

Dalhousie Professional Management Group (DPMG)

Year-End Report

Environmental Health & Safety Committee

Submitted by Liz LeClair, August 2018

Since 1980, the Dalhousie University Environmental Health and Safety Committee has provided a forum for discussion and input on the University's program. Although established well in advance of any legislated requirement, the Committee serves the entire University and responds to the requirement set out in Sections 29 to 32 of the present Occupational Health and Safety Act. The Committee reports, through the Vice-President Finance and Administration, to the President of the University.

Recognizing both the responsibility for safety in their units that is carried by Deans, Directors and Chairs, and the importance of participation, the University has encouraged heads of units to establish local health and safety committees. These committees provide opportunities to resolve health or safety concerns within the unit and provide opportunities for local safety innovation.

2017-18 Committee Representatives

DPMG's two representatives for the EHS Committee for the 2017-18 year were:

- Liz LeClair – Office of Advancement (Primary)
- Michelle Sampson - Department of Microbiology and Immunology (Alternate)

Year in Review: EHS Key Issues and Highlights

- Issues Management & Reporting
 - Accident Incident Summaries
 - These reports were reviewed every month by the committee. The majority of incidents on campus were minor and no serious harm or injury came to any of the staff, faculty or students.
 - Custodial staff reported the largest number of injuries throughout the year. Themes of the injuries focused on sharp objects (glass and needle disposal), slips and falls (wet floors, icy surfaces), and lifting of heavy objects (compost bins)
 - Student injuries were mainly contained to the labs but there were a number of incidents of students slipping and falling on wet floors
 - All issues were addressed by the committee and members of the staff.
- Director's Reports:
 - Reports were provided to the committee monthly from the leads on fire safety, chemical and biological safety, campus leads, and hazardous waste disposal.
 - A significant project was undertaken by the team to review containment and disposal of nuclear waste on campus in 2018 with the UN Atomic Energy Commission. The University was found to be in good standing.

- Security reports provided the committee with updates on key incidents on campus including fire alarms, break-in's, accident and injury on campuses, and any motor vehicle accidents. No significant issues occurred this year with the exception of the Truro Campus fire which is reported on in the Incident Report below.
- Training (In-Person & Online)
 - EHS staff are working on both in-person and online training courses for Dalhousie staff.
 - Mike Burns, head of security, lead a multi-campus training exercise in the fall of 2018 to assess the school's capacity to respond to emergency measures. The scenario was a watermain burst on the Carlton and Studley campus. The team felt confident in the University's response to the incident in collaboration with St. John's Ambulance, Red Cross, and student volunteers. The case is being reviewed to improve overall emergency response measures ongoing.
 - EHS are launching online training for WHIMIS and Chemical Spill response. The program will be free to Dalhousie University employees and will be provided by fee to external stakeholders. The link can be found at: <https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/chemical-safety/whmis.html>. DMPG members are encouraged to participate and sign up.
- Department of Labour Incident Reports
 - Three significant incidents were submitted to the Department of Labour & Advanced Education by the team at EHS in 2017-18:
 - Truro Campus Fire – still under investigation at this time. Report to be filed.
 - Chemical Spill – spill in the MacDonald Building that required an evacuation of the building and investigation.
 - Sexton Campus – wood shop injury; tech was seriously injured and a report was filed to LAE. The tech is recovering and requires time off work.

Summary:

Overall it was a very good year for EHS Committee. The committee still struggles to find representatives from some areas of the university, but Jerry and the team are working hard to fill those gaps.

The online training tools are well received and will provide Dalhousie employees with access to excellent safety training opportunities.

Liz LeClair will remain on as the primary rep for DMPG for another two-year term.