

ABSA
INTERNATIONAL

OCTOBER 2018 Biosafety Month

Promoting a Culture of Biosafety and Responsibility

Arizona State University is taking lessons and stories, engaging other divisions, and building successful Biosafety campaigns! Check out what ASU is doing to support a safety culture at their university while promoting 2018 Biosafety Month! #getyourcultureon

As Biosafety professionals, we probably all have had to deal with needlestick incidents, lost or misplaced vials, autoclave failures, or possibly even laboratory-acquired infections. We likely have seen someone wearing flip-flops in the laboratory, or perhaps having a holiday party with beer and champagne bottles on cluttered benchtops. Conversely, we also have had amazing successes, from convincing a scientist not to mouth a pipette or helping someone not blow up an autoclave. Either way, we all have stories, and it is these stories that help us educate our respective audiences.

At Arizona State University (ASU), we have taken these stories and made them into campaigns in support of Biosafety Month, created by the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Office of Science Policy (OSP). NIH OSP has effectively promoted biosafety themes such as transparency in research, accountability in laboratory operations and public engagement.

Biological research at ASU has increased in astronomical proportions. When new researchers come to ASU, no one tells them what they need to do from a biosafety or biosecurity point of view. We often "catch" them during a laboratory registration, a disclosure to the Institutional Biosafety Committee, or a building walkthrough. Similarly, there are no introductory courses for students to address biosafety and biosecurity.



The ASU Biosafety Team: David Gillum, Catherine Mancini, Irene Mendoza, and Giorgio Scarpellini

Because of this, our team is required to be in a constant public relations state. We must let everyone know who we are, what we do, why it's important and how we can help.

The ASU biosafety team is comprised of Irene Mendoza, Giorgio Scarpellini, Catherine Mancini, and David Gillum. We have partnered with our research division – Knowledge Enterprise Development – and our Business and Finance Communications team, to make posters, videos, articles, and tweets to support the Biosafety Month themes and stories we wanted to share. These stories have been incredibly successful, and we owe much of our past success to the NIH OSP.

ABSA International is leading Biosafety Month this year, and we are very excited about the “Promoting Biosafety Culture and Responsibility” theme. Besides the amazing play on words and brilliant hashtag (#getyourcultureon), it is a great means to engage your scientific community in the biosafety conversation. At ASU, we plan to hold a contest and offer a prize for the “Best Safety Culture” photo or artwork submission. Perhaps other institutions will want to compete; who doesn’t love competition?

Our biosafety team is extremely thankful to ABSA International and everyone in the biosafety community for supporting Biosafety Month. This is going to be a great year!

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ABSA International is pleased to be a part of 2018 Biosafety Month, “Promoting a Culture of Biosafety and Responsibility” and encourages all biosafety professionals to “Get Your Culture On!” #getyourcultureon.

For more information on 2018 Biosafety Month and access to additional resources visit:
<https://absa.org/event/2018-biosafety-month/>

