



## U-M Research Safety Initiative - Safety Committee Summit

### Executive Summary

The U-M Laboratory and Research Safety Committee (LRSC) convened the first U-M Safety Committee Summit in Palmer Commons on March 19, 2018. The **purpose** of the event was to build community utilizing directed small and large group discussion sessions focused on a) successes, b) challenges, and c) needs for strengthening the culture of laboratory and academic safety on the University of Michigan campus. The 5-hour event had 75 participants, including members of the LRSC, the Unit-Level Safety Committees, and Environment, Health, and Safety (EHS), and the University of Michigan Office of Research (UMOR). Every unit-level safety committee established on the Ann Arbor campus was represented, in addition to U-M Flint and Dearborn. The following 6 topics represent some of the major discussion points emerging during the large group discussions:

**1. Training** – There was broad agreement that the process by which training occurs and is monitored needs to be improved. This included the need to identify certified trainers and avoid “trickle-down” training where information is passed from an unqualified individual to a new trainee. Online access to training records by laboratory and program directors would also provide greater oversight of safety-training status of personnel. Finally, concern regarding work conducted after hours was expressed and considered an important topic for future summits.

**2. Resources** – Many units expressed the need for devoting greater resources to improve safety. This included financial support to correct existing infrastructure challenges and to incentivize faculty, staff, and trainees to more broadly adopt recommended safety guidelines.

**3. Data Communication** – There was broad agreement that using non-punitive data to help drive the change in safety culture would be impactful. All agreed that discussion and dissemination of safety and operations data is an important priority. Likewise, it was agreed that promoting lessons learned and sharing best practices would strengthen the safety culture by providing heightened awareness of hazards.

**4. Facilities maintenance** – There were concerns expressed regarding negative trends in the timeliness, costs, and quality of infrastructure and equipment repairs by UM. Concerns were also expressed regarding the lack of communication regarding these repairs and lack of follow through.

**5. EHS resource visibility** – There was overall enthusiasm for developing and implementing programs, including informal mechanisms, to promote greater collaboration between EHS inspectors and faculty, staff, and trainees. Concepts include designated times for safety inspectors to walk around their areas to increase availability of expert safety advice without fear of citations. These and other ideas need further development for implementation.

**6. Escalation policy** – Many units agreed a campus-wide escalation policy is needed to supplement local efforts in managing individuals who refuse to correct deficiencies.

Overall, the kickoff Safety Committee Summit was a success in terms of participation and identification of critical topics and goals that will help direct the safety campaign over the next year.