

ISSUE
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UNIVERSITY OF
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DULUTH

MASTER of ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH and SAFETY

NEWSLETTER



Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota's Health Care Occupational and Environmental Safety Workshop

Five members of the UMD ASSE Student Section, along with two professors, attended Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota's Health Care Occupational and Environmental Safety Workshop on September 21, 2010. The informative sessions gave students a new perspective on how to provide safe working environments when in a medical facility.

Topics covered included Health Care Compliance with OSHA Codes and Standards; Health Care Slips, Trips, and Falls Prevention; Medical Response to a Freeway Bridge Collapse; Sharps Safety Program; Patient, Public, Staff and Worker Safety-A Construction Perspective; Evaluation Methods and Exposure Monitoring of Anesthetic Gases; and Respiratory Protection.

The UMD ASSE Student Section would like to thank Ms. Kristi Haglund, Safety Specialist at Children's and Mr. Jim Leste, Senior Director of Environmental Operations at Children's, for making our attendance at this conference possible.

Marti Kiesling – kiesl014@d.umn.edu

Editors' corner

We are happy to present this first issue of the MEHS newsletter from the class of 2011. Established in 1974, the Master of Environmental Health and Safety program at UMD is celebrating 36 years of educating safety professionals. Over 750 safety professionals have graduated from this program, making a tremendous impact on the health and safety of workers across the globe.

The 2010-2011 academic year represents another step in the program's evolution as it strives to produce future safety professionals with the skills and knowledge necessary to practice in today's workplaces. As the result of internal curriculum audits, discussions with alumni and prospective students, changes in the Graduate School structure at the University of Minnesota-Duluth and economic challenges both internal and external to the University, the MEHS program has expanded its degree completion options.

The 2010-2011 class includes 12 motivated and passionate students from various backgrounds. The differing backgrounds give everyone a great amount of input in different areas of safety. Three students will be graduating in December; and we will welcome more students at that time. This newsletter intends to inform and stay in touch with previous graduating classes. We hope you enjoy the content! Please feel free to contact us or the faculty/staff with any comments, concerns or questions. Additional information on the program and the current class is available on the MEHS website: <http://mehs.d.umn.edu/>

Sincerely,

Alanna Schwanke – schwa759@d.umn.edu

Words from ASSE's Student Section President

I feel like this school year has only just begun and already the MEHS program has gotten into the full swing of things. As a group we have been keeping busy attending the Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota's Health Care Occupational and Environmental Safety Workshop, the ASSE Northern Area Safety and Health Network Day at Spirit Mountain, and touring the Hibbard Steam Plant. Along with these great experiences, we have had many knowledgeable individuals come into our classroom sharing their areas of expertise. We would like to thank the following people who have allowed us to have these great experiences:

Mark Boben – JES & Associates
 Pam Enrici – UMD
 Kristi Haglund – Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
 Bill Haug – W.B. Haug Inc.
 Bob Houdek – Minnesota Power
 Jim Leste – Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
 Linda Thiry – Arrowhead Consulting and Testing Incorporated
 Mike Villa – Idea Drilling
 Ivan Zirbes – Enterprise Products

Our MEHS group is really looking forward to the rest of this semester. Seven students will be attending the ASSE Future Safety Leaders Conference held in Schaumburg, Illinois on Nov 4th and 5th. We will also be having a site tour of the New Page Paper Mill thanks to Mr. Harvey Burski and plans are also in the works to receive crane and forklift training from Mr. Jim Stauber. Look for stories and pictures on these activities, tours, and more in upcoming newsletters.

Marti Kiesling– kiesl014@d.umn.edu
ASSE UMD Student Section President

Faculty and Staff

Robert Feyen :	Program Director
Pat Wollack:	Executive Office and Administrative Specialist
Seraphin Abou:	Assistant Professor
Harvey Burski :	Adjunct Associate Professor
Mike Marturano:	Instructor
Wade Roseth:	Instructor
Jim Stauber:	Instructor
Darrell Anderson:	Senior Lab Coordinator

Scholarship Award Recipients

SMDC Auxiliary Scholarship

Shelley Balcer

James Scott Soleim Scholarship

John Hollingsworth

Gordon O. Voss Scholarships

Marti Kiesling
 Alanna Schwanke
 Kevin Sundet



Congratulations!

Upcoming Events

November 4th & 5th
 Future Safety Leaders Conference,
 Schaumburg, IL

Spirit Mountain Safety Day

This past September, the MEHS class was invited to the Northern Area Safety and Health Network Safety Day (a.k.a. Spirit Mountain Safety Day) organized by the Minnesota Safety Council.

Students and safety professionals learned about up-to-the minute concepts as they attended information sessions, shared knowledge with colleagues, and visited exhibits of the latest safety and health products. Presentation topics included confined space entry, the EPA lead rule, sprains and strains, etc. Students gained extracurricular knowledge on safety related issues and had the opportunity to connect with multiple alumni and safety professionals from all over the state.

Myriam Trepanier - trep0024@d.umn.edu



MEHS Students at Spirit Mountain Safety Day

Future Safety Leaders Conference

On November 4th and 5th, seven MEHS students will be attending the ASSE Future Safety Leaders Conference in Schaumburg, IL. All seven of the attendees are members of the Northwest Chapter of ASSE.

The two-day conference is made especially for ASSE student members and is created to prepare the future safety professional for the transition from student life to employment as a safety, health and environmental employee. While at the conference, students will attend educational sessions that range from real-life safety experiences, to managing a student section.

The students are really looking forward to all of the networking!
Be sure to check out our Winter 2010 newsletter for photos and news on the conference!

Alanna Schwanke – schwa759@d.umn.edu

BISON WIND FARM – New Salem, North Dakota

Minnesota Power began the first phase of the Bison Wind Farm Project after purchasing a 465-mile DC transmission line from Center, North Dakota to Duluth, MN. The first phase of the project entailed building a 22-mile 230KV transmission line, one new and addition infrastructure to substations, over 50,000 feet of underground collections, and the erection of 16 2.3 MW wind generators. For a temporary summer position, I was assigned the Safety Inspector Position on the project. The estimated total of the two-year, 33 turbine project, is around \$178M.

For this position, I was assigned as the Minnesota Power Safety Inspector on the project. The experience exposed me to multiple parts of safety including; LOTO, confined space, fall protection, and large cranes and heavy machinery just to name a few. One of the greatest learning experiences I took from the project was the ability to directly work with four primary contractors and the MP Project Management Team.

The Bison Wind Farm is just one step being made by Minnesota Power to produce 25% of its power by renewable energy. By the end of 2011 Bison will be capable of producing 76 MW of power from wind.

John Hollingsworth – holli177@d.umn.edu



One of Minnesota Power's wind generators on the Bison Wind Farm

MEET THE CLASS



Shelley Balcer



John Hollingsworth



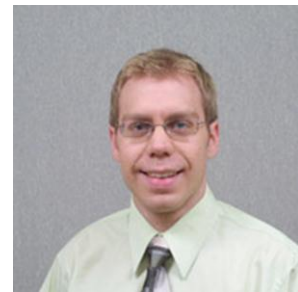
Marti Kiesling



Greg Kramer



Claudia Martin



Mike Nilsen



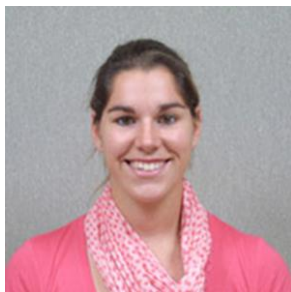
Seth Sayles



Alanna Schwanke



Kevin Sundet



Myriam Trepanier



Matt Wirth

Alumni Spotlight

Name: Joseph J. Austin
 Graduation Class: MIS 1991, MS 1993
 Employer: St. Louis County
 Job Title: Director – Safety and Risk Management
 Industry: Government – Public Sector
 Contact Info: 1-218-726-2613



1. Where is most of your time spent on a typical day of work?

I am responsible for directing the Safety and Risk Management program for St. Louis County (1700 FTEs). This includes budgeting for, working with and directing the activities of 12 professional and administrative staff performing the functions of Employee Safety and Health Management, OSHA Compliance, Risk Management, Security, Emergency Preparedness, Environmental Compliance, Workers Compensation/Loss Control, and overseeing all Mine Safety and Health inspections throughout St. Louis County as required by statute. Additional responsibilities include writing and presenting County policy pertaining to Safety and Risk Management issues, preparing and defending an annual budget of \$3,500,000, and effectively responding to concerns from the County Board, senior leadership, employees, and citizens regarding Safety and Risk Management related issues across St. Louis County.

Day to day activities vary depending upon need and have clearly evolved over the last 12 years. Although I still get in the field to do hands on loss control, which I really enjoy, the current demands of my role are more involved with decision making, identifying opportunities to reduce exposure/prevent loss, assuring that my staff have the support and resources necessary to do their jobs effectively. If properly positioned in the organization Safety/Risk Management positions are essentially leadership positions, which is what this position has evolved into for me. The overarching role of my position is to identify exposure, create initiatives to minimize it, sell them internally to get support/funding and then assure they get implemented. Currently greater than 50 % of my time is spent on re-tooling our Workers Compensation Management Program and working with staff to implement a customized Risk Incident Management Computer System (RIMS).

2. What was the hardest transition you had to make from the classroom to the industry?

My first 5 years were spent as a full time consultant in Green Bay WI. As a job this was not a difficult transition to make because I like variety in my day to day activity. It was however, a shock to realize that literally, as of the first day on the Job, my time was being billed out to customers and I was considered “the expert” in my field. I do not think that most students (my self included at the time) realize that in many situations, the first time you walk in the door at the new job, you will be considered the subject matter expert in the field and your decisions will bear weight.

Becoming a Green Bay Packer fan was also a difficult transition. I did not follow sports at all until I moved to Green Bay, but it is a requirement if you are a consultant there. I am still a fan today even though I am back in Minnesota.

3. What is the most rewarding about your job?

I love the variety and latitude that comes with my job, but what drives me is the ability of my decisions and initiatives to help people while at the same time save the organization money. Safety and Risk Management at St. Louis County is accepted and integrated with all Departments and has fantastic support from Administration to whom we report. Because of this, we have the ability to get involved with projects and issues at all levels. Like many, we sit on safety committees, follow-up on employee concerns and injuries, work toward compliance etc. But we also are involved with serious prevention activities like designing safety/security into our buildings/remodeling projects, changing business practices and implementing huge prevention initiatives, some of which have resulted in millions of dollars in cost savings and prevented employees from having life long health problems.

4. What are the challenges you face daily?

A large part of my job involves facilitating change that I believe is right thing for the organization. By nature, many people do not immediately embrace change that involves things that they have been doing a certain way for a long time. This is a continual daily challenge in this position. In a role as a management level Safety and Risk Professional you must accept that your job is facilitate and enable change, which can involve significant conflict and can be exhausting.

Another challenge is the disconnect between what many people believe Safety and Risk Management is and the reality of an effective program. To many people the perception is that Safety/Risk Management is only about Compliance. My opinion on this is that nothing could be further from the truth. Effective Safety/Risk Management is about identifying exposure, minimizing/preventing the event and controlling the impact of the event if it does occur. How this is done is actually very challenging and complicated because it involves people skills, technical skills, leadership and a the self commitment (AKA hardheadedness) to keep moving forward when faced with challenges.

5. What advice do you have for future safety professionals?

The business case for Safety and Loss prevention is noticeably easier to make now than it was 15 years ago. This is because the medical costs associated with injuries when they do occur have been rising at levels that far exceed inflation every year over that time period. Add to this the facts that our work force is getting older, Americans (in general) are getting larger, and the economy is under strain, there is absolutely no reason to believe that this trend will not continue. Put simply, injuries and illness cost employers more now than they ever have before, therefore there should be increased support for those who can help prevent them.

6. What advice do you have for future safety professionals?

You have a completely clean slate the minute you walk into your first job. Recognize this. Realize that in many cases you are a decision maker and that your decisions can and will influence the lives of others and the bottom line of the organization. Make them based on integrity, science and potential impact.

Understand that the profession is continually evolving so you too must continually learn, adapt and be of value to the organization at all levels.



Second Issue Coming Soon!

Visit the MEHS website at:
<http://mehs.d.umn.edu>