

Improving the Culture of Research Safety: Engaging Faculty

Imke Schroeder, Ph.D.
UC Center for Laboratory Safety

Faculty Statement UCLA 2010

Professor XYZ:

“Safety is not our responsibility. We are here to be doing research. EH&S should be doing all of the necessary training.”

Criminal Felony Charges Against Faculty



Sheharbano Sanji, UCLA December 29, 2008, accident with a pyrophoric chemical

- Sustained 3rd degree burns over 40% of her body
- Died January 16, 2009



Dr. Thea Ekins-Coward, University of Hawaii, Manoa, March 16, 2015, hydrogen/oxygen explosion

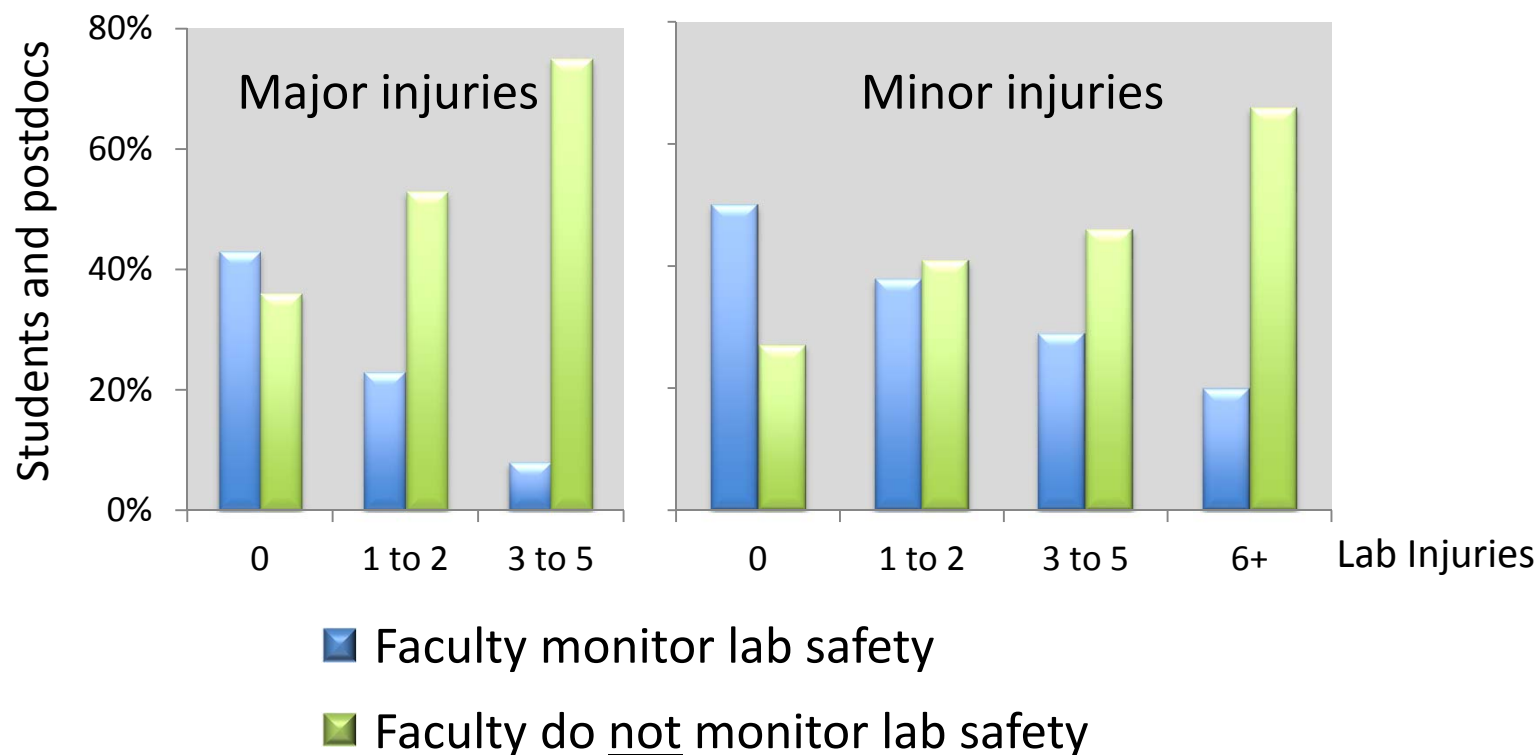
- Lost one arm
- Suffered burns to face, abrasions to cornea, loss of high frequency hearing

Faculty have to take responsibility for the researchers in their lab

- Obligated by law as supervisor to keep researchers in their lab safe
- Moral obligation to keep researchers in their lab safe
- Most familiar with research projects including hazards involved
- Most familiar with new products or processes they innovate

Impact of Faculty on Student Safety

Injuries witnessed or personally experienced by students and postdocs (n=406)



What is faculty engagement in lab safety?

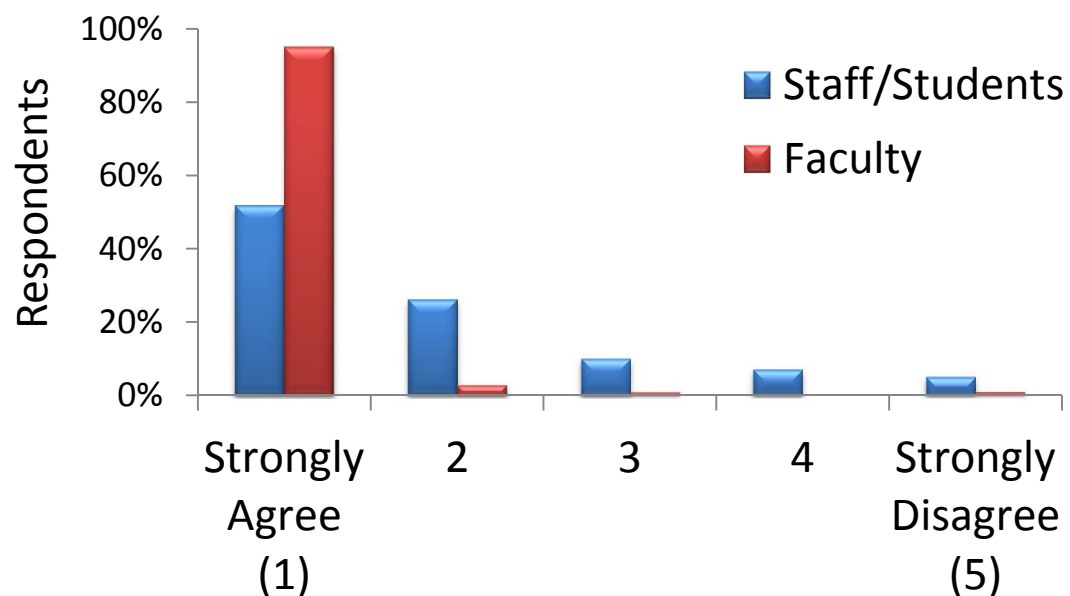
- Faculty set expectations on students
- Faculty ensure proper training of their students
- Faculty model safety behavior
- Faculty monitor safety practices in their lab
- Faculty encourage students to voice safety concerns

2016 Survey at UCLA:

When there is a safety issue in my lab, I address it. (96 faculty responses)

When there is a safety issue in my lab, my mentor/professor does a good job addressing it.

(296 students and staff responses)

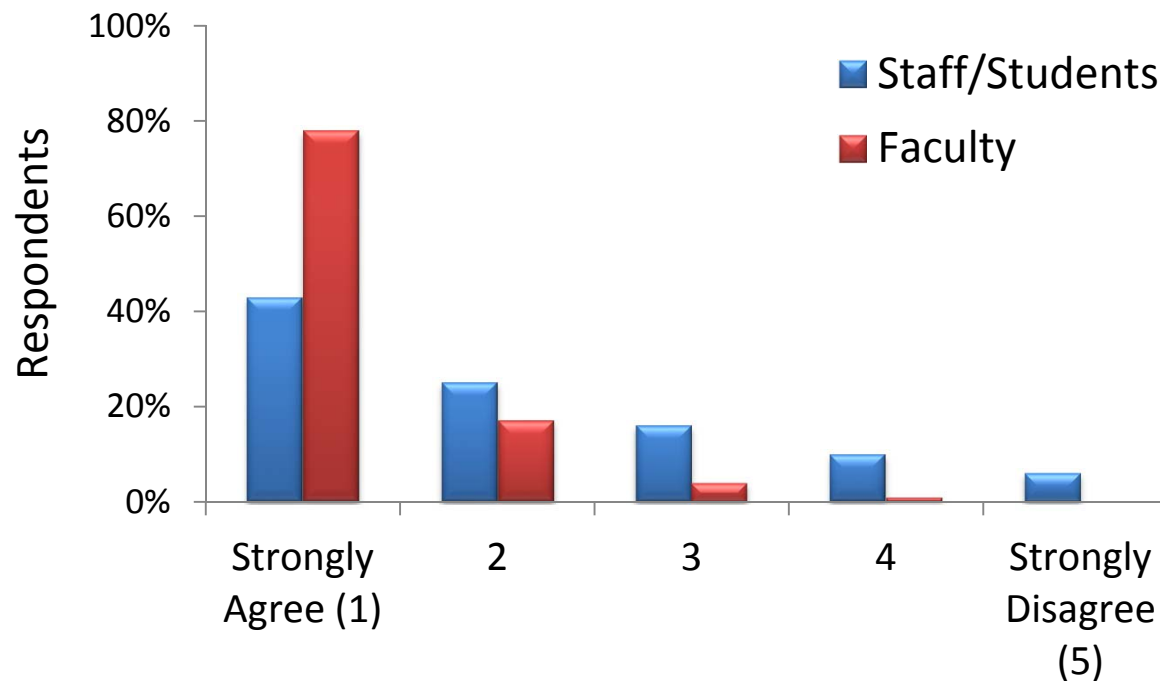


2016 Survey at UCLA:

I discuss with my lab group how to conduct experiments safely. (98 faculty responses)

My mentor/professor discusses with me how to conduct experiments safely.

(297 students and staff responses)



2016 Survey at UCLA:

What do you think is the biggest challenge to improve the safety in your lab?

Faculty Responses:

- Making sure that everyone understands that safety comes first
- To spend time on activities that truly improve safety, rather than on activities that are dictated by regulations to theoretically improve safety
- A culture of safety and not a compliance culture

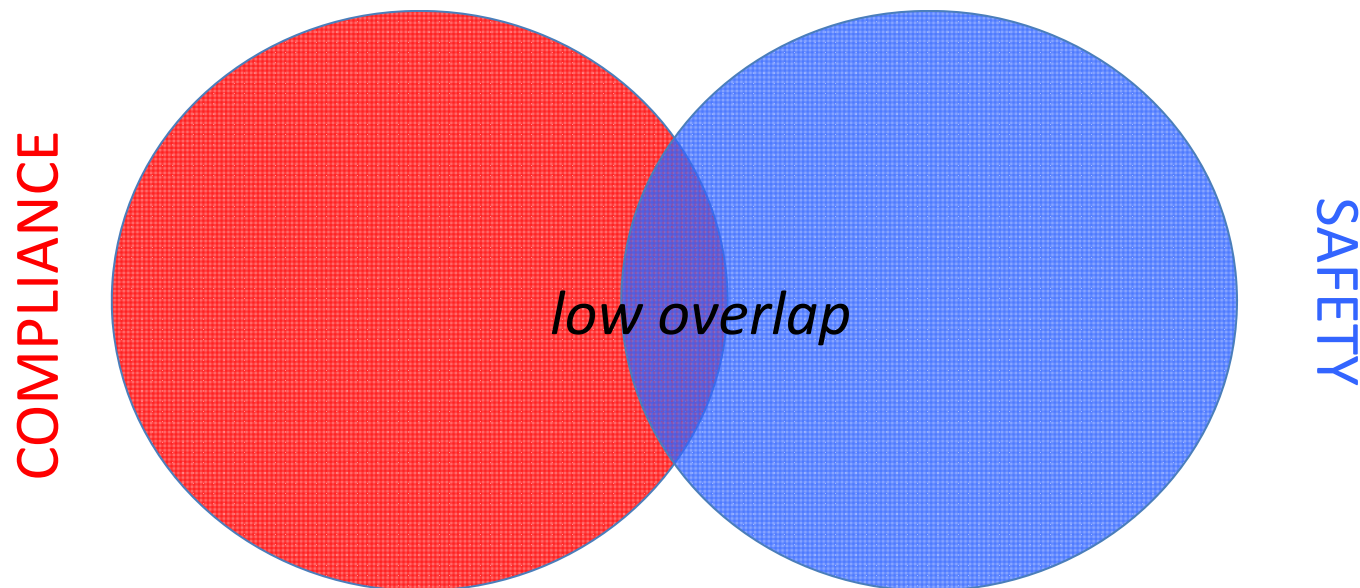
COMPLIANCE versus SAFETY: Where's the overlap?

EH&S View?



COMPLIANCE versus SAFETY: Where's the overlap?

PI/Researcher View?



Safety Training Consortium: PI Responsibility Course



Holden Thorp, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs of Washington University in St. Louis

~15 min eLearning course developed by faculty

Introductory video with Dr. Holden Thorp:

“You are going to have to lead by:

- Ensuring everyone does a proper hazard analysis before beginning work
- Making sure safety equipment such as fume hoods and biosafety cabinets are operating properly, and Personal Protective Equipment, or PPE, such as lab coats, safety goggles and gloves, are available and used when needed
- Making sure everyone feels comfortable reporting near-miss incidents, so all can learn in order to prevent more serious future accidents”



Thank You



Email: ischroeder@ehs.ucla.edu

www.cls.ucla.edu, www.safety-consortium.org