

“Progress in Redeveloping the Office for Research Safety at Northwestern University: Chicago Campus”

Iwona Spath, Marina Zelivyanskaya, Reginald Blythe, Andrea Hall and Michael Blayney, Northwestern University, IL

◆ Objectives

1. Assess strengths, opportunities and weakness (SOW) of the program from August, 2012 to present.
2. Identify areas with greatest short-term return of investment
3. Enhance and deliver improved services to our clients

◆ Introduction

In this poster, we describe the essential keys and progress to successfully redevelop our safety program. Proper planning and a clear agenda are essential for success as well as the identification of strengths, weakness and opportunities for improvement. In the research labs, we have identified several areas with opportunities for improvement including proper storage and organization of lab supplies, disposal of outdated lab equipment, and appropriate accumulation, segregation and disposal of chemical and biological waste, all of which offer space liberation and risk and liability reduction.

◆ Materials and Methods:

Using a SOW analysis, we identified four key areas with the greatest return on investment

1. Improved hazardous waste services and the removal of historical chemical and radiological waste
2. A streamlined process to identify, certify and remove old lab equipment for recycling.
3. Improved information and training on higher standards for care for the future (our *Essential Information Guide*)
4. Systematic, floor-by-floor, building cleanup projects bring additional resources and services to a given location for a period of time

Lab Equipment Disposal



During scheduled campus clean up initiatives, the process to recycle/dispose of laboratory equipment is streamlined by coordinating with various departments within Northwestern.

Campus Wide Cleanup



Historical chemicals that were outdated or no longer useful for research were disposed of during bulk amnesty periods that lasted one week per floor.

Before and After



Collaboration

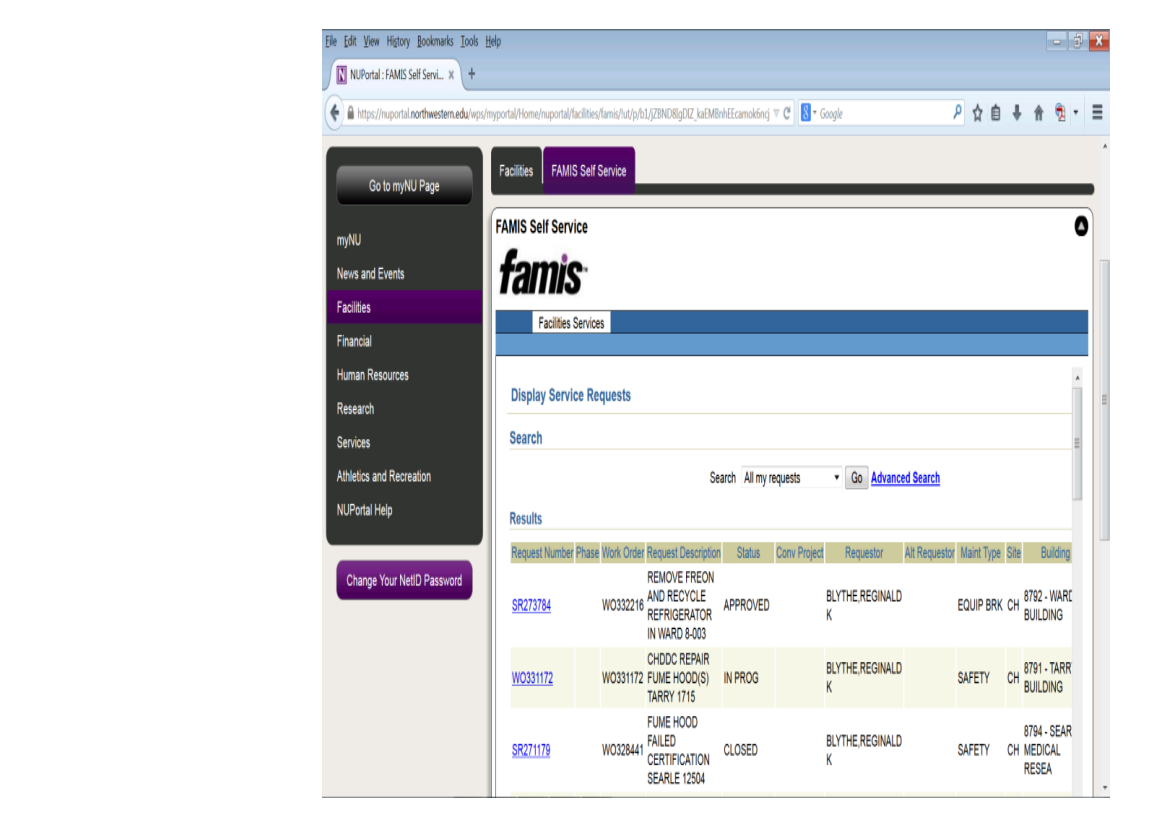


Collaboration



Additional recycling bins are strategically placed during the clean out periods to promote a total lab clean up that included any recyclables in the labs. The Office for Research Safety teamed up with The Office of Sustainability to create a sticker that designates equipment for disposal

Direct Contact with FM



The Office for Research Safety requested access to Facility Management’s Portal to directly input work orders to streamline lab services (e.g., Freon removal, safety shower/eyewash repair, fire extinguisher replacement, etc.)

Freebies



ORS provides supplemental materials to the labs at no charge to promote safe science. Every lab receives our essential guide containing emergency phone numbers, information on hazards, waste and equipment disposal (and many more). We also provide spill kits, trays, neoprene gloves, stickers and other laboratory related items. In addition, as a part of green initiative and hazard reduction, we organize lunch and learn seminars to introduce safer alternatives to the currently used lab materials.

◆ Conclusion

Health and safety efforts need period reinvention arising from some combination of new leadership, institutional awareness and sensitivity to changes in the profession. At Northwestern, we are looking ahead by cleaning up the past and setting higher stands for the future. Furthermore, it is essential to provide good training, have on-site fully trained emergency personnel and improve relations with maintenance and custodial groups as well as community first responders.

◆ Acknowledgements

We would like to thank ORS staff, FM, and the labs for contributing to the efforts of making the Chicago campus cleaner and better organized.