

**ABSA
INTERNATIONAL**

OCTOBER 2018

Biosafety Month

Promoting a Culture of Biosafety and Responsibility

A genuine culture of safety depends on participation at the top levels of any institution. Joe Kanabrocki, Associate Vice President for Research Safety at the University of Chicago, demonstrated this by example, allowing his postdoctoral fellowship scientists to use his likeness in a campaign to deliver important biosafety messages to the university research community... allowing Joe to become “The Most Interesting Man in Biosafety.”

Reflecting on my nearly 30 years serving as a practicing biosafety professional, my most satisfying accomplishment was mentoring, over the course of ten years, ten post-graduate life scientists who are currently serving as biosafety officers (or equivalent) at major U.S. research institutions, mostly academic. I was afforded this opportunity to establish what was the world's first post-doctoral biosafety training program by way of appointments as a co-principal investigator on two NIAID Regional Centers of Excellence (RCE) research funding grants, the Midwest RCE (MRCE), who's home institution was Washington University in St. Louis, and the Great Lakes RCE (GLRCE), who's home institution was the University of Chicago (UC). One important founding principle for these NIAID Biosafety Fellowship Programs is that it is easier to teach safety to a scientist than it is to teach science to a safety professional.

Introducing The Most Interesting Man in Biosafety.

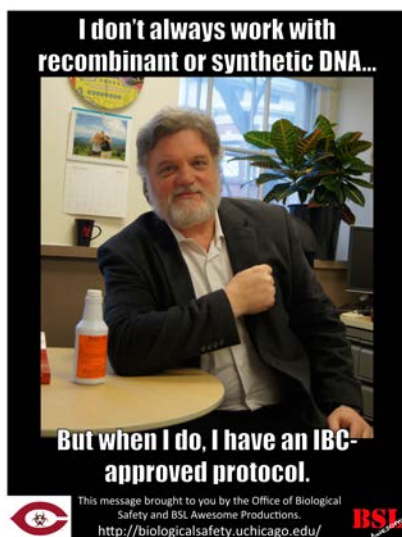


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From this unforgettable experience, I have learned that young biosafety scientists bring enthusiasm, energy and creativity to all aspects of a robust biosafety program, but particularly in the realm of communication and outreach. One great example of this energy and creativity was an outreach campaign initiated during their time in the RCE Biosafety Fellowship Program by two of my former biosafety fellows, Dr. Rob Foreman, currently a BSO at Northwestern University, and Dr. Marissa Cardwell, currently a BSO at Harvard University. Both Rob and Marissa created posters employing pop culture references in an effort to promote a strong laboratory safety culture at the UC.

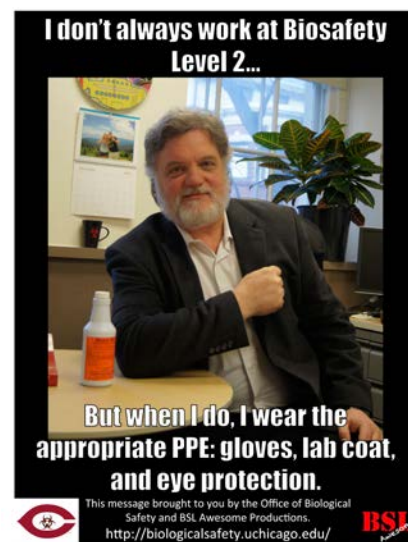
One particular example among these pop culture laboratory safety posters was one of Rob's campaigns, which featured as its spokesperson "the most interesting man in biosafety", modeled after the Dos Equis "Most interesting man in the world" beer advertising campaign. As the Assoc. VP for Research Safety at UC, I was the reluctant "star" of this "most interesting man in biosafety" campaign.



The reaction from the campus community to this poster campaign was overwhelmingly positive. While the biosafety fellows and biosafety officers initially distributed these posters around campus, we soon learned that they were being copied by students, faculty and staff and further distributed; the UC research community had taken notice and were talking about these posters! For better and for worse, mostly for worse, the AVP for Research Safety became the "face" of this initiative. Important to note is that this initiative

demonstrated leadership commitment to safety, put on display the biosafety fellowship program, as well as the creativity of biosafety fellows in the program, and was done essentially at no cost. Needless to say, as my beard continues to grow longer, I look forward to a new campaign featuring a ZZ Top motif!

Joseph Kanabrocki, PhD, CBSP
Professor of Microbiology
Associate Vice-President for Research Safety
Office of Research and National Laboratories
The University of Chicago



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:



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