

# SPECIAL RESEARCH TOWN HALL

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Tuesday, June 8, 2021

# Overview

- **Lab & Research Re-Opening** (Phil)
- **Research Safety & Regulatory Committees** (Heather)
  - Re-Org
  - Active OVPR Committees
  - Regulatory Committees
  - Chemical Safety Inventory
  - Faculty Satisfaction & Operational Efficiencies
- **Open Discussion & Questions**

# LAB & RESEARCH RE-OPENING

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# Increased Lab Personnel Density

- I. Update on TUSM pilot – increased lab personnel density began 4/16/21
  - 6ft spacing at workstations presumed to be static
  - Eating (unmasked) in breakrooms one at a time only
  - Testing cadence and masking policy unchanged; N95 and face shield/goggles required for close-proximity (<6ft) work over 15 min/day
  - No adverse events reported as of 5/18/21
  - Increased occupancy (~25% over previous level) limited to some degree by meal policy; generally well-received
  
- II. Expansion of increased lab density campus wide begins 6/1/21
  - 0ft distancing now in effect; therefore, full occupancy of research spaces is allowed
  - Testing cadence unchanged for staff and faculty; most students will be tested once per week
  - 3-ply masks required inside – accommodations for individuals who need additional respiratory protection may be provided
  - Core facilities fully open
  - Indoor dining returns to pre-pandemic capacity. Please use good judgement in regards to proximity to others particularly if unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated

# Changes to ISC Oversight Roles – I

1. COVID-19-related studies no longer need ISC review unless they contain additional activities warranting review (e.g. face-to-face human studies research)
  - Remote surveys with COVID-19-related questions (zoom, phone, etc.)
  - Wet lab studies without live virus
2. International hiring will revert to export control review only
3. Domestic research travel review will be dropped
  - Travelers will be expected to follow state and local COVID-19 guidance and will require testing upon return
  - International research travel (essential only) review will continue given highly variable global COVID-19 rates (approvals: research dean → ISC → ITRC/registration)

# Changes to ISC Oversight Roles – II

Face-to-face human subjects research review will continue for some studies

## “In House” Studies

- No longer need review, unless higher risk of COVID-19 transmission
- COVID-19 questionnaire retained; all research subjects will follow Tufts masking rule regardless of vaccination status
- Higher risk studies (e.g. aerosol generation, physical exertion) will require ISC review to consider enhanced precautions

## Domestic ‘Field’ Interviews

- Policies will be on website
  - No ISC review required
- Street interviews
  - Tufts personnel must be masked
- Prisons, schools, cultural centers etc.
  - Tufts personnel must be masked; subjects should follow local guidance

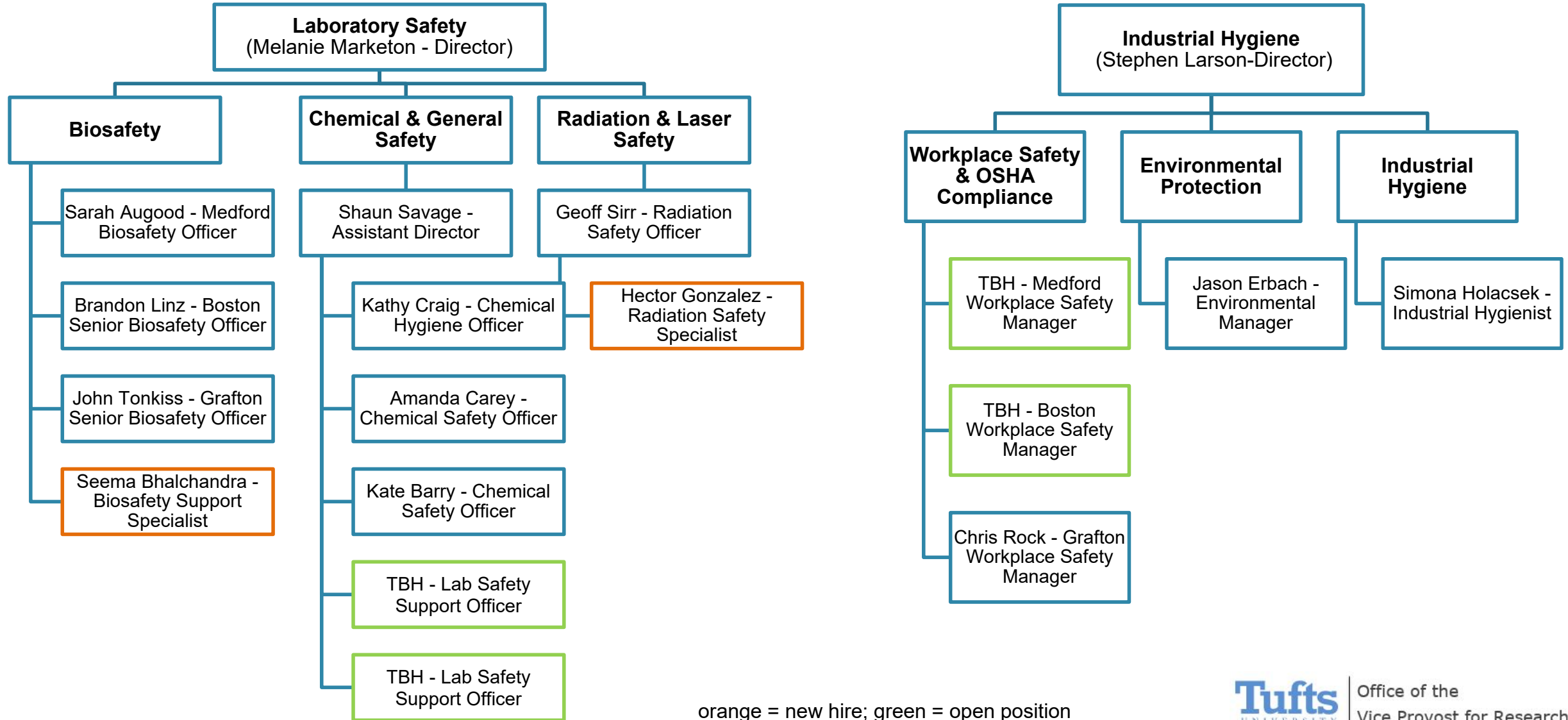
## International Face-to-Face Studies

- Will be reviewed by the ISC even if all enumerators already in-country given wide variety of COVID-19 rates internationally
- Policies at place of study must be followed by Tufts personnel and those working on behalf of Tufts if they exceed Tufts guidelines
- Subjects should follow local guidance

# RESEARCH SAFETY & REGULATORY COMMITTEES

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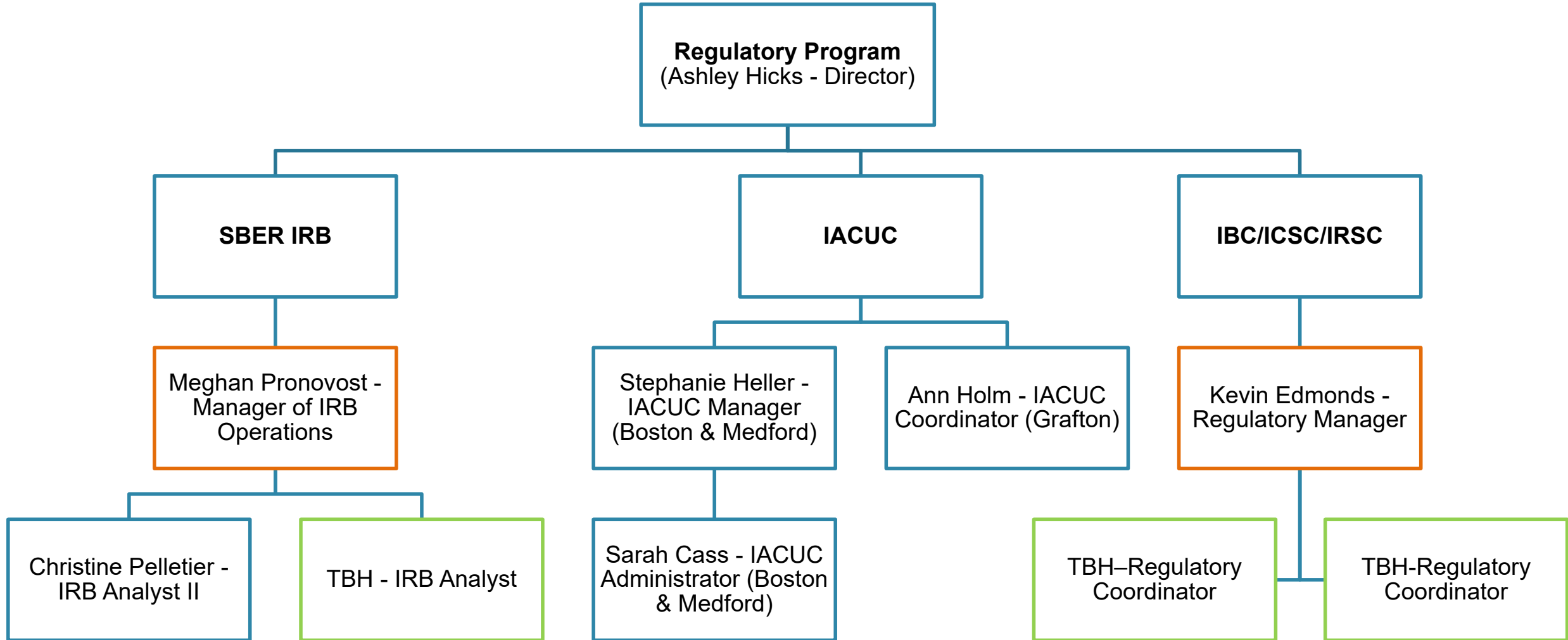
# Research Safety



orange = new hire; green = open position



# Regulatory Programs



orange = new hire; green = open position

# Active OVPR Committees

- **Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)**
- **Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)**
- Institutional Chemical Safety Committee (ICSC)
- **Institutional Radiation/Laser Safety Committee (IRLSC)**
- **Institutional Review Board (IRB)**
- Faculty Safety & Compliance Board
- Conflict of Interest (COI) Review Committee
- Integrative Safety Committee (ISC)
- **Scientific Misconduct Committee (ad hoc)**

# Regulatory Committees

## IACUC

- Oversees care and use of all vertebrate animals used in research
- Biomedical
- Teaching
- Training
- Clinical studies
- Wildlife/ Field studies

## IBC

- Recombinant/synthetic nucleic acids
- Biological Toxins
- Infectious agents
- Human source materials and non-human primate materials
- SARS-CoV-2 virus (live or inactivated), virus components, and genetic elements

## ICSC

- Chemical Inventory
- High Hazard Chemicals in research, teaching, and training
- Educate on the safe use, storage, and disposal of chemicals
- Develop trainings

## SBER IRB

- Social science research
- Behavioral research
- Educational research
- Humanities-based research
- Non-invasive collection of biospecimens / minor amounts of blood collection in SBE research
- Low physical risk in SBE research

## HS IRB

- Clinical research
- Biomedical research
- Research with HIPAA-protected data
- Use of stored biospecimens / biospecimen repository research
- Research on education or training for TUSM/TUSDM students if it involves clinical care
- Tufts Medical Center also engaged in research

## IRSC

- Radioactive materials, X-ray machines, other ionizing radiation sources
- Lasers, UV radiation, and other non-ionizing radiation sources

# Chemical Inventory Program

- BioRAFT Pilot Program – June 2020
- Institutional Chemical Safety Committee (ICSC) Policy – February 2021
- Implementation phase is ongoing
  
- **What labs need to do:**
  - **Get your chemical inventory into BioRAFT**
    - If you haven't already scheduled an inventory and support session, please contact [ICSC@tufts.edu](mailto:ICSC@tufts.edu) by July 1, 2021.
  - **Maintain your inventory within BioRAFT**
    - It is up to labs to keep their inventory accurate and current. Compliance will be checked during audits.



If there are questions, please contact [ICSC@tufts.edu](mailto:ICSC@tufts.edu)

# Faculty Satisfaction & Operational Efficiencies

- Turn around times for regulatory and safety teams have remained consistent except for the SBER IRB Office due to increased workload and open positions.
  - Recruiting for open positions.
  - Evaluating protocol template and requirements.
- We expect to see extended turn around times for safety teams over the summer months as inspections resume due to the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, open positions and extreme burn-out.
  - Recruiting for open positions.
  - Evaluating lab inspection process.

# Faculty Input on OVPR Services





# Updated COVID-19 Information & Research Resources

Last updated June 3, 2021



## Update on COVID-19 Protocols at Tufts

Following recent guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Governor Baker's decision to lift all remaining COVID-19 restrictions in Massachusetts effective May 29, Tufts University updated its COVID-19 policies and procedures effective June 1, 2021.

[Learn More](#)

## Questions?

Please contact the OVPR with your questions and feedback related to research during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Contact Us](#)

## Stay Updated

[Research Community Updates](#)

[OVPR Town Halls](#)

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## Re-opening Research

[Biosafety Guidelines for SARS COV-2 \(PDF\)](#)

[Dining](#)

[Human Subjects Research](#)

[Mask Guidance & Surveillance Testing](#)

[Research Density & Close Proximity Work](#)

[Research-related Travel](#)

# Open Discussion & Questions