

## **2008 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY BIOSAFETY COMMITTEE**

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**For the University Health and Safety Committee**

**Dr. G. Kidder, Associate Vice President (Research), Chair  
Jennifer Stanley, Biosafety Coordinator**

### **Introduction**

The Committee met three times in 2008 (February, June and October) to discuss biosafety issues. The Committee is required to meet three times annually. The Terms of Reference were reviewed for the Biosafety Committee and Biosecurity Subcommittee to better address the potential threat of plant pests and agricultural biosecurity risks. Dr. Tyrrel de Langley joined the committee as the new Director of Animal Care and Veterinary Services.

### **Biotron**

Over the course of the year, the Committee received updates on the progress of the construction of the new Biotron building. In late 2008 the committee reviewed the Standard Operating Procedures Manual and Users Manual for the Biotron Containment Level 3 Laboratory.

### **Level 3 Containment Facility**

The Level 3 Containment unit was shut down during rebuilding of the autoclave in the Spring and re-opened in the Fall. If the annual 2009 shut-down for maintenance is extended to January 2010 there may be a short period of time where Level 3 agents can not be acquired.

### **Tri-Council Schedule 13**

The Tri-Council Schedule 13 Memorandum of Understanding for Research Involving Biohazards was reviewed by the Biosafety Committee to assess the impact on research.

### **Medical Surveillance**

The Biosafety Committee and Biohazards Subcommittee discussed several medical surveillance issues regarding research involving lentiviral vectors, vaccinia, and rabies. Dr. Sidney Siu joined the Biosafety Committee and Biohazard Subcommittee in 2008.

## **Biosafety Manuals**

Modifications to the biosafety manuals for containment levels 1, 2 and 3 were reviewed by the Committee and/or Biohazard Subcommittee.

## **Microbial Toxins**

“Draft Guidelines for Laboratories Working with Microbial Toxins” was discussed by the Committee. Comments were sent to Health Canada on behalf of the University research community.

## **Biosafety Program**

Several graphs were discussed by the Committee, including the Researchers Starting to Work with Biohazards and Purchase Orders and Material Transfer Agreements. In 2007, there were 23 infectious shipments from UWO and 535 people trained. As of October 15, 2008, there were 26 new researchers, 23 of them on main campus and 3 at the Lawson Health Research Institute.

## **Bill C-54**

In 2008, the Public Health Agency of Canada put forth draft legislation called Bill C-54. The Biosafety Committee reviewed the proposed document and sent comments on behalf of the University research community.

## **Biohazards Subcommittee and Biohazardous Agents Registry Forms**

The Biohazards Subcommittee reviewed and approved 100 Biohazardous Agent Registry Forms (or modifications) in 2007. As of October 15, 2008, the Biohazards Subcommittee had reviewed 89 Biohazardous Agents Registry Forms.

The Biohazardous Agents Registry Form was updated to reflect plant pathogens. This was done to better address the research done at the Biotron.

## **New Substance Notifications Regulations (Organisms)**

The Biosafety Committee reviewed New Substance Notifications Regulations (Organisms) proposed jointly by Environment Canada and Health Canada.

## **Biosafety Requirements of Imaging**

The integration of Robarts created new biosafety challenges with respect to imaging. The Biosafety Requirements for Imaging standard operating procedure was created, modified and approved in 2008.

## **New Guideline on Viral Vector Transduced Cells**

Over the course of 2008, the Biohazards Subcommittee and Biosafety Committee created and implemented this guideline to address the growing use of viral vectors by researchers on and off campus.

## **Biosecurity Subcommittee**

The Biosecurity Subcommittee met 3 times in 2008. The biosecurity process flowchart was implemented. The Terms of Reference and committee membership were updated. The committee focused on agricultural pests and toxins used in research.

The Biosecurity Plan was modified. The “Biosecurity Requirements for Facilities Using Biological Agents” and Frequently Asked Questions were created. These documents have been posted on the web and communicated to affected researchers.