
From: LeDuc, James W. [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=937DF08E29C4439E88A04BABFFB162AD-JWLEDUC]
Sent: 4/29/2020 10:38:48 AM
To: Handley, Gray (handleygr@niaid.nih.gov) [handleygr@niaid.nih.gov]
CC: Holubar, Connie J. [cjholuba@UTMB.EDU]
Subject: FW: quick question

Gray, my colleague Connie Holubar raises some concern that are valid as noted below. The 10K encounters includes training for our own UTMB staff, which was at least half to three quarters of all those trained. Further, we had very few trainees from China. We trained one building engineer from Wuhan and the two post-docs mentioned below. We also trained four individuals from Kunming (where another BSL4 is located) on building operations, and we sent a team to Kunming to offer on-site training at their facility. So we had relatively little engagement with China throughout the training center history.

Thanks, Jim

From: Holubar, Connie J. <cjholuba@UTMB.EDU>
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 9:57 AM
To: LeDuc, James W. <jwleduc@UTMB.EDU>
Subject: RE: quick question

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From: LeDuc, James W. <jwleduc@UTMB.EDU>
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 9:14 AM
To: Holubar, Connie J. <cjholuba@UTMB.EDU>
Subject: FW: quick question

Just FYI.

From: LeDuc, James W.
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 9:12 AM
To: 'Handley, Gray (NIH/NIAID) [E]' <handleygr@niaid.nih.gov>
Subject: RE: quick question

Hi Gray,

The title for both projects was National Biocontainment Training Center. Final reports for both are attached for your information.

The Center was supported by two separate awards: W81XWH-09-2-0053 covering the period 22-05-2009 to 21-12-2014 and W81XWH-11-2-0148 covering the period 07-2011 to 07-2016. See below for specific answers. Let me know if you need additional information. Thank you for addressing these issues. I continue to believe that this is a success story and we are proud of our contributions.

Best wishes,

Jim

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From: Handley, Gray (NIH/NIAID) [E] <handleygr@niaid.nih.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 8:07 AM
To: LeDuc, James W. <jwleduc@UTMB.EDU>
Subject: quick question

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Jim: Embassy Beijing is asking what was the official name of your DoD supported training program and some other background information. Can you send me that?

Also, can you assure these responses to their questions are accurate? I provided the text in black earlier and the red text is my response to their follow-up questions –all based on our conversations.

1) Did this training take place in the U.S., China, or in both countries?

Since 2013, the Galveston National Laboratory (GNL) of the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), part of the NIH Biodefense Laboratory Network, provided laboratory safety and security training for high-level biocontainment facilities in China, including the Wuhan Institute of Virology

In the U.S. at UTMB facility. Training was provided to partners from about 70 different countries with over 10,000 training encounters offered over the life of the training center, including a few from China. Training was provided both on site using a purpose made training center on the UTMB campus and augmented with training in the Galveston National Laboratory active biocontainment suites and mechanical spaces and at host nation facilities. Training was offered to two categories of learners, those laboratory scientists who would be working in biocontainment and those building engineers who were responsible for the safe and secure operations of the laboratory infrastructure. Training included long-term training for post-doctoral fellows working in biocontainment and specific to China, we hosted Han Xia, PhD during her post-doctoral training working on Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever virus in the GNL BSL4 laboratories. A second post-doctoral fellow, Chan Shao, PhD, was supported using other funds after the training center award expired. Both Dr Xia and Dr Shao have now returned to the Wuhan Institute of Virology where they are working on the current coronavirus pandemic.

2) Is this relationship still ongoing?

This relationship has been facilitated since 2015 through an ongoing dialogue and regular collaboration meetings co-sponsored by the Chinese Academies of Science and the U.S. National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine with cooperation from the Chinese CDC and others.

The training ended in 2016. The collaboration meetings convened by the CAS and the U.S. NAS, and highly regarded by the participating scientists, continued to be convened nearly each year since 2015. We understand there will not likely be a meeting this year. We just learned today that a joint virtual meeting will be held as early as May, 2020, again jointly sponsored by the CAS and NAS. Details are just being developed.

We continue to have scientist-to-scientist dialogue and collaborations with colleagues in China and elsewhere around the world.

3) Why was DOD funding discontinued?

This UTMB training engagement ended in 2016 when DoD funding was exhausted and not replenished from 2017 onwards.

This funding was expended on the training of scientists and facility operators to assure biosafety and biosecurity at high-containment laboratories around the world. The funding was provided by DoD, following an Congressional earmark in its appropriation, through two awards of five years each. In year seven, the awarded funding had been fully utilized. Despite requests from UTMB, DoD and other USG Agencies approached for support chose not to provide additional funding. UTMB understood this decision had to do with the overall USG position on relations with China but only DoD could say what factors were actually determinative. OK. We continue to seek funding for the training center as it clearly addresses an urgent global need with the continuing proliferation of biocontainment labs around the world.

4) Was there a formal name for this program? If so, please include.

According to GNL leadership, the relationship with the Wuhan Institute of Virology included the provision of training to scientists and biosafety and engineering professionals from Wuhan, as well as from other biocontainment labs in China and the China CDC. This [name of program] included operations training as the Wuhan Institute of Virology prepared to open their BSL-4 facility as part of essential global research collaboration which is necessary to develop countermeasures against the world's most dangerous public health threats.

National Biocontainment Training Center

Many thanks,

Gray

F. Gray Handley
Associate Director for International Research Affairs
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
National Institute of Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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