

University of Arkansas at Monticello

Institutional Biosafety Committee Meeting (IBC)

Minutes: September 1, 2026 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 Dr. Muhoza's office and lab in the Turner Neal Museum of Natural History, at the University of Arkansas at Monticello.

B. Committee composition

-No change in the committee composition.

C. Tour of Muhoza Lab - We started with a tour of the Muhoza Lab. The space used to be a lab where ticks were studied by Dr. Blount. This was of high interest from a veterinary perspective, since ticks are important pests.

Dr. Muhoza showed us where his bacteria are grown, and the space and tools used for extracting DNA and protein and analyzing them. His disposal process was discussed. He has to autoclave rDNA and other biological materials in the UAM Science Building, next door. To move materials, he and his students seal the materials in a primary container and uses secondary containment.

Most of the students who work in the lab learn to do specific skills and tasks (pipetting, running PCR). High performing, motivated students can work on a project. These students are encouraged to attend a conference to present their results (Arkansas INBRE (Idea Network of Biomedical Research Excellence), Arkansas Academy of Sciences). They are encouraged to participate in the publishing process.

D. 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.

- IBC protocol #22 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 maintaining rDNA stocks from previous work that is currently on hold. Poplar transgenic lines died, were autoclaved, and disposed of.

Committee question: Are those stocks stored in the Forestry Building.

Babst answer: Yes.

Babst recused himself from the vote.

Motion to approve: Marty O'Fallon

Second: Nat Grubbs

Vote (Babst recused): 4 ayes, 0 nays

IBC Protocol #22 is approved.

- IBC protocol #23 from Djamali Muhoza (School of Math and Sciences). "Computational and Biochemical Design and Testing of Small Molecule Inhibitors." (RG1, BL1)

Dr. Muhoza mentioned briefly that his initial proposal last year included use of some human cells and serum, but he removed that from his proposal last year, and is not ready to add that into his workflow at this time. He uses *E. coli* and potentially *Agrobacterium* to demonstrate gene transfer to students. There were no changes to the proposal since last year.

There were no committee questions, other than those addressed during the tour.

Motion to approve: Nat Grubbs

Second: Marty O'Fallon

Vote (Muhoza recused): 4 ayes, 0 nays

IBC protocol #23 is approved.

E. Meeting adjourned