JF) shared that Catherine Barrette was consulted regarding the plexiglass at the library service counter but it was decided not to install it there. The employee group would like to see the rationale for the decision. If this is not addressed before the next meeting the employee group will be prepared to submit the recommendation.

- f. Employee (CK) tabled the Injury Hazard Form review and the [Position Hazard Assessment](#) agenda items to the next meeting, employee (ST) offered to review the forms and provide revision suggestions. The forms to be reviewed include: [Injury Hazard Form](#), Employee Recommendation
- g. Employee (CK) summarized the action items.

Minutes recorded by employee (CK)

Meeting adjourned at 2:48 PM

