The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

HBA/IBC MEETING MINUTES
Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)
Zoom Meeting

Meeting Minutes

May 22, 2026
1:00 pm – 3:30 pm

ATTENDANCE

Voting Members Present:

	IBC Position	*Area or Department*
Daniele Provenzano (Zoom)	Chair, Scientist	Bio. & Chem. - Bacterial Genet.
Megan Keniry (Zoom)	Scientist	Integrative Bio. & Chem. – Mamm. Cell Bio.
HyeongJun Kim (Zoom)	Scientist	Phys. and Astron. Bacterial Chr. dynamics/biophys./biochem.
Robin Choudhury (Zoom)	Scientist	Bio. & Chem. - SEEMS
Javier Garcia (Zoom)	BSO, Ex-Officio	Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management
Laura Decanini (Zoom)	Community Representative	Not Affiliated

Voting Members Absent:
(Without Representation)

	IBC Position	*Area or Department*
Lynne Depeault	Community Representative	Not Affiliated
Julie Mustard	Vice-Chair, Scientist	Integrative Bio. & Chem. - Neurosci.
Dae Joon Kim	Scientist	Medicine & Oncology
Subramanian Dhandayuthapani	Scientist	Medicine & Oncology
David Laughlin	Community Representative	Not Affiliated

Ex-Officio Non-Voting Members Present:

	IBC Position	*Area or Department*
Cordelia Rasa (Zoom)	Ex-Officio, LAR & BSL3 Director	Ex-Officio, LAR & BSL3 Director
Amy Mutore (Zoom)	Ex-Officio, Professional Support	Office of Research Compliance
Monica Barrera	Ex-Officio, Professional Support	Office of Research Compliance
Eric Allen (Zoom)	Director, Ex-Officio, Admin Rep	Office of Research Compliance

Ex-Officio Non-Voting Members Absent:

	IBC Position	*Area or Department*
Matthew Moncus	Ex-Officio, EHSRM Director	Ex-Officio, EHSRM Director
Monica Barrera	Ex-Officio, Professional Support	Office of Research Compliance Office of Research Compliance

Total Voting Members Present: 6

Guests:

	Capacity
None	

QUORUM

The quorum requirement for the IBC meeting is 6 voting members present and must consist of at least 5 members from UTRGV employees and 1 unaffiliated member. Upon quorum being assembled, the meeting was called to order by the Chair at 1:56 pm. Including the Chair, 6 voting members were in attendance at the beginning of the meeting. Quorum was maintained throughout the entire meeting.

A. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed the Committee.

B. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

The Chair reminded the Committee to hold in confidence the information revealed and/or discussed during the meeting and not disclose the information to any third parties including investigators and research personnel.

C. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

The Chair reminded the Committee of their responsibility to declare any conflicts of interest prior to the discussion of any study included as an agenda item. Members were reminded that conflicts of interest include financial (e.g., Member or Member's family hold a financial interest in the research sponsor) and non-financial (e.g. Member is part of a study research team). The Members were polled for any conflicts of interest with the projects being reviewed.

No conflicts were reported.

D. REVIEW AND APROVAL OF PREVIOUS IBC MEETING MINUTES

None.

E. 4-YEAR RENEWALS

1. IBC-26-11 (2022-004-HBA & 2022-002-IBC)

Project Title: *Role of Ion channels in Cellular physiology and Pathophysiology*
Sponsor: N/A
Biosafety Level: BSL-2

Principal Investigator:	Nirakar Sahoo
Type of Submission:	4-Year
Committee Action:	30-day Approval; Revisions needed to secure approval past 30 days
Total Voting = 6	Vote: For = 6, Against = 0, Abstained = 0, Recused = 0.

Incidents:
None.

NIH Guidelines Sections:
1. *II-A-3, Appendix C-1* - Use of animal cells/cell lines or tissues (e.g., tissue culture research)
2. *II-A-3* - Use of human cells/cell lines or tissues (e.g., human blood, 293 cell lines, CSF)
3. *III-D-1, 2* - Use of or the cloning genes from, or into a Risk Group 2, 3, 4 or restricted agent
4. *III-D-3, III-E-1* - Use of virus or viruses (experiments involving Influenza viruses fall under III-D-7)
5. *III-E, III-F* - Cloning and vector construction in bacteria and yeasts
6. *III-E, III-F* - Expression of recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules in cultured cells
7. *III-D-4* - Administration of recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules into animals (e.g., transformed cells, vectors)

Discussion:
The Committee discussed the protocol in detail and determined that the PI would need to make multiple minor revisions to secure approval after 30 days. The Committee reviewed and verified that the protocol specifies all approved laboratory spaces authorized for the proposed activities. All procedures outlined in the protocol were determined to be consistent with established standard laboratory practices and compliant with institutional requirements for work in these designated spaces, except as noted below. PI CVs have been evaluated to verify and certify subject matter expertise.

The following changes are requested from PI:
1. In box 1 (Project Summary), add a brief description of the experiments performed: for Project 1 define standard cell biology methods; for Project 2 briefly list the experiments that will determine lysosome function, iron storage, ferritinophagy, autophagy, etc.; for Project 3 state the experiments used to study cell signaling, organelle movement, autophagy, lysosome function, etc.; for Project 4 briefly list the techniques used to study cell-bacteria interaction, lysosome clearance, xenophagy, etc. as applies to each project/experimental flow. In other words, relate the phenotypic assays to the techniques used in each instance.
2. In box 2, (Risk Assessment), provide the infectious dose (ID50), exposure route, disease symptoms/manifestations for each bacterial pathogen and which experimental steps present

the highest risk for each. Define the" added cautions" used in handling *Legionella pneumophila* and how these cultures will be handled (in biosafety cabinet?).
3. In Box 3 (Biosafety Precautions), state what specific precautions will be taken to decrease any instance of laboratory-born transmission of pathogens for the highest risk experimental steps identified and described in Box 2.
4. In Box 4 (Biological Waste and Disposal), describe how liquid bacterial cultures and bacteria-contaminated ware will be deactivated before disposal.
5. Define the lentivirus vector generation.
6. For experiments involving bacterial pathogens, if all listed species will be inoculated into cell cultures using the same methodology, confirm it. Alternatively, indicate and pathogen-specific differences in methodology used.
7. Describe how O157:H7/GFP E. coli strains will be gavaged into mice.
8. In each instance disinfection is mentioned, state the name of the disinfectant, the concentration used and the time of exposure.
9. In each instance *appropriate* containment is mentioned, define what that consists of.
10. In each instance where "controlled lab conditions" or "BSL2 practices" are mentioned, briefly indicate what these are in the context of the description.

Motion:
A motion was entered by Dr. Megan Keniry and seconded by Dr. Laura Decanini to grant 30-day approval of IBC-26-11 (2022-004-HBA & 2022-002-IBC) pending the changes and information requested are satisfactorily addressed by the PI and that the training records are up to date to secure approval past the 30-day period. The motion carried unanimously.

F. NEW IBC PROTOCOLS

1. IBC-26-10

Project Title: *Identification of novel drugs with antimicrobial potential*
Sponsor: N/A
Biosafety Level: BSL-2

Principal Investigator (PI):	Yahan Wei
Type of Submission:	New Protocol
Committee Action:	Tabled
Total Voting = 6	Vote: For = 6, Against = 0, Abstained = 0, Recused = 0.

Summary:
The goal of the project is to identify the natural functions of bacterial genes and explore the potential of targeting those genes for therapeutic treatment.

NIH Guidelines Sections:
1. *III-D-1, 2* - Use of or the cloning genes from, or into a Risk Group 2, 3, 4 or restricted agent
2. *III-E, III-F* - Generation or use of cDNA/genomic libraries

3. *III-E, III-F* - Cloning and vector construction in bacteria and yeasts
4. *III-F* - Use of recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules for detection (e.g., probes)
5. *III-E, III-F* - Expression of recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules in cultured cells

Discussion:
The Committee discussed the protocol in detail and agreed to table the study until further clarification was given regarding what gene/s will be deleted/complemented in what bacterial species to properly assess the risk involved. The Committee reviewed and verified that the protocol specifies all approved laboratory spaces authorized for the proposed activities. All procedures outlined in the protocol were determined to be consistent with established standard laboratory practices and compliant with institutional requirements for work in these designated spaces, except as noted below. PI CVs have been evaluated to verify and certify subject matter expertise.

The following changes are requested from PI:

1. Provide a detailed description of what gene/function will be transferred to what strain to understand the likelihood of "gain of function" outcomes in any of these pathogens.

Risks Identified:
The risk will be fully evaluated once the protocol is resubmitted with clarifications requested.

Motion:
A motion was entered by Dr. Megan Keniry and seconded by Dr. Laura Decanini to table IBC-25-24 until further clarification was given regarding what gene/s will be deleted/complemented in what bacterial species to properly assess the risk involved. The motion carried unanimously.

2. IBC-25-64
Project Title: *Role of microbiota in regulating cancer growth and progression*
Sponsor: N/A
Biosafety Level: BSL-2

Principal Investigator (PI):	Sheema Khan
Type of Submission:	New Protocol
Committee Action:	Exempt
Total Voting = 6	Vote: For = 6, Against = 0, Abstained = 0, Recused = 0.

Summary:
The goal of the project is to investigate how specific bacterial species found in human liver tissues can influence the progression and prevention of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) to NASH, cirrhosis, and ultimately hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC).

NIH Guidelines Sections:
1. *III-E, III-F* - Cloning and vector construction in bacteria and yeasts
2. *III-E, III-F* - Expression of recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules in cultured cells

Discussion:
The Committee discussed the protocol in detail and determined the study to be exempt from committee oversight. The Committee reviewed and verified that the protocol specifies all approved laboratory spaces authorized for the proposed activities. All procedures outlined in the protocol were determined to be consistent with established standard laboratory practices and compliant with institutional requirements for work in these designated spaces. PI CVs have been evaluated to verify and certify subject matter expertise.

Risks Identified:
The risk was determined be low due to lack of sufficient biological hazards that raise to BSL-2 precautions.

Motion:
A motion was entered by Dr. Megan Keniry and seconded by Dr. Robin Choudhury to exempt IBC-25-64 for lack of sufficient biological hazards that raise to BSL-2 precautions. The motion carried unanimously.

3. IBC-26-17
Project Title: *Investigate role of GPER and Galectin-1 in tumor growth and progression*
Sponsor: Seed Money/CPRIT-TREC
Biosafety Level: BSL-2

Principal Investigator (PI):	Sheema Khan
Type of Submission:	New Protocol
Committee Action:	30-day Approval; Revisions needed to secure approval past 30 days
Total Voting = 6	Vote: For = 6, Against = 0, Abstained = 0, Recused = 0.

Summary:
The goal of the project is to investigate the functional roles of GPER (G protein-coupled estrogen receptor 1) and LGALS1 (Galectin-1) in cancer progression using in vitro and in vivo models.

NIH Guidelines Sections:
1. *II-A-3, Appendix C-1* - Use of animal cells/cell lines or tissues (e.g., tissue culture research)
2. *III-E, III-F* - Expression of recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules in cultured cells
3. *III-D-4* - Administration of recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules into animals (e.g., transformed cells, vectors)

Discussion:
The Committee discussed the protocol in detail and determined that the PI would need to make multiple minor revisions to secure approval after 30 days. The Committee reviewed and verified that the protocol specifies all approved laboratory spaces authorized for the proposed activities. All procedures outlined in the protocol were determined to be consistent with established standard laboratory practices and compliant with institutional requirements for work in these designated spaces, except as noted below. PI CVs have been evaluated to verify and certify subject matter expertise.

The following changes are requested from PI:

1. At each instance where "standard safety procedures" or equivalent are mentioned, briefly describe what those entail.
2. Include & describe the role of lactobacilli and bacterial cultures in the Project Description (Box 1).
3. Select BSL2+ as maximum biosafety level required to conduct the experiments that involve the use of lentiviral/CRISPR manipulated BSL2 cancer cells.
4. Describe the animal restrain techniques used to inoculate the animals by injection and precautions taken to prevent accidental needlesticks.
5. Remove Hepa 1-6 and HCC1937 cell lines from the hazardous biological agents table as they are RG1 according to ATCC.
6. Remove streptozotocin from the hazardous biological agents table, because it is a chemical agent under the oversight of EHSRM Chemical Hygiene program.
7. Fill the "logistical sources" table for the remaining BSL2 agents.
8. Clarify the "BSL2" entry in Table 2 (engineering controls).

Risks Identified:
The risk was determined to be low, all cell lines used in this study will be handled as risk group 1 (RG1) agents and under BSL-2 containment.

Motion:
A motion was entered by Dr. Robin Choudhury and seconded by Dr. Laura Decanini to grant 30-day approval of IBC-26-17 pending the changes and information requested are satisfactorily addressed by the PI and that the training records are up to date to secure approval past the 30-day period. The motion carried unanimously.

4. IBC-26-18
Project Title: C*ollection of Oral Swab samples from healthy and diseased participants*
Sponsor: H2Ocean and other seed grants
Biosafety Level: BSL-2

Principal Investigator (PI):	Sheema Khan
Type of Submission:	New Protocol
Committee Action:	30-day Approval; Revisions needed to secure approval past 30 days
Total Voting = 6	Vote: For = 6, Against = 0, Abstained = 0, Recused = 0.

Summary:
The goal of the project is to investigate changes in the oral microbiome following the use of an oral rinse with H2Ocean in Mexican Americans, to investigate the relationship between oral microbiome dysbiosis and Alzheimer's disease progression in the underserved Hispanic population of the Rio Grande Valley, and identify noninvasive microbiome-associated biomarkers and potential therapeutic targets that may help improve early detection and disease management in Alzheimer's disease.

NIH Guidelines Sections:
None.

Discussion:
The Committee discussed the protocol in detail and determined that the PI would need to make multiple minor revisions to secure approval after 30 days. The Committee reviewed and verified that the protocol specifies all approved laboratory spaces authorized for the proposed activities. All procedures outlined in the protocol were determined to be consistent with established standard laboratory practices and compliant with institutional requirements for work in these designated spaces, except as noted below. PI CVs have been evaluated to verify and certify subject matter expertise.

The following changes are requested from PI:

1. Under the Human/Primate Specimen tab, item iv. select OPIM (other potentially infectious materials).
2. At each instance where "standard safety procedures" are mentioned or equivalent, briefly describe what those entail.

Risks Identified:
The risk was determined to be low, as all specimens will be treated as potentially biohazardous material and handled using Biosafety Level 2 (BSL-2) practices and standard universal precautions.

Motion:
A motion was entered by Mr. Javier Garcia and seconded by Dr. Robin Choudhury to grant 30-day approval of IBC-26-18 pending the changes and information requested are satisfactorily addressed by the PI and that the training records are up to date to secure approval past the 30-day period. The motion carried unanimously.

5. IBC-26-02
Project Title: *Social and Biological Determinants of Alzheimer's Disease Risk in Hispanic Primary Care Patients in the Rio Grande Valley*
Sponsor: N/A
Biosafety Level: BSL-2

Principal Investigator (PI):	Jose Cano
Type of Submission:	New Protocol
Committee Action:	30-day Approval; Revisions needed to secure approval past 30 days
Total Voting = 6	Vote: For = 6, Against = 0, Abstained = 0, Recused = 0.

Summary:
The goal of the project is to improve how Alzheimer's disease is detected and managed in older Hispanic adults living in the Rio Grande Valley. The findings will help guide better care and future research for this underserved population.

NIH Guidelines Sections:
None.

Discussion:
The Committee discussed the protocol in detail and determined that the PI would need to make a minor revision to secure approval after 30 days. The Committee reviewed and verified that the protocol specifies all approved laboratory spaces authorized for the proposed activities. All procedures outlined in the protocol were determined to be consistent with established standard laboratory practices and compliant with institutional requirements for work in these designated spaces, except as noted below. PI CVs have been evaluated to verify and certify subject matter expertise.

The following changes are requested from PI:

1. In each instance where "guidelines" are mentioned and referenced, briefly state how these will be applied to this specific project.

Risks Identified:
The risk was determined to be low, as all specimens will be treated as potentially biohazardous material and handled using Biosafety Level 2 (BSL-2) practices and standard universal precautions.

Motion:
A motion was entered by Dr. Robin Choudhury and seconded by Dr. HyeongJun Kim to grant 30-day approval of IBC-26-02 pending the changes and information requested are satisfactorily addressed by the PI and that the training records are up to date to secure approval past the 30-day period. The motion carried unanimously.

G. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1. **None**

H. OTHER BUSINESS

1. **EHSRM Report:** None.

2. **LAR Report:** None

3. **PAM Report:** None

I. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 pm.

----APPROVAL OF MINUTES ----

These minutes were approved by the IBC on July 10, 2026.