



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
SAFETY PROFESSIONALS



2021 ASSP Foundation Academic Scholarships

The American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) Foundation is awarding \$328,000 in academic scholarships and professional education grants to 117 individuals to help them achieve their educational and career goals in the occupational safety and health profession.

“For more than 30 years, our foundation has helped thousands of students and professionals continue their education in occupational safety and health,” said ASSP Foundation Chair Trish Ennis, CSP, ARM, CRIS. **“The consistent support from our generous donors demonstrates that safety and health careers are vital in helping to protect workers everywhere.”**

The 2021 awards include \$307,000 in academic scholarships for 100 graduate and undergraduate students pursuing degrees related to occupational safety and health at 47 colleges and universities across the country. The ASSP Foundation is awarding another \$21,000 in professional education grants to 17 practicing safety professionals who are working to advance their careers through certification, college coursework, conference attendance and similar learning opportunities.

Please scroll through the following pages to learn more about the those impacted by your donations, and read their direct words of gratitude for your investment in their future.

[View the press release](#) on the ASSP website, or [view a full list of awardees](#).

***Thank you* for entrusting the ASSP Foundation Board of Trustees with stewardship of your investment.**

Trish Ennis, CSP, ARM, CRIS
Chair, ASSP Foundation Board of Trustees



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ASSP Foundation Martha Greer Board Angels Memorial Scholarship

Riley McGrew

University of Wisconsin Whitewater
Undergraduate Program: Occupational Safety
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What attracted you to the safety industry and how has your education affected your opinion of the field?

My senior year of high school was spent abroad. From August of 2017 to July of 2018, I was a Rotary Youth Exchange Student in Bolivia. While abroad, I noticed how different the safety standards are outside of the United States. Most cars didn't have seat belts installed, meat was left in the blistering heat for hours on end, drinks were usually served with bugs in them, and busses were always over their carrying capacity. These things were all normal to my host family but seemed dangerous to me. Seeing people make unsafe decisions helped steer me towards wanting to work in the safety profession. After taking safety classes, I realized how unsafe the average person is. While working as a safety intern, I noticed that multiple coworkers would mix unmarked containers of chemicals in the same bottle in order to clean some of the products we made.

Obviously, unlabeled containers and mixing unknown chemicals together is very unsafe. Most companies are able to keep their employees safe, but not every company can. My education has allowed me to see that some companies don't have the means to keep their employees safe, whether it's due to lack of knowledge, ignorance, lack of manpower to keep hazards in check, or intentional neglect to keep costs low. I experienced a similar situation while working as an intern. Besides myself, there was only one person running the entire safety department for a company with over 500 employees. This company didn't even have a health services center. Instead we had an office that was converted into a first aid closet. It was impossible for my boss to do everything that the company asked of her when it came to safety, and I wasn't experienced enough to help her. This situation helped enforce the idea that some



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companies have a hard time being as safe as they can be. After living in Bolivia, I saw that safety is not optional, it is a necessity. After taking safety classes, I learned how important it is to educate others and enforce safety rules.

What are some of your educational and professional goals, and how do you plan on achieving them?

One of my goals while attending UW-Whitewater is to receive my Bachelor's Degree with at least a 3.65 GPA to receive high honors. Due to the pandemic, all of my classes were moved online. Last semester, Spring 2020, I really struggled with online classes. I thought that this semester was going to be the same. I genuinely thought that I was going to fail this semester. Instead of letting my fear win, I worked hard to earn a 3.94 GPA this semester. As long as I continue to this work hard, I know I'll be able to achieve my goal of graduating with high honors. Another educational goal I have is to, make my college dorms safer. The dorm building I live in was built in 2019. 1 year of students have previously lived in the building, yet we only recently had emergency safety signs put up. We also have not had any fire drills for the building, unlike other dorm buildings. No one in our building knows what to do in case of an emergency.

When I go back to campus in the spring, I plan on putting up more signs on what to do in case of any emergency. I also plan on talking to our buildings Assistant Complex Director about this issue. One of my professional goals is to make everyone I work with care about safety as much as I do. I previously worked as a safety intern for a company in Wisconsin. Most of the people I worked with were older gentleman who had been with the company for over 30 years. I was 18 when I started working for this company. Most people didn't take me seriously for different reasons, even though all I wanted to do was keep people safe. Some of the reasons included that I was only an intern, I was a college student perusing a higher education, and that I was a girl who was younger than some of the workers grandchildren. To them, I was too young and inexperienced to know how to help keep these workers safe. I want to make sure that this doesn't happen again in my future career. One of the ways I want to achieve my goal is to talk to coworkers one on one to see if they notice any safety hazards. I want to show people that I care about their safety, and talking to people about their safety concerns will help me prove this to them. Another way I can get people to care about safety is to start a safety committee to make sure any safety concern gets looked into, no matter how small the concern may be. I want people to understand how important workplace safety is.





What leadership and/or volunteer roles have you taken within the safety profession, and what positions do you envision yourself taking in the future?

In the past, I worked as a Safety Intern. The company I worked for employed approximately 500 people. It was a nonunion fabrication and final assembly plant for tank trailers. As the assistant to the safety department, I maintained facility safety supplies and PPE stations, I participated and helped drive changes in the Safety Committee, I was in charge of cleaning, stocking, and ordering supplies for the first aid stations, I managed all of the eye wash stations, and I took inventory and managed the chemical waste storage area. Technically, I was second in command in the safety department, but that is only because there were only 2 people in the department. Myself and my boss. This internship really helped me build my confidence in a workplace setting.

Due to the pandemic, I haven't been able to participate as much as I would have liked within the safety community. Currently, I am involved with the UW-Whitewater Student Safety Organization. It is a student section of the American Society of Safety Professionals. This professional organization is dedicated to making UW-Whitewater a safer campus by educating the student population on how to make safe decisions on campus. Some safety concerns we have talked about in the past include what to do in case of a natural disaster, and how to stay safe during a pandemic. In the future, I want to travel abroad to teach underdeveloped companies how to keep their employees safe. I don't want to be limited to just one city or one country for my entire safety career. The way I see myself doing this is by working hard in any international company I may work for, and working my way up in the safety department of the company. The higher of a position I hold, the more likely I will be to travel domestically and internationally. As long as I am able to travel for work, I will be able to help companies around the world provide safer work environments for their employees.

What is your greatest takeaway from the current school year? How do you think this knowledge will impact yourself and others throughout your career?

My greatest take away from this school year is that people either choose not to be safe, or they don't know how to be safe. The 2020-2021 school year has been heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Although many people are taking this pandemic seriously, not everyone is. The only way to beat this virus is to have everyone make





safe and informed decisions, such as avoiding large gatherings or only leaving your home for necessities. While living in the dorms on campus, I have noticed that many people still aren't wearing masks, even though face masks are required on campus and by executive order. Most students that live in my dorm building either don't understand how serious the pandemic is, or they choose not to be safe. Many people don't have the proper education when it comes to making safe decisions, so I plan on educating everyone I possibly can at the future company I work for.

Teaching people safety enables them to make better decisions in the workplace. For example, someone might not understand chemical labels. By teaching people how to read chemical labels, chemical burns in the workplace could be greatly reduced. In my future career, I want to be a safety educator. I want to teach employees to make safer decisions, and I want to help employers provide safer work environments. Recently, I've had the opportunity recently to teach my roommates the importance of safety. One of my roommates is 5' 3". In order to reach the top of the fridge, she was standing on top of a foot rest that was placed on her chair. I told her that what she was doing was extremely unsafe. There were multiple things that could have gone wrong. For example, she could have slipped and fallen off of the foot rest and chair. This could have resulted in a serious injury, such as a broken arm. After I explain why this decision was unsafe, she promised me she would never do it again. This situation happened 2 months ago and she has yet to do it again. This is just one of many interactions I've had in helping others learn the importance of safety.



Riley McGrew

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June 5, 2021

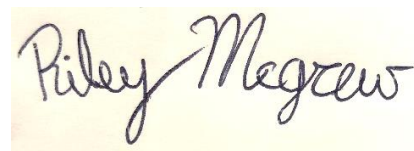
To the ASSP Foundation Donors,

Thank you so much for awarding me with this generous scholarship! Receiving this scholarship means so much to me!

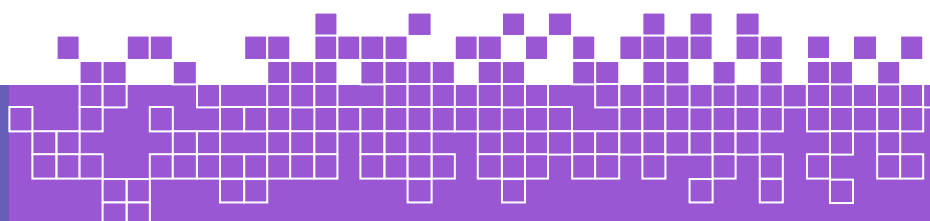
I am currently a Senior at the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater, and I am studying Occupational Safety. I was recently given the opportunity to work as a safety intern at CNH Industrial in Burlington, Iowa for the summer. After this internship ends in August, I will return to Whitewater for my final year of college. Through the entirety of Junior year, I worked incredibly hard to earn a 4.0 GPA. I also made the Dean's list for both the Fall and Spring semesters. My goal for my senior year is to maintain my 4.0 GPA and continue making the Dean's list. Receiving this scholarship has made my hard work more rewarding!

Thank you again for awarding me with this scholarship! I hope to honor Martha Greer and make you along with everyone involved with the American Society of Safety Professionals proud!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Riley McGrew in black ink on a light yellow rectangular background.

Riley McGrew





AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
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ASSP Foundation Texas Safety Foundation Bill Durham HSE Memorial Scholarship

Harrison Buenger

Texas A&M University
Undergraduate Program: Aerospace Engineering
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What attracted you to the safety industry and how has your education affected your opinion of the field?

My background is an unusual one – to say the least! I began my tenure at Texas A&M University without much direction and eventually landed with Aerospace Engineering for the sake of a good occupational outlook, vigorous academic challenge, and marketable degree. Upon finding the TAMU Chapter of ASSP (thank you, free pizza), I became attached to the idea of an occupation that surpassed normal boundaries of industry, allowed for the application of problem solving to intriguing issues, and genuinely helped people! Always a fan of travel, the diversity of available jobs didn't hurt my interest either. Now that I have spend nearly 3 years surrounding myself with ASSP as well as Aerospace Engineering and even IP Law and Philosophy fields, I can safely say (no pun intended) that the safety is interdisciplinary, for lack of a better word. Anywhere a chair is sat in, a ladder is used, a computer is typed on, anything is made, machinery is used – everywhere! – safety is present. And with it comes the opportunity to solve problems and help send workers home to their families in higher numbers with less short and long term injuries.

My education has been characterized by diversity – a little of this and a little of that. Such diversity of learning has not led me away from safety, but rather brought me closer to it and my time within ASSP has helped me recognize it in areas where my peers from different industries would not and where my peers from the safety field often fail to look. I believe I bring two distinctly unique and beneficial characteristics to the safety field – the problem solving and practicality of an engineer and the understanding of multiple distinct industries in a detailed manner that allows for the application of safety factors from the inside out. My opinion of the safety field has not changed – I am



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enamored with the idea of helping people and further drawn in by the idea of doing it from a perspective that is not oft considered and where much benefit can be drawn. I find myself excited with opportunity as I write, eager to continue learning all I can and even more eager to share it.

What are some of your educational and professional goals, and how do you plan on achieving them?

Up until recently I would probably not have been able to relay specific educational and professional goals. I recently accepted a position at an Intellectual Property Law Firm, which will be my introduction to the professional world. My educational goals are rather more complicated. As you may have gathered, I have never been one to see my education as a single degree and have always availed myself to every opportunity to learn about what interests me. Thus, I plan educationally to maintain my time with ASSP in whatever capacity I am able in order to meet with professionals from the safety industry and develop connections where I can learn more and more about ergonomics and other factors of the safety field that I can keep in my back pocket and bring with me to whatever field, industry, or job that I find. In that way, I see my educational goals as somewhat never ending and my professional goals as sharing what I have learned in an effort to improve the culture, efficiency, and safety of wherever I find myself working. I am, more or less, describing my future professional goal as working whatever occupation I find intriguing while also holding myself to the standards of a sort of “volunteer safety manager.”

Eventually I hope to sort of relay this experience into officially safety work – beginning to obtain my GSP or CSP at some point in the future. I believe I have educated myself to the best of my ability with regards to safety and will continue to do so, however, I recognize my lack of knowledge that stems from not obtaining a degree in the field. I believe continued “experience based” education of the field will allow me to have a smooth transition into the field, while continuing to allow me to grow up inside of a unique industry that many safety professionals do not have access to. As far as how I am to achieve this goals: hard work is at the forefront. Professional hobbies require a certain level of commitment that I believe I have and have proven over the years – excelling academically in a difficult engineering field while simultaneously continuing to educate myself in the field of safety and immerse myself into the field via student, local, and national chapters of ASSP.





What leadership and/or volunteer roles have you taken within the safety profession, and what positions do you envision yourself taking in the future?

I have had the opportunity to serve in multiple varying leadership capacities for the Texas A&M Chapter of ASSP since Spring of 2018. My introduction to ASSP began as Secretary and my contributions varied from volunteering at or advertising for events, attending and planning meetings as well as lectures, recruiting new members, and more. Additionally, I maintained contact with the parent chapter (Region 3, Central Texas) and attended the FSLC in Chicago that year in order to better serve my student chapter as a leader and gain valuable professional connections and experience. During my term as Secretary, the Chapter submitted their first organized National Chapter Recognition application. My second year I was able to further involve myself, extending my responsibilities as Vice President and once again attending the FSLC. Our chapter approximately doubled in size and we were able to improve upon our chapter application, achieving commendation. This semester our executive committee had big plans, but we knew that our chapter would have to make drastic changes upon the onset of online classes and meeting limitations under the pandemic – canceling hosting the region III student conference as well as various events which would have extended our reach both on campus, locally, and across the state. Fortunately, the pandemic has availed our chapter to the possibility of research and we are currently attempting to utilize the unforeseen circumstances surrounding the pandemic in order to develop more accurate image of student safety during this time. I have taken up the role of “Engineering Liaison” as our chapter strives to extend our reach to all corners of campus and, in turn, all available industries. This role followed from the ideology that safety is in everything we do and every industry that exists – an idea that I hold particularly close as an Aerospace Engineer.

As far as the future is concerned, experience breeds knowledge, thus my plan to advance my professional skills outside of a classroom setting is to locate people, events, organizations, and other such opportunities to put my time into in order to develop my own professional skills. In my time serving the Texas A&M Chapter of ASSP, I have already begun developing these and many more OSH professional skills via meetings (both student and parent chapter alike), lectures from highly involved, successful, and knowledgeable companies, and other similar events. Although just beginning my tenure as a safety professional, continued focus on these mentioned resources will no doubt advance my professional skills to great levels of success. As I look towards a future in Engineering, Safety, or even, as it currently stands, Intellectual





Property Law, I know that anywhere manufacturing is done, every office where work is accomplished, and every setting of every industry involves factors of safety – and I believe that I can learn now and teach in the future, reaching industries rarely touched by safety professionals.

What is your greatest takeaway from the current school year? How do you think this knowledge will impact yourself and others throughout your career?

This question carries with it a heavier weight than usual and a certain connotation that is unfortunately rather negative due to the removal of normalcy in my life during the pandemic and conditions therefrom. Online class and a lack of connection has hampered my personal ability to connect and learn as much as I would normally like to do. I am a large proponent of in person meetings rather than emails, calls rather than texts, and developing relationships from professional connections. All of this has been rather difficult following the onset of online schooling and all online meetings for ASSP. As I have continued to overcome these difficulties, I have learned a very important lesson: difficulty yields opportunity. An online format means that engineering students can more easily access ASSP meetings. An international pandemic carries with it unprecedented opportunity to study and observe the safety habits of students, faculty, and corporations alike.

National and local mandates barring personal interaction means increased access to virtual information that would not normally be available. In every difficult circumstance, new opportunity is revealed. Over the past year and school year I have become accustomed to finding these opportunities and taking full advantage of them. I don't think it is difficult to transfer this lesson to a professional level – there will always be setbacks, obstacles, and difficulties in life and in all lines of work, but these will always hide within then chances for improvement and new points of view. Everything is a learning experience, and every task is a chance to better yourself and those around you. I believe this lesson is best shared by the way I can act – by always doing my best and showing other people the best in the worst situations. I look forward to future challenges and what they will bring my way.



Dear ASSP Foundation Donors,

I hope this letter finds you well following this rather trying international ordeal. I remain ever grateful during this time and am continually and sincerely honored to receive the ASSP Foundation Texas Safety Foundation Bill Durham HSE Memorial Scholarship, which you have so generously provided. In both my studies at Texas A&M University as well as my time in research or working with the Texas A&M Chapter of ASSP I have come to continually admire the ubiquitous nature of safety and the high ideals which safety professionals everywhere stand for. To receive this award now from a group of such professionals who admire the field in much the same way makes it all the more special.

As I finish my studies at Texas A&M and look towards the future, I am glad to inform you that your donation drives me forward in my efforts to pursue excellence in any field that I pursue – and to bring with me all that I have gathered from the safety community in order to further those same goals. It is not only the generous financial aid, but also the moral backing and continuous support that keeps me striving for the future. I want to inform you all that I have already fielded a job offer post-graduation with an IP Law Firm in Houston. Regardless of the path I take, my time with ASSP – and I do not wish to overlook the continued opportunities afforded me within the organization – has been and will continue to be integral to who I become and how I see the world around me.

My Sincerest Thanks,

Harrison Buenger

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Harrison Buenger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Harrison" is on the top line, and the last name "Buenger" is on the bottom line, with the two names connected by a large, sweeping loop.



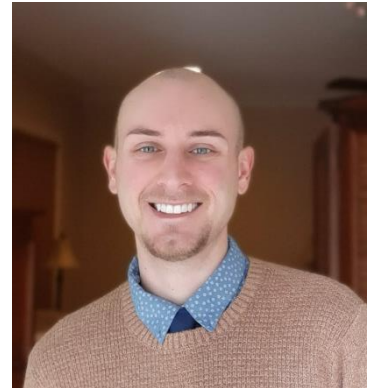
ASSP Foundation Texas Safety Foundation Charlie Darnell HSE Memorial Scholarship

Kiylee Callaway

Texas State Technical College

Undergraduate Program: Environmental Health and Safety

kiyleejoe92@icloud.com



What attracted you to the safety industry and how has your education affected your opinion of the field?

I first attended TSTC in 2010 for air navigation. I was freshly out of high school, and did not truly see a clear path in front of me nor did I have goals that I wanted to achieve. Just three semesters into my education I dropped out believing that I would never return to college. The years leading up to my return to college would be bleak as I struggled with addiction. In 2016 I was able to find sustainable sobriety and started forming goals and aspirations. I had no visible plan for my life but knew that I wanted to be successful in some capacity. In 2018 I was employed at a treatment center, working with people also struggling with their own addiction. In October of that year we received news that the center would be closing. I then again was lost, not knowing what to do next. During one of my last shifts a profound thought crossed my mind that maybe, just maybe, school was back in the cards for me.

That being said I did not know what I wanted to go to school for but I started the process anyways. After jumping through some hoops I was able to return to school. Something that has been an interest to me for years are environmental and safety controls that are in place to protect human health and the environment. It just never occurred to me that I could make a career out of it. I knew TSTC was a great school, having already attended there. I was excited to learn that they had a degree specifically tailored to environmental safety. My experience over the past year has been one of great joy. I was worried at first but came to love what I was learning. My specific degree is environmental technology, but is heavily paired with occupational safety and industrial hygiene. To my surprise, I enjoyed them just as much as my environmental classes. My instructors made learning about safety interesting and fun. My second





semester was only safety classes and, to be honest, I was nervous going into it. I found out that occupational safety is a fundamental function of almost all work environments. Mrs. Williams, one of my safety instructors, was very passionate about the field and it really helped me absorb some enthusiasm as well. I am very glad that I am on the path that I am now, and looking forward to sharing and gaining more education in the workforce.

What are some of your educational and professional goals, and how do you plan on achieving them?

My short term goal upon arriving back to school was to get back into good academic standing and join PHI THETA KAPPA. After a lackluster performance in my final semester at TSTC in 2011, I returned with a 1.5 GPA. I knew the only hope I had was to keep my upcoming and future semesters at 4.0, and that is exactly what I have been able to accomplish. I am extremely proud that my GPA now sits right under 3.4 but unfortunately it will not high enough to be able to join the honors society this semester. I have aspirations to continue my education in the future and obtain my bachelors in environmental studies.

However, my current goal right now is to get my Class D Texas Water License through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. I am currently studying for that right now, and hope to gain some industry experience working for a water treatment plant after graduating. Hopefully within a year or two I will obtain my Class C Texas Water License. The biggest accomplishment out of my education is the prospect of graduating. I will be the first person in my immediate family to have graduated with a college degree, but it is as much their accomplishment as it is mine because I would not have been able to get this far without them.

What leadership and/or volunteer roles have you taken within the safety profession, and what positions do you envision yourself taking in the future?

I am currently on the board of TSTC's chapter of ASSP. My role is the environmental representative and my goal is to increase our recycling efforts in our department. A example of this is to implement recycling during our fundraising events and to divert as much waste as possible from the waste stream. This can include eliminating or substituting goods during these events. However, the most prominent tactic is having accessible recycling receptacles and using products that are easily recyclable, example





being paper products and aluminum cans. Through out the entire campus we have aluminum can receptacles that we collect regularly and store until the following Earth Day. We then take the cans into M Lipsitz, a local metal recycling facility, and collect the revenue which goes straight to TSTC's ASSP. Another goal was to coordinated events with local non profits organizations, such as Keep Waco Beautiful, so members of TSTC's ASSP could volunteer their time to beautification projects around the city. However, this never materialized due to covid-19 restrictions. I envision myself, once in the workforce, being part of a robust safety team. I will gladly be apart of the safety efforts wherever I end up working. I would like to work in a organization that takes safety seriously and prioritizes it above all other things. In my current job I manage a restaurant, and my workers safety means a lot to me. I believe that I am good a leading because I am able to see all the small individual parts that make the whole picture and in seeing those I am able to organize a system to its most efficient level.

What is your greatest takeaway from the current school year? How do you think this knowledge will impact yourself and others throughout your career?

This year has been challenging for all walks of life. Covid-19 threw a wrench into the gears, and brought a lot of people's lives to a near halt. Being in the safety and environmental program brought this home. That it was of the utmost importance to mitigate the spread of this virus through whatever safety means necessary. I believe the most of effective of these are simply wearing a mask. In class we learn that being in compliance is important and necessary so therefore wearing the mask is also important and necessary. As safety people our goal is to protect human life from hazards and covid-19 proved to be a formidable hazard. It is our duty to be in compliance and take the safety measure recommended from the CDC and implement them. I am proud that my campus as taken it very serious and we are able to continue in person classes without the threat of exposure. I believe my greatest take away from this year is that we still have to continue forward no matter what is in our path. I suspect that a lot of students dropped out of schooling this year because of the sudden dramatic shifts and changes making it more difficult. I was able to witness this if my own department, seeing less and less familiar faces. No matter what obstacles lie in our way we must overcome this and tackle our goals head on. This is easier said than done though. This year has been a learning experience for everyone but I am glad it was one for me that allowed me to grow. It will make me more prepared for the challenges ahead and be ready to adapt if necessary.



6/3/2021

Dear ASSP Foundation Donors,

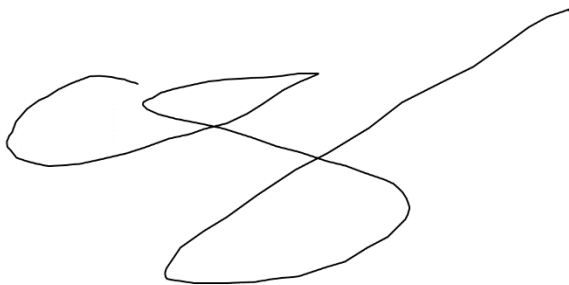
My name is Kiylee Callaway, and I am recipient of the Charlie Darnell HSE Memorial Scholarship for the 2020-2021 school year. I am extremely grateful and honored to receive this.

I began my higher education journey at Texas State Technical College in 2010 but after a few hardships I found myself having to leave school. After that experience, I genuinely believed school was no longer in the cards for me. The years that followed I grew as an individual and was able to forge a path for myself. In 2019 I found myself back on the TSTC Campus studying Environmental Technology. I joined ASSP my second semester and soon after was elected as the environmental representative by my peers. My experience in the safety society has been one of great joy and has provided me the knowledge and skills to help me succeed. I am the first person in my immediate family to graduate from college. It is because of organizations like this and the people in my life that I was able to graduate and accomplish my goals.

Upon graduating with my Environmental Compliance Specialization Technology degree, I received a position as a water operator for the City of Temple. My short term goals are to obtain my C Water License by the end of the year and continuing moving up in my department. My long term goal is to return to college and obtain my bachelors. Please know your generosity will help me along every step of the way. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Kiylee Callaway

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kiylee Callaway', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
SAFETY PROFESSIONALS



ASSP Foundation Texas Safety Foundation Del Tally HSE Scholarship

Kaysey Aguilar

Texas A&M University
Doctorate Program: Public Health
kaysey_nicole@tamu.edu



What attracted you to the safety industry and how has your education affected your opinion of the field?

Years of introspection, classes, two degrees, personal risk-avoidance tendencies, and a health educator job led me to the safety field. In middle school, a series of health issues showed me the incredible impact the health field could make, and I wanted to make that impact, too. Over twelve years later, I have finally found my niche in the safety field. It started after I got a master's degree in public health.

That degree was concentrated in health promotion, which is health education and health program planning. After graduating, I worked as a university health educator; this job taught me much, but it had middling fulfillment. The work was not challenging and it did not involve my long-held interests in human behavior, design, and the hard sciences. When considering a terminal degree, I needed a challenging area; health education is not easy-peasy, but it is definitely not on the same level as the biology, chemistry, and physics courses I took in college, either. I also needed a field that would maximize my personal strengths of being risk-averse and detail-oriented. After a superabundance of introspection and research, I learned more about the field of occupational health, and it clicked – this is the field that meets everything I want to do. Years of strategic wandering finally led me to the best career niche for me. This is the field where I want to spend my life protecting others' health and well-being.

Even though I researched this field beforehand, it still surprises me during my studies. My biggest opinion change is this: Despite its focus on technical aspects of safety, this field is very people-focused, and my background in Health Promotion will be useful here.



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The field of Health Promotion focuses so much on people and community. Health Promotion students talk about working for non-profits and they want a job where health is the main product. However, occupational health and safety is so different. We talk about workers in class, but the people-focus is much smaller compared to Health Promotion. Students talk about working for Boeing or Exxon. This was quite the paradigm shift for me. I started to think that people-focus was not as important in this field, but after a few classes, I saw that the focus was still there. Even though we focus on technical aspects, we do discuss the importance of communication and understanding the perspective of workers. It shows me that the focus on community and people – the desire to value, learn from, work with, and serve others to improve their health – is still present. We may not focus on it like in Health Promotion, but I have realized this is an area where I can merge my previous studies with my current ones. By highly valuing people and the community of workers, I can merge my technical knowledge with a deep respect for people connections, helping me to effect changes and protect health as a safety professional.

What are some of your educational and professional goals, and how do you plan on achieving them?

My educational and professional goals center around mentoring others; developing an effective, supportive work environment; and staying on the cutting edge of my field.

I have benefited immensely from the mentors and advisors in my life. As a Health Educator, the supervisors in my office had a strong focus on personal and professional development; during my time at that office, I grew from a new graduate to a confident educator. As a future leader, I want to encourage that same kind of growth in the people around me. Through my experiences at the School of Public Health, my summer internship, and work I volunteer with, I am learning how to improve interpersonal communication, foster relationships, and create growth opportunities for others. Now and in the future, I want to leave people better than when I found them – both for their sake and the sake of the people we serve. My go-to form of learning is books and webinars, but for this, I will find a mentor to learn from as well.

I also want to be a leader who creates an effective, supportive workplace for others. As a Health Educator, I worked with a strong team in a very supportive office. I realized that it was the norms, culture, and attitude that our office director perpetuated that helped to make the office what it was - a supportive environment where our team could





grow professionally and personally, do our best work, and create the strongest impacts for our students. This environment improved our work and personal life by creating a growth-centered office to work in, and it impacted students' health by allowing us to do our jobs well. That kind of workplace does not happen by accident. Between her strong understanding of health promotion and her abilities to cultivate a strong office culture, our director had a key role in making it possible. In the future, I want to do the same. Other than learning from my work experience, I plan on achieving this through learning opportunities from professional organizations (like ASSP), continuing education trainings, and my own personal learning (like reading the best books on leadership and communication).

Finally, once I receive my DrPH degree, my degree goals will be fulfilled, but I will never stop learning. I love to collect and apply information. Whatever safety niche I settle into, I am going to learn everything I can about it. Webinars, trainings, information from professional organizations, magazine articles, videos, talking to other safety professionals – I will take information wherever I can to become extremely knowledgeable. Part of this comes from my innate desire to constantly consume information, but part of this is because I know the responsibility that comes with any health field job. A safety professional's knowledge can make or break someone else's health and well-being. I owe it to the people I will be working with to be the best safety professional possible.

What leadership and/or volunteer roles have you taken within the safety profession, and what positions do you envision yourself taking in the future?

I am currently serving as a committee-member in the Applied Ergonomics Conference's Student Skills Workshop Committee. Our three-person team is planning a one-day student workshop event, and I am helping as we wade through logistics (like choosing the most relevant topics for breakout sessions and finding effective speakers). My perspective as a student and educator helped us to pick topics that will be relevant to students, and my art background helped us to develop a flyer for the event. It is a small role, but it has felt very validating. Coming from the Health Promotion field, it is easy for me to feel like I do not fully "belong" here yet, but this role has shown me that taking up roles and being a part of this field is possible, even if it is small at first. I look forward to doing more in the future and taking on greater responsibility. I used to be a leader in the health education field; now, I will become a leader in the safety field.





In the future, I want to take part in volunteer positions that involve mentoring and teaching. I have benefited so much from people who have taken time to mentor and educate me. I want to be that person for others. With social distancing this year amidst the pandemic, it has been hard to reach out to others, but it has still been possible in different ways. In my job as a teaching assistant, I am able to speak with undergraduate students who are applying to the master's program. I have been able to speak with them about their goals and current studies, encouraging them and giving pointers that helped me a long time ago. It is a small start, but having this role as a graduate-level teaching assistant has put me in a position where others come to me for help, and I can practice using my experience, empathy, and desire to grow others in order to help them.

Additionally, I want to pursue roles where I can teach others. As a student, I have not been able to do this in the safety field yet, but I am doing it with public health. In the Interprofessional Relationship Outreach Network student organization, where I serve as Secretary-Treasurer, I am working with another member to plan the February meeting where Public Health representatives will speak to the club about how the field can work inter-professionally with the other health professions. Even in this role, I am able to step into the education arena and help my fellow-students to grow in their interprofessional knowledge, better equipping them to succeed as professionals in the future. Besides this, I volunteer at my university as a violence prevention educator, giving trainings to students each semester. I know that all of this experience, alongside my previous job as an educator, will prepare me to do teaching as a safety professional one day.

What is your greatest takeaway from the current school year? How do you think this knowledge will impact yourself and others throughout your career?

If this dumpster fire of a year has taught me anything, it is this: people are often going through more than you know in their lives, and you need to be intentional about building relationships so you can support them. This semester, I have seen classmates grieve lost grandparents, lost jobs, and lost senses of security. I have responded to frantic text messages from broken friends before seeing them in virtual classes, pretending to look fine and be normal. As I support my exhausted classmates, I am reminded that this pandemic will end one day, but the necessity of remembering people's experiences will not. In the future, I will be intentional about forming strong relationships with people so I can learn about these experiences, and I will need to have understanding for the experiences I do not learn about.





Remembering that people have hidden struggles in their life may seem like a simple takeaway, but it can be easily forgotten in the hustle and bustle of pressing deadlines and other priorities at work. In the midst of these things, I never want to forget that my workplace is made up of people, and those people exist within contexts outside of work. Their family structures, self-pride, physical health, mental health, home life, and extra-curricular roles can all play a part in their behavior and perspective. I have seen this at my old job where I realized too late that I could have better supported a co-worker.

I had a co-worker who never seemed confident; when she tried to act “in charge,” it never came easily and she had a hard time speaking up. One day, she mentioned that she struggled with anxiety and saw a therapist. In that moment, it all “clicked.” If I had made the effort to get to know her as something more than just my co-worker, I might have learned that sooner. Even if I had not, I knew that she did not seem confident, and I could have surmised that she would have benefited from more encouragement and validation from her co-workers. Unfortunately, by the time I learned about her mental health struggle, I was already leaving that job. I wish I had done more to bolster her confidence and help her to grow as a self-assured health educator.

In the future, I will be more intentional about building relationships with others and remembering that the people I work with have many unseen factors below the surface. They have contexts outside of their titles that affect the behaviors and responses I will see from them. This mindset will help me to be more intentional about how I respond to people’s behavior in the short- and long-run. Through this, I hope to develop communication skills and understanding to work with each person as a true individual, better able to support and build them up. This will help create a positive work environment where each person can reach their potential and do their best work.



June 6th, 2021

Dear ASSP Foundation Donors,

My name is Kaysey Aguilar; I am a third-year doctoral student from Texas A&M University. I have spent the past ten years pursuing a career in the health field. From my undergraduate degree in Biology to my master's in public health to the doctoral degree I am completing now in occupational health and safety, my goal has always been the wellbeing of others. It has been a long road, but as I look back on it, I am keenly aware that I never walked it alone. An education requires time, advice, effort, finances, and encouragement. So many people have shown up in my life to help bolster these things. Thank you for being one of them!

In public health, we talk about how our work has far-reaching effects – we will never truly know how much good we caused because of our work in prevention. In the same way, I am not sure you will ever know how much good you have done through supporting students like myself. Through this scholarship, you have helped me and everyone I plan to protect and teach in the future.

As I finish my last year in this program, your support will help me to finish strong without having to worry about finances (which is a huge blessing!). Thank you again for your generosity and support. Thank you for helping me to finish my education so I can move forward and achieve my long-held goal of serving others.

Sincerely,

Kaysey Aguilar

Kaysey Aguilar, MPH, CHES | Doctoral Student

School of Public Health | Texas A&M University

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ASSP Foundation Texas Safety Foundation John Hodges HSE Memorial Scholarship

Allison Donovan

Texas A&M University
Graduate Program: Occupational Safety
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What attracted you to the safety industry and how has your education affected your opinion of the field?

Health science and Environmental science have always been topics of great interest to me, even dating back to middle school where I was enrolled in a science magnet program. I have continually looked for ways in which to employ these interests throughout my life, and when I transferred into the Bioenvironmental Sciences program in the Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology at Texas A&M, my eyes were opened to the possibilities of combining these topics. I have a deep interest in environmental studies and how they translate to and affect large-scale health and the wellbeing of human society as a whole. To help stimulate that interest, I chose to include a Minor in Public Health in my studies during my time as an undergraduate-level student. Through my educational experiences, I decided that continuing my studies by pursuing a Master of Public Health would allow me to expand my knowledge in subjects of my interests.

My choice in the Occupational Safety and Health Program was also influenced strongly by my experiences outside of the classroom. In the summer between the third and fourth year of my undergraduate degree, I was able to participate in an internship program in the safety department at S&B Engineers and Constructors in Houston, Texas. While there, I was exposed to a wide variety of real-world applications of environmental and safety principles. My work over the course of the summer was primarily related to the development of Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans, Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plans, and measures taken in the removal of various wastes for several fractionation plant construction projects. During my time there, I was also allowed to witness the implementation of various safety and training protocols, as well as accident investigation practices. These experiences instilled in me



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a belief in the importance of ensuring safety in the workplace, and ultimately led me to the decision of pursuing a master's degree in Occupational Safety and Health.

What are some of your educational and professional goals, and how do you plan on achieving them?

My overall goal is to be in a position where the prevention of occupational health and safety hazards is a primary focus. An example of this moving into a role in Industrial Hygiene, where I would be able to promote a safe workplace for both employees and promote the health of the environment. I believe wholeheartedly that the appropriate application of safety practices and procedures can both have a positive impact on a company's margins, but also play a vital role in ensuring that employees can return safely home to their families and can continue providing for them. My plans include becoming a Certified Safety Professional (CSP) or a Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH) to further my depth of understanding in the field and to become a voice of authority on proper safety practices.

With this position, one thing that I plan to do is promote awareness of the importance and desirability of the profession. Until I became aware of the internship opportunity that I received at S&B Engineers and Constructors, I did not understand the scope or importance of safety professionals within the workplace environment, and I believe that student and community outreach could be a benefit to those in similar situations or with similar interests to me. I also plan to lead by example in promoting the continuation of women's entry into a number of STEM fields. In my time as an intern at Marathon Petroleum, only three of the twenty-six interns were women, and I believe that if more women believed that there weren't any barriers to them taking on these roles, those numbers may have ended up completely different.

What leadership and/or volunteer roles have you taken within the safety profession, and what positions do you envision yourself taking in the future?

This year I was nominated and elected by the previous leaders of the Texas A&M ASSP Student Section Chapter as the new president for the Fall 2020-Spring 2021 academic year. During my time in this role, I have had the opportunity to work on various projects with my fellow ASSP officers, university faculty, and many professionals in the industry. My tasks began with the recruitment of new members at various conferences and events and continued into the semester with the organization of chapter meetings, recruitment of industry professionals to speak at meetings, and



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industry outreach through participation in ASSP Central Texas chapter meetings. My fellow officers and I are also working on a project to help understand the effect that COVID-19 has had on students in greater detail with hopes of developing improved accommodations for both the classroom and extracurricular events.

In the future, I plan to be an active member as an industry professional. Members of the ASSP Central Texas Chapter have been extremely helpful in providing insight and advice for both academic and professional purposes. I have had many of my own questions answered personally and wish to provide the same level of time and support that I have received for future students.

What is your greatest takeaway from the current school year? How do you think this knowledge will impact yourself and others throughout your career?

My greatest takeaway from the current school year is the necessity of adaptability. There has been and still is quite a bit of uncertainty which has increased the importance of being flexible. I was also provided the opportunity to be a teaching assistant this year which allowed me to better understand the teaching and developmental side of academics. The transition to remote learning has not been an easy one for students or faculty, and yet I was still able to develop valuable knowledge in important subjects, including Industrial Hygiene, Ergonomics, and Industrial and Systems Safety. This commitment to adaptability has taught me valuable lessons that I will take into my career as a safety professional. I believe this quality is useful as industries and technologies are advancing at a rapid pace and being able to understand new risks and make adjustments to mitigate them is increasingly important.



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June 3, 2021

ASSP Foundation Donors,

I was very humbled and honored to learn that I had been selected as a recipient of the Texas Safety Foundation John Hodges HSE Memorial Scholarship, and am writing you to express my gratitude for the generous financial support to aid in completing my education at the Masters level.

After completing my undergraduate education in Environmental Science in May 2019, I decided to continue my education to pursue a Master's degree in Occupational Health and Safety. I hope to excel in a career in this field using both my undergraduate degree and the knowledge I have gained in the Master's Program. I first gained an interest in this field through an internship experience which has driven my passion to pursue a career and make a difference in safety.

This scholarship has aided me in completing my education. Your generosity makes an impact on the attainability of my goals, and I'd like to thank you wholeheartedly. I hope to be in a position in the future to provide aid to students in the way you have for me.

Thank you,

Allison Donovan

Texas A&M University



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ASSP Foundation Texas Safety Foundation John Hodges HSE Memorial Scholarship

Lindsey Wooley

Montana Technological University
Undergraduate Program: Occupational Health and Safety
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What attracted you to the safety industry and how has your education affected your opinion of the field?

My father graduated from Montana Tech with an Occupational Safety and Health degree and then he entered the workforce. Growing up I have seen my father grow as a safety professional and advance in his career. Not only was he working 12-hour days, but he was raising 4 daughters in the process. He is a very genuine man, who cares a great deal about the people that surround him. I have always looked up to him as a person and I strive to be half as great of a person as he is. Right about now, you are reading this and wondering why I would talk about my father in a short answer that should be about me. Telling you about my father is safety and health to me. I have been taught safety and health from my father, not just through his experiences as a professional, but by who he is as a person. Safety and health professionals should be there to lead by example, respect people, to be understanding, have strong ethics, but most importantly to care not just the job but the people. I went into safety and health, not just because of my father, but because I am passionate about these attributes that safety and health professionals stand for. Seeing my father growing up is what guided me to this field. Once I started my classes, I grew a new understanding for this profession. My classes taught me knowledge to aid in the prevention of accidents in the workplace. My education teaches me not only about the profession, but the kind of professional I can become to help people in many different industries.



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What are some of your educational and professional goals, and how do you plan on achieving them?

Starting with educational goals, I plan to finish strong with my senior year. I anticipate graduating in the fall of 2021 with my bachelor's degree in Occupational Safety and Health from Montana Technological University. Though I will graduate with my bachelor's degree, I have been accepted into the Industrial Hygiene master's program at Montana Tech. Upon graduating, I will become a full-time graduate student continuing my education in a safety and health related field. I originally made this decision upon taking an industrial hygiene internship with an underground mining company. I realized how much my work can have a true impact on people and their health within the workplace. This realization grew my passion for not only industrial hygiene but with safety and health. My long-term goal is to face industry and to be a leader within the field of safety, health, and industrial hygiene, but for now my goal lies with school. School is my main focus right now, as it should be. Last semester I made the initiative to come back to campus and take on 19 credits, which I am very proud of the hard work that I put into it. Overall, I received a 3.81 GPA that I had to work very hard for. This next semester, I will take 20 credits and my goal is to maintain a GPA that represents the work I put into it. Outside of just my classes, I continue to be an officer and an active member within the ASSP student chapter.

Upon graduating, my educational goals will shift to focus on my professional goals. Throughout my past two summer internships, I have learned the importance of safety and health within a working environment. Safety and health are a foundation for both of these companies as it should be for any company. As a professional, my goal is to put the safety and health of everyone first. In school we learn about identifying hazards and understanding the hazards within any work setting. My education builds the foundation for me to be a professional that can aid in the identification of hazards in the workplace in attempt to prevent workplace accidents. To achieve this goal, I will utilize the resources that have built my foundation to do the best job I possibly can as a professional in this industry.

What leadership and/or volunteer roles have you taken within the safety profession, and what positions do you envision yourself taking in the future?

I joined the Montana Tech American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) student chapter in the spring of 2019. Not long after, I was elected Secretary from 2019 to





2020, then Vice President of the student chapter for 2020 to 2021. This club provides opportunities for me to learn about various aspects of the safety field and to get to know professionals in the field as well as learning to be a leader within my career. I have had many opportunities being an officer in this club including volunteer community activities, technical meetings with many safety professionals, and multiple leadership conferences. Though this year has been more difficult than last year with COVID-19, we have adapted to the change and have still organized student meetings, technical events, and fundraisers. Being active in ASSP has granted me the chance to be involved with not just fellow students, but to gain knowledge through many professionals who are working in the field.

Through these two officer positions, I was able to attend two ASSP leadership conferences that have educated me on advancing my leadership skills as an incoming professional. Being a leader in this industry is critical and these positions have guided me towards a stronger understanding of what may come in my future. Safety professionals are leaders in all industries to support people in being safe while performing their daily tasks. In my future career, I do not know where I will end up yet. Though I do not know where I will end up, I do know that I strive to be a leader. I will strive to lead the company I work for in safety. I want each and every individual to go home safely at the end of the day.

What is your greatest takeaway from the current school year? How do you think this knowledge will impact yourself and others throughout your career?

This current school year has been unbalanced for everyone around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed and challenged many people's lives. As students, our lives have also been impacted significantly this year. This year has been a year that I will look back on and tell my kids about what it was like to be a student in the year of 2020 and it started in March. In the month of March, COVID-19 struck Butte, Montana where I attend school. The student body went on spring break, and we didn't come back until the fall semester of 2021. Finishing the spring semester was a huge adjustment for all of the students and faculty. All classes were converted to online and everything turned to chaos. This chaos feeling did not let up and it continued through my summer internship, then followed into fall semester of 2020. This past semester, we did come back to campus, but everything was different. Communication, class layouts, interactions with professors and students was adjusted, and our classes overall were different. Yes, I have learned a lot in classes about safety and health, but this pandemic





has been one of my greatest takeaways from the current school year. Adaptation, motivation, perseverance, and finding success are all great takeaways that have come from this year. As a student I had to learn to adapt to the quick change we had in school. Montana Tech is a very interactive college, resulting in a lot of interaction within the classroom and labs. It was a difficult transition to adjust my mindset for online classes. I went back to my parent's house where I was struggling to find the motivation to learn a strenuous amount of material from a computer screen. One of my classes was anatomy lab, and it became significantly more difficult to learn the material. I had to train myself to be motivated and to manage my time to succeed. Though these times were difficult, I had to persevere past it in order to find success. Time management was a key to my success in finishing out the past semester. Each and every one of these skills transitioned into the fall semester. I learned to adapt to the many changes and find success by utilizing my time. The workload this past semester was one of the heavier workloads I have had to date in college, yet I had the best semester grade point average in my college career.

I learned that though times are not always easy that I am capable. I will carry these skills with me for the rest of my professional career. This year has been difficult for everyone to adjust their lives to, but I have learned through it all that it is possible. As I proceed to my career, I hope that my mentality on difficult times can impact others around me. My goal is to help others around me as a professional in the safety and health industry.



Lindsey Wooley

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June 7, 2021

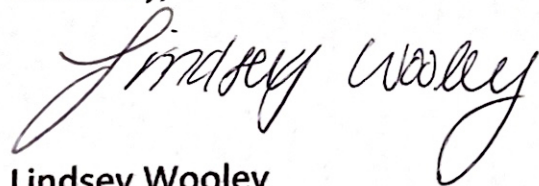
Dear ASSP Foundation Donors,

My name is Lindsey Wooley, and I am honored to be the recipient of the ASSP Foundation Texas Safety Foundation John Hodges HSE Memorial Scholarship. I want to formally thank you for generously funding this scholarship. I am currently a student enrolled in the Occupational Safety and Health program at Montana Tech located in Butte, Montana.

My father earned his degree in Occupational Safety and Health from Montana Tech, which is how I got introduced to Safety and Health as a career. As I proceeded my college career, I began looking into Occupational Safety and Health upon having many conversations with my father about his career. I took an interest in many aspects of the safety and health career path and I decided to pursue this path. I joined the American Society of Safety Professionals student chapter at Montana Tech where I was elected as the student chapter Secretary from 2019 to 2020, Vice President of the student chapter for the year of 2020 to 2021, and recently got elected as the President for this upcoming school year of 2021-2022. This chapter provides opportunities for me to learn about various aspects of the safety field and to get to know various professionals as well as learning to be a leader in this profession. I have had two previous summer internships for safety and health, and this summer I have an internship at the Idaho National Lab. I have enjoyed my time expanding my knowledge from school in a real-world setting while learning from many experienced safety professionals in various industries.

I value my education and I am very grateful to be receiving a degree in Occupational Safety and Health. The ASSP Foundation Texas Safety Foundation John Hodges HSE Memorial scholarship will be incredibly helpful in support of my education. I am very grateful to receive this scholarship. I will continue to work hard to maintain my good standing as a student. Again, thank you so much for your contribution to my education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lindsey Wooley". The signature is fluid and matches the printed name below it.

Lindsey Wooley



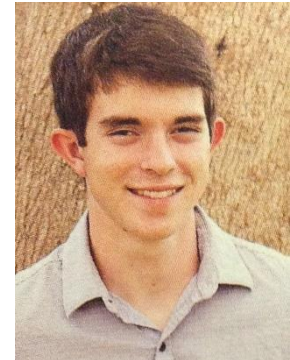
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ASSP Foundation Texas Safety Foundation Steve Halliburton HSE Scholarship

Austin Akin

Texas A&M University
Graduate Program: Occupational Health and Safety
austin_akin@tamu.edu



What attracted you to the safety industry and how has your education affected your opinion of the field?

My hometown exists along the edge of the Eagle Ford Shale. When the last “boom” came around, many (including my father) found themselves swept into the oilfield. Over the years, I have seen and heard many accounts regarding the dangers of this vocation, which occur through both workplace accidents and chronic exposure. I learned that traditionally, a health, safety, & environment (HSE) specialist bears responsibility in reducing these negative factors. Individuals who serve this function often go unnoticed, yet continually act to keep workers (including my father) out of harm’s way. Addressing morbidity and mortality in this manner represents exactly the role which I wish to fulfill professionally, and my motivation for joining the safety field. This fall marked my first semester as part of the Master of Public Health degree program in Occupational Safety & Health at Texas A&M. As a student in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, I learned that our practice addresses exposures to pollutants, detrimental materials, and hazardous situations in the workplace, home, and surrounding environment. Further, occupational safety and health represents a crucial subset of this discipline, serving to identify, evaluate, mitigate, and eliminate dangers prior to incidents with health ramifications. This domain exists in roles across all vocational sectors, as every industry requires an emphasis on safety to preserve employee well-being. Thus, occupational safety and health embodies a foundational principle of modern public health: the continual maintenance of society’s ability to pursue life goals with limited health risk.

My education has further affected my view of this line of work through introducing me to the lesser-known aspects of a “typical” position. For example, one would expect my occupational safety course to cover such topics as OSHA regulations, HAZCOM/GHS,



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personal protective equipment (PPE), and lockout-tagout (LOTO) procedures; indeed, we had lectures dedicated to these subjects. However, we also discussed critical themes like ethics in safety, the impact of leadership styles, and coordination for the effective implementation of both leading and lagging indicators. Through emphasizing these concepts, my instructor conveyed the gravity of interaction with others in occupational health. This serves as a prime illustration of how my graduate studies can better equip me to take initiative in addressing public health issues. Such enablement will prove crucial in my pursuit of achieving a beneficial impact on the well-being of surrounding populations.

Those dedicated to the safety field aim to intervene for the protection and promotion of physical and emotional prosperity. Our measures work to prevent illness and injury in the environments where people live and work. My commitment to pursuing a master's degree in this area of study can be attributed to a respect and gratitude for the overlooked everyday efforts of HSE specialists and other occupational health professionals. Without such acts, our society would surely be unduly burdened by additional hardships. Through devoting myself to attaining the significant level of professional readiness required for this vocational arena, I can ultimately help to continue producing positive paradigm shifts for the realization of workplace safety.

What are some of your educational and professional goals, and how do you plan on achieving them?

Like most people, my primary career objective has been to acquire an employment opportunity that provides for well-being. Through these years of study, my efforts have always worked towards realizing this ambition (along with my other professional goals). My university's EOH department has often been associated with prime occupational prospects. With alumni of my concentration often finding employment within top companies, the coursework of this program undoubtedly prepares students for a future beyond the diploma. An education with such proven success appeals to me greatly, as I value vocational security.

Accomplishment in school aids in accomplishment beyond school. Thus, I strive every semester to earn a perfect grade point average, as I have since my freshman year. Success through this MPH program should lead to enriching, stable employment. Most importantly, I trust I will be a more refined professional and in an optimal position to achieve my additional goals in mitigating occupational hazards. I will have a greater





capacity to prevent and protect from health risks in the operational realm, allowing for an environment of limited danger in which individuals can fulfill their objectives. Of course, the enablement of my growth as a public health leader does not solely entail dedication to studies; I must also capitalize on other developmental resources. Beyond an integrated curriculum, the departmental elements of trademark networking opportunities and an engaging practicum experience should add greatly to my capabilities in benefiting the health of others.

In fulfilling my vocational aspirations, I seek a role with duties that entail direct interaction with the individuals and environments of safety concern. I believe this allows for both parties to achieve a more authentic understanding and prioritization of health risks/interests and related countermeasures. Consider this global pandemic, which has led certain workers to decry the perceived discrepancies between their newly designated PPE/routines and the appropriate level of intervention. Disagreements of this nature could possibly have been better addressed if those prescribing the interventions and the affected workers had more adequately interfaced to share their perspectives.

I feel that a disconnect exists between safety regulations and the attitudes of general employees that can no longer be afforded; the coronavirus has illustrated this cruciality of a more actualized public health. I intend for my career to impact the profession by standardizing an effective relationship between safety specialists and other industry divisions. Many of such current relations feature each party viewing the other as an obstacle. Yet, a collaborative mindset between health experts and “stakeholders” (coworkers) could instead prove conducive to resolving issues and accomplishing project objectives. I aim to institutionalize this notion that safety professionals and other employees should work with, not around, each other, in order to truly obtain optimal security and efficiency. Through making the most of resources like the formal education of my coursework and means of cultivating and exercising relevant skills, I believe I can attain the knowledge and experiential competence required to achieve my goals and fulfill my intended role as a force of public health advancement.

What leadership and/or volunteer roles have you taken within the safety profession, and what positions do you envision yourself taking in the future?

Since this past April, I have served as the secretary of the Texas A&M University ASSP Student Section. This role entails action as the primary line of communication between





members and officers. Such responsibility often takes the form of organizational and university-wide announcements regarding meetings, events, and resources across all levels of ASSP. My public relations capacity also involves promotion of student awareness and access of ASSP offerings (including assistance with membership enrollment processes), as well as correspondence with industry representatives for the provision of guest speakers at student section meetings. Further duties include the development of materials for the facilitation of organizational affairs and the documentation of resulting information.

I first applied for the role of secretary because I saw an opportunity to actively engage in my future vocational realm in a manner which far exceeded the reach of traditional students (and even standard ASSP members). I believed that this opening in the ASSP student officer board represented a significant introductory position within the safety community. In reality, the secretary post has already helped foster the critical skills and leadership capabilities which prove fundamental to success in my eventual field. I feel this experience will continue to aid my personal development into a competent occupational safety and health professional.

This past June, our officer board had the opportunity to present to the ASSP Central Texas Chapter (CTC) on the internships currently being fulfilled by members of our student section. Upon the conclusion of our presentation, we held a Q&A session in which students could inquire of professionals' advice regarding the transition from academia, recommended extracurricular pursuits, and additional words of wisdom. This counsel from safety veterans provided invaluable insight. Similarly, I believe my vocational prowess has frequently been enhanced through the know-how imparted by my chapter's faculty advisor. His expertise, and that of my instructors in general, stands distinctly unequalled by the knowledge found within any textbook. As my peers and I have yet to truly emerge into this line of work — some students first encountered this academic discipline just a few months ago — the benefit of more seasoned individuals' guidance cannot be understated.

Garnering advice from professional ASSP members and professors of practice has undoubtedly had an influence on my perceived leadership path. I envision myself potentially fulfilling a similar position in the future, possibly even as an ASSP CTC officer. Such a capacity would represent a natural extension from my current role as a student section officer, and would allow me to continue playing a part in enhancing the future of the occupational safety and health profession. Further, I would be better





enabled to “pay forward” the instances of mentorship through which I have regularly been advanced, ensuring a maintained cycle of direction for developing members of the field. As the realm of safety strives to adapt proactively to meet the evolution of the world at large, at least one constant remains: the worth of experience. I intend to perpetuate sharing of this priceless understanding.

What is your greatest takeaway from the current school year? How do you think this knowledge will impact yourself and others throughout your career?

As a first-year Master of Public Health student, I have only engaged in one semester’s worth of my occupational safety and health curriculum. In fact, three of my five completed graduate-level classes have pertained to “core” public health studies, which do not directly relate to my field of interest. Thus, only the courses on occupational safety and occupational biomechanics from my current year of schooling have been concentration-specific. These subjects have disclosed a wealth of information which should largely prove crucial in the years to come. However, I feel the most prominent theme from this year has actually been conveyed outside of the classroom.

The global pandemic has inarguably affected nearly every conceivable aspect of daily public life. This includes higher education, as virtual instruction has gone from niche to norm across all universities. Our new normal has required the modification of teaching methods, even for the few classes that still allow for in-person attendance. For example, the labs of my occupational biomechanics course traditionally mandate multiple participants for ergonomic data collection; this could not occur under current physical distancing protocols. Further, collaboration on group projects has been hindered by the logistics of distance learning, as a lack of on-campus obligations have led people to attend virtually from their hometowns. This remote scenario entails solely virtual communication, which can sometimes be conducive to misunderstanding. As both professors and students have navigated this untraditional landscape, one takeaway has prevailed: together, we must find a way to make it all work.

Amid this universal tribulation, stories of triumph can still be found. These range in scope from individual success over coronavirus complications to the achievement of broad population health protection by some nations. For my university, the conclusion of this particular semester presented good reason to celebrate; the academic community had staved off the brunt of the virus’ impact. The majority of students and faculty had retained their health while also fulfilling their scholastic pursuits.





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Accomplishing these feats required a concerted commitment to innovative efforts for issue navigation. I feel that this mindset of shared responsibility for solution identification can aptly translate to industry.

The aforementioned philosophy could be readily implemented into my future work as a safety professional. In this position, I will be tasked with making individual, divisional, and organizational roles align for the realization and preservation of occupational health. In considering how this objective can involve and affect others, I must be capable of actualizing a collective approach and mentality conducive to the realization of both tasks and wellness, regardless of surrounding circumstances. At all levels, there must be a willingness to make adjustments and improvements following the evaluation of less-than-ideal situations. This willingness must be pervasive in order for intended effects to be realized. Knowledge on how this attitude can be widely put into practice represents a foundational takeaway from this year. In utilizing this insight throughout my career, I trust I will greatly impact people through the maintenance of population well-being.



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June 5th, 2021

Dear ASSP Foundation Donors,

My name is Austin Akin. I am an incoming second-year graduate student pursuing a Master of Public Health degree in Occupational Safety & Health at Texas A&M University. I trust this education will help enable my ambitions of promoting and preserving health, providing for beneficial impacts in community well-being. In addressing academia's capacity for individual growth, I must also recognize the cruciality of extracurricular activities. I have personally been able to engage in these avenues through leadership roles in both my employment and student organizations. I have fulfilled supervisor and site manager positions through my work with the Texas A&M University Department of Recreational Sports. Regarding organizations, I have most recently served as secretary of my university's ASSP student section — I will maintain these officer duties through the remainder of my graduate schooling.

My ASSP secretary post has aided in fostering the critical skills and leadership capabilities which prove fundamental to success in my eventual field. This experience will undoubtedly continue to further my progression into a competent safety professional. Indeed, my ASSP tenure has been a prime introduction to my future vocational realm, and a significant supplement to my coursework and practicum. These developmental opportunities, coupled with the generous bestowment of awards such as this academic scholarship, represent a cherished investment that will pay dividends through my professional efforts for public betterment. I am so grateful for your selfless support, which shall certainly be influential in countering the financial burden of higher education. As a recipient of this donation, I have been entrusted with an elevated potential for contribution as a member of the safety community; I hope my career can reflect your own dedication to this line of work. Thank you for this truly altruistic honor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Austin Akin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "A" and "K".

Austin J. Akin