University of Arkansas at Monticello

Institutional Biosafety Committee Meeting (IBC)

Minutes: August 19, 2025 meeting.

Present: **Benjamin Babst (chair), Arturo Ferrer (by phone), Marty O'Fallon, Nat Grubbs, and Djamali Muhoza.**

Committee Members: Ben Babst (chair), Arturo Ferrer (by phone), Marty O'Fallon, Nat Grubbs, and Djamali Muhoza*.

A. Location of meeting
In-person meeting at Forestry Complex room B210, at the University of Arkansas at Monticello.

B. Committee composition
-Dr. Andrew Roser has moved on from UAM is no longer a committee member.
-Dr. Djamali Muhoza agreed to serve. He is an assistant professor of chemistry/biochemistry at the UAM School of Math and Sciences. Previously, he worked as a research technician at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and earned his Ph.D. at University of Arkansas in 2021
-Committee vote results: 4 ayes, 0 nays
-The motion passed, Dr. Muhoza is now a member of the UAM Biosafety Committee

C. Review of proposals - Two proposals were received for consideration, one from Dr. Babst and one from Dr. Muhoza. Both proposals were distributed to committee members to review in advance of the meeting. After some initial questions from Dr. Babst (detailed below), Dr. Muhoza modified his proposal.

- IBC protocol #20 from Ben Babst (College of Forestry, Agriculture, and Natural Resources). "Impacts of Biotic and Abiotic Stress of Forest Trees and Plant Communities." (RG1, BL1)

  This proposal is to continue ongoing work. Primarily maintaining existing transgenic lines, and stocks of rDNA

  Committee question: For the duration of this work at UAM, how many deaths or injuries have occurred.
  Babst answer: zero deaths and zero injuries

  Committee question: Who would actually be doing the work, hands-on.
  Babst answer: Graduate students and/or my research technician. Anybody handling rDNA-related materials in my lab receives training directly from me on proper handling and disposal of materials.

Vote (Babst recused): 4 ayes, 0 nays
IBC Protocal #20 is approved.

- IBC protocol #21 from Djamali Muhoza (Schoole of Math and Sciences). "Computational and Biochemical Design and Testing of Small Molecule Inhibitors." (RG1, BL1)

  Dr. Muhoza gave a brief overview of his proposal, and explained that he does a lot of computational work to identify chemicals that potentially may interact with and affect specific target enzymes (e.g., drug discovery).

  The original proposal included work with *E*. *coli*, Agrobacterium, human embryonic kidney (HEK293) cells, and human serum. Dr. Babst noted that our form states that additional regulations will apply to research involving human blood, bodily fluids, tissues or cell culture. The Principal Investigator must consult with the University, with the UAM IACUC, and with the UAM IBC for additional information that must be included in this application. Due to constraints on time, Dr. Muhoza suggested that he would like to move forward for now with a revised proposal that excluded the human cells and serum to allow the *E*. *coli* and agrobacterium work to proceed. Dr. Muhoza explained that the human cells and serum are not hazardous. But they are no human subjects, nor animal subjects. The appropriate venue for safety review will be determined at a later date.

  The IBC, therefore, considered the revised proposal.

  Committee questions:
  -will students work with the rDNA materials?
  Answer: a small number of select students will work on the protocol in the future. Students will be trained and supervised by Dr. Muhoza.

  -Are all materials, tools, and work areas contained in one work room?
  Answer: Yes, except for the autoclave. The room to be used is under lock and key.

  -What is the purpose of the work?
  Answer: Protein characterization and chemical/drug discovery.

  Vote (Muhoza recused): 4 ayes, 0 nays
  IBC protocol #21 is approved.

D. Meeting adjourned

*Elected to the Biosafety Committee at this meeting, 8/19/2025.