

MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY

555 31st Street

Downers Grove Il 60515

Institutional Biosafety Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Details

Date: December 2, 2025

Time: 2:00 P.M. – 3:03 P.M. Illinois / 1:00 P.M. – 2:03 P.M. Arizona

Location: Remote via Microsoft Teams

Meeting Closed: As a private institution, Midwestern University does not hold public IBC meetings. All IBC Meeting Minutes are available on the Midwestern University website.

Members Present: Nicholas F. Noriea (IBC Chair), Adebayo Molehin (Biosafety Officer, Glendale), Agnes Pascual, Karolina Klosowska, Robert Foreman, Allen Helm, Jeremy Ellermeier, Ogi Okwumabua, Kathleen Kennedy, and Amanda Rice.

Guests Present: None.

Staff Present: Nicholas Cronk

Members Excused: Richard Laddaga (Biosafety Officer, Downers Grove) and Brian Wellensiek.

Commonly Used Abbreviations

- IBC: Institutional Biosafety Committee
- BSO: Biological Safety Officer
- BSL: Biosafety Level
- PI: Principal Investigator
- IACUC: Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
- NIH: National Institutes of Health
- SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

Agenda Items

- 1. Call to Order:** The Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) Chair called the meeting to order at 2:02 P.M. Central / 1:02 P.M. Arizona. A quorum was present.
- 2. Member Conflicts:** The IBC Chair reminded attendees that any notes that they retain are subject to public disclosure. A statement was also made about conflict of interest and voting on research proposals as described in the IBC Charter. This includes sharing a grant or a familial relationship.
- 3. Review of Previous Minutes:** October 27, 2025 IBC Meeting Minutes. The committee voted 5 yes; 0 no; 5 abstained to approve the previous meeting's minutes.
- 4. Old Business:**
 - Dr. Nicholas Haley, MWU File #AZ-28, “Exploring chronic wasting disease prion amplification potential in various PRNP substrates.”
 - i. Approved 11/21/25.
- 5. Informational:**
 - None.
- 6. New Business:**
 - None.
- 7. IBC rsNA Applications:**
 - **Glendale, AZ Campus**
 - Dr. Robert C.C. Mercer, MWU File #AZ-29, “Molecular mechanisms of prion pathogenesis.”
 - i. The IBC Chair presented the review containing the following: risk assessment to determine the appropriate biocontainment levels, assessment of the facilities, procedures, practices, and training and expertise of personnel, agent characteristics, types of manipulations planned, source(s) of the nucleic sequences, nature of the nucleic acid sequences, host(s) and vector(s) to be used, and whether an attempt will be made to obtain expression of a transgene, and if so, the function of the protein that will be produced.
 - ii. The Primary Reviewer Form was shown.
 - iii. All the required trainings have been completed.

- iv. The IBC Chair made a motion to approve the rsNA Application under NIH guidelines III-D-3-b, III-D-4, III-E, III-F-2, III-F-8 C-I, and III-F-8 C-II with containment of agents at BSL/ABSL-1 and BSL/ABSL-2 with 3 practices, pending the following revisions:
 - 1. #32: Correct typo to state, “grown.”
 - 2. #45: Check III-D.
 - 3. Page 15: Please sign the rsNA Application.
 - v. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the IBC rsNA Application from Dr. Mercer pending the revisions.
- Dr. Savannah Sanchez, MWU File #AZ-30, “*Orientia tsutsugamushi* mutagenesis and recombinant protein development.”
- i. The IBC Chair presented the review containing the following: risk assessment to determine the appropriate biocontainment levels, assessment of the facilities, procedures, practices, and training and expertise of personnel, agent characteristics, types of manipulations planned, source(s) of the nucleic sequences, nature of the nucleic acid sequences, host(s) and vector(s) to be used, and whether an attempt will be made to obtain expression of a transgene, and if so, the function of the protein that will be produced.
 - ii. The Primary Reviewer Form was shown.
 - iii. All the required trainings have been completed.
 - iv. The IBC Chair made a motion to table the rsNA Application pending the following:
 - 1. Confirmation from the IO that MWU is supportive of this research utilizing a Risk Group 3 organism.
 - 2. Dr. Sanchez is supportive of submitting a Minor Action to the NIH OSP.
 - 3. A Minor Action is submitted to the NIH OSP by the IBC Chair.
 - 4. NIH OSP approves this project to be conducted at BSL/ABSL-2 with 3 practices.

- v. The Committee voted unanimously to table the IBC rsNA Application from Dr. Sanchez.
- Dr. Savannah Sanchez, MWU File # AZ-31, “*Rickettsia montanensis* mutagenesis and recombinant protein development.”
 - i. The IBC Chair presented the review containing the following: risk assessment to determine the appropriate biocontainment levels, assessment of the facilities, procedures, practices, and training and expertise of personnel, agent characteristics, types of manipulations planned, source(s) of the nucleic sequences, nature of the nucleic acid sequences, host(s) and vector(s) to be used, and whether an attempt will be made to obtain expression of a transgene, and if so, the function of the protein that will be produced.
 - ii. The Primary Reviewer Form was shown.
 - iii. All the required trainings have been completed.
 - iv. The IBC Chair made a motion to approve the rsNA Application under NIH guidelines III-E-1 and III-F-2 with containment of agents at BSL/ABSL-1, BSL/ABSL-2, and BSL/ABSL-2 with 3 practices pending the following clarifications:
 - 1. Regarding experiments where *O. tsutsugamushi* sequences are cloned into *R. montanensis*, please confirm whether you have access to genomic/template *O. tsutsugamushi* DNA without the need to handle or culture live *O. tsutsugamushi*.
 - 2. The IBC notes rsNA application #39 confirms that no genes your lab will clone into *R. montanensis* is expected to increase virulence. Based off your expertise in the field, please confirm that you do not expect any cloning of *O. tsutsugamushi* into *R. montanensis* to result in pathogenic *R. montanensis*.
 - v. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the IBC rsNA Application from Dr. Sanchez pending the clarifications.

8. IBC rsNA Change Forms:

– None.

9. Adjournment: 3:03 P.M. Central / 2:03 P.M. Arizona.