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## *Joseph Kanabrocki appointed associate vice president for research safety*

By

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**J**oseph Kanabrocki, associate professor of microbiology, assistant dean for biosafety and select agent responsible official for the Biological Sciences Division at the University of Chicago, has been appointed associate vice president for research safety, effective May 1.

In his new position, Kanabrocki will lead an important new enterprise, the University's Office of Research Safety, situated within the Office of the Vice President for Research and for National Laboratories (<http://ovprnl.uchicago.edu/>). He also will serve as the biological safety officer and select agent responsible official for the University.

The creation of the Office of Research Safety reflects the University's institutional commitment to safety. The office is charged with instilling a culture that focuses on the health and well-being of all UChicago personnel engaged in research activities. The new office will be guided institutionally by the Research Safety Policy Council, which will be chaired by the provost and composed of the vice president for research and for national laboratories, relevant deans and other appropriate University leaders. The council will be responsible for reviewing and approving University-wide research safety standards, policies and procedures, which the Office of Research Safety will then implement.

"Safety is integral to the University's scientific research mission," said Provost Eric Isaacs. "Our exceptional faculty, students and staff care deeply about safety and the responsible conduct of research. The new Office of Research Safety will develop and implement coherent research safety standards, policies and training to bolster these efforts University-wide."

In his new role, Kanabrocki will provide staff support to the council and lead a Research Safety Leadership Team to assist in the development of standards and policies for review and approval. He will also work closely with counterparts in the academic divisions, the University Environmental Health and Safety Office, the Animal Resources Center and, as appropriate, with Argonne National Laboratory (<http://www.anl.gov>), Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (<http://fnal.gov/>) and the Marine Biological Laboratory (<http://www.mbl.edu/>).

"Joe is exceptionally well-qualified to lead this critical endeavor," said Donald H. Levy, vice president for research and for national laboratories. "His deep expertise in biosafety management will help us to instill the highest possible safety standards and practices for all of the world-changing research that takes place here."

“Having worked with Joe in the past, I know he is very talented in taking a balanced approach to integrating safety into our research programs,” added Isaacs, who formerly was the director of Argonne.

As assistant dean for biosafety, Kanabrocki served as select agent responsible official, University biosafety officer and director of the biosafety programs at the University’s Ricketts Regional Biocontainment Laboratory (<http://www.htrl.uchicago.edu/>) at Argonne and the Great Lakes Regional Center of Excellence for Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Diseases (<http://www.glrce.org/>) Research. As associate professor for microbiology he supervised the training of postdoctoral fellows in biosafety and select agent research safety.

Prior to that, Kanabrocki was director of biological safety/biological safety officer, assistant director of Environmental Health and Safety and assistant research professor in the Department of Molecular Microbiology at Washington University in St. Louis. He also served as the administrative officer for the Washington University Institutional Biological and Chemical Safety Committee as well as the institution’s responsible official for the Select Agent Program. Prior to this appointment, he served as the responsible official and as biosafety officer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for eight years.

Kanabrocki earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from the University of Notre Dame and his PhD in microbiology from the University of South Dakota School of Medicine. He was trained as a postdoctoral fellow in the Section of Genetics and Development at Cornell University and in the Laboratory of Molecular Biology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

He obtained his professional certifications as a Certified Biological Safety Professional from the American Biological Safety Association, where he has been a member since 1992, and from the National Registry of Microbiologists-Specialist Biological Safety.

Kanabrocki is a former voting member of the NIH Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee and currently serves as a member of the National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity. He also serves as chair of the Biological Safety Examination Board for the American Society for Microbiology National Registry of Microbiologists and is a former member of the Scientific Advisory Board for the National Institutes of Health National Biosafety and Biocontainment Training Program. He has written extensively about biosafety education, risk assessment and operations in scholarly journals as well as the popular press, given interviews and testimony, and has been an invited speaker at many national and international biosafety conferences.

“I am humbled and honored at the opportunity to lead this important new Office of Research Safety at the University of Chicago,” said Kanabrocki. “I look forward to working closely with existing programs, departments and individuals who are proponents of a culture of responsible research of which research safety is a critical component. It is our goal to partner with the research community to provide an environment where discovery and the responsible conduct of research are seamlessly integrated.”