INSTITUTIONAL BIOSAFETY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Chair: M.A. Amalaradjou
Meeting Time: 1:30 PM

May 7, 2026
Web Conference

Attendance

Voting Members	Committee Role	Record
Amalaradjou, Mary Anne	*IBC Chair*	Present
Brennan, James	*Animal Care Services*	Present
Cavallaro, David	*BSO, Secondary NIH Contact*	Present
Chidambaram, Ramaswamy	*Animal Expert*	Absent
Heyduk, Karolina	*Plant Expert*	Present
Macierowski, Bobbie	*Local Non-Affiliated Member*	Absent
Maltz-Matyschsyk, Michele	*Vice Chair, Molecular and Cell Biology*	Present
Miller, Robert	*Local Non-Affiliated Member*	Present
Wunder, Elsio	*Pathobiology*	Present
Wright, Dennis	*Pharmaceutical Sciences*	Present
Non-Voting Members		
Delage, Danielle	*NIH Contact, IBC Program Director*	Present
Lewchik, Brent	*EHS Director*	Present
Lucas, Melanie	*RICS Director–Animal Research & Safety*	Present

The IBC has eleven voting members; a minimum of five members is required for quorum. Eight voting members were present, and quorum was met.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM.

I. Confidentiality Statement & Conflict of Interest

The Chair read the confidentiality statement and briefly reviewed the COI policy with the committee. Committee members were asked to declare potential conflicts and no conflicts were reported.

II. Announcements

1. Committee Membership Updates:

   Several appointments renewed–K. Heyduk, D. Wright; J. Brennan renewed appointment was updated to reflect his recent promotion as the Director of Animal Care Services, which promulgates his new designation as Animal Containment Expert.

   Dr. Yupeng Chen noted that he enjoyed working with the group but was unable to renew his appointment due to other commitments. He also expressed interest in serving again in a few years, as circumstances allow.

2. NIH IBC Registration Management System (RMS):

   Submission pending – due to technical difficulties in uploading required documents.

III. Review of Minutes

1. The April 2, 2026, IBC meeting minutes require further revision and were deferred for review and approval at the June 11, 2026, meeting.
2. The Committee was notified of minor, non-substantive clerical and formatting edits to the March 5, 2026 meeting minutes.

IV. Chair Report

The Chair provided a report on administrative actions taken since the last meeting.

Submission	PI Name	Committee Action	Status	Date
Renewal 318R2	Schwartz, Daniel	Approved with Conditions on 04/02/2026	Conditions Met – Approval Finalized	04/07/2026
Renewal 336R1	Santiago Martinez, Michel Geovanni	Approved with Conditions on 04/02/2026	Conditions Met – Approval Finalized	04/07/2026
Renewal 309R1	Zarkada, Georgia	Approved with Conditions on 04/02/2026	Conditions Met – Approval Finalized	04/27/2026
Renewal 57R3	Tian, Xiuchun (Cindy)	Approved with Conditions on 04/02/2026	Conditions Met – Approval Finalized	04/30/2026
Renewal 323R2	Fabris, Daniele	Approved with Conditions on 04/02/2026	Conditions Met – Approval Finalized	05/01/2026
Renewal 276R2	Jung, Hunmin	Approved with Conditions on 01/15/2026	Conditions Met – Approval Finalized	05/04/2026

V. Biosafety Officer Report

Administrative Approvals

Submission	PI Name	Summary of Request	IBC Assigned Classifications	Approval Date
Amendment 130R2A1	Nishiyama, Akiko	New funding and related experiments with a collaborator	III-D, III-E, III-F	04/10/2026
Amendment 151R2A1	Jackson, Alexander	Added new transgenic mouse lines	III-D, III-F	04/22/2026
Amendment 320R2A1	Conover Joanne	Added transgenic mouse line	III-D, III-E, III-F	04/22/2026
Amendment 316R1A1	Kienzler, Michael	Added a human cell line	III-E, III-F	05/04/2026

** Criteria for administrative approval include projects that:*
1. Are exempt under the Guidelines.
2. Involve minor changes that do not affect risk assessment (same BSL, risk groups, and NIH classifications).
3. Add new awards utilizing previously approved activities (e.g., same host-vector systems).
4. Do not involve the creation or handling of materials containing covered rsNA constructs.

Audit Report

Laboratory audits are conducted periodically to assess facilities and lab practices to ensure compliance. The BSO presented a summary of recent biosafety audits to the committee.

In April, eight biosafety audits were completed. Seven of the eight had no findings, and one finding was an out-of-date biological inventory.

VI. Review of NIH Covered Experiments

Review #1

PI Name	Steven Szczepanek
Submission	Registration Renewal 6R3
Title	Infectious Disease and Vaccine Development Research

Project Overview

Summary

Focuses on developing and evaluating vaccines for human and animal respiratory pathogens using animal models and clinical samples. Includes RG2 human pathogens (e.g., influenza, COVID-19) and RG3 animal pathogens (e.g., Foot and Mouth Disease Virus). Work is done at BSL-2 at UConn, with RG3 studies conducted at specialized AgBSL-3 facilities.

Experimental activities include recombinant DNA methods to clone and express bacterial and viral antigens in E. coli and adenoviral (Ad5) vectors, followed by protein and antibody purification. Vaccine platforms include modified bacterial components, recombinant proteins, viral vectors, nanoparticles (siRNA, DNAzyme, mRNA), and microneedle delivery systems. Studies involve vaccination and pathogen challenge experiments in animal models (mice, rats, pigs), including transgenic and knockout mice to assess immune pathways. Biological agents include RG2 pathogens (e.g., Mycoplasma pneumoniae, influenza, SARS-CoV-2) handled at UConn, with RG3/select agents (e.g., Foot and Mouth Disease Virus, Mycoplasma mycoides) studied at external AgBSL-3 facilities. Additional work includes use of de-identified human clinical samples for pathogen sequencing, culture, and comparative infection studies.

Note that RG3 and BSAT pathogen work is conducted at external facility, NOT at UConn.

Experimental Manipulations:

☒ Centrifugation	☒ Vortex/Mixing	☒ Sharps Use	☒ Protein Expression
☒ Tissue Culture	☒ Animal Work	☒ Inoculation	☒ Risk of Shedding
☒ Necropsy	☒ Tissue Collection		

Risk Assessment & Discussion

Engineering Controls

☒ BSC	☐ Safety Needles	☐ HEPA Filtered Cages/Racks
☒ Splash Shield	☐ Chemical Fume Hood	☒ Sealed Centrifuge Cups Rotors
☒ Appropriate PPE		

Training	Lab members are compliant with EHS training requirements.
Biosafety Level Assignment	BSL-2, ABSL-2
NIH Guidelines Section	III-D-1, III-D-2, III-D-3, III-D-4, III-E, III-F

Risk Assessment	Route of spread: Respiratory pathogens are used in intranasal infection models, directly relevant to natural transmission routes. Aerosol generating procedures: Intranasal inoculation, animal infection work, and handling respiratory pathogens present aerosol exposure risk. Gene product effects: Gene products expressed are primarily vaccine antigens, immune modulators, or therapeutic molecules and are not expected to increase virulence or pathogenicity. Containment practices were noted as adequate based on the details provided.
IBC Motion & Vote	
Committee Discussion	The Committee discussed minor clarifications needed from the lab. The primary reviewer noted that the lab must respond to the current open notes. Potential BSL-2 containment discussed for III-D-2 work.
Motion	A motion was made to approve registration renewal 6R3, with conditions. The motion was seconded and the committee voted with 8 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions. The motion carried.
Committee Action	The committee voted to approve registration renewal 6R3, with conditions, for a three-year term.

Review #2

PI Name	Paulo Verardi
Submission	Amendment 59R2A2
Title	Development of recombinant vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics
Project Overview	
Summary	This is an amendment submission requesting to add a modified research construct of the Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV). This construct was modified to replace the VSV glycoprotein with the glycoprotein precursor of the Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever Virus (CCHFV) - VSV-CCHFVgpc. The lab is planning to propagate the recombinant virus in Vero cells to evaluate immunogenicity of new vaccine candidates against CCHFV (from collaborators) tested in mouse by determination of neutralizing antibodies titers. The construct is a BSL-2 live-attenuated and won't be used in animals. **Experimental Manipulations:** ☒ Centrifugation ☒ Vortex/Mixing ☒ Sharps Use ☒ Protein Expression ☒ Tissue Culture ☒ Animal Work ☒ Inoculation ☒ Risk of Shedding ☒ Necropsy ☒ Tissue Collection
Risk Assessment & Discussion	
Engineering Controls	☒ BSC ☐ Safety Needles ☐ HEPA Filtered Cages/Racks ☐ Splash Shield ☐ Chemical Fume Hood ☒ Sealed Centrifuge Cups Rotors ☒ Appropriate PPE
Training	Lab members are compliant with EHS training requirements.
NIH Classifications	III-D-1, III-D-3, III-D-4

Biosafety Level Assignment	BSL-2, ABSL-2
Risk Assessment	Proper manipulation in biosafety cabinet and use of PPE is described, as well as proper decontamination and disposal of material.

IBC Motion & Vote

Committee Discussion	GDMO applicability was discussed and determined that this project does not meet the criteria for III-D-8.
Motion	A motion was made to approve amendment 59R2A2, as written. The motion was seconded and the committee voted with 8 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions. The motion carried.
Committee Action	The committee voted to approve amendment 59R2A2, as written, for the duration of the registration's approval.

Review #3

PI Name	Clinton Mathias
Submission	Amendment 285R1A1
Title	Pathogenesis of Allergic Reactions in Mice

Project Overview

Summary

The lab is adding two bacteria to experiments with mice, Ruminococcus gnavus and Bacteroides spp. To test with the effects of bacterial sphingolipids, the Bacteroides spp modified by a collaborator, is unable to make sphingolipids and will be used to assess whether these bacteria will be unable to provide expected protective benefits. They are also planning on adding studies involving human fecal microbial transplants. The new organisms and material will be introduced to mice by gavage to assess the effects of gut microbiome in animals with hepatocelluar carcinoma HCC. The lab will induce HCC with the carcinogen diethylnitrosamine (DEN) or a high fat diet. They will collect mast cells, T cells and other immune cells from tissue harvested form the mice. Assays such as RNA and DNA isolation from tissue samples, RNA, DNA, and protein quantification, cDNA generation, PCRs, ELISAs, Western blots, and isolation of cells from tissues of flow cytometry will be performed.

Risk group 1 materials were noted, which are not associated with disease in healthy human adults. Opportunistic pathogens include R. gnavus and Bacteroides spp.

Experimental Manipulations:

☐ Centrifugation	☐ Vortex/Mixing	☐ Sharps Use	☐ Protein Expression
☒ Tissue Culture	☒ Animal Work	☐ Inoculation	☐ Risk of Shedding
☒ Necropsy	☒ Tissue Collection		

Risk Assessment & Discussion

Engineering Controls

☒ BSC	☐ Safety Needles	☐ HEPA Filtered Cages/Racks
☒ Splash Shield	☐ Chemical Fume Hood	☒ Sealed Centrifuge Cups Rotors
☒ Appropriate PPE		

Training	Training requirements must be completed for applicable lab members.
NIH Classifications	III-D-4
Biosafety Level Assignment	BSL-2, ABSL-2
Risk Assessment	Bacteroides spp. are opportunistic pathogens more commonly causing gastrointestinal symptoms or wound infections. It is unclear if the modification to the Bacteroides attenuates it in any way. Fecal samples / isolates present moderate risk from enteric organisms. BSL-2 practices are appropriate. Experiments with Rumminococcus do not require BSL-2 / ABSL-2 practices.
IBC Motion & Vote	
Committee Discussion	The Committee discussed whether the sphingolipid deficient Bacterioides a natural mutant or genetically engineered deletion. The lab will need to clarify this information. It was noted that projects involving human fecal microbiome transplants is planned for the future, but the lab wanted to include it at this time for committee review.
Motion	A motion was made to approve amendment 285R1A1, with conditions. The motion was seconded and the committee voted with 8 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions. The motion carried.
Committee Action	The committee voted to approve amendment 285R1A1, with conditions, for the duration of the registration's approval.

VII. Old Business:

1. IBC Policy Review

   Research Compliance and Integrity has requested additional time to review and revise the updated IBC policy. In order to review and approve by the June 11, 2026 meeting, a deadline of May 29, 2026, was proposed to submit revisions.

   M. Lucas stated that revisions may require additional meetings to discuss further and was uncertain whether revisions could be completed by the next meeting.

VIII. New Business:

1. D. Cavallaro provided the committee with highlights from the recent Harvard Yale Symposium.

IX. Items from the Floor:

None

Chair made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:07 PM.

Next Meeting: June 11, 2026 at 1:30 PM