

The Process of Building Relationships with Campus Stakeholders for Projects Involving Remodeling of Laboratory Spaces



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Introduction

The remodel of laboratory spaces was occurring without input from all relevant stakeholders. The safety units within Environment, Health & Safety (EHS) were either not notified of projects within laboratory spaces or were contacted late in the planning stage. Lab assessment questionnaires did not always provide enough details on the materials or activities to assess the requirements for a space. The Office of Biological Safety (OBS) needed to have a voice at the table in order to provide a comprehensive assessment for the remodel of a laboratory space. To address communication gaps and to ensure minimum facility standards would be met for the activities conducted, a process was initiated to change the workflow for laboratory remodel projects and strengthen program relationships,

Method

Initially, EHS connected with the campus Architecture/Engineering (AE) unit and started meetings to discuss current and pending campus projects. A process was developed for sharing of information provided in the lab assessment questionnaire submitted by investigators when a project is initiated. An EHS liaison will attend AE group meetings to facilitate the sharing of information between units regarding projects.

Results

OBS attends the initial site visit/courtesy consult meeting for a project or work order and provide a comprehensive assessment of the space for the proposed project. We have been able to learn more about space planning on campus and the project design and construction phases of projects. The AE unit has increased awareness of laboratory facility standards and will contact us earlier in the process with questions or concerns. There have been increased opportunities to connect with trades groups needing hazard communication and guidance for working in laboratory spaces. In addition, a new system for tracking work orders and projects allows EHS access to information on pending, in progress, and completed projects.

Conclusions

With the cooperation and contributions of several collaborators within Facilities Planning & Management (FPM), EHS and OBS have now been integrated into the process for the remodeling of laboratory spaces. By being involved earlier in the process, we are able to connect with the investigator assigned to the space to discuss the biological materials handled and activities performed and results in an increase in the safety of the built environment. The additional communications and new collaborations provide an opportunity to strengthen program relationships and serve to increase the campus safety culture.

Figure 1. Workflow

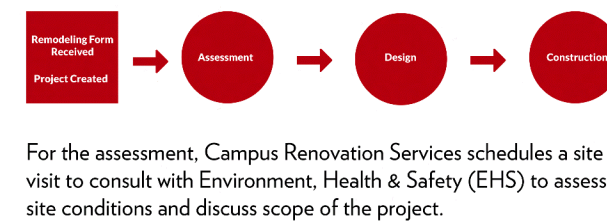


Figure 2. Lab Assessment Questionnaire

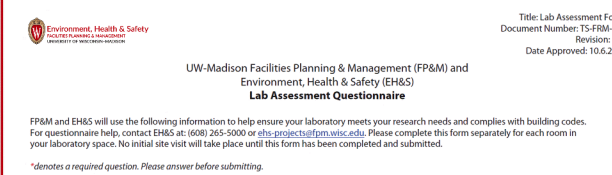


Figure 3. Units

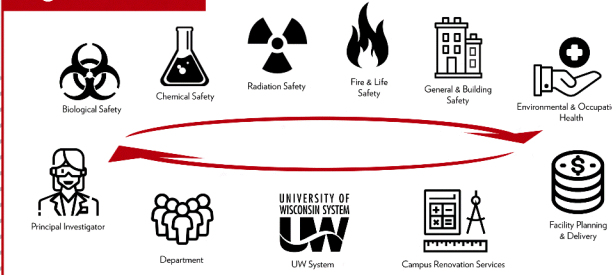
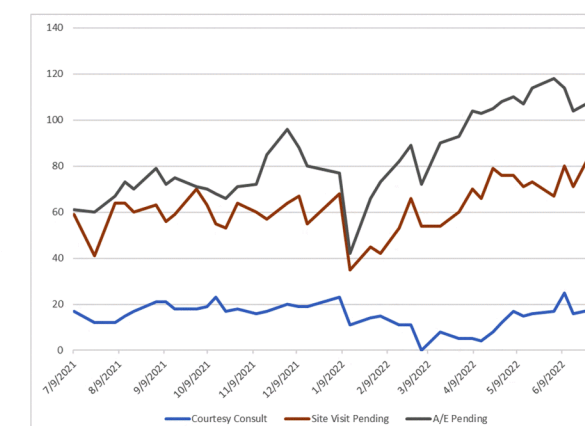


Figure 4. Projects



Positive Outcomes

- Increase in the safety of the built laboratory environment
- Laboratory closings and relocations identified
- Updated UW-Madison Researchers' Biosafety Manual to include guidance for campus service unit personnel

Future Goals

- Redesign Lab Assessment Questionnaire
 - Online Submission Form
- Continue program and process review to identify additional points for improvements

Opportunities for Improvement

- Remodels initiated during recruitment
- Laboratory space not finished prior to faculty start date
- Lack of information on research activities and facility use when designing space for future hires