Guest Speakers

Chris Schneider
John Deere

The ASSE student section had the great pleasure of hosting Chris Schneider, a product safety engineer from John Deere Harvester Works and an ISU alumnus as a guest speaker at the November 4, 2014, meeting.

He shared his insights into the field of product safety and compliance at John Deere with an overview of his responsibilities, some of the basics of global compliance, and the types of obstacles he has encountered. He is involved in many aspects of combine production.

Schneider’s responsibilities range from engineering and design to marketing, focused on the protection of the machine users’ safety during all operations. In order to set a baseline of protection for the heavy machinery users, countries often publish regulations that manufacturers must follow. Private organizations such as the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers and the International Organization for Standardization also publish their own standards that define safety requirements and guidelines.

The Illinois State University ASSE student section greatly appreciates our alum for taking the time to visit and speak!

John Johnston
City of Bloomington

John Johnston, the procurement manager for the City of Bloomington and an Illinois State University alum, visited the ASSE student section on Nov. 18, 2014, for the final meeting of the fall semester.

He recalled his experiences as a student and the changes since his graduation in 1975. If it can be believed (he made the audience promise not to laugh), it was a difficult journey at the time to find a working calculator with a square root button in the newly built DeGarmo Hall, but it made all the difference.

Johnston shared useful advice about careers, including paying attention to detail, being efficient with your time and your coworkers’ time and learning and understanding the workplace culture. He added that you should always do your homework and be prepared.

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Safety program students presented two separate research posters at the University Research Symposium in April. One paper was entitled “Crime Readiness Survey of Small Independent Local Businesses” and was authored by K. Dodd, N. Wright, C. Rogers and A. Bacidore with T. Fuller as the faculty advisor.

The second was “Comfort-Related Factors Affecting the Use of Personal Protective Eyewear Among Inexperienced Users” and was presented by Nicole Gall with C. Greishaber as the faculty advisor.

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Michael Brown
Johnson Controls

On March 20, Michael Brown, a 2014 alum, visited ISU and gave a presentation to the ASSE student section. He is the interim safety supervisor at the Johnson Controls factory in northern Illinois.

Brown spoke about his work as the lone safety representative at a plant with 300 employees. Since he began the job less than a year ago, he has implemented a new computer generated lock-out/tag-out program for 150 devices throughout the plant. He also conducts air and noise monitoring. He is on several safety committees and conducts continuous training on a broad range of safety topics.

Michael Lawler
Walsh Construction

Last September, Michael Lawler, CSP, attended an ASSE student section meeting as a guest speaker. He discussed many of the obstacles on his construction sites. Most of the heavy civil projects are so immense that registered professional engineers must collaborate with him, and his safety team, to ensure worker safety and health.

Student members had the opportunity to learn about current safety and health topics as well as some of the company’s innovations designed to keep workers safe while meeting and exceeding the demands of their customers.

Lawler graduated from the Illinois State University Safety program and spoke about its value. Walsh Construction made a generous donation to the ASSE student section during his visit.

Walsh Construction’s mission statement is built upon “the highest standards for ethics, quality, and safety.” The student section recognizes that this financial contribution reinforces their mission and distinguishes Walsh Construction as an industry leader focused and committed to advancing the safety profession.

Don Ackad
honored homecoming alum

On Oct. 2, 2014, the ASSE Central Illinois Parent chapter partnered with the student section to host honorary guest, Don Ackad, a retired safety manager for the United States Secret Service.

Ackad discussed the safety and health issues encountered during his career, ranging from exposure to lead, struck by/crushed by hazards, exposure to excessive noise, musculoskeletal issues, and indoor air quality. His knowledge and expertise far exceeded the scope of the safety profession, to include many interesting aspects about working for the Secret Service.
Agriculture safety research

In the heart of corn country, Paul Ronczkowski, MPH, CSP, is committed to advancing agricultural safety. The agricultural industry is one of the least regulated, and most often overlooked, industries with elevated injury and illness rates. As such, the ASSE student section will be collaborating with Ronczkowski on a research project in the interest of professional development and raising awareness about agriculture safety.

On October 17, 2014, Ronczkowski and student members, Josh Karis, Michael Lies, and Malachy McLoughlin, taught middle school students about the hazards of grain silos. At the 4-H Science Sleepover, students learned about grain handling through a demonstration that fatally engulfed a Spider-man figurine in a grain silo during emptying operations.

Tours

Mitsubishi Plant Tour

Past ASSE student member and 2012 alum Tim Nieukirk provided an exceptional tour of the Normal facility on March 21 to the HSC 173 class, Aspects of Professional Safety Practice. The alum is a safety engineer with broad responsibilities for ergonomic evaluations and safety training.

Komatsu factory tour

Last fall the ASSE student section sponsored a tour of the Komatsu manufacturing and assembly plant in Peoria.

Faculty Updates

Paul Ronczkowski

Paul Ronczkowski is a member of the Grain Handling Safety Coalition (GHSC). It was initiated by Catherine Rylatt after the death of her 19-year-old nephew and a 14-year-old coworker in a grain bin in northwestern Illinois in July 2010.

The coalition brought together a diverse group of agencies and organizations with ties to the grain industry to address critical safety and education needs. The GHSC addresses both the production (farm) and commercial sectors of grain handling and storage, emphasizing awareness, prevention and education. The GHSC is comprised of representatives from commercial elevators/milling companies; commercial associations; producer associations; higher education, research, and extension; rural health care and education; migrant workers; youth educators; insurance; regulatory and other government entities; safety professionals; manufacturers; rescue personnel; farmers and family members. The GHSC has developed several training modules and training videos; delivered training to various groups; and worked with others to resolve some of the leading issues in the industry.

Thomas Fuller

Professor Thomas Fuller attended the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) Conference and Exposition this past summer in San Antonio. He taught a half-day professional development course entitled “Workplace Violence -- Understanding the Problem and Creating Solutions” on May 31, 2014. He was also a session arranger for a roundtable discussion on “Thermal Stressors” and another roundtable on “Technological and Managerial Aspects of Large Facility Dismantlement.”

The professor is a member of the Safety Committee, Nonionizing Radiation Committee, and the Health Care Working Group of the AIHA. In November, 2014, he was appointed as the AIHA Ambassador to France.

Professor Fuller was recently awarded the Gabriel Alvarado Professional Education Grant from the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) Foundation. Selected from hundreds of applications, he used the money to attend a Certified Safety Professional preparation course sponsored by the ASSE in Seattle. In July 2014, the National Safety Council (NSC) released

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a new book entitled Basics of Occupational Safety and Health completed by Fuller in early 2014. He used this book in his introductory safety course, “Aspects of Professional Safety Practice.” During the course, students helped with final reviews, and one student will be credited with contributing to the end-of-chapter questions that will be provided on the NSC online faculty portal.

Other news

A new Safety Program marketing flyer has just been developed. It is meant to attract high school and community college university applicants to our program. The brochure will be available in print form and as a PDF file. Anyone who might be in a position to distribute the flyer and help the Safety Program grow should contact Tom Fuller at tfulle2@IllinoisState.edu to obtain copies or receive the PDF.

There were approximately 20 graduates of the program this past May. There were eight graduates in December. Most of them will complete their Professional Practice course requirements over the summer. Students will also be looking for their first jobs during this time. Anyone with potential opportunities for our graduates can forward information to tfulle2@IllinoisState.edu to be posted on the EHS alumni list serve.

Reflections: A Bright Future

Safety Program graduates continue to secure great positions. Last year we had students start in a wide variety of industries, including manufacturing, construction, and insurance. Starting salaries this past year averaged $59,600!