Principal Investigators,

In our efforts to make The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) a model institution for research, I would like to take this opportunity to express my complete commitment and support for laboratory safety. UTA continues progress toward being the Model 21st Century Urban Research University, setting the standard for others to follow. This standard includes instilling and nurturing a culture of safety.

The APLU Council on Research Task Force on Laboratory Safety recently released a report titled A Guide to Implementing a Safety Culture in Our Universities. Core institutional values that the task force highlighted to promote a culture of safety are listed in part below:

1. Safety is everyone’s responsibility. Each institution should commit to a campus environment that ensures the health and safety of their entire community (faculty, students, staff, and visitors) and empowers the community to be responsible for the safety of others. A safe campus environment for workers is a right of employment. A safe campus learning environment is a right of all involved in education and research.

2. Good science is safe science. Scholarly excellence and responsible conduct of research includes safety as a critical component.

3. Safety training and safety education are essential elements of research and education. They are important for instilling a culture of safety in the next generation of researchers and future faculty, and they are important for our students’ career development and employability.

4. An improved culture of safety is necessary to truly reduce risk.

The UTA Environmental Health & Safety Office (EH&S) has the responsibility for establishing and pursuing an effective Laboratory Safety Program for the University. EH&S has implemented a Laboratory Evaluation Procedure to assist all laboratory users in fulfilling UTA’s commitment to furnish a place of employment and learning that is as free as possible from recognized hazards that cause, or are likely to cause, harm to faculty, staff, students, or the surrounding community.

As Principal investigators, you play a crucial and primary role in laboratory safety and in development and maintenance of an effective safety culture within your research groups and within your departments. You can promote a safety culture by encouraging and acknowledging others for working safely, setting a positive example for others, and being accountable for safety. Safety should be an integral part of all laboratory operations, it should be automatic, never questioned and never compromised.

Thank you for your continued efforts towards promoting a culture of safety at UTA.

Sincerely,

Vistasp M. Karbhari
President