

Athens State University
Risk Management and Safety Committee

Monday, April 26, 2021

Membership

The following members were present for the meeting:

Barbara Ferguson, chair
Julie Martin, recording
Jerry Crabtree
Mike McCoy
Kerry Warren
Damon Lares
Steve Downs
Billy McClain
Elaine McGill
Juliana Hunt
Molly Myhan
Jackie Gooch
Cody Smith
Jennifer Bunnell
Katherine Kandalac – via Zoom

Members absent:

Necedah Henderson
Regina Kyle

Barbara Ferguson called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for attending.

Old Business

Lab Safety and Campus Safety – A few months ago, there was a large pick up of chemicals from the maintenance department and our biology and chemistry labs. A part-time lab safety coordinator has been hired, and he began work on April 12, 2021. Maintenance is now planning to post a position that will encompass both inventory control and campus safety. The job description is being finalized and should be posted soon.

New Business

Barbara shared a video and assessment tool prior to the meeting. This video was developed by our insurer, United Educators to help explain the concept of enterprise risk management and

what we are trying to accomplish as a committee. Barbara summarized the highlights of the video –

- We want to be proactive, not reactive
- Look at entire institution, not be bogged down with departmental specifics
- Look at opportunities that can come from risk

Risk Management begins with the Board of Trustees and the President. Our committee charge comes from the President, and Dr. Way has been very supportive of continuing with our risk management efforts.

Using the risk assessment tool, in 2017 we identified our top 20 risks and from there we chose to focus on several. Barbara provided updates on the risk mitigation efforts for the following identified risks:

- Development of a Disaster Plan – Emergency Communication Plan. This document is completed and posted on the University website policy library. This is a living document that will always require updating.
- Accessibility – physical plant improvements on campus and information technology accessibility improvements
- Grants - a new accountant has been hired to focus on grants and restricted funds as well as new staff in University Advancement focused on applying for grants
- Improvements in workplace safety – hazardous chemical pick- ups, lab safety and safety training
- Motor Vehicle Record checks and new training initiatives (workplace harassment and driver safety)
- Property and facility upgrades

The committee was asked to use the assessment tool that Barbara provided to rank the categories that should be addressed. This is the same tool used in 2017 with a few recent updates from United Educators and The Association of Governing Boards. Barbara asked the committee to please have this worksheet back to her by the middle of May. Our cabinet members will also use the assessment worksheet to identify areas to address. Barbara will summarize the submitted worksheets and share which risks rated as most urgent.

There was discussion about developing a broad policy regarding our commitment to Risk Management. Jackie Gooch will begin work on a draft policy.

Mike McCoy expressed his appreciation to Barbara and the committee for acting on Risk Management. Our insurer told us to expect a 20% increase in premiums next year due to the climate of our world and litigation in higher education. The more we can do to mitigate risks and show that we are addressing needs on campus, the better we will look to our insurer.

Mike addressed COVID protocols for summer semester.

- No more screeners at entrances to campus
- All campus entrances open
- Guidesafe app no longer available – UAB is discontinuing its use
- Employees will be asked to self-monitor for illness and appropriately report any illness to their supervisor
- Masks will not be required, however, if an individual feels more comfortable asking others to wear a mask in the office/classroom, that request should be respected
- The University continues to engage with our third party cleaning service to ensure a clean and sanitary campus environment and to promote physical distancing and other safe work practices
- Vaccination opportunities have been provided to employees and the University will continue to encourage vaccinations and provide time off to get the vaccine
- Students, faculty and staff will continue to have access to support services, including mental health counseling

With no further questions or business, Barbara thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting.