

**ILLINOIS OCCUPATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND
SAFETY EDUCATION AND RESEARCH CENTER**

SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008

NIOSH Training Grant

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**Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety Education
and Research Center
University of Illinois at Chicago
2007-2008 Annual Report**

The University of Illinois at Chicago Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety Education and Research Center (Illinois ERC), a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) funded training grant is currently in year one of a five year approval (2008-2013). The program provides MS and PhD training in industrial hygiene, occupational health nursing, occupational safety, and occupational epidemiology as well as occupational medicine residency training, including MPH graduate degree, and specialized training in agricultural safety and health to students in a variety of degree programs. Additionally the continuing education and outreach program exists as a resource on occupational health and safety issues for all and to support the goals and objectives of the NIOSH Training Grants Program and the WHO Global Plan of Action on Workers' Health 2007-2017. The Illinois ERC supports two research training programs, a pilot project research training program which provides small grants to new occupational safety and health investigators and a targeted research training program that provides support to interdisciplinary research training teams.

The Illinois ERC exists to improve, promote, and maintain the health of workers and communities by applying innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to:

- prepare professionals to be leaders in occupational and environmental safety and health who will direct and manage occupational and environmental safety and health programs, teach other occupational and environmental health professionals, and research issues pertinent to occupational and environmental safety and health;
- provide continuing education to occupational and environmental health and safety professionals and outreach to workers and communities to improve their knowledge, skills, and awareness of key issues in occupational and environmental safety and health, devoting special attention to the problems and needs of at risk and underserved workers and communities;
- contribute to the knowledge base in occupational and environmental safety and health by preparing doctoral students, performing faculty and student research on problems of regional, national, and global significance, and disseminating the results of their research; and
- serve as a regional OS&H information resource.

The Illinois ERC, funded since 1977 and comprised of 13 programs, is a multi-campus, multi-college Center that is administratively housed in the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Division in the School of Public Health. Five academic programs, three continuing education programs, two research training programs, and a center administration program were funded during the 2007-2008 reporting period. Two new programs, in occupational safety and occupational and environmental epidemiology were developed and approved during the reporting period. These programs began on July 1, 2008 and have recruited 5 new trainees. Over the past 30 years the Illinois ERC has worked with professional associations, government agencies, other university and college programs, and individuals to understand and address the occupational safety and health training needs in the region, nationally, and internationally. Each

year approximately 15 new occupational safety and health professionals graduate and continuing education is provided to more than 2000 such professionals.

The Illinois ERC strength's include: the Center's sound past performance in training occupational safety and health professionals; the quality and continuity of leadership; the synergy generated in the Center by the leadership and the multidisciplinary nature of many of the training activities; the overall coordination and integration of activities within the ERC; the depth and extent of interdisciplinary training and research training for all trainees and professionals; the depth and diversity of outreach to the Chicago regional area; a strong, model Pilot Project Research Training Program; and focused efforts to train minority students.

Opportunities for students include:

- **Traineeships** in industrial hygiene, occupational safety, occupational and environmental epidemiology, occupational health nursing, and occupational medicine
- **International** research and internships (Switzerland, Ukraine, India, South Africa)
- **Distance education** for academic and continuing education courses (occupational and environmental health)
- Participation in regional, national and international **conferences**
- **Employment** in the environmental and occupational field in government, industry, academia and consulting (e.g., U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Abbott Laboratories, Ford Motor Co., Motorola, LTV Steel, the Cook County Department of Environmental Control, and the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory).

2007-2008 Highlights

During the 2007-2008 reporting year, the Illinois ERC supported 29 full time and 6 part time trainees in five academic programs and graduated 13 trainees, including 9 MS, 1 PhD, and 3 occupational medicine residents. Additionally, more than 100 other trainees took occupational health and safety courses.

Table 1. Number of NIOSH Supported Trainees and Graduates by Academic Program

Program Area	Number of NIOSH Supported Trainees		Number of Graduates	
	MS	PhD	MS	PhD
Industrial Hygiene	11	5	6	2
Hazardous Substance Academic Training	4	-	2	-
Occupational Medicine	1 (MPH)	-	1	-
Occupational Health Nursing	3	2	0	0
Agricultural Health and Safety	1(MPH)	1(DVM)	0	0

A minor in AGR S&H for undergraduate students was approved by the University of Illinois in the Spring of 2008 and will be offered to students beginning in the Fall of 2008.

Two new programs in Occupational Safety and Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology were developed and approved. These programs began on July 1, 2008 and have recruited five new trainees.

Faculty, staff, and students had 47 publications and 9 trainees presented their research at national conferences.

The Illinois ERC has been successful at far exceeding the minimum number of 400 trainees (participants) in continuing education (CE) in the traditional occupational safety and health disciplines as well as reaching others active in health and safety in our region. During the 2007-2008 reporting period, the continuing education program offered 130 courses and trained 2201 persons in occupational safety and health.

In addition to courses, conferences, workshops, etc., program products of note include: enhancement of health and safety training curricula for homecare workers including two trainer courses (bloodborne pathogens and infectious diseases); two 7-hour courses for homecare workers (bloodborne pathogens and infectious diseases); violence prevention in health care settings; and three distance based courses for academic and continuing education credit (Principles of Environmental and Occupational Health, Occupational Diseases, and Environmental and Occupational Seminar). Additionally, the GeoLibrary (www.geolib.org) continues to be an important product for cataloging and distributing occupational health and safety training materials and practice tools. We provide enhanced communication and marketing related to our bi-weekly occupational medicine seminars through our web site.

In the area of occupational health nursing we continue our successful partnership with the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago to provide the NIOSH approved Spirometry course and to develop two other occupational health nursing offerings. Additionally, we work with the local AAOHN chapters to support their continuing education programs.

Recent graduates of the program have taken positions of responsibility with US DOE, OAI, Inc, University of Iowa, Loyola University Medical Center, Abbott Laboratories, Provident Hospital, Advocate Occupational Health, and the US Air Force.

- Sarah Katula (OHN trainee and PhD Candidate) was named the 2008 recipient of the Rue Bucher Memorial Award for Qualitative Studies in Social Process for her project entitled "Employed Women in IPV Situations: Workplace Experiences and the Perception of Safety." As a member of the Sociology Department, Professor Bucher recognized that important research was being conducted outside the confines of her discipline and the award in her memory was explicitly designated as one that students in all disciplines at UIC would be eligible for.
- Jorgia Connor (OHN trainee and PhD Candidate) was awarded pilot project funding for her project "Work and Adaptation Experiences of Registered Nurses from the Philippines."
- Alison Welch (IH trainee) received the best masters level poster award at the UIC School of Public Health Student Research Forum and Awards Day for her presentation "Lead Dust and Total Dust Emissions during Demolition of Single Family Homes." She was also selected to attend the AIHA Leadership Workshop.

- Anders Abelman (IH student) received the Chicago Section Scholarship presented by the American Industrial Hygiene Foundation and the American Society of Safety Engineers Northeastern Illinois Chapter Scholarship.
- Bogdan Catalin (IH trainee) received the Best Poster Award in Aerosol Science in the graduate student section, American Industrial Hygiene Conference & Exposition in Minneapolis
- Chirag Patel (IH trainee) received the AAAS Scholarship
- Jennifer S. Pierce (IH trainee) received the Liberty Mutual Scholarship, presented by the American Industrial Hygiene Foundation
- Jo Anna Shimek (IH trainee) was awarded pilot project funding for her project “Biological Exposure Assessment in a Brain Cancer Case-Control Study”
- John Breskey (IH trainee) was awarded a fellowship from the UIC Institute for Environmental Science and Policy Fellowship and was selected to attend the AIHA Leadership Workshop
- Maria Gutierrez (IH student) received the Michael Bruton Workplace Safety Scholarship, the Scrimshaw Latino Health Scholarship, and the James P. Keogh Memorial Scholarship.
- Shanna Horvatin (IH trainee) received the Best Poster in Occupational Epidemiology award in the graduate student section, American Industrial Hygiene Conference & Exposition in Minneapolis
- Tara Alcazar (IH trainee) received a travel award from the International Society of Exposure Analysis for travel to International Society of Exposure Analysis 2007 Conference