

# Indiana State University

2006 - 2007 Academic Annual Report

Department of Health, Safety, & Environmental Health Sciences

## Vision Statement

### View/Modify Vision

**Below is your vision statement from previous years. Please take this opportunity to review it and if necessary update it.**

The Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Health Sciences: 1) fosters professional growth and development for its faculty and staff, 2) serves and consults with students to help them reach their potential and become highly contributing members of society, and 3) strives to become known as a pre-eminent department exemplifying ISU's strategic initiatives of experiential learning and community engagement.

## Year in Review

### Accomplishments

**As you have heard, increasing public awareness of Indiana State University's accomplishments is crucial to building student enrollment, influencing policy makers, and developing a place of pre-eminence in the Midwest. What do you consider to be your department's accomplishments for the 2006-2007 year that will contribute to this effort? [Please list in priority order and limit to no more than 8.]**

1. Safety Management program awarded full accreditation by the National Association of Industrial Technology. Originally, based on our 2004 visiting team report, the program was given conditional accreditation pending submittal of a two-year report addressing criteria in partial non compliance. Full accreditation was granted by unanimous vote of the accreditation board of NAIT in November 2006. 2. Convergence of School Health and Community Health programs. Based upon the recommendation following evaluation of program prioritization reports, these two programs have been merged with a set of core courses and separate courses for each specialization. We have already seen an increase in enrollment in the combined major. 3. Transfer of Safety Management master's program to a web-based format. Existing courses that had been taught via IHETS satellite TV delivery have been transformed into formats deliverable over high-speed internet. Some of the courses are entirely Blackboard-based. Others are using IHETS Interactive format, which allows real time delivery of lectures to students through the internet. A vivid example of the flexibility of the new format was real time connections including a student in Anchorage, Alaska and another student in Jacksonville, Florida, as well as students in seven other states all participating in HLTH 604 lectures simultaneously. Moving to the web-based format has allowed us to expand our distance education program beyond Indiana's state lines. We are eager to advertise the expanded program, knowing that there is a strong demand for master's programs in Safety Management that are available to professionals who cannot forego careers to attend traditional campuses. 4. Fulbright scholarship awarded to Dr. Blyukher. Dr. Blyukher has been working in Europe on a NATO project with his second career Fulbright award. 5. Successful search for tenure-track position in Safety Management. Dr. Bill Campbell will join our faculty this summer. 6. During the last year, more than 300 teenagers have participated in the Learn-to-Drive program at one of our three locations: campus, South Vermillion HS, or Sullivan HS. Additionally, more than 275 people attended our motorcycle rider education course, now in its 35th year.

## Research and Scholarship

**What is your assessment of accomplishments in the area of research and scholarship that is focused primarily on contributions to practice and discipline-based scholarship? Are you satisfied overall? In which areas do you feel your department does particularly well? In which areas do you feel your department needs to improve?**

Faculty in the Department of Health, Safety, and Environmental Health Sciences have been actively pursuing research and scholarship in these areas. Dr. Blyukher lists four activities each as contributions to practice and discipline-based scholarship. Dr. Drabczyk list seven activities as contributions to practice and five as discipline-based scholarship. Dr. Peterson lists two discipline-based activities. It should be noted that at least two retiring professors did not complete a personal activity report for 2006. I believe there are more activities actually completed than are listed on the activity reports. Presentations to community groups are not always recorded by individual faculty. We need to improve our reporting of activities to better present the department's actual contributions in this area. We need more faculty participation in these areas on a regular basis.

## Grants, Contracts & Off Campus Professional Service

**What is your assessment of accomplishments in the area of grants, contracts, and off campus professional service? Are you satisfied overall? In which areas do you feel your department does particularly well? In which areas do you feel your department needs to improve?**

The department is particularly strong in off campus professional service with several members assuming leadership roles with professional organizations and accrediting agencies. Dr. Bermudez served on an accreditation visit team with the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council. Dr. Sheldon has been elected president-elect of the Safety Division of the National Association of Industrial Technology and continues to serve as treasurer of the Indiana Rural Safety and Health Council. Dr. Sheldon has served for 10 years on the executive committee of the Putnam County fair board. Dr. Legault serves as Vice President of the Indiana Rural Safety and Health Council. Dr. Blyukher has been working on a NATO project in Europe during the spring semester. Mr. Henderson again secured funding for the Motorcycle Rider Education program. This recurring grant has been awarded to ISU for 35 years. Dr. Peterson and Dr. Drabczyk each were awarded small grants and Dr. Ferng continued her work with a large grant award in cooperation with Aviation Technology. Dr. Legault submitted two large grant proposals, but neither were funded. While our department has shown strength in the area of off-campus professional service, we continue to struggle with obtaining significant external grants and contracts. In the coming academic year, each faculty member will be challenged to submit at least one external grant or contract proposal. We cannot expect to grow our department without external funding sources.

## Teaching

**We would like to highlight innovative approaches to teaching. Has your department developed any pedagogies or practices you'd like to share with us? Please describe briefly.**

With the transformation of our Master's program for Occupational Safety Management to a web-based delivery system we have had to adapt a new teaching pedagogy. We now offer classes broadcast live via the internet that are available to students anywhere there is a broadband connection. Students are able to interact with the professor and their classmates in real time, but have the option of viewing the entire lecture at any time later through a URL link. This new delivery format was very popular among our graduate students. We now need to expand our program and be prepared to offer more courses each semester. Another pedagogical change is occurring with some of the undergraduate courses in our Health Science and Safety Management programs. Students are

learning important concepts through experiential opportunities ranging from coops and internships to class projects completed in cooperation with area businesses. We are finding that development of actual materials for use in the "real world" is often a more effective measure of curricular competence than the traditional exam. By exposing students to actual work environments while they are under the supervision of a professor we are able to bring a realism to their education that employers have previously found absent.

### Course Scheduling/Enrollment Management

#### **How is the department making sure that students are able to get the classes they need to graduate in a timely manner?**

Students enrolled in each of the four department undergraduate programs are assured that every course required for their major is offered at least once per academic year. Internships and coops are offered during summer sessions. Care is taken in the scheduling process to insure that time conflicts are avoided. Graduate courses for the Occupational Safety Management master's program are offered via distance education at least once every two years. Core required courses are offered annually.

### Outreach

#### **What are the outreach opportunities for your discipline? (non-traditional modes of delivery and timing, etc)**

We currently offer two programs available through distance education. Our undergraduate Community Health program is web-based. Our Master's program in Occupational Safety Management offers courses that meet at night and are available anywhere a broadband internet connection exists. Besides these major programs, we also offer the Driver's Education teaching certification via distance ed. Locally, students enrolled in the program are hired to assist with the learn-to-drive courses as driving instructors.

### Assessment

#### **Please share your stated student learning outcomes.**

Students will be provided with the opportunity to establish a solid foundation and background in environmental, health, and safety issues through academic education and training in the classroom and field. Graduates from our programs will be well prepared for environmental, health, and safety careers in academic, industrial, and governmental settings.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

#### Community Engagement I

#### **Please summarize your faculty's efforts in community engagement this year.**

The academic programs of the Department of Health, Safety, and Environmental Health Sciences are well-represented in Community Engagement activities ranging from internships, coops, and student teaching to consulting services for area businesses. We rely heavily on networking with alumni and friends for support of our programs including guest speakers for classes and student organizations, equipment donations, and advisory committees for our programs. Maintaining and fostering relationships with corporate partners allows us to continuously improve our classroom teaching, place our graduates in a highly competitive job market, and pursue research responsibilities of faculty and graduate students.

#### Experiential Learning

## **What is your vision for experiential learning in your department?**

The Department of Health, Safety, and Environmental Health Sciences has been incorporating experiential learning methods into our programs since long before the term even became popular. Each of our major programs requires an internship prior to graduation. Coop programs are also available to our students. Laboratory courses provide hands-on learning to students in Environmental Health and Safety Management. We utilize community business connections for class assignments and offer services to those businesses that would otherwise be quite expensive to them. We continue to incorporate more experiential learning techniques into our curricula each and every year. A donation of two types of scaffolding from Safway Corp. has allowed students to learn to safely erect those scaffolds. Other donations of equipment have included gas monitors, noise dosimeters, personal protective equipment and various other items for use in the Industrial Hygiene and Environmental Health labs. Recently, the purchase of a quantitative gas mask fit tester has been approved jointly between our department and the university Environmental Safety Office. We could not have purchased this expensive item directly from our own budget. Students in the Industrial Hygiene courses will benefit by hands-on use of state-of-the-art equipment while a critical service department on campus has it available for their use as needed. We will continue with all of the current experiential learning activities we provide to our students and constantly seek out additional opportunities to expand this important aspect of their education.

### Fundraising Activities

## **What steps have you taken to support fundraising activities in your department? How can your efforts be supported?**

Fundraising is a glaring weakness in the Department of Health, Safety, and Environmental Health Sciences. While a few individual faculty members have submitted grant proposals, little else has been done. I encouraged our student chapter of ASSE to host a golf outing to raise funds for the program, but could not get the organization's officers geared up to carry out a successful event. Such an event could raise thousands of dollars for the program, and several representatives from different companies have assured me they would participate with teams and sponsorships. The problem becomes finding someone to devote the time to promote the event and contact the many companies and individuals necessary. I hope to achieve this goal in the next academic year.

### **Quality**

### Quality

## **Please provide 1-2 suggestions to increase the ability of your department or the University to meet the criteria above.**

Our department has been operating short-handed for the last few years. A once-approved position search for Community Health resulted in a failed search in 2005. That search has not been re-approved either of the last two years. The Safety Management programs have lost two faculty who have left the university in the last two years. The NAIT Accrediting board recommended that we have at least 5 full time faculty for those programs. We currently have 2.5 FTE positions for the programs. Our department faces the departure of 5 faculty in the next 12 months. Three will take terminal leave next fall, one has announced his retirement effective 5/08, and one was not reappointed. We had one (1) search approved for a position to start in August. Obviously, we are in a very tight personnel situation for at least the next year. For our faculty to pursue their research interests and keep up with demands for service activities, many of our students will begin suffering. Our first obligation will be to our students, but requirements for tenure and promotion dictate that we devote some efforts to scholarly activities and university/college/department service. The one thing

the university needs to do for our department so that we can achieve all of the NCA Criteria for Accreditation is to fully staff our vacant positions.

### Feedback

**This section is to allow you to share your ideas for enhancing enrollment, dealing with budget and other challenges facing the university community.**

Student recruitment has been an issue during my entire tenure at ISU. We do a poor job of contacting potential students to get out the word about ISU, and an even worse job of promoting our many nationally-recognized programs. High school guidance counselors are of little help to our department because they know nothing about our individual programs, with the possible exception of School Health Ed. The admissions department of the university is no better. I teach in a program that has seniors graduating and accepting entry-level positions that pay more than most of the faculty in my department! And most of them have multiple job offers! Yet, we are one of the best kept secrets on campus. ISU needs to promote our program, as well as many other successful programs around campus, to students in middle school and high school. Focusing attention on high school juniors and seniors is too late for an effective recruiting plan. Most of them have already formed opinions of individual colleges long before they reach that stage of their education. As faculty, we need to aggressively pursue outside funding sources to supplement our meager departmental budgets. Major grant writing requires significant individual time sacrifices. While the Office of Sponsored Programs is helpful in the process, our department faculty find it difficult to arrange adequate time for grant proposal preparation and many of us are not comfortable with our proposal writing expertise. We could use more help with this.