

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth Houston)
Institutional Biosafety Committee
September 10, 2026
Microsoft Teams (Virtual)
Minutes

Meeting Attendance:

Voting Members

Dr. Catherine Denicourt (Chair)
Dr. Eric Brown
Dr. Taichi Goto
Dr. Nicholas Justice
Dr. Ashish Kapoor
Dr. Yang Liu
Dr. Yahuan Lou
Dr. Duc Nguyen
Dr. Eunsu Park
Dr. Scott Patlovich
Dr. Fei Wang
Mr. Jesus Duran Ramirez (SM)

Non-Voting Members

Dr. Joy Harrison
Dr. Kristin King
Dr. Mary Robinson
Mr. Colin Harrison
Mr. Zack Becker
Ms. Rebecca Kairis
Ms. Allison Lino
Ms. Meredith Mills

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Denicourt at 3:02 PM.

2. Conflicts of Interest

The Chairperson reminded the committee about the conflict of interest procedure. She also reminded the committee members that all protocols that are discussed at the meeting are to be considered confidential and are not to be discussed outside of the meeting with non-IBC members.

3. Review Previous Meeting Minutes (August 13, 2026)

Approved = 10
Opposed = 0
Abstained = 2

4. IBC Administrative Items

- Introduction of new IBC member, Dr. Fei Wang, Assistant Professor, Neurology
- The Biosafety Program is pending the addition of an additional Safety Technician position for IBC administrative duties.
- [USG Policy for Stopping High-Risk Life Sciences Research](#)

The Biosafety Program updated the IBC on the progress of the action items discussed at the last meeting.

- [Draft NIH Biosafety Policy for Research Involving Biohazards](#), [Incident Reporting](#), [Minutes Template](#), and [Comparison Table](#)

The IBC was notified of the draft policy and the deadline for submission of comments. The committee agreed to have a separate meeting to draft and approve comments to be submitted on behalf of the institution's IBC.

- Delay the updates to IBC-related policies and training

The required annual review of institutional IBC-related policies is due in September 2026. It was discussed and approved that the review be delayed due to the impact of the two policies mentioned above and incorporating the changes of these new requirements.

Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules Research Applications Review

During the review, the committee assessed the containment levels as well as the facilities, procedures, practices, and training and expertise of the personnel involved in recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules research. The committee also reviewed agent characteristics, types of manipulations planned, sources of the inserted nucleic acid sequences, the nature of the inserted nucleic acid sequences and whether an attempt will be made to obtain expression of a foreign gene, and if so, the protein that will be produced. Furthermore, the PI must determine the applicable section(s) of the *NIH Guidelines*.

5. Clinical Protocol Reviews (HGT)

None

6. Protocol Reviews

IBC-26-056 – Dr. Claudio Soto – “Early Diagnostic and Therapy for Alzheimer's Disease” AND “Protein misfolding cyclic amplification assay (PMCA) for tau” AND “Highly selective detection of tau oligomers in biological fluids for the diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease” AND “Development of a blood test for Alzheimer's disease diagnostic” AND “Isolation, characterization and pathogenic role of self-propagating conformational amyloid-beta strains” AND “PMCA detection of antibody-treated biological samples” AND “Misfolded Protein Aggregates in HIV Infection” AND “Depression as a risk factor for converting mild cognitive impairment into AD” AND “Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis/Fronto temporal dementia PMCA” AND “Misfolding and aggregation of p53 and its implications in cancer” AND “Role of circulating Abeta seeds and peripheral tissue damage in Alzheimer's disease pathogenesis” AND “Recombinant APOE as treatment in AD mouse models” AND “Detection and characterization of alpha-synuclein aggregates in patients with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia” AND “Characterization of the structure of tau aggregates in postmortem brain of DLB and PD patients”

Containment Level: BSL-2; ABSL-1

NIH Section: N/A

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training

Approved = 11

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 1

The protocol was presented and approved, pending clarification on the type of intranasal administration of r-ApoE (liquid vs aerosol) and addition to the AWC protocol; and correction of the PMCA assay to the Seed Amplification Assay, which involves shaking of either capped tubes or well plates with a membrane (PMCA is only used as a Prion assay). Prior to the meeting, the work with p53 aggregates and HIV was removed from the protocol. After the meeting, the work with ApoE was removed from the protocol.

IBC-26-070 – Dr. Hong Li – “Developmental Mechanisms and Therapeutic Strategies for Birth Defects”

Containment Level: BSL-2; ABSL-1

NIH Section: III-D-4-b, III-E-1, III-F-1, III-F-8

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training

Approved = 12

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved with no additional discussion or recommendations.

IBC-26-071 – Dr. Chai-An Mao – “The role of T-box Transcriptional factors in the development of RGC subtypes”

Containment Level: BSL-2; ABSL-1

NIH Section: III-D-4-a, III-E-3, III-F-8

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training

Approved = 12

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved with no additional discussion or recommendations.

IBC-26-072 – Dr. Jun Li – “Mechanisms and Treatment for Ischemic Stroke”

Containment Level: BSL-2; ABSL-1 (mice with AAV administration); ABSL-2 for 5 days (mice with Lentiviral vector administration)

NIH Section: III-D-1-a, III-D-2-a, III-D-4-a, III-E-3, III-F-1

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training

Approved = 12

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved, with clarification to autoclave cages from ABSL2.

7. Conditionally Exempt Protocol Reviews

None

8. Protocol Updates

a. Significant updates:

IBC-24-073 – Dr. Long Jun Wu – “Studying microglia functions in health and diseases via viral tools and plasmid containing nanoparticles in mice”

- **Changed to an administrative update**

b. Administrative updates:

IBC-21-066 – Dr. Claudio Soto – “Generation of a Cellular Model of Neurodegenerative Diseases using Pluripotent-Induced and Embryonic Stem Cells” and “Chimeric mice harboring human nerve cells as a model of Alzheimer's disease” AND “A novel in vitro model of Alzheimer's disease in lab-generated mini-brains Sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association”

- **Addition of bioagents:** Dual Notch1-YFP and Inducible Delta-mCherry Reporter CHO-K1 (hN1) Cell Line, Dual Notch1 (Variant) -YFP and Inducible Delta-mCherry Reporter CHO-K1 (hN1G4esn) Cell Line; Notch receiver cells: CHO cell line expressing Human Notch receptor-Gal4-T2A-H2B-mTurq2 and UAS-H2B-mCitrine; DLL1 sender cells: CHO cell line constitutively expressing DLL1-T2A-mCherry; DLL1 cis inhibition cells: Notch receiver CHO cell line expressing Tet-off (4-epi-Tc)-DLL1-T2A-mCherry, along with Notch receptor-Gal4-T2A-H2B-mTurq2 and UAS-H2B-mCitrine
- **Update AWC Number:** AWC-20-0081 to AWC-23-0095

IBC-21-074 – Dr. Zheng Chen – “Identification and Characterization of Small Molecules as Chemical Probes of the Circadian Clock” and “Small Molecule Probes of Circadian Coordination of Cardiometabolic Functions” and “Rescue of GI functions in Clockm/m Mutant Mice by Clock-enhancing Compounds” AND “Molecular Mechanisms of Action of Clock-modulating Small Molecules” AND “Role of Clock-Modulating Small Molecules against Aging” AND “Regulation and function of the circadian factor Period 2” AND “Molecular Mechanism of a clock-enhancing natural product” AND “Function of CRY and FAD in nutrient sensing” AND “A FAD-driven biochemical oscillation governing CRYPTOCHROME turnover” AND “Role of the circadian oscillator in AD neuropathological and behavioral alterations” AND “Functional crosstalk between brain circadian oscillators and AD pathology in mouse models” AND “Identification of endogenous ROR ligands as modulators of aging clock and physiology” AND “Concerted enhancement of core and output rhythms to promote healthy aging” AND

“Role of RORs in age-related circadian and metabolic alterations” AND “Mammalian circadian rhythms: from genes to mechanisms” AND “Regulatory role of the CRYPTOCHROME-FAD axis in mitochondrial bioenergetic oscillation” AND “Circadian pathways linking metabolic homeostasis and gene regulation during aging” AND “Regulation of headache pain responses by the Trigeminal ganglion clock” AND “Circadian regulation of mitochondrial function by muscle RORs to promote healthy aging” AND **“Tissue-specific circadian function and mechanism of RORs”**

- **Addition of bolded title**
- **Addition of rDNA:** AAV-ck6-Flag-Ror WT-TurboID and AAV-ck6-Flag-Ror mut-TurboID
- **Addition of bioagents:** AAV vectors from BCM core
- **Update AWC number:** AWC-23-0038 to AWC-26-0021
- **Addition of CSC:** Colchicine (pending)

IBC-22-041 – Dr. Peeyush Thankamani Pandit – “Cerebrovascular endothelial cell dysfunction in subarachnoid hemorrhage (SAH)”

- **Addition of work/rDNA/Biological agents:**
 1. Use of lipid nanoparticles to induce angiogenesis in adult male C57BL/6J mice. The lipid nanoparticle will target HDAC2 in endothelial cells, additional study to include BCAS surgery.
 2. Use of HDAC2 drug inhibitor in mice (not biological)
 3. Restore HDAC2 expression in brain endothelial cells using an endothelial-targeted AAV-BI30-HDAC2 vector in HDAC2 KO mice

All animal experiments will include Functional ultrasound (fUS) imaging and post-euthanasia brain collection for molecular and histological analysis.

- **Removal of Personnel:** Luis Vaquero and Ari Dienel
- **Addition of Personnel:** Ponnampurakkal Chandran

IBC-24-027 – Dr. Kevin Lin – “The role of Protein Arginine Methyltransferases in neurovascular coupling and brain diseases”

- **Addition of work:** Addition of an AAV vector to overexpress GLP1-R in 3xTg mice neurons prior to treatment with semaglutide. Results will be evaluated through behavioral tests, downstream protein expression profiles, and potential changes or improvements in brain vasculature. This project is part of the post-doctoral experiments of “Julia Zaccarelli”
- **Addition of rDNA and bioagent:** Adeno-associated virus (AAV/PHP.eB-hSYN1-GFP-m-GLP1R-WPRE)
- **Addition of personnel:** Julia Zaccarelli Magalhaes, Barbara Brito Nanni, Julia Langman, Drew Smith

IBC-24-037 – Dr. Tae Jin Lee – “MicroRNA therapy for cancers” AND **“Uncovering glycoRNA landscape in glioblastoma as a novel layer of immune evasion”**

- **Addition of bolded title**
- **Addition of bioagents:** Human Glioblastoma PDX cells (GBM12-Luc); Murine glioma cells (NP, NPAI); Human GBM patient-derived primary GBM cells (GSC11, GSC20)
- **Addition of work:** Experiments using new bioagents, associated with new title and NIH grant 1R03NS151007-01
- **Removal personnel:** Jiyeon Kim

IBC-24-053 – Dr. Hongyuan Yang – “AGPAT2 in whole body metabolism and the interactions between AGPAT2 and GPAT3/4 in vivo” AND “The synthesis and trafficking of phosphatidylserine in cellular cholesterol homeostasis”

- **Removal of personnel:** Mingming Gao
- **Addition of personnel:** Jin Wu
- **Removal of locations:** MSE R602, R636
- **Addition of location:** MSE R557

IBC-24-064 – Dr. Alan Myers – “The Busulfan Metabolite (EdAG), **Psilocybin/Psilocin**, and Areca Nut Alkaloids: Metabolism in Biological Species, Cytotoxicity to Human Liver, Inactivation of Thiol Modifying Enzymes, and Drug Interactions” AND “**Evaluation of Biological Markers and Metabolites in the Saliva and Gingival Crevicular Fluid in Patients with or without Periodontal Disease**”

- **Addition of bolded title**
- **Addition of work:** Objective #6 to request use of human saliva and gingival crevicular fluid for in vitro experiments and Objective #7 to request in vitro metabolism assays
- **Addition of bioagent:** Human gingival crevicular fluid
- **Addition of CPHS number:** HSC-DB-26-0652
- **Addition of personnel:** Hyeon Gyeom, Jeff Lee

IBC-24-073 – Dr. Long Jun Wu – “Studying microglia functions in health and diseases via viral tools and plasmid containing nanoparticles in mice”

- **Addition of work:** Live animal imaging and immunohistology of mouse brains related to the addition of hM-CSF KI (iPSC-MG Tx) mice and iPSC cells.
- **Addition of bioagent:** iPSC cells
- **Addition of animal strain:** Mice (hM-CSF KI (iPSC-MG Tx))

IBC-25-021 – Dr. Changqing Ju – “Molecular and Cellular Mechanisms of Inflammation and Tissue Injury in Liver and Gastrointestinal Models”

- **Removal of titles:** “MIF Signaling After Ischemia and Reperfusion Liver Injury” AND “The Role of Plscr1 signaling and Alcoholic liver injury and repair”
- **Addition of title:** “Molecular and Cellular Mechanisms of Inflammation and Tissue Injury in Liver and Gastrointestinal Models”
- **Update protocol summary:** Update to restructure and include new mice strains
- **Addition of animal strains:** Mice (Clec4n-flox (NM-CKO-234141); Cdh5-2A-CreERT2 (NM-KI-200173))
- **Update AWC numbers:** Updated AWC numbers are AWC-25-0100; AWC-26-0025; AWC-26-0053
- **Addition of personnel:** Xinyin Zhu

9. BSL-3 Update

None

10. Biological Safety Program Activity Report

11. The report was provided in the packet for your review. There were 5 reported injuries in August: 2 microtome injuries with investigations ongoing (BRAINS neurology and

pathology lab workers); 1 slip in CLAMC; 1 needlestick in a BRAINS neurology lab worker in which the investigation found a non-infectious situation with improper sharps disposal – EHS provided additional training and disposal equipment; and 1 mouse bite (late addition). 1 near miss incident in the laboratory for work with animal prions (not animal housing or laboratory for work with human and bovine prions); housekeeping entered the donning area, but did not enter the lab area where PPE is required – EHS provided additional training.

Discussion on trends in microtome injuries based on departments, additional training available via EHS, and requirements during IBC review.

12. Environmental Protection Program Activity Report

The Environmental Protection Program Safety Program Activity Report was included in the packet for review, although August data was not available. Reminder to evaluate controlled-substance stock for expired materials and notify EPP for disposal. Notification that “Stericycle” is undergoing rebranding to “Waste Management”.

13. Other Items

None

14. Next Meeting

The meeting is scheduled for October 08, 2026, 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM, virtually via Microsoft TEAMS.

15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Dr. Denicourt at 3:55 PM.