

Plant Growth Facilities Faculty Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes – February 14, 2024

The meeting started at 10:30 AM

Members Present: Ming Guo, Stacy Adams, Katarzyna Glowacka, Justin McMechan, Amit Mitra

Ex-Officio Members Present: Hector Santiago, Amy Hilske, Scott Sattler, Anna Jungck

Approval of Minutes of the May 4, 2023, Meeting – Amit moved to approve the minutes. Stacy seconded. Minutes were approved.

Updates from Amy Hilske –

- Introduction and welcome Anna Jungck.
- Greenhouse Updates:
 - No major updates but working on updating lights to LEDs. Over a hundred LED lights have been purchased to distribute throughout the different greenhouses.
 - Locations determined by user requests, or where they know it will be most beneficial.
 - Greenhouses did well during the cold spikes. Most were able to maintain 40 degrees.
 - There was one break in a waterline, but UNL Facilities came quickly to make the repair within hours to get the heating system back up and running. Nothing major was damaged.
 - Question – have there been requests to lower lights for projects or is it something that can be tested?
 - It is a possibility but depends on infrastructure. Needs to be done in a way that's safe for staff.
- EHS & IBC Request/Requirement –
 - Need to ensure that every researcher has an IBC protocol where it is required.
 - It has not been a protocol in the past, but now has been added to the project request form, to ensure that they do have an IBC protocol.
 - Currently our policy states that the project request form only needs to be filled out when a project consists of over 10 to 20 large pots, or 6 or more trays. Policies need to be updated.
 - *Recommendation* – if your project requires an IBC protocol, you must fill out the form regardless of the number of plants.
 - Ordering from other places/out of state –
 - Even if an APHIS permit is not required, an IBC protocol would still be required.
 - **Action Item** – Anna following up on whether plants that did not require an APHIS transfer permit still required an IBC protocol.
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 - Question – how easy is it for staff to identify a non-compliant permit?
 - Staff do not have access to this. Amy does but as an IBC committee member, not as greenhouse director.
 - If there is a PI that is unsure of whether an IBC protocol is required, have them reach out to Anna's office to confirm.
 - *Regarding the NIH funding, because the University receives NIH funding for recombinant work, all researchers on campus must adhere to the NIH guidelines—regardless of whether their research is personally NIH funded. This work is approved by our UNL IBC (Institutional Biosafety Committee).*
 - **Voting** – it was requested to table the voting until Anna finds out more information about the permits.
 - **Action Item** – Lauren to schedule a meeting within the next week or two to discuss this issue specifically.
- Policy Change – it was requested to add a line in the policy document that states that the pots and flats purchased by greenhouse facilities are the property of the greenhouse and must returned after the project has been completed. If they know that they are going to take the pots and flats with them, there will be an opportunity to purchase them at cost.
 - **Voting** - Kasia moved to make the policy change. Ming seconded. All in favor.

Updates from Hector Santiago –

- An SBS representative has been missing from the committee for a while. Hector has reached out 5 times but has not gotten a response.
- Plant Growth Facilities – VC charged the Foundation to look at this. Derek and Hector are working with them to identify potential industry partnership donors.
 - Usage of new USDA facility at NIC is only for USDA ARS use, not UNL. USDA would continue to use UNL space as usual and not impact anything in the future.

Agenda Items –

- Chair Election
 - Justin proposed to be a co-chair with Stacy. Stacy offered to help when needed, but Justin would be the chair. Everyone was in support.

Items from the Floor –

- Teaching greenhouse concrete project update – Hector will work on this.

Next meeting

- Wednesday, March 6 at 10:30 AM
- Wednesday, April 17 at 10:00 AM

Adjourn –Meeting adjourned at 11:39 AM