



Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee

Wednesday September 14th, 2022, 1:15 pm to 2:30 pm, SSB 4210

Minutes

- 1. Land Acknowledgement**
- 2. Approval of the Agenda** – Approved by committee
- 3. Approval of Minutes** from previous full meeting (**August 24th, 2022**) – Approved by committee
- 4. Business arising from previous meeting.**
 - a. Update on Campus Operations for Fall 2022 Term**
 - On August 31/22, Health Canada approved a new bivalent vaccine – it specifically targets the SARS-CoV-2 virus from 2019 as well as the Omicron variant.
 - Expected to be available in Middlesex-London and on Campus for 18+ by September 26/22.
 - Western modified the vaccination policy – compliance deadline has been extended to January 9/23 as opposed to October 1/22, in order to give individuals a chance to choose the new bivalent booster.
 - Masking signage has been placed around campus – all indoor spaces are mask friendly, whereas masking is required in instructional spaces (classrooms, laboratories, seminar rooms, etc). This will be reviewed in early October.
 - Masking and PPE as required for research labs, clinics, etc. continue
 - Other safe practices and programs – Absence notifications continue, faculty kits, hand hygiene/signage, ventilation systems and wastewater testing.
 - COVID testing does continue – certain groups continue asymptomatic self-testing, employees who are symptomatic may contact workplace health to discuss testing/treatment. Review will be done as to how to move forward with accommodated employee testing.
 - Visitors are still asked to complete a daily symptom check before coming to campus.
 - Employee Assistance Plan.
 - Dedicated phone number for Western Employees (1-855-597-2105)
 - Suggestion box has been put in place, with the option to remain anonymous, to provide direct feedback to the Employee Well-being team regarding Lifeworks.
 - Focusing more resources on counselling and work/life support, as opposed to mobile apps/platforms.
 - b. JOHSC Powers of Authority**
 - Reviewed the correct statute and regulation references applicable to this request of the employer
 - While the terms of reference of the committee and the statute suggests there is need for consensus for any motion made by the committee, the university is

willing to discuss the concern and the request

c. Request for Review and Revision Employer Policies and Procedures

- Concerns regarding vaccinations outside of the primary series (boosters). Employee representatives expressed concern regarding hazardous conditions for persons receiving injections and also for persons with medical conditions
- Suggested that workers who have had a previous reaction to a vaccine should potentially be able to get physicians advice to not get the booster.
- Another employee representative noted that the Policy is creating a level of stress for our community of workers because there is lack of clarity on expected consequences if do not receive a booster
- Employee representatives on the Committee requested clarification from the employer regarding boosters and exemptions. Specifically what is the purpose of the booster and what will happen under the policy if employees do not comply?
- The University will respond to the request/recommendation

5. New Business

- Next meeting will be held October 5th.
- Motion to delete August 24th zoom recording and no more recordings (5 members approved, 2 were against, rest of committee abstained)

6. Adjournment – Meeting Adjourned