

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Plant Science Research Greenhouse Facility Faculty Oversight Committee Meeting March 25, 2021, 1:00 PM

Present: Chrislyn Particka, Director; Erik Runkle, (HORT), Co-Chair; Thomas Sharkey (PRL and BMB), Co-Chair; Britta Hamberger (standing in for Bjoern Hamberger, BMB); Mary Hausbeck (PSM); Roberto Lopez (HORT), David Lowry (PLB); Carolyn Malmstrom (PLB); Eric Olson (PSM); David Smitley (ENT)
Absent: Michael Walters (FOR)

The meeting opened with a discussion of the approximately \$4M investment in the greenhouse facility announced during the Plant Science Town Hall on March 9. The funds are being provided by the Office of the Provost, the Office of Research and Innovation, AgBio Research, the College of Natural Science, and Infrastructure Planning and Facilities. Funds will be primarily used to purchase environmental control systems and LEDs and to improve drainage in floors across the facility. These upgrades will improve environmental control, decrease the environmental footprint of the greenhouses, and conserve energy.

Tom provided an update on the planning grant proposal to the NSF Mid-Scale Research Infrastructure program; we were not invited to develop a full proposal. There was some discussion about ideas to renovate existing greenhouses such that they can be very tightly controlled.

Chrislyn asked the committee to help ensure members of their departments are well-educated about Worker Protection Standard (WPS) training. WPS training is required for employees who work in any areas where pesticides are applied and is governed by state and federal laws. WPS training has two components: general training, which must be completed annually, and site-specific training, which must be completed once for each research location. Chrislyn has been assisting with general WPS training since it moved to being taught via Zoom a year ago due to the pandemic. With the number of employees who must take WPS training annually and the current training structure, its administration requires a considerable amount of her time.

The committee discussed sanitation issues that are occurring in some greenhouses. During monthly facility inspections, Chrislyn notes sanitation issues and contacts appropriate lab personnel. In nearly all instances, the greenhouse is quickly cleaned. However, in some cases, the sanitation problems persist and are severe enough that they could negatively affect research in adjoining greenhouses. The committee approved a program whereby Chrislyn contacts via email the faculty member and appropriate lab personnel to set a reasonable deadline for cleaning the greenhouse. One reminder will be sent prior to the deadline. If the greenhouse has not been cleaned by the deadline, greenhouse staff will clean it and the user will be charged \$100/hour with a \$200 minimum charge.

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 pm.

Chrislyn Particka, PhD
Director

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