

# MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY

555 31st Street

Downers Grove Il 60515

## Institutional Biosafety Committee Meeting Minutes

### Meeting Details

**Date:** February 3, 2026

**Time:** 2:02 P.M. – 2:23 P.M. Illinois / 1:02 P.M. – 1:23 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), Brian Wellensiek, 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)

### 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:** December 2, 2025 IBC Meeting Minutes. The committee voted 11 yes; 0 no; 1 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.
  - Dr. Robert C.C. Mercer, MWU File #AZ-29, “Molecular mechanisms of prion pathogenesis.”
    - i. Approved 12/5/25.
  - Dr. Savannah Sanchez, MWU File #AZ-31, “Rickettsia montanensis mutagenesis and recombinant protein development.”
    - i. Approved 1/29/26.
  - Dr. Savannah Sanchez, MWU File #AZ-30, “Orientia tsutsugamushi mutagenesis and recombinant protein development.”
    - i. The rsNA Application was tabled at the December 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting pending a Minor Action with the NIH OSP.
    - ii. NIH OSP has responded to the Minor Action.
    - iii. 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.

- iv. The Primary Reviewer Form was shown.
- v. All the required trainings have been completed.
- vi. The IBC noted a discrepancy in the NIH OSP response to the request for Minor Action. It was stated in the response that, “*Orientia tsutsugamushi* is not specifically listed in Appendix B of the NIH Guidelines,” but it is listed in Appendix B-III-A as a Risk Group 3 organism.
- vii. The IBC also noted an error in Dr. Noriea’s initial email to NIH OSP requesting the Minor Action. Dr. Noriea’s email stated, “III-C research,” but should have stated “III-D research.”
- viii. The IBC Chair made a motion to approve the rsNA Application under NIH guidelines III-D-1-a, III-D-1-b, III-D-2-a and III-F-2 with containment of agents at BSL/ABSL-1, BSL/ABSL-2, and BSL/ABSL-2 with 3 practices.
- ix. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the IBC rsNA Application from Dr. Sanchez.

**5. Informational:**

– None.

**6. New Business:**

– None.

**7. IBC rsNA Applications:**

– None

**8. IBC rsNA Change Forms:**

– None.

**9. Adjournment:** 2:23 P.M. Central / 1:23 P.M. Arizona.