Test Results Summary

On January 19, 2016 in connection with a lawsuit filed by a former employee (plaintiff), asbestos testing took place on campus. In addition, SSU hired an outside firm, RHP Risk Management (RHP), to conduct air monitoring testing in a number of locations in order to establish an air quality baseline in advance of the January 19, 2016 testing. The advance testing occurred on January 15, 2016. This message seeks to provide meaningful information about the tests conducted at SSU.

Testing Methods

Wipe sampling or micro vacuum sampling can be performed to determine whether settled surface dust (non-airborne) contains asbestos. At present, as described in the sampling methodologies for each technique, no relationship has been established between asbestos-containing dust in settled surface dust as measured with these techniques and potential human exposure to airborne asbestos. Additionally, the ASTM wipe sampling methodology states in the “Significance and Use Section: At present, a single direct relationship between asbestos sampled from a surface and potential human exposure does not exist. Accordingly, the user should consider these data in relationship to other available information (for example, air sampling data) in their evaluation.” See ASTM D5755-09 (2104) and ASTM D6480-05(2010) for more information. The wipe or micro vacuum settled dust sampling techniques do not assess exposure to airborne asbestos.

Air sampling assesses an employee’s or the public’s exposure to asbestos (for example, personal air sampling assesses exposure in the employee’s breathing zone or stationary area air samples can be used to assess indoor air quality to the public within a building in a fixed location). See 29 C.F.R. section 1910.1001 for details on employee personal air sampling. Employee exposure is defined by Cal/OSHA regulations to mean exposure to airborne asbestos that would occur if the employee were not using respiratory protective equipment. C.C.R. Title 8 Section 5208 General Industry. Air monitors collect breathing zone air samples which test employee exposure to asbestos.

May 2013 to February 2016 Testing Results

RHP performed testing in January 2016 and in June 2015, July 2015, and February 2016. RHP performed numerous inspections involving air and/or surface samples for asbestos during each of these times in several occupied SSU buildings, including Stevenson Hall, Carson Hall, Art Building, Nichols and Ives. All of RHP’s stationary air samples (20 in total) collected in occupied buildings indicated no detectable airborne asbestos concentrations within the areas sampled using recognized EPA air sampling methodology.

These results are consistent with air monitoring performed by Millennium Environmental in May 2013. The stationary air samples (45 in total) collected from many of the same buildings, indicated no detectable airborne asbestos concentrations within the areas sampled using recognized EPA air sampling methodology. See http://www.sonoma.edu/ehs/hazmat/asbestos/program.html. All 65 air samples collected between May 2013 and February 2016 in Stevenson Hall, Carson Hall, Art Building, Nichols, PE building and Ives were negative for airborne asbestos.

Five personal air samples were collected during the testing performed in January 2016. All five samples were below the applicable Cal/OSHA Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL). Four samples were below the detection limits of the method (none detected) and 1 sample detected a low level of asbestos that was
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almost 100 times below the Cal/OSHA PEL. This sample involved inspections that occurred in a restricted access mechanical room. See C.C.R. Title 8 Section 5208 General Industry Safety Orders.

Settled Dust Tests

Settled surface dust has been tested at SSU on numerous occasions. A review of settled dust sampling performed in 2013 indicated that 11 out of 112 dust samples were positive for asbestos within multiple buildings. These samples contained moderately elevated levels of asbestos dust. These areas were properly cleaned/remediated as recommended by Millennium Consulting. Additional sampling performed by RHP in June 2015 detected settled asbestos dust in one area in Stevenson Hall and that area was then properly cleaned/remediated as recommended by RHP Risk Management.

Sampling on January 19th detected settled asbestos dust. However, EPA air sampling data demonstrates that any detectable surface asbestos dust levels that were found in the building have not contributed to elevated levels of airborne asbestos in the areas tested. The recognized methodology for assessing exposure is by performing air samples which SSU has done on multiple days over 3 years (2013-2016) in multiple buildings and none of the 65 area stationary air samples within the occupied buildings detected any airborne asbestos.

Results from surface asbestos dust sampling are not indicative of employee or public exposure. The proper methodology for assessing employee or public exposure to airborne asbestos is by performing OSHA personal air samples or EPA area stationary air samples.

Given the data from Millennium in 2013 and the data from RHP in 2015-2016, there is no evidence of any exposure above recognized EPA and/or Cal/OSHA applicable exposure limits within these buildings. All area air testing has shown no airborne asbestos has been detected in all six buildings using recognized EPA air sampling methodology.

To alleviate concern, SSU will collect air samples monthly and send the results to Cal/OSHA. Should airborne asbestos exceed Cal/OSHA and EPA standards, SSU will immediately take action to reduce or eliminate risk.