1. Welcome – Chair Lisa Habel

2. Land acknowledgement – Gail Spencer

3. Introduction of guest speaker – Steve Bradley

4. Presentation by Dr. Servos, Canada Research Chair in Water Quality Protection

Presentation: Moving from Watersheds to Sewersheds: Wastewater surveillance of SARS-CoV-2

- Team members on monitoring wastewater for COVID-19 variant Omicron: Hadi Dhiyebi, Meghan Fuzzen, Heather Ikert, Nivetha Srikanthan, Samina Hayat, Carly Sing-Judge, Yash Badlani, Leslie Bragg, Eli Zeeb, Patrick Breadner, Blake Haskell. The team and efforts have been supported by many more on campus and beyond including Co-op students and Rolland from Plant Ops, Custodial Services
- Summary: The COVID-19 pandemic has touched almost every corner of the globe and caused serious health impacts within our communities. It was recognized early in the “first wave” of infections that there was the potential to monitor SARS-CoV-2 viral fragments in wastewater as an alternate way to do community surveillance. This approach has the advantage that it is independent of how testing is done for individuals over time (i.e. changing methods, access), integrates both symptomatic and asymptomatic people and includes everyone within the
sewershed (i.e., it is independent of clinical testing). Our team rapidly responded to the needs of the public health agencies by pivoting research from environmental toxicology to assessment of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater. Regular sampling of influent (wastewater) initiated at several wastewater sites in Ontario, as well as student residences on the UW campus, has shown wastewater surveillance to be a useful tool to track community spread that parallels closely the reported clinical cases (until recent changes in clinical testing in early 2022). Wastewater has also been emerging as a way to rapidly monitor the spread of variants of concern (VOCs) in our communities. This work has been used by local authorities to inform and support public health actions to protect our communities.

- Recommendations: follow advice of local medical officer of public health, wear masks indoors and get vaccinated

- Q&A:

  Q: Can you identify potential new variants in advance?
  A: All sequencing data worldwide goes into a global database. We have access to this follow international variants and work to try to predict what’s coming to Canada.

  Q: Do you know how many people have the virus based on the results of samples?
  A: We don’t know how many people have it based on samples - can’t know if one person shedding a lot or a lot of people shedding a little. Very difficult to make a precise estimate of the numbers so our work focuses on the trend not the number of people.

  Q: Do you track other things in the wastewater?
  A: This technique has been used and applied for polio, monitoring opioid drug use, influenza and more. With what we are learning and applying we are looking to assess other virus and heath concerns. This is still an emerging science.

  Q: Is poop a potentially a better way to test on an individual basis?
  A: No, the most effective way is still via the nasal testing.

5. President’s Report (see Appendix A)

- Recent UWSA presentations – presented at the recent new staff member orientation and participate in the staff conference drop in session
- Campus Climate Survey #3 - was sent out and some results have since been shared with University administration. Data will be shared with staff soon
  - Large amounts of staff have strong preference for mask and vaccine mandate
  - Workforce planning/future of workforce is the top concern for our staff
- MOA – we are planning the roll out
- Staff compensation review – getting our work started on this already
- UWSA 3-year strategic planning – this is getting underway
- Upcoming social events: June 2022 – Canada’s Wonderland Trip, Jul 2022 - Golf Tournament, August 2022 - Stratford Festival Chicago performance

- Q&A:

  Q: Did the 50% subsidy of fitness at BMH disappear
  A: I’ll get back to you on this
Q: How does one get tickets to the Stratford Festival Chicago performance?
A: Email Dave McDougall or Catherine Bolger

Q: What was the President’s Goel’s reaction to the data you presented from the recent climate survey?
A: President stated it is inevitable that things have to change and indicated the UWSA can represent staff in workforce planning and have a ‘seat at the table’. Marilyn Thompson [Associate Provost, Human Resources] is also supportive of UWSA representing staff in these spaces.

6. Approval of Minutes of March 10, 2022
Approved.

7. Open forum

8. Closing remarks

Next meeting: Thursday, May 12, 2022

Chair: Lisa Habel
Minutes: JM

APPENDIX A

PRESIDENT’S REPORT
Our recent staff survey told us that most of you want to continue with the Mask and Vaccine mandate past May 1. I sent those results to Vivek, Jim Rush, Michelle Hollis and Kate Windsor after we received the initial announcement that mandates were to be dropped May 1. We’re not saying that our email had anything to do with the update that mandates will continue in May but we felt it was important for senior leaders to know what staff were thinking.

Hosted an Open House with almost 40 people during the Staff Conference

Presented in front of 90 New staff as to the benefits of becoming a member

Working on a roll out plan to discuss the new MOA with members

Sent 3 staff proposals to PACSC – two accepted, one deferred

Facilitating a 3 YR strat plan with the Board with the help of Sandra Hanmer from Capacity Canada

Set the budget for next year – highlights include – putting money aside for a new hire

Reminder about upcoming socials – June 11 Canada’s Wonderland, Thurs July 14th and to Chicago at Stratford in August.