

Vitalant Research Institute (VRI)
Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) Meeting Minutes

Date: May 22, 2026

Time: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM PDT

Location: Microsoft Teams

Attendance

Present: Graham Simmons, Satish Pillai, Rachel Martinelli, Patrick Roberts, Shawn Kiell, Nora Hirschler, Mohamed Bouzidi, Marcus Muench, Steven Sweet

Absent: Pamela Millani, Jing Jin

Meeting called to order at approximately 11:00 AM PDT. Patrick Roberts noted that the meeting posting placed in all entry points of 360 Spear Street, San Francisco, CA.

1. Welcome and Membership Updates

- Patrick Roberts announced the addition of new IBC members **Shawn Kiell** and **Pamela Millani**.
- Community members and external representatives were acknowledged.
- Pamela Millani was unable to attend the meeting.

2. NIH Registration and Annual Reporting Requirements

- Patrick Roberts reviewed NIH annual IBC registration requirements.
- Committee members were asked to provide updated bio-sketches reflecting current titles and credentials.
- The IBC Charter and membership roster will be updated to include new members and submitted as part of the NIH annual reporting process.

3. Future Use of the IBC

Rachel Martinelli discussed expanding the role of the IBC beyond protocol review. Proposed uses include:

- Review of new staff training and onboarding.
- Documentation of project closure and destruction/inactivation of biological materials.
- Review and approval of biosafety-related policy changes.
- Regularly scheduled meetings to demonstrate ongoing institutional oversight and NIH compliance.

Committee Consensus:

- The IBC should meet on a regular basis, with a target frequency of every six months, in addition to meetings required for protocol review.

4. Chikungunya Virus (CHIKV) Vaccine and Respiratory Protection Policy Review

Rachel Martinelli and Graham Simmons presented a risk assessment and policy proposal regarding CHIKV work in the BSL-3 laboratory.

Discussion Topics:

- Availability of the FDA-approved CHIKV vaccine (Vimkunya) for laboratory personnel.
- Vaccine eligibility for personnel working in the BSL-3 environment.
- Risk assessment supporting task-based respiratory protection requirements.
- Education and informed consent documentation for personnel accepting or declining vaccination.

Committee Discussion and General Agreement:

- Vaccination should be offered to personnel with potential occupational exposure in the BSL-3.
- Vaccination will remain voluntary.
- Educational materials and acknowledgment forms should be developed to document vaccine acceptance or declination.
- Respiratory protection requirements may be based on task-specific risk assessments, with certain high-risk activities continuing to require respiratory protection regardless of vaccination status.

5. BSL-3 Eye Protection Policy Update

Rachel Martinelli presented a proposal requiring eye protection in the BSL-3 laboratory.

Policy Proposal:

- Personnel entering the BSL-3 must wear either:
 - Safety glasses (including prescription safety glasses), or
 - A face shield.

Additional Information:

- VRI will reimburse up to \$200 for prescription safety glasses for eligible staff.
- Face shields will be made available as an alternative form of eye protection.

Outcome:

- Committee members expressed support for implementing the policy.

6. Protocol Re-Reviews

The committee reviewed upcoming protocol re-review requirements for projects approved in 2023.

Reviewer Assignments:

- **PD-001-2023** (Prerna Dabral) – Graham Simmons agreed to review.
- **GS-002-2023 Amendment** – Mohamed agreed to review.

Discussion:

- The committee discussed handling inactive projects that remain in storage but are no longer actively conducting research.
- Members agreed that renewal reviews can document that projects remain inactive while maintaining approved storage of materials.
- Meeting Minutes will be included in the June 5, 2026, meeting; the committee will cast votes to approve at that time.

7. Next Meeting

- A follow-up meeting is scheduled for **June 5, 2026, at 11:30 AM PDT** to review assigned protocols and pending amendments.

8. Public Posting of IBC Information

- Rachel Martinelli reported plans to post IBC meeting information and approved minutes on the VRI website to satisfy NIH public access requirements.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:00 PM PDT.