Institutional Biosafety Committee
University of Nevada, Reno

Meeting Minutes

September 10th, 2025

General Information

- The IBC Chair called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.
- Meeting minutes approved at the October 2025 IBC meeting
- Meeting conducted via Zoom
- Total voting members present: 10; Quorum: 6

Voting Members Present

1. Cam Tran, Scientist/Chairperson, 014
2. Claudia Rueckert, Scientist/Vice Chairperson, 003
3. Evan Colletti, Community Member, 004
4. Benjamin Weigler, Scientist/Veterinarian/Animal Expert, 009
5. Keith Kikawa, Biosafety Officer, Committee Contact, 010
6. Andrew Nuss, Scientist, 013
7. Robin Trimble, Community Member, 008
8. Shailesh Agarwal, Scientist, 015
9. Paul Brett, Scientist, 001
10. Jung Hwan Kim, Scientist, 012

Voting Members Absent

1. Won-Gyu-Choi, Scientist, plant expert, 002

Others Present

1. Kristin Eliasen, non-voting committee contact
2. Jenn Thornton, non-voting committee contact
3. Lauren Davie, Administrative assistant, Research Integrity and Security
4. Andy Martin, Senior Lab Safety Specialist, EH&S

Agenda for Full Committee Business

Minutes

Review and approval of minutes for the August 13th, 2025 IBC meeting:

There were no comments or concerns regarding these meeting minutes. A motion was made by 010 and seconded by 014 to approve them. The motion passed unanimously.

Review Prior Business

None

MOUA Reviews

Three-year Protocol Renewals

B2025-25, Nuss, Insect Physiology Lab (COI: 013) – BSL2
Renewal of B2022-25
Member 013 was in conflict and was recused during the discussion of this renewal. Committee members discussed this submission and there was a motion made by 003 and seconded by 001 to approve this renewal contingent on the lab members' completion of the necessary EH&S training courses and the final comment being addressed. The motion passed unanimously.

IBC comment- The PI was asked to provide more information regarding the potential biological hazards of the proposed research in section 5 of the IBC protocol form.

Summary- The laboratory group studies insect receptor function by transfecting Sf9 cells with recombinant receptor constructs and assaying responses to predicted peptide hormones. Recombinant plasmids containing insect receptor genes will be amplified in non-pathogenic *E. coli* as part of the research. Transgenic *Anopheles stephensi* with modified odorant receptor genes are maintained under BSL-1 containment, along with wild-type *Lygus hesperus* and *Manduca sexta* colonies. NIH Guidelines should apply due to the listing of transgenic arthropods included in 3I, but only Section III-F (Appendix C-II) exemptions have been selected. More information is required to verify Section III-D-4 applies, with information on how these transgenic species are involved in the research before IBC approval can be granted. Biosafety Concerns- The research involves recombinant DNA work in Sf9 (BSL-1) cells, with associated risks of exposure to transfected human cell lines and potential recombinant material. Plasmid amplification in non-pathogenic *E. coli* presents minimal risk under BSL-1 containment. Maintenance of transgenic *Anopheles stephensi*, alongside wild-type *Lygus hesperus* and *Manduca sexta*, raises additional considerations under the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules. While Section III-F (Appendix C-II) exemptions may apply, clarification is needed to determine whether Section III-D-4 (experiments involving whole animals, including arthropods, with stable recombinant DNA modifications) is triggered. Key biosafety concerns include preventing unintended release of transgenic arthropods, verifying containment practices, and ensuring appropriate biosafety level designations for recombinant cell culture work

Last Assessment- 8/22/2025 (pending final review/submission)

New Protocol Reviews

None

MOUA Amendments

None

Designated Member Reviews (DMRs)

Riddle, B2024-15, Genetic studies in Mexican tetra (COI: No)

Keith Kikawa was assigned as the DMR reviewer. DMR approval was completed on 9/3/2025.

Summary- The laboratory group's amendment proposes microbiome transplant experiments in *Astyanax mexicanus* using gut microbial communities derived from fish feces or gut contents from its existing lab colony. Samples will be prepared as agarose pellets and fed back to the fish, with all manipulations conducted under BSL-2 containment due to the undefined microbial composition and presence of potential opportunistic pathogens. No culturing of isolates is planned; future work with individual strains would require separate IBC approval. Standard mitigation practices (PPE, BSL-2 facilities, chemical disinfection of waste) will be used, and a biosafety summary of the most abundant taxa is provided in Section 3I.

Biosafety Level- BSL-2 (standard practice when dealing with unknown biohazards)

Biosafety Concerns- The laboratory's amendment has addressed the primary biosafety concern of handling undefined microbial agents and will use BSL-2 practices. A preliminary list of the ten most abundant microorganisms has been included and contains a few risk group 2 agents, but nothing of significant concern. NIH Guidelines Section III-D-4 applies due to the use of whole transgenic animals (no gene drive modified organisms).

Last Assessment- May 2, 2024

*No biosafety-related findings identified.

Closed Protocols

None

Agenda for Administrative Business

Administrative Amendments

1. **Burkin, B2024-52, Muscular Dystrophy**

   Addition to personnel

2. **Gonzales, B2024-30, Light-dependent effect on choroid**

   Update study personnel

3. **Gonzales, B2025-10, Cancer Hijacking on the Microcirculation**

   Update study personnel

4. **Gonzales, B2023-37, Pericyte Control of Junctional Blood Flow**

   Update study personnel

5. **Rueckert, B2022-27, Study of cellular and molecular interactions of arboviruses and mosquito cell lines**

   Update study personnel

Other Business

1. Introduction of the new lab safety specialist – Andy Martin
2. News from the NIH Office of Science Policy

Meeting Close-out

Next meeting: October 8th, 2025

Time adjourned: 3:32 p.m.