Health and Safety Council
Annual Report AY 2020-2021

The HSC will evaluate effectiveness of the council activities on an annual basis, and include the following information in an annual report:

1. Strategies, policies, programs, or procedures that were reviewed and revised by the council
2. Processes that were improved based on the council’s activities or recommendations
3. Number of meetings held during the reporting period
4. Brief summary of the council’s work during the reporting period
5. Near-term and long-term actions and plans
6. Whether there are items in this council that warrant broader faculty consultation through the Faculty Senate

1. Strategies, policies, programs, procedures reviewed/revised:

   WAC 296-901-140 Hazard Communication Standard and CWUP 2-40-140 Chemical Inventory Management System (CIMS) Procedure

   The council thoroughly reviewed and revised this procedure related to hazardous chemical inventory management which is critical to university compliance with the Hazard Communication Standard WAC 296-901-140, and aligns with the university’s core value of safety and its strategic goal of sustainability. This procedure establishes a university-wide hazardous chemical inventory management system (CIMS) and outlines the roles and responsibilities of university employees in relation to the implementation of the CIMS in compliance with CWU Policy 2-40-140. The procedure was approved by UPAC in June 2021 as CWUR 7-20-050.

   The council made and approved revisions to the official charter in accordance with WAC 296-800-13025. The changes included adding a policy regarding member attendance, clearer wording to reflect council mission, and adding membership representation to include all the colleges and a representative from ADCO (Academic Department Chairs Organization) and UFC (United Faculty of Central).

   Additionally, the council solicited new members to fill vacant positions. A new college safety representative, Dr. Kara Gabriel, joined us from the College of the Sciences. Mark Young filled the PSE classified representative position vacated by Ian Seiler. The new member seat
from ADCO (Academic Department Chairs Organization) was filled by Dr. Dion Rivera. The vacant student position was filled by Makenna Thuringer.

The council surveyed colleges, departments, and work groups to determine adherence to Department of Labor and Industry regulations and [WAC 296-800-13020](http://wac.wa.gov/). This information has been collated into a single spreadsheet and a gap analysis was performed. A PowerPoint training on the requirements for safety meetings and how to conduct meetings has been completed. It is ready to be circulated with the annual Department Safety Meeting data to promote compliance within departments regarding conducting safety meetings and training.

2. Processes improved:

_Safety Culture at CWU:_ The council took steps to improve the safety culture of the institution. The employee elected representatives brought attention to the current status of CWU’s safety culture, identified primary contributing factors to a poor safety culture, and offered suggestions for improving the safety culture at CWU.

A review of annual safety culture surveys from 2017-2021 was conducted to determine trends and analyze report data for noticeable or significant items.

Overall, the 2021 data indicated a positive upward trend in safety culture compared to previous years. However, for some responses, these trends could be influenced by the large percentage of workers working remotely from home during the survey period in 2020. Additionally, the use of survey methodology is prone to response bias as those who respond typically have concerns. In addition to the historically low response rate, this results in questionable statistical significance. However, common trends and indicators of the CWU safety culture do exist within the data. Many of these trends and indicators are analogous to concerns which have been brought to the council’s attention by the campus community. Concerns related to COVID-19 are not considered separate from this discussion.

*Most common concerns:*

- Slips, trips, falls (less mention in 2020 due to less employees on campus).
- Sedentary work and ergonomics.
- Indoor air quality and mold (this issue has been a top concern even pre-covid).
- Many don’t feel safety inspections are being performed in their area.
- People do feel encouraged to report safety issues and only a small minority don’t feel comfortable reporting.
- However, a majority feel that nothing happens after reports are made. They are unaware of any investigation, or they feel no appropriate action or corrected action is taken when incidents are reported.
- Majority of people are not sure where to find safety info.
Majority of people indicate that safety as a topic is rarely/never discussed during staff meetings.

- Majority of people indicate don’t know who their safety rep is.
- Lack of funding and support in the safety office
- Lack of safety training and CPR/First Aid classes are not offered.
- The negative optics of fostering a potential punitive culture due to EHS reporting to the University Police and Public Safety.
- Parking lots and sidewalks are not safe in winter when there is ice and snow.

These trends were used to develop an action plan by the council with recommendations from the council chair for areas that the university can invest in to improve these issues.

**Support for the Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) Department at CWU:** Many of the concerns discussed above stem from a lack of support for the EHS department at CWU, an issue that the council has called for to be addressed for some time. Increasing the support for the EHS department through staffing and funding has become one of the primary missions of the council. To that end, the council once again took action to show support for the efforts to rehire the vacant EHS positions that have not been re-hired in over a year due to COVID hiring freeze.

The council formulated a letter of support which included the costs of previous incidents that could have been prevented had the positions been filled. This letter was to assist the Chief of Police with funding requests for two safety positions during the spring budget allocation request. The goal for these positions is to allow for routine safety checks to be conducted regularly so that more proactive safety preventive tasks can be done to prevent accidents, injuries, and other risks and liabilities the university currently encounters. These positions will also support, and possibly manage, the chemical purchasing and inventory management system currently being implemented.

In addition to the letter, a video supporting the hiring of a safety officer and industrial hygienist was created which included presentations from the council chair, chief of police, and environmental health and safety manager regarding the importance of these positions. The video was submitted to the Budget Allocation Subcommittee and as a result, the safety officer and industrial hygienist position made it in the top 10 priority recommendations during the 2021 budget allocation request summit. Therefore, these recommendations will go forward to PBAC and then to the President for approval.

**Support for the COVID Reopening Advisory Committee and Policies and Procedures Working Group:** The council continued to take an active role and provided representation on the COVID-19 Reopening Advisory Committee. The chair attended committee meetings and reviewed plans to ensure that occupational health and safety concerns are being appropriately addressed for faculty and staff. Additionally, the council hosted the program
manager of the committee at several meetings for information sharing and discussion. Furthermore, the council has volunteered their expertise as part of the reopening efforts and plans to review when needed due to new external state and federal (e.g. DOE, L&I, OSHA, etc.) regulations related to COVID that may arise and affect employees. The council will review these regulations and assist the working group with developing protocols for the University to implement and ensure they are meeting these new guidelines, policies, or regulations.

3. Number of meetings held:
Total of 11 (no December meeting held)

4. Summary of work:
The council has reviewed all reported accidents at each meeting, made recommendations for improvements to safety at the university, addressed safety concerns brought to the council by members of the CWU community, made recommendations to the VP of Operations for Cabinet discussion, and reviewed and revised policies and procedures regarding safety.

5. Actions and plans:

Near-term plans include:

I. Filling vacant council positions—in particular WFSE representation, non-represented, employee elected position, and representatives from College of Business and Library.

II. Distribution of Department Safety Committee Status Report to departments for updating and confirmation. Discovery of gaps in department safety committees, communication, and training of departments regarding safety committee requirements. This is done in a way that is aligned with the existing Emergency Plan in order to guide departments in how to conduct safety meetings, increase council presence on campus, and further encourage a safety culture.

III. Creation of a fall/winter communication plan to promote proper footwear and clothing that is appropriate to winter weather and conducive to preventing slips/trips/falls.

Long-term plans include:

I. Work with stakeholders across the University to implement the action plan based on recommendations from the council chair for areas that the university can invest in to improve the safety culture at CWU.
II. Development of a situational awareness program for employees to increase behavioral safety and eliminate commonly seen accidents that are due to inattention.

III. Continued support for EH&S hiring, including the re-allocation of funds to create a new safety position that more broadly serves the university laboratory community.

IV. Creation of a plan to encourage a reporting culture for all unsafe conditions on campus so that these items can be addressed and corrected quickly by maintenance teams.

6. Items that need Faculty Senate review:

The new council charter should be presented to faculty senate in hopes that better coordination with the senate will help foster cooperation and support to include representatives from all colleges.