

Institutional Biosafety Committee University of Nevada, Reno

Meeting Minutes

June 11, 2025

General Information

- The IBC Chair called the meeting to order at 3 p.m.
- Meeting minutes approved at the July 2025 IBC meeting
- [Meeting conducted via Zoom](#)
- Total voting members present: 9; Quorum: 5

Voting Members Present

1. Cam Tran, Scientist/Chairperson, 014
2. Won-Gyu-Choi, Scientist, plant expert, 002
3. Claudia Rueckert, Scientist/Vice Chairperson, 003
4. Robin Trimble, Community Member, 008
5. Evan Colletti, Community Member, 004
6. Benjamin Weigler, Scientist/Veterinarian/Animal Expert, 009
7. Keith Kikawa, Biosafety Officer, Committee Contact, 010
8. Andrew Nuss, Scientist, 013
9. Shailesh Agarwal, Scientist, 015

Voting Members Absent

1. Paul Brett, Scientist, 001
2. Jung Hwan Kim, Scientist, 012

Others Present

1. Kristin Eliassen, non-voting committee contact
2. Jenn Thornton, non-voting committee contact

Agenda for Full Committee Business

Minutes

Review and approval of minutes for the May 14th, 2025 IBC meeting: There were no comments or concerns regarding these meeting minutes. A motion was made by 002 and seconded by 004 to approve them. The motion passed unanimously.

Review Prior Business

1. Biological use protocol B2025-15 (Frese) has been withdrawn and the protocol has been closed.
2. (COI Nuss) – Review of PIs response to non-compliance event pertaining to MOUA B2023-13: The PI has adequately responded to the IBC's comments and has completed all the corrective actions to the IBC's satisfaction. The only outstanding item is that there are lab members who are out-of-date on the required EH&S safety training refresher courses. The IBC Office will reach out to request that the PI have these trainings complete by June 13th, 2025.

MOUA Reviews

Three-year Protocol Renewals

B2025-17, Sumby, Group A Streptococcus pathogenesis, Renewal of B2022-23 (BSL-2)

Summary: The PI works primarily with group A Streptococcus (GAS). Work is applicable to NIH Guidelines Sections-III-D-1, 2 & 4, as well as Section III-F (C-II). The PI uses lentiviral vectors. The primary goal is to determine pathogenesis of GAS.

Biosafety Concerns- The PI performs benchtop work with GAS strains that may generate aerosols. Recommendation to enforce biosafety cabinet usage when handling GAS to further reduce the risk of a laboratory acquired infection (LAI). All lab members are up-to-date on the required EH&S training courses. Committee members discussed this submission and wanted to PI the to respond to a final comment in the MOUA. There was a motion made by 004 and seconded by 009 to approve this renewal after the protocol was updated to address the IBC's remaining comment. The motion passed unanimously.

IBC comment: Section 4A needs to be updated to reflect all aerosol producing activities are performed in a BSC. Given the fact that UNR is an educational institution, it needs to model the best biosafety practices for the students who are performing these techniques as well as implementing best practices to reduce the chance of a LAI. Regardless of the fact that your lab has not has an LAI, the IBC is requiring that if you intend to perform any aerosol producing activities outside of a BSC, each activity needs to have strong justification for this request and the IBC will evaluate this justification after you have replied to the comment to determine if the justification is acceptable.

New Protocol Reviews

B2025-16, Kim, Establishment of a Biobank of human specimens from Renown for use in UNR Biomedical Research labs (BSL-2)

Summary: The PIs are establishing a “biobank” on the UNR campus in collaboration with partners at Renown Regional Medical Center. None of the proposed work is directly subject to NIH Guidelines, as it involves no r/sNA. All specimens will be transported by a medical courier with minimal processing in the biobank itself. Biosafety Concerns: The PIs are having a new laboratory space renovated for this work in conjunction with the UNR Biosafety Officer (multiple meetings have been held to review the workspace and proposed renovations). In the meantime, an existing laboratory space has been assessed and deemed appropriate for the work proposed. All lab members are up-to-date on the required EH&S training courses. Committee members discussed this submission and agreed that the protocol was ready to be approved as revised. There was a motion made by 002 and was seconded by 015. The motion passed unanimously.

MOUA Amendments

B2024-09, AuCoin, DxDiscovery (BSL-1 & BSL-2)

Summary: The affiliate works to develop early/rapid diagnostic tools for a variety of infectious diseases. The NIH guidelines applicable to the research are Section-III-F-3 & 8 related to chimeric antibody production for diagnostic purposes (not human therapeutics). The amendment was to add a new specimen source.

Biosafety Concerns: While this entity handles a large variety of agents at BSL-2, they are well established and affiliated with several senior PIs and staff at UNR.

All lab members are up-to-date on the required EH&S training courses.

The committee members discussed this submission and agreed that the amendment was ready to be approved as revised. There was a motion made by 008 and was seconded by 002. The motion passed unanimously.

B2023-03, Jones, Study of Pathogenic Mechanisms of Facioscapulohumeral Muscular Dystrophy (BSL-2)

Summary: The PI studies facioscapulohumeral muscular dystrophy (FSHD). NIH Guidelines section NIH-III-E-1 & 3, as well as NIH-III-F-C-II & VII apply to this work. The project makes use of transgenic animals, lentiviral vectors, adenovirus, retrovirus & AAVs to characterize pathogenesis of FSHD. The amendment proposes the use of antibody-linked siRNA targeting DUX-4 in skeletal muscles to examine the therapeutic potential in a transgenic mouse model. Additionally, the PI proposes the immortalization of human myocyte cells using replication-deficient retroviruses to express hTERT & mouse CDK4, which will be used in xenograft studies in mice to determine efficacy of the aforementioned antibody-linked siRNA. Biosafety Concerns: The PI's research is well established, no novel biosafety concerns for the MOUA are being introduced with the proposed work. All lab members are up-to-date on the required EH&S training courses. The committee members discussed this submission and agreed that the amendment was ready to be approved as revised. There was a motion made by 009 and was seconded by 014. The motion passed unanimously.

B2024-37, Nunes, The role of macrophages in Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy cardiomyopathy and Facioscapulohumeral Muscular Dystrophy (BSL-2)

Summary: The PI uses a mouse model of Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) to elucidate the role of macrophages and other immune cells in the progression of the disease. NIH Guidelines section NIH-III-E3 & NIH-III-F-1 apply. The amendment adds the use of transgenic mice (FLExDUX4/MCM) and tissues from transgenic pigs to the study. Biosafety Concerns: While the MOUA and PI had not previously made use of the proposed additions, they will work closely with a PI who has long-established experience with the transgenic mouse model and will generate the porcine tissue used in the study. Additionally, the animal husbandry staff are well versed in the handling of animals and related materials in studies making use of tamoxifen. All lab members are up-to-date on the required EH&S training courses. The committee members discussed this submission and agreed that the amendment was ready to be approved as revised. There was a motion made by 004 and was seconded by 002. The motion passed unanimously.

B2022-16, Tran, Cerebral Blood Flow Regulation (COI:Tran) (BSL-2)

Summary: The PI studies blood flow impact on neuronal function using in vivo mouse models, as well as in vitro systems. NIH Guidelines sections NIH-III-D-4, NIH-III-E1 & NIH-III-F 4 & 8 apply. The amendment proposes the addition of mouse models and AAVs to the MOUA. Biosafety Concerns: The protocol does not add any novel biosafety concerns over previously approved work. All lab members are up-to-date on the required EH&S training courses. The committee members discussed this submission and agreed that the amendment was ready to be approved as revised. There was a motion made by 009 and was seconded by 004. The motion passed unanimously.

B2023-41, Verma, SARS-CoV-2 V neutralization, antiviral assays and detection of variants on rapid tests (BSL-3)

Summary: The PI has been working with SARS-CoV-2 variants, testing the efficacy of inactivating specific targets to determine the effect on viral growth kinetics. In the amendment, they request approval of the acquisition of high-pathogen avian influenza (HPAI) to demonstrate the necessary facilities and permissions to submit a funding application. Prior to commencing research activities with HPAI, a subsequent amendment or MOUA application will be submitted for approval; in the meantime, these materials will be stored securely in a BSL-3 facility. No r/sNA work subject to NIH Guidelines is covered by this MOUA. Biosafety Concerns: For what is proposed, no work will be performed with the HPAI materials. All items will be securely stored in a BSL-3 facility, and the PI has the necessary expertise and experience to work in this facility with the appropriate biosafety precautions. All lab members are up-to-date on the required EH&S training courses. The committee members discussed this submission and wanted the PI to respond to the comment below. There was a motion made by 003 and seconded by 015 to approve this amendment after the protocol was updated to address the IBC's remaining comment.

IBC comment: In the MOUA to indicate that HPAI agents being added are not in use/preserved stock in section 3I of the form.

B2024-42, Molecular Virology of Human Viruses (BSL-2)

Summary: The PI uses a recombinant human coronavirus system as a platform to assess antiviral efficacy. The amendment proposes the use of inactivated high-pathogen avian influenza (HPAI) strains to develop molecular assays for HPAI detection. The NIH guidelines applicable to the work in this MOUA include NIH-III-D-3 & 4, as well as NIH-III-E-1. Biosafety Concerns: All inactivated HPAI materials are well characterized from established sources and research groups. The existing MOUA establish sufficient facilities and expertise for the proposed research activities. All lab members are up-to-date on the required EH&S training courses. The committee members discussed this submission and wanted the PI to respond to the comment below. There was a motion made by 003 and seconded by 015 to approve this amendment after the protocol was updated to address the IBC's remaining comment.

IBC comment: Please verify if question 3F needs to be checked. If yes, then elaborate on the animal material in use in sections 3I and 4A of the form.

Closed Protocols

B2025-15, Frese, Bacterial microbiome community analysis training (BSL-1)

Agenda for Administrative Business

Administrative Amendments

1. **Burntack, B2024-11, Development of Subunit Vaccines Against Bacterial Pathogens**
 - a. Removal of study personnel
2. **Brett, B2023-10, Use of non-select Burkholderia to identify diagnostic/therapeutic targets**
 - a. Removal of study personnel
3. **Cobine, B2024-26, Utilization of toxins as blockers of neurons and ion channels in smooth muscles**
 - a. Update to study personnel
4. **El Zaklit, B2023-12, Cellular and Molecular Effects of High Intensity Nanosecond-Duration Electric Pulses on Adrenal Chromaffin Cells Using Fluorescence Microscopy**
 - a. Update to study personnel

Other Business

1. May 2025 Laboratory Assessment Biosafety Findings – In May 2025, the EH&S Laboratory Safety Team conducted 38 assessments, identifying 63 findings, of which 17 are still open and awaiting resolution. Some of these inspections have not yet undergone team review and submission to the PIs. A summary of the findings related to biosafety of open/completed inspections are included below:
 - a. Santos, B2023-15 (all corrected by 6/3/2025):
 - i. Biohazard labels not present on some equipment
 - ii. Out of date safety training for some personnel
 - b. Kivistik, B2023-07 (all corrected by 6/5/2025):
 - i. Biohazard labels not present on some equipment

Meeting Close-out

Next meeting: July 9, 2025

Time adjourned: 4:17 p.m.