The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth Houston)
Institutional Biosafety Committee
March 12, 2026
Minutes

Meeting Attendance:

Voting Members
Dr. Catherine Denicourt (Chair)
Dr. Eric Brown
Dr. Nancy Crider
Dr. Nicholas Justice
Dr. Ashish Kapoor
Dr. Yang Liu
Dr. Yahuan Lou
Dr. Eunsu Park
Dr. Scott Patlovich
Dr. Jose Portugal
Dr. Mary Robinson
Mr. Spencer Chichester (SM)
Mr. Petko Ivanov (CM)
Mr. Imad Khalil (CM)
Mr. Jesus Duran Ramirez (SM)
Mrs. Marivonne Rodriguez (CM)

Non-Voting Members
Dr. Kristin King
Mr. Zack Becker
Mr. Colin Harrison
Ms. Rebecca Kairis
Ms. Allison Lino
Ms. Meredith Mills

Guests:
Ermina Ali, intern
Dr. Rachel Wilson, CLAMC

1. **Call to Order**

   The meeting was called to order by Dr. Denicourt at 3:00 PM.

2. **Conflicts of Interest**
   The Chairperson reminded the committee about the conflict of interest procedure. She also reminded the committee members that all protocols that are discussed at the meeting are to be considered confidential and are not to be discussed outside of the meeting with non-IBC members.

3. **Review Previous Meeting Minutes (February 12, 2026)**

   Approved = 15
   Opposed = 0
   Abstained = 1

4. **IBC Administrative Items**

   In-person Meeting: The committee discussed and decided to have the April 9, 2026, IBC meeting in person at the Cyclotron (CYF) training room B.106.

   Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules Research Applications Review

   During the review the committee assessed the containment levels as well as the facilities, procedures, practices and training and expertise of the personnel involved in recombinant

or synthetic nucleic acid molecules research. The committee also reviewed agent characteristics, types of manipulations planned, sources of the inserted nucleic acid sequences, the nature of the inserted nucleic acid sequences and whether an attempt will be made to obtain expression of a foreign gene, and if so, the protein that will be produced. Furthermore, the PI must determine the applicable section(s) of the *NIH Guidelines*.

5. Clinical Protocol Reviews (HGT)

None

6. Protocol Reviews

IBC-26-033 – Dr. Jun Wang – "Novel Insights into ROCK2 in Sinus Node Homeostasis and Dysfunction Treatment"

Containment Level: BSL-1; ABSL-1
NIH Section: III-D-4-a, III-E-3
Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training requirements
Approved = 16
Opposed = 0
Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved with no additional recommendations.

IBC-26-035 – Dr. Laura Goetzl – "Metformin and Fetal Brain Biomarkers"

Containment Level: BSL-2 with Herpes B Post Exposure Guidance; no animal work associated with the protocol.
NIH Section: None
Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training requirements
Approved = 16
Opposed = 0
Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved with no additional recommendations.

7. Conditionally Exempt Protocol Reviews

IBC-26-034 – Dr. Laura Goetzl – "Biomarkers of the effect of Metformin on the Adult and Fetal Brain"

8. Protocol Updates

a. Significant updates:

None

b. Administrative updates:

IBC-21-076 – Dr. Ali Azhdarinia – "Molecular Imaging Probe Development"
- **Addition of bioagent:** BxPC3 cells and PANC-1 cells (human pancreatic cancer cells)
- **Removal of Personnel:** Remove Servando Hernandez Vargas and Solmaz AghaAmiri

IBC-22-004 – Dr. Kangho Kim – "Metabolic Benefits of Hepatic Bile Acid Signaling"
- **Addition of work:** Added the use of AAV8-TBG-Tdo2 (overexpression) and AAV8-CRISPR/Cas9-Tdo2 (knockdown) in the fourth project to restore or inhibit tryptophan 2,3-dioxygenase function specifically in the liver. AAV will be delivered via tail vein to mice, BSL-1, ABSL-1, III-D-4-a (new work does not increase containment or NIH guidelines)
- **Addition of rDNA and bioagent:** AAV8-TBG-Tdo2 and AAV8-CRISPR/Cas9-Tdo2
- **Addition of animal strains:** Mice (B6.129P2-Lyz2tm1(cre)Ifo/J, Lyz2-cre/+;Ahr flox)

IBC-22-051 – Dr. Simon Young – "Hydrogel encapsulated and responsive micro-cytokine factories to treat oral cancer"
- **Addition of bioagents:** Syrian hamster oral cancer cell line HCPC-1, murine oral cancer cells (MOC1-OVA, MOC2-OVA)
- **Addition of approved AWC protocol:** AWC-25-0053

IBC-23-074 – Dr. James Murphy – **"Characterization of Immunological Parameters Related to Rapid/Slow Progression of viral infections"**
- **Update title to bolded title**
- **Addition of work:** Use of biospecimen frozen plasma and whole blood from protocol HSC-MS-03-296 on testing POC device development under future use of samples.
- **Removal of personnel:** Thulasi Thiviyanathan and Haniyeh Koochak
- **Removal of locations:** MSE R227 and MSE R229
- **Addition of locations:** MSB 3.131 and MSB 3.133

IBC-24-027 – Dr. Kevin Lin - "The role of Protein Arginine Methyltransferases in neurovascular coupling and brain diseases"
- **Addition of work with rDNA Bioagent:** Addition of 2 AAV vector to knockdown Dopamine Receptor 2 in: a) in neurons, b) brain endothelial cells, with the AAV scramble paired to each virus (premade) for injection into mice. This project is part of the dissertation experiments of the graduate student "Julia Langman".
  Neuron-specific viral knockdown of D2R (AAV/PHP.eB-hSYN-eGFP-mDrd2-shRNAmir(1)) as well as the scramble virus AAV/PHP.eB-hSYN-GFP-scrmb-shRNAmir
  Endothelial-specific viral knockdown of D2R (AAV/BR1-CDH5-mCherry-mDrd2-shRNAmir(1)), as well as de scramble virus AAV/BR1-CDH5-mCherry-scrmb-shRNAmir.

- **Addition of Personnel:** Julia Langman, Barbara Brito Nanni, Julia Zaccarelli Magalhaes, Drew Smith
- **Removal of Personnel:** Luiz Matuguma

IBC-24-080 – Dr. Jiaqian Wu – "The function roles of regulatory molecules in the differentiation of neural stem cells and oligodendrocytes" AND "Identifying novel molecular targets for chronic spinal cord injury" AND "Identifying Novel Potential Therapeutic Targets for Chronic SCI Gliosis"
- **Addition of personnel:** Eman Jamal (UH Student)

IBC-25-029 – Dr. Yi-Ping Li – "Skeletal Muscle Remodeling" AND "Intramuscular Mechanism of Cancer Cachexia"
- **Add bioagents**: pCDNA3.1 vectors expressing p38alpha MAPK, p38beta, and eIF3f

IBC-25-050 – Dr. Xiangdong Lyu – "Stress Responses in Tumor Progression and Therapy Resistance"
- **Addition of bioagent:** Mouse cancer cells (PYMT-M, 2331L, and 2396L)

IBC-25-062 – Dr. Tatiana Barichello – "Association between experimental childhood meningitis and risk of schizophrenia in adulthood" AND "Infection-driven mechanisms associated with Alzheimer's disease pathology"
- **Addition of location:** Update BBSB6260B as the ABSL-2 housing location

IBC-25-074 – Dr. Zhongcong Xie – "Effects of anesthesia and surgery on brain function"
- **Removal of personnel:** Yuanlin Dong, Xiang Li
- **Addition of personnel:** Weiting Zhang, Ruiwei Wang, Yanjing Guo

IBC-26-008 – Dr. John Hancock – "Molecular and Spatial Analysis of Plasma Membrane Nanodomains CPRIT RP170233"AND "K-ras Spatiotemporal Dynamics: Novel Therapeutic Targets" AND "Development of a novel K-Ras therapeutic. CPRIT DP150065" AND "Decoding the structures and lipid binding specificity of small GTPase membrane Anchors" AND "Phosphatidylserine acyl chain remodeling regulates KRAS spatial distribution and function on the plasma membrane" AND "Regulation of KRAS plasma membrane targeting by defined glycosphingolipids. RO1 GM151280-01" AND "KRAS spatiotemporal dynamics: lipid glycosylation as a novel therapeutic target"
- **Addition of work:** Using AAVs to express sgRNAs targeting UGCG and specific GSL enzymes to infect KP cells
- **Addition of rDNA:** Adeno-associated virus (2nd generation packaging system; pITR-AAV-Rep2Cap9-GFP, pDGM6, pAdDeltaF6), cDNA plasmids (sgRNAs targeting UGCG and specific GSL enzyme)
- **Addition of bioagent:** Adeno-associated virus (AAV6 and AAV9)
- **Addition of animal strains:** Mice (B6.129S6-Ugcgtm4Rlp/Mmucd, FVB.129S6(B6)-Gt(ROSA)26Sortm1(Luc) Kael/J)

IBC-26-025 – Dr. Seungwoo Kang – "Astrocyte-neuron mechanisms of glutamatergic modulation in social novelty recognition"
- **Addition of personnel:** Aubrey Bennett and Hyunjung Kim

9. BSL-3 Update

The BSL-3 (currently used for BSL-2+/ABSL-2+) is still under commissioning. We are waiting for repairs to occur to the source of the water damage on the ceiling.

10. Biological Safety Program Activity Report

The Biological Safety Program Activity Report was included in the packet for review. In February, a mouse bite was reported during CLAMC staff training.

11. Environmental Protection Program Activity Report

The Environmental Protection Program Safety Program Activity Report was included in the packet for review. Contact EPP for autoclave training.

12. Other Items

Update on Biological Agent, Biological Toxin, and Potential Infectious Material Acknowledgement Form
Reviewed accumulated data from the form released in February.

University-Wide Statement of Responsibility for NAC
The Biological Safety program summarized the actions taken to include content on Poliovirus Containment in the UTHealth Houston Institutional Biosafety Manual, Module 2 of Biosafety Basics for Researchers, and the BSL-2 survey question for the Biological Agent, Biological Toxin, and Potential Infectious Material Acknowledgement Form. Based on the data from the Form, the IBC requested that the Biological Safety Program receive additional submissions prior to the statement of responsibility.

13. Next Meeting

The meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2026, 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM, in person at the Cyclotron (CYF) training room B.106.

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Dr. Denicourt at 3:40 PM.