

Training Project Grants
Annual Report
Reporting Period: July 1, 2015 – June 20, 2016

Institution: University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

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SECTION I

TPG Summary: The Department of Occupational and Environmental Health (OEH) at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (OUHSC) College of Public Health provides graduate education leading to the Master of Science (MS) degree in Industrial Hygiene and Environmental Health Sciences (IH/EHS). The goal of the IH/EHS program is to prepare professional practitioners to apply scientific knowledge to the anticipation, recognition, evaluation, and control of environmental hazards or stresses affecting human health. The IH/EHS degree has been prized by employers and students because graduates are prepared to direct environmental compliance programs as well as occupational health and safety programs.

The IH/EHS program at OUHSC is one of only four ABET-accredited masters level industrial hygiene programs in the south central United States. The program has been accredited by the Applied Science Accreditation Commission (ASAC) of ABET since 2000. The curriculum consists of 48 semester hours of coursework, including masters thesis research and a field practice experience, and can be completed in 21-24 months of full-time study. The OEH Department consists of 6 full-time faculty with diverse research interests and rich experience in professional practice in industry, government, the military, and consulting. The Department is well equipped with laboratory and field sampling instruments in support of the training program.

The specific aims of the NIOSH training project grant (TPG) are: (1) to attract highly qualified and motivated students, including individuals with cultural or linguistic fluency related to underserved populations, into the industrial hygiene profession and (2) to recruit students with diverse technical backgrounds who are interested in entering the industrial hygiene field. TPG funds are used to support four traineeship slots per year, to be filled by full-time masters-level trainees. Trainees may be supported on the TPG for up to 24 months.

The program has traditionally drawn well-prepared applicants from a number of undergraduate programs in the region. Oklahoma colleges have relatively high American Indian enrollments reflecting the state's unique ethnic mix, presenting an excellent pool of well qualified prospective trainees from under-represented minorities. Recruitment also targets individuals with work experience in the health professions, engineering, chemistry, and environmental science who wish to make the transition into industrial hygiene practice.

Relevance: Currently there are not enough trained industrial hygienists to meet the need for these specialists, who work throughout all industrial sectors to protect workers from occupational hazards that could cause illness or death. The training project grant helps to attract students of diverse technical backgrounds and cultural competencies into the Master of Science program in Industrial Hygiene and Environmental Health Sciences at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

Key Personnel:

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The core Industrial Hygiene faculty members are Dr. Phillips, Professor David L. Johnson, PhD, PE, CIH, and Assistant Professor Evan Floyd, PhD. Department Chair and Associate Professor Robert Lynch, PhD and Assistant Professor Jun Wang, PhD, PE share in teaching and mentoring trainees.

SECTION II

High Impact Stories:

The impact of the NIOSH TPG extends beyond the trainees who are directly supported on the grant to other well-qualified students who are attracted to the vibrant program. One such student graduated from the MS program in 2015-2016 and is continuing in the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health as a PhD student. For the past year he has been the lead field person for the University of Oklahoma (OU) Healthy Schools Project. This is one of 6 such projects funded by USEPA whose focus is to investigate the relationship between school design, construction/operation, indoor air quality (IAQ), and student/staff outcomes. Working under the direction of Dr. Robert Lynch, the student has been responsible for extensive coordination, planning, and IAQ measurement with 12 participating schools in the Oklahoma City school district. The findings are currently being communicated to the schools.

Another student who graduated from the MS program in 2015-2016 was lead author of the poster "Real World Evaluation of Second-Generation Electronic Cigarette Batteries" and co-author of the poster "Does Cloud Chasing Spill Over: Thirdhand Vapor Found in Vapor Shop Neighbors" presented at the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco 2016 Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois. These posters were based on her thesis research with Dr. Floyd exploring the emerging public health issue of occupational and environmental exposure to "vaping" aerosol and gaseous products.