UNIVERSITY-WIDE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

April 11, 2007 1:00-2:30 pm
University of Washington Club, Lower Level

Membership:

- **Group 1**
  - Robin Wood
  - Jon Organ

- **Group 2**
  - Ron Fouty
  - Ric Carlson

- **Group 3**
  - Diane Hanks
  - Paul Zuchowski

- **Group 4**
  - Ann Aumann★
  - Stephanie Steppe
  - Julie Worlein★

- **Group 5**
  - Barbara Masaki
  - Carole Davison

- **Group 6**
  - Sheri Huber

- **Group 7**
  - John Miller

- **Group 8**
  - Joe Chynoweth

- **Group 9**
  - Jack Herndon
  - Tracy Erbeck

- **Group 10**
  - David Zuckerman
  - Margery Cooper

- **Group 11**
  - Laurie Bryan
  - Kathleen Newell
  - Charlotte Boynton

SEIU 925, AFL-CIO    Larry Sommers

Ex-Officio:

- Elizabeth Dahl -- Attorney General’s Office
- Anne Guthrie – Facilities Services
- Dave Weaver– Risk Management

Other Attendees:

- Denis Sapiro – Environmental Health & Safety
- David Leonard – Environmental Health & Safety
- Peter Rackers – Group 5 Guest
1. Call to order

Chair Robin Wood called the meeting to order and introduced guests Vicky Stormo, David Girts, Anneke Szyperski, Rick Cheney and Karen Hansen. Guest Peter Rackers from the College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP) Dean’s Office was introduced later by Barbara Masaki.

2. Presentation: “Workplace Violence Prevention and Readiness”

Anneke Szyperski began by describing many online resources available on campus, including CareLink and Supervisor Checklists. Special training “Stay Safe” is available directly off the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) website. (Several handouts were distributed at the end of the presentation.)

She described the agenda as including:
- Workplace Violence Policy
- Early Warning Signs
- Violent Behaviors and Appropriate Responses (a continuum)
- General Response Requirements
- General Reporting Requirements

**UW Workplace Violence Policy:**

“Individuals who engage in violent or prohibited behavior may be removed from the premises, and may be subject to dismissals or other disciplinary action, arrest and/or criminal prosecution.”

**Prohibited behaviors:**
The University does not tolerate behavior, whether direct or through the use of University facilities, properties or resources that:

- Is violent
- Threatens violence
- Harasses or intimidates others
  - Repeated unwelcome telephone calls or e-mails
  - Oral or written statements
  - Stalking
- Interferes with an individual’s legal rights, movement and expression
- Disrupts:
  - The workplace
  - The academic environment
  - The University’s ability to provide service to the public

Violence doesn’t “just happen”

- It is often the result of a build-up of problems without resolution over a significant period of time.
- It is important to
  - Trust your instincts. If you are afraid, there is likely a reason for that fear
  - Watch for warning signs
  - Report to your supervisor any observations that concern you – it is your responsibility to report
  - Reports will be reviewed using specific assessment “tools”

Dave Girts described warning behaviors and general guidelines for response.

Early Warning signs:

- Early signs are not typically prohibited behaviors
- Concern arises from a combination of warning signs and persistence over time
- Most people, even those who experience high levels of stress over long periods of time, don’t act out in any violent way
- Violence is unpredictable.
- There is no easy formula to take the place of increasing awareness to distress shown by students, co-workers and others in your workplace.
- Concerns should be reported.

General Guidelines:

- Get involved with the individual only at the level at which you feel comfortable
- Report all behavior that concerns you
- The risk of not responding far outweighs the risk of reporting an issue, even if it turns out not to be serious.

Early warning signs of increased distress:

- Increased moodiness (especially brooding over situations)
- Increased agitation such as pacing, wringing of hands, and staring
- Decline in self-care
- Decrease in productivity
- Attendance problems
• Use of drugs/abuse of alcohol

Effective responses to early warning signs of distress:
• Listen
• Support with empathetic, non-judgmental statements
• Help the individual with problem resolution
• Suggest resources, such as UW CareLink
• Stay alert to additional changes / increased distress
• At the point the workplace is being affected, you must tell the supervisor (you can still maintain confidentiality, however)

Warning signs of heightened distress:
• Inability to concentrate
• Overreaction to situations
• Poor impulse control (e.g. snapping at co-workers, throwing, slamming and kicking things but not directed at anyone)
• Conflicts with co-workers, supervisors, customers
• Intimidation, belligerence, harassment or other inappropriate behavior
• Withdrawal from friends and acquaintances
• Abuse of alcohol / drugs including prescription medication
• Talk of self-harm, suicide, or extreme feelings of worthlessness (e.g., “everyone would be better off if I weren’t around”)
• Desperation over family, personal, financial or legal matters
• Involvement in an abusive relationship – domestic violence

Effective responses to heightened levels of distress:
• Maintain a posture of respect
• Do not judge or criticize
• Ask specific questions about why the person is upset
• Stay calm and in control of your own emotions
• Set limits on out of control behavior while offering choices for “venting” or problem solving
• Do not take on more than you can handle; ask for help (e.g., supervisor, HR, CareLink, administrator, co-workers).
• Direct individual to other resources (this might include offering to make initial call for help, etc.)
• Inform supervisor of your observations and concerns. You can also call the UWPD, which is another conduit to Human Resources.

Warnings of increased risk of violence:
• Direct or veiled threats of harm to self or others
• Showing a fascination with incidents of violence – statements may indicate approval of violence/identification with perpetrators
• Escalating conflicts; blaming others for their problems – little or no ownership of responsibility
• Bringing a weapon to the workplace, inappropriate references to weapons and how they could be used
• Sabotaging property of employer or co-workers
• Fear on the part of co-workers
• Other extreme changes in behavior

Responses to increased risk of violence:
• Immediately report all behaviors and statements made, as well as your personal concerns, to your supervisor or to the police
• Remain calm
• Manage your own personal safety

Prohibited behaviors (repeat of above list):

What is violent behavior?
• Any behavior, either deliberate or spontaneous, that causes danger to self, to others, or causes damage to property
  o Making threats of violence causing fear in other persons
  o Damaging property
  o Pushing or hitting
  o Displaying or using a weapon

Immediate help:
• Call the University Police 911
• Describe
  o What is going on
  o Where it is happening
  o Who is doing the violence
• When you are safe, notify your supervisor and Human Resources as soon as possible
• Alert co-workers to the danger and tell them to calmly leave the area.

Keep yourself safe…
• If you’re injured, you cannot help others
• Get out of the danger area as quickly as possible. Go to a safe and secure location.
• Do NOT attempt to intervene or disarm the individual. This is very dangerous.

If you cannot get away…
• Remain calm
• Evaluate your circumstances
• Visually locate exits and telephone
• Realize the individual may be afraid. When confronted with a weapon we are so fearful that we forget that the individual’s reason for having the weapon may be based on fear.
• Do what the person tell you to do
• Keep the person talking to de-escalate the tension
Your goal is to get the person on your side or to convince him/her that you are in this together
Try to find things to agree on. Each small “agreement” is a step back from the crisis situation
Try to find a way to call the Police

Do not...
Try to disarm the person. IT IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS
Endanger yourself or others by
  o Arguing
  o Not following instructions

Workplace Safety Plan
How can you be prepared?
  o Talk about concerns within your unit
  o Create a workplace safety plan
  o Establish a code word
  o Revisit once a year
  o Review the safety plan with new employees
  o Report concerns to your supervisor

Good things to cover in the workplace safety plan: What do you do if you
  o See someone committing any non-violent crime such as theft (a video is available on non-workplace violence)
  o See an unknown person in a private or non-public work area
  o See any other suspicious person or circumstance
  o If you don’t want to alert the suspicious person, ask a co-worker to call the police (using a pre-arranged code word).

The UWPD can offer a safety pre-assessment and suggest improvements such as mirrors at intersections

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
Individuals are required to report any incident, even if it doesn’t involve an employee
Always contact your unit Human Resources Consultant
  o Anneke Szyperski, HR Consultant (206) 685-7575; anneke2@u.washington.edu
  o If not available, ask to speak to any Human Resources Consultant, Assistant Director or Upper Campus Director at (206) 543-2354
  o Supervisors who receive incident reports of violent or threatening behavior must notify the head of unit
  o A report must be submitted using the Online Accident Reporting System (OARS)

Assessment and Response
The Human Resources Consultant will involve the appropriate resources and assist supervisors and managers in their response to allegations of violent or threatening conduct.
The goal is to gauge needs of the situation and department
WPV Assessment Team

- Team Members:
  - UWPD
  - Human Resources
  - Attorney General
  - UWCareLink
  - Department of the affected party
  - Possible representatives from the Provost Office and/or Student Affairs

- Confidentiality is based on need-to-know
- Discussion of the incident includes:
  - Review of background information
  - Creation of a Risk Abatement Plan (this is a continuum)

Summary of how to cope with …

- An angry person
  - Stay calm, Listen attentively
  - Maintain eye contact
  - Be courteous, Be patient
  - Keep the situation in your control

- A threatening person
  - Protect yourself – leave if necessary
  - Call 911
  - Have someone else call 911 (using pre-arranged code word)

- A threatening person with a weapon
  - Do not try to disarm the person
  - Leave the danger area – run away
  - Get to a safe location
  - Follow police instructions
  - Alert co-workers to leave the area

Question from a Committee member: “with cell phone calls going directly to the Seattle PD or Washington State Patrol, how quickly can the Assessment Team meet?”

Answer: within several hours. The Assessment Team meets every Friday from 2:00 to 3:00 pm to discuss non-emergent topics, so that time would already be available.

- The President has appointed a committee to review procedures regarding violence. The Board of Deans will discuss the topic when it meets next week.
- The role of Faculty is very important.

For information in an on-going violent event

- Call UWPD Dispatch 543-9331 (also called “Communications Center”)
- Call the UW Hotline 206 UWS-INFO (also used for inclement weather)
- The UW website is a better choice because it’s more inclusive:
  - UW Home Page → “About the UW” → “Emergency Information” →
  - UW Emergency Management Home Page → click on:
  - “Immediate Emergency Assistance (red box on top left) → click on:
  - “UW Emergency News and Information” (middle of page below gray boxes)
  - To FAX UW Emergency Management, use (206) 897-8001
Intra-building communication (e.g., PA system) is not available in some buildings such as Gould Hall.

(The Tacoma and Bothell campuses have services similar to the Seattle campus.)

Committee members suggested these needs regarding workplace violence:
- More training and more focused training should be offered for supervisors
- A refresher course should be offered in addition to initial training.

3. Announcement:
Rick Cheney, Director of Facilities Services Maintenance & Alterations, discussed the new Administrative Policy Statement 56.6 (APS) “Alterations to UW Seattle Campus Buildings and Grounds”. The APS is available on various websites, such as Purchasing and Capital Projects.
- Question: does this APS apply to vendors who install products such as carpets.
  Answer: Yes

4. Group Reports:
Group 1, Administration/Other Academic Programs: Jon Organ reported that Charles Easterberg gave a presentation concerning the West Nile Virus.

Group 2, Executive Vice President: Ron Fouty said his group is scheduled to meet tomorrow, April 12th.

Group 3, Student Affairs: Diane Hanks had nothing to report.

Group 4, Health Sciences/Hospitals: Stephanie Steppe reported discussing problems in HSB J-Wing plumbing during the move due to laboratory supplies clogging drain pipes below cup sinks. Also discussed were ways to identify and locate ductless fume hoods being used in the Health Sciences Building. G/H-wing renovations are scheduled to start April 26th.

Group 5, Architecture & Urban Planning: Barbara Masaki introduced her guest, Peter Rackers. She reported that the CAUP has been experiencing lots of turnover and is currently understaffed. Regarding the recent murder, she relayed the concern that Gould Hall does not have a building-wide public address system. Thus, in a different scenario - with a gunman at large - it would have been difficult if not impossible to communicate to occupants to shut and lock their doors and NOT try to leave the building. Dick Cheney commented on how fire alarm systems are constantly being upgraded, and new ones have the capability of integrating PA systems. Ric Carlson asked if a telephone system was capable of doing that. Dick said that was not a good option. Dave Leonard mentioned that Capital Safety Funds are actively used at the UW to upgrade file and life safety systems in buildings, and stated he would follow-up within EH&S to find out more about this type of communication upgrade.

Group 6, Arts & Sciences: Sherri Huber reported that her group will be contacting departments who haven’t responded to the request for names of their department safety
Group 7, UW Bothell: John Miller referred to the earlier discussion regarding communicating with building occupants during a violent situation and the importance of safety plans.

Group 8, UW Tacoma: not present.

Group 9, Engineering: Jack Herndon reported that his group hasn’t met for a while – and they need to discuss their lack of meetings. Engineering had a couple of unplanned evacuation practices. The first one was due to soldering a pipe directly underneath a smoke alarm. One week later the alarm “self triggered.” Jack said they were scheduled for an entirely new alarm system. “That should fix the problem.”

Group 10, Forest Resources: David Zuckerman reported his Committee is updating its Evacuation Warden training. All facilities are involved.

Group 11, Ocean & Fishery Science: Charlotte Boynton reported having their quarterly meeting last month. Henderson Hall and Schmitz Hall discovered during yesterday’s unplanned power outages that those buildings have no emergency lighting. (Power was lost due to a problem in the Electric/Hydraulic building.) Some members felt that emergency training should be mandated. With certain activities that involve “inherent” risk such as working with money or working alone at night, it makes sense to have the UWPS do a security assessment as part of emergency planning.

5. EH&S Report:
Denis Sapiro reported that an employee was hit by a vehicle on Stevens Way about 4:30 pm. More detail next time.

The Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) is making progress regarding the Harborview Public Safety Officer’s complaint and hopes to end the investigation by the end of April.

EH&S will be asking for volunteers to help develop a UW Asbestos Management Plan.

There is an open investigation for an employee complaint at UWMC about a blocked fire exit, earthquake hazard, lighting, and drawer ergonomics.

L&I is investigating the shooting at Gould Hall.

6. Minutes for February and March
Due to shortage of time, review and approval of minutes were delayed until the May meeting.

7. Adjournment