

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SPRINGFIELD

Office of the Provost, March 28, 2023

Recently, I became acquainted with an intolerable risk situation for UIS. Laboratory and Safety Inspection Reports conducted by our Environmental and Safety Officer (ESO), Ravneet Chhokar, revealed several instances of non-compliance with safety protocols, some of which have persisted despite numerous past inspection findings. Compliance with safety requirements that are intended to keep our students and employees safe as well as upholding the integrity of the teaching and research conducted in our labs is of utmost importance. Accordingly, I am setting forth an immediate protocol of expectations specified below to facilitate remediations of current problems and to avoid future issues.

I have every confidence that all faculty and staff members will recognize the seriousness of these safety concerns and will participate in promptly addressing them. However, anyone who fails to cooperate will be addressed through the appropriate personnel procedures. It is imperative that **ALL** faculty and staff take the safety of our community and the integrity of our teaching and research seriously. To resolve the existing Inspection Report findings:

1. The HST Committee on Environmental Safety will be consulted and appraised of the current situation.
2. By April 7, 2023, each academic dean, department chair, head and faculty member utilizing a laboratory or overseeing a program that utilizes laboratories will work cooperatively to address the findings and correct identified deficiencies, as well as document an Action Plan for implementing corrective measures to address any findings that cannot be corrected by the deadline. **All involved employees are responsible for cooperating with the process.**
3. By April 12, 2023, each academic dean will submit the documentation designating who will correct the cited deficiencies to the ESO.
4. The ESO is responsible for reviewing and consulting with the dean about the Action Plan, as well as re-inspecting each lab to ensure that corrective measures taken have adequately addressed the findings.
5. By April 24, 2023, the ESO will provide a supplemental Inspection Report to the Provost. This supplemental report will identify any remaining concerns, as well as document any instances of non-compliance or poor cooperation by any deans, school directors, department chairs, heads or individual faculty members.
6. The Provost will consult with the ESO to determine if the closure of any labs is warranted based on the supplemental report. In the event closure is deemed warranted by the Provost, the impacted lab will be closed for use on June 1, 2023 and will not reopen until compliance is achieved. Appropriate personnel action may also be pursued.
7. It is expected that unknown (unlabeled) waste disposal will be the major issue in reaching environmental and safety compliance. Please complete the necessary forms here:

<https://forms.uofi.uis.edu/sec/1740695517?referrer=https://www.uis.edu/>

8. Each College Dean is responsible for compliance with applicable environmental and safety regulations in labs utilized by faculty and programs in their college. This includes holding Directors, Department Chairs, Heads, and individual faculty members responsible for instances of non-compliance.
9. School directors and program leads are responsible for compliance with environmental and safety protocols in laboratories at the operational level.
10. Individual faculty colleagues, when using laboratories for research, instruction, or production tasks, are accountable for the care, condition and compliance in every single laboratory used and must take steps to adhere to environmental safety reports and develop necessary compliance practice.
11. Each laboratory or prep room will have a faculty person designated by the School Director or Department Chair or Head, as the responsible party – in consultation with other colleagues who may use the same facility. This responsible faculty designation may change with altered instructional or research programs or with changes in employment status including sabbatical leave periods of time.
12. Each semester, before the beginning of classes, i.e., during the first two weeks of August for fall classes and during the first week of January for spring classes, environmental safety audits will be conducted to assure that every laboratory is in compliance and available for use by our students, faculty and staff.

There is no alternative to environmental and safety protocols and the associated requirements. Our students depend on us and so do our colleagues throughout the academy to insure their safe educational experiences. We will move ahead into the future with ordinary tasks that result in full compliance with the requisite audits and any necessary corrections within all UIS laboratories.

Respectfully,

Linda M. Delene, Ph.D.,

Interim Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Provost