

OHIP ANNUAL REPORT

GRANT NUMBER: 5T03OH009220-10

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SECTION I

TPG SUMMARY:

The primary goal of the Occupational Health Internship Program (OHIP) is to recruit and provide training for the next generation of occupational health professionals. Over the course of the summer internship, each OHIP trainee gains an understanding of the following three objectives that underlie the program:

- Discuss the importance of work-related health and safety hazards in determining the health of workers and the general community;
- Explain the changing nature of the workforce and importance of designing health and safety interventions to meet the needs of specific and diverse worker groups; and
- Describe the role of occupational health and safety professionals in reducing workplace health and safety hazards.

The second goal of OHIP is to increase diversity in the occupational health disciplines by actively recruiting and mentoring students from minority and immigrant backgrounds including underrepresented minorities (URM). URM individuals are those racial and ethnic populations that are underrepresented in the public health profession relative to their numbers in the general population.

Of the 15 students that were selected for the 2017 OHIP summer, 87% of them were from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds; 60% are technically in the URM category. Of the 284 students that have participated in the program since its 2004 inception, 70% percent were from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds and 50% are URM. In addition, 82% of all OHIP students are fluent in a second language and 14% speak a third language. Thus, many bring special language and cultural skills that are essential to the success of their projects. The majority of our field-based projects serve low-wage and immigrant worker populations that need students who are proficient in a second language and meet the cultural needs of the workers, which our OHIP students have successfully provided. In 2017, four of the projects served low-wage, temporary, or immigrant worker populations from the temporary, seafood, domestic worker, and retail sectors.

The third goal of OHIP is to strengthen relationships between academic researchers and worker organizations to collaboratively address health and safety concerns of different worker groups. OHIP projects pair worker organizations or local unions - which function as a “host” organization for the students - with an academic institution or a health department. This unique partnership may not exist without OHIP. In 2017 the students had two projects dealing with gender violence (IL and LA), injuries in domestic workers (CA), training for pre-apprenticeship students (CA), effectiveness of personal devices to prevent back injuries (CA), two projects

dealing with hazards in trucking (DC and WY), and conditions among ethnic grocery workers (CA).

Each OHIP team is required to complete three “deliverables” during their 9-week internship: (1) educational materials that can be used by their host organization (union, community-based organization, agency, etc.) to improve worker knowledge of safety and health hazards; (2) summary of their findings in PowerPoint format to be presented at the end of the summer through videoconference links; and (3) written summary reports of project objectives, methods, results and recommendations.

OHIP project personnel, mentors, and supervisors from around the country, each with considerable health and safety experience, work to ensure that the internships will be successful. This includes widespread national recruitment to ensure a diverse pool of applicants, thorough selection of projects and students, extensive planning of a three-day national orientation training, regular national conference calls, and committed mentorship and supervision throughout the summer.

Post-summer communication with the trainees solidifies their interest in occupational health. Bimonthly emails offer various occupational health and safety (OHS) opportunities (i.e. jobs, fellowships, events, workshops, scholarships, webinars, etc.) and updates through our OHIP Facebook page keeps our alumni connected with the OHS field. OHIP personnel also offer OHS academic and professional mentorship opportunities following the summer internship. American Public Health Association (APHA) scholarships provide OHIP students the opportunity to present their summer project findings on our annual OHIP session at the APHA meeting and meet leaders in the OHS field. Additionally, a national advisory board, composed of nationally recognized educators and scientists, advises the program on many aspects of our operation, including helping former interns stay in the field.

RELEVANCE: The overall purpose of OHIP is to expose undergraduate and graduate students to the field of OSH and increase the number of underrepresented minorities in the occupational health professions through a summer enrichment experience. Students are provided with an experienced-based learning opportunity that motivates and inspires them to continue their academic training through graduate programs in the occupational health professions. The training program also serves to increase awareness of work-related injuries, illnesses and hazards among immigrant and low-wage populations, and provide content information and background experience for further study in occupational health and related fields.

Key Personnel:

- **Sarah Jacobs**, National OHIP Program Coordinator, sjacobs@irle.ucla.edu/310-413-1878
- **Ingrid Denis**, Administrative Program Coordinator, idenis@aoec.org/888-347-2632
- **Matthew London**, Co-National OHIP Program Coordinator, mlondon53a@gmail.com/518-210-8238

TPG Web Link: [Occupational Health Internship Program](#)

SECTION II

Program Highlights of High Impact:

OHIP students often contribute to organizations and campaigns in ways that have high impact on improving workplace conditions, advancing legislative and policy initiatives, and expanding the capacity of host organizations to address the work-related health and safety concerns of their members.

For example, 2017 OHIP students Veronica Ponce de Leon and Reuben John Ronquillo worked with the California Domestic Worker Coalition on issues related to workers compensation for domestic workers. This coverage is mandated in California but is a benefit many domestic workers are unaware is available to them.

OHIP Quotes 2017

The summer OHIP internship experiences often have a profound impact on students in both their personal and professional lives, as reflected in feedback provided during evaluations at the end of each summer:

All of my expectations were met and exceeded. I gained a lot of knowledge through the research that I completed both about my community and about research. In addition, I learned so much about occupational health as a field. I did not expect to learn so much from my community, a community that I have grown up in and thought I had already learned all about. I am also extremely happy with the many relationships and connections that I was able to create through this internship because of OHIP and because of my assigned location, Cypress Mandela Training Center. OHIP incorporates all of my textbook knowledge into practice. Being able to gain actual experience in occupational safety was a bonus. I was also able to network with people who have been in the field for a long time. (CA)

My “aha moment” was realizing the interconnections between the trucking workforce (of this project) and the warehousing workforce (of previous experience). The work of these two sectors is heavily intertwined and the operations of one can have an effect on the other. From this project and my past experience, I’ve now heard how each group is sometimes frustrated by the other. And I now have a more complete picture of the challenges and barriers each group faces to optimal work, and can see a lack of understanding on both sides. (WY)

My “aha moment” was when NGA and OHIP interns sat down to review the survey, this was a beautiful moment of collaboration. Changes were important and afterward everyone felt proud of the survey. (LA)

One of the “aha” moments that I had during the summer was when I attended an Alzheimer’s workshop for caregivers at the Pilipino Workers Center. In this event, I realized the challenges that caregivers face when caring for patients with Alzheimer’s disease and other neurodegenerative diseases. Throughout the workshop, caregivers shared their stories of

experiences they had which were very hard to hear at times but helped me to understand the types of challenges in this workforce. (CA)

My supervision was great! I was constantly surrounded by mentors in and outside of the Worker Center. Each organizer allowed us to follow along and be a part of their day to day work life. I also found great help from the mentors at UCLA LOSH! They were incredible accessible and also provided above and beyond resources for us during our summer. (CA)

The supervision from our academic mentors was very supportive. Kevin Riley provided really helpful guidance in the process of analyzing the OSHA logs and for talking through some of the organizational structure and dynamics of a labor union, and Hector Flores (and later, Deogracia Cornelio) were also great in terms of providing resources for us to build out our worker health and safety trainings. (CA)

Student Recruitment and Training:

OHIP has achieved a great deal since its beginning in 2004, including its recognition as a great summer internship program -- with the number of applicants increasing significantly. We've averaged over 400 applicants each of the past five years. In 2017, due to financial uncertainties, OHIP accepted 15 graduate and undergraduate level students who worked on 8 projects for the summer. OHIP seeks students with cultural and language skills that benefit the majority of OHIP projects. The 2017 project sites were located in California, Illinois, Wyoming, District of Columbia, and Louisiana. A key part of our training is the 3-day in-person orientation in week one each summer, including national OHS leaders as faculty, and a guided worksite tour.

New OHIP Sites: In 2017, there was one new site in Cheyenne, Wyoming. OHIP will continue to identify and evaluate sites for program expansion, and pursue additional placements throughout the nation as future OHIP sites.

Long-Term OHIP Impacts on Participants: Efforts to track the trajectory of former students through regular surveys and ongoing contact with alumni has provided insight into the impacts the program has on former students both professionally and personally. This has helped measure the impact of OHIP on student's perceptions of work and health, and their decisions about future academic and career paths.

Since 2010, OHIP has increased efforts to measure the program's impact on the careers, education and interest of our alumni. During the fall of 2016, an 18-question survey was emailed via Survey Monkey to the 234 alumni students who participated in the program from 2004 through 2015, for whom we had emails. The survey had a 64% response rate (149 out of 234). The survey utilized both a quantitative and qualitative approach, allowing OHIP alumni to elaborate upon their responses.

Results of the survey indicate that many alumni have pursued a graduate degree in OSH or a related program or have gone on to work in health and safety at different worker organizations,

including several who have continued working for their OHIP supervising organization (local unions, community based-organizations, worker centers). Many are making an impact in OSH through their research, teaching and patient care

Continued Opportunities for Former Students: OHIP Alumni have been asked to present their summer projects at national conferences/meetings. Five of the 2017 OHIP students received scholarships to present their project findings at the 145th Annual APHA Meeting and Exposition in Atlanta this fall. The 2017 OHIP interns have again been invited to share their project accomplishments through the NIOSH Science Blog.

To continue its efforts to provide a pathway into the OHS field after the OHIP trainees complete their summer internship, OHIP staff sends bimonthly emails to its alumni (2004-present) with OHS opportunities, i.e. job postings, events, webinars, fellowships, etc. In addition, mentorship opportunities are offered to those who are interested in continuing in the field.

OHIP and Online Technology:

- **Website:** Since 2012, the OHIP application process has been conducted entirely online through its updated website ([Occupational Health Internship Program](#)).
- **OHIP Facebook:** In 2012, OHIP created a FB page ([Occupational Health Internship Program \(OHIP\)](#)) which continues to provide OHIP updates and news. The page is maintained by an OHIP alum and moderated by OHIP staff.
- **OHIP Emails:** For the past several years, OHIP staff have increased efforts to improve communication and provide OHS opportunities (i.e. job postings, events, webinars, fellowships, etc.) to former OHIP students as well as mentorship opportunities to those who are interested in continuing in the field through bimonthly emails.
- **OHIP Survey:** Online technology was used to survey former OHIP students (2004-2015) to capture data for analysis.
- **OHS Webinar:** In October 2016, OHIP and the Occupational Health Section of APHA partnered together to present a webinar (<http://uofil.adobeconnect.com/p6k4zs87rt4/>) on five OHIP alumni addressed how OHIP influenced their OHS interest and work.

Project Impacts and Themes: Reaching low-wage workers, supporting community based organizations and local unions, plugging into organizing campaigns, reaching workers in evermore precarious employment situations – temporary workers, Latino seasonal workers, workers in the black hair salon industries, etc., and projects that support policy efforts around workplace hazards.