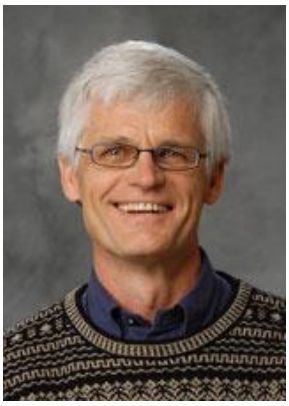
Northwest Center for Occupational Health & Safety

Alumni Profiles

Stephen Hunt, 2005 – MPH Environmental & Occupational Medicine

National Director, VA Post-Deployment Integrated Care Initiative, VA Puget Sound Health Care Systems



Troops in Iraq and Afghanistan survive with more severe wounds than those from previous wars because of advances in body armor, field hospitals, and evacuation flights. However, these successes yield a growing population of severely wounded veterans who will need a lifetime of care.

Stephen Hunt directs a multidisciplinary post-combat assessment and follow-up clinic for returning veterans in the Puget Sound area. He also co-chairs the national Technical Assistance Team, providing leadership for a national Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) initiative for establishing similar integrated post-combat care clinics nationwide.

"I feel very fortunate to be involved with the incredibly meaningful, challenging, and rewarding work of providing health care and other support services for combat veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan," he says.

When he entered our Master of Public Health (MPH) program, he was a physician working with combat veterans at the VA, and he completed his Occupational and Environmental fellowship and MPH training on the job.

He says the Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OEM) program enhanced his clinical work, expanded his research capabilities, opened up additional teaching and training opportunities, and contributed to his professional development in innumerable other ways.

He applies the principles of occupational and environmental medicine, and preventive health care daily in his clinical care of veterans who have suffered the traumas of war and combat. These principles also guide his development of programs for comprehensive post-combat services.

Hunt particularly admires the interdisciplinary nature of the OEM program. He remains involved with the program as a clinical assistant professor of Medicine.

He hopes current students consider the rewards of working with veterans. The VA health care system has a wide variety of opportunities for health professionals in all fields. "There is a place for all disciplines, including clinical, research, educational, administrative, and policy making in the VA," he says.

(*Profile originally published in 2005-2007 Biennial Report, updated 2011)*

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Northwest Center for Occupational Health & Safety

Alumni Profiles

Katia Harb, 2002 – MS, Environmental Health, Industrial Hygiene

Industrial Hygienist, Indoor Air and Environmental Services

Describe your job:

I work as an Industrial Hygienist for a Seattle based industrial hygiene consulting firm. The bulk of my work involves indoor air quality (IAQ) and mold assessments. This includes diagnostic evaluations of ventilation systems, sampling for chemical and biological contaminants, communicating with concerned building occupants, providing recommendations to improve and maintain acceptable air quality, and writing mold remediation protocols.

I also assist companies with Washington Industrial Safety and Health Administration (WISHA) compliance by developing health and safety programs, conducting exposure assessments to chemicals, performing job hazard analyses, and training employees.

What do you find interesting or exciting about your job?

Each project is unique and challenging and I have the opportunity to work with people from a variety of backgrounds. IAQ assessments are challenging because of the many issues that may be involved with IAQ concerns. These issues include engineering and maintenance of ventilation systems, airborne contaminants, existing medical conditions, and human factors. I always find Industrial processes fascinating. I enjoy learning processes from beginning to end and finding ways to make them safer and more efficient.

Describe the path you took from UW to your present job:

I entered the undergraduate program with plans to continue on to the Industrial Hygiene graduate program. Four internships helped me gain experience and introduced me to many professionals in the field. Before I graduated in August 2002, I chose to work with IAES, a company where I worked as an intern, to gain additional experience with indoor air quality and mold.

How did your experience at UW DEH help prepare you for this position?

The coursework provided the technical background that is essential and the internships provided practical experience needed to apply the science to real life situations. The group projects and presentations were important in helping me communicate technical information to a variety of audiences. The skills I learned in the undergraduate technical writing course were invaluable for report writing and developing educational brochures. More than 50% of my time is spent writing reports.

What was the most valuable thing you learned at DEH?

Communicating environmental health issues to the general public.

What advice would you have for students currently enrolled at DEH?

The field of environmental health is very broad. To find the path that is best for you, talk to professionals in the field, get involved with professional organizations, work as a research assistant, and complete an internship.

(*Profile originally published in 2006 on website)*

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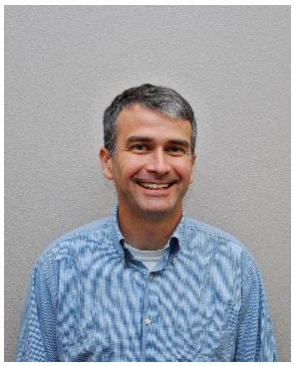
Northwest Center for Occupational Health & Safety

Alumni Profiles

Dave Bonauto, 2000 – MPH Occupational & Environmental Medicine

Occupational Health Physician, Washington State Department of Labor & Industries



Almost every week, David Bonauto drives more than 120 miles round trip to treat injured workers at the Harborview Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OEM) Clinic in Seattle. He considers his clinical work important to his full-time job in Olympia as associate medical director in the Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention (SHARP) Program. SHARP, which receives federal funding to track occupational illnesses and diseases, offers evidence-based information about workplace health and safety prevention strategies to employers and workers in Washington state.

"We're a research program," Bonauto explains. "Part of our efforts is to create new knowledge, to try to identify areas where more information about occupational safety and health is needed, to focus our research on industries at highest risk for occupational injury and illness, and to be innovative in our approaches to getting the word out about occupational safety and health." SHARP's data and analyses create an important knowledge base for policy decisions made by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I). L&I works to protect the safety, health, and security of Washington's workers and manages the workers' compensation system.

Bonauto received his undergraduate degree from Bowdoin College in 1987, and took a job at the General Electric Corporation, where he worked on new compounds and filed seven US patents in two years. He earned his MD degree at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1993, then trained in Internal Medicine at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, and received his board certification in 1996.

He later moved to Washington state and took a position in a Bremerton hospital, where he saw patients who suffered from lung diseases, potentially linked to their work in naval shipyards. His interest in work hazards led him to enroll in our department's Occupational and Environmental Medicine program, where he received his MPH in 2000. He accepted a position with SHARP soon after and has been there ever since.

Among other primary responsibilities, Bonauto conducts long-term studies to determine the relationships between workplace exposures and injuries and illnesses.

As an attending provider at the OEM Clinic, Bonauto says his work allows him to understand "the dynamics of being injured, how workers relate to their employers, the workers' compensation system, and difficulties in going back to work." Workers may fear being injured again, and the job may not be able to accommodate the limitations created by the worker's injuries, explains Bonauto. At the clinic, he also experiences first-hand how the workers' compensation system functions.

"Relative to a lot of other systems," he says, "it's pretty impressive in its efforts to protect and take care of injured workers and be efficient in claims."

While his job is one of a kind, he is optimistic that DEOHS graduates will find rewarding opportunities in government work. The program at the UW, says Bonauto, is looked on favorably, and he says graduates he has worked with "do high-quality work."

Bonauto is a clinical assistant professor in our department and in the Department of Medicine.

(Profile originally published in 2007-2009 Biennial Report)

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Northwest Center for Occupational Health & Safety

Alumni Profiles

Michael Box, 2000 – MS Industrial Hygiene & Safety

Public Health Service Officer, US Coast Guard

Michael Box finished his undergraduate degree and enrolled in the department's master's program in Industrial Hygiene and Safety. He did his graduate thesis on air pollution, specifically the exposure to particulate air pollution by older adults with heart and lung diseases.

The US Coast Guard has 42 units providing search and rescue, law enforcement, and environmental protection services in Northern California. All involve potentially hazardous work. Lieutenant Michael Box, an alumnus of our undergraduate and master's programs, is responsible for the health and safety of more than 3,000 Coast Guard personnel in that region. He is based in the only remaining military treatment clinic in the greater San Francisco Bay area.

As a Safety and Environmental Health Officer, he supervises, plans, budgets, and implements an environmental health, safety, and industrial hygiene program. While at the University of Washington (UW), Box spent two summer internships with the Indian Health Service and one with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). After graduating, he became an officer in the US Public Health Service, detached to the Coast Guard in Alameda, California. He is part of a team that provides environmental health, industrial hygiene, safety, and ergonomics services for Coast Guard personnel and units.

One of his assignments was to find better ways for the crews of 47-foot motor lifeboats and helicopters to communicate with each other during noisy rescue operations. His work led to recommendations for improved communications gear and hearing protection, which are currently being field tested.

Anyone who has been to Northern California's coast is familiar with foghorns. That romantic sound, however, can be hazardous to the lookouts on Coast Guard cutters. Box researched and implemented communication headsets that permit the lookouts to hear distant signals, communicate with the bridge, and benefit from hearing protection. On another project, he evaluated asbestos exposures during brake removal, cleaning, and inspection, which led to an improvement in standard operating procedures for mechanics. In addition to occupational health, he confronts environmental health problems, such as resolving a recurring indoor air quality problem caused by groundwater intrusion at a housing unit.

Box loves the variety of his work and says he never has a boring day. He is involved in many areas of environmental health, safety, industrial hygiene, and ergonomics. Many of his assignments take him into the field.

He appreciates the fieldwork opportunities he had at the UW. He worked with Associate Professor Sally Liu on research involving particulate air pollution and older adults with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Box encourages departmental graduates to think about careers in the Public Health Service. Its environmental health officers work in the Indian Health Service, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, NIOSH, the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Bureau of Prisons, the National Park Service, the National Institutes of Health, and the Coast Guard.

(*Profile originally published in 2001-2003 Biennial Report)*

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Northwest Center for Occupational Health & Safety

Alumni Profiles

Guy Silvey, 1994 – MS Industrial Hygiene & Safety

Director of Safety & Health, Western US, Turner Construction

Turner Construction's slogan is: "Every worker goes home from each of our jobs, every day." In the western United States, it's Guy Silvey's job to make sure those workers go home healthy. Silvey oversees all of Turner's environmental health and safety activities in the region. His wide-ranging scope includes employee and subcontractor safety, compliance with codes and regulations, industrial hygiene, fire protection, workers' compensation, environmental compliance, and loss control/risk management.

From an office in Portland, he directly manages safety directors in eight business units and oversees a professional safety organization of 50 managers. His job involves "solving a different problem every day." This includes providing leadership in health and safety in "a field that traditionally does not support this type of culture."

Before coming to Turner in 2003, Silvey worked for the computer chip manufacturer, Intel, starting in environmental health and moving into regulatory management. His first job after graduating was with the University of Washington Environmental Safety and Health department as a hazardous waste technologist. He was previously an environmental support technician with the Air Force.
The UW industrial hygiene graduate program appealed to him because of its emphasis on field-based research. He said this "allows students to get real-time experience outside the typical university environment." His thesis adviser was Dave Kalman.

He said the most important thing he learned in his undergraduate and graduate programs was that "communication between different parties is key to driving change in any organization."

He encourages current students to seek opportunities for "real-life" experience, including field trips, research studies, and internships. Instead of becoming narrow specialists, he encourages them to embrace the entire field, as "true EH&S professionals are educated in all aspects of the field, including industrial hygiene, safety, ergonomics, and toxicology."

Job opportunities are "wide open" in construction safety and health, he said. The emphasis has shifted from injury prevention to a broader concern for occupational health and prevention of exposures such as lead, silica, and noise.

(*Profile originally published in 2003-2005)*

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Northwest Center for Occupational Health & Safety

Alumni Profiles

Cynthia Rogers, 1992 – MS Industrial Hygiene & Safety

Health, Environmental & Safety Advisor, Chevron Global Upstream

The rate of occupational injuries and illnesses is about five times higher in the oil and gas sectors than in private industry as a whole. Cynthia Rogers is part of an occupational health team that is trying to reduce that injury toll.

Her job is to develop standardized processes for workplace health and safety and to help implement them in Chevron's global upstream strategic business units. "Upstream" refers to exploration and drilling, rather than refining and delivery. Chevron is the world's fifth largest global energy company, created by the merger of Chevron and Texaco.

Houston-based Rogers leads several teams that develop Chevron's standards for corporate occupational hygiene and fitness for duty. She provides advice, interprets standard processes, and leads workshops for the strategic business units.

She also mentors new hires and interns and plans to recruit on the UW campus each fall. The oil industry hasn't been hiring for about 20 years, she says, but expected retirements are opening positions for well-educated health, environment, and safety graduates.

She likes the variety of her job. "Every day is a different challenge. I like the fact that I know so many of my co-workers—from roustabouts to vice presidents—because I work on so many projects that have company-wide impact. I like having the freedom to evaluate health and safety needs and decide the best approaches to resolving the issues."

Her latest project involves residual mercury left in equipment, tanks, and pipes that have been used for hydrocarbons. She is working on a multidisciplinary team to interpret data and make determinations as to when a vessel is "clean."

While she was in our Master of Science program, she interned with an oil company in her native Alaska. The industry was in a downturn when she graduated, so she went to work for a consulting firm and worked in other industries. One day Unocal's industrial hygiene manager called to encourage her to apply for a job in the company's Kenai operations in southern Alaska.

She later moved to the Gulf region of Louisiana and Texas. On her tenth anniversary, Unocal was bought by Chevron and she became a Chevron employee. She has worked in Singapore and other locales, noting, "I've had to have extra pages added to my passport from all the international travel."

Her master's thesis was on ventilation, but she says her graduate education provided her with a well-rounded industrial hygiene and safety background that "enabled me to develop workplace safety and health programs that were recognized as best practices." She says the most valuable thing she learned in our program was teamwork.

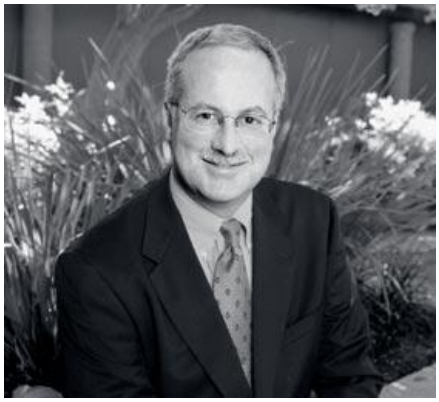
(*Profile originally published in 2005-2007 Biennial Report)*

Northwest Center for Occupational Health & Safety

Alumni Profiles

Dr. John Holland, 1986 – MPH, Environmental & Occupational Medicine

Principal, Holland Associates



John Holland takes a broad view of prevention, grounded in economics as well as occupational medicine.

"As the one medical specialty that focuses on workers, workplaces, and the environment," he said, "we in occupational and environmental medicine are in a unique position to contribute to the health and productivity of workers, the organizational success of employers, and the environmental challenges of a complex world."

As president of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Holland initiated a series of corporate occupational medicine courses that focused on prevention and disease management programs, health status and health-care quality measures and cost containment.

In his inaugural address to the association, he outlined the challenges to his field. "On a scientific level we are faced with the rapid and continuous expansion of scientific knowledge and technology. The physical environment where we work and live is constantly changing, presenting challenges such as emerging infectious diseases and unrecognized hazards from new technological processes. The economic and political environment also presents constant challenges, including the increasing need to present economic justifications and demonstrate short-term returns on investment for all of our professional activities. "Although we face many challenges, occupational and environmental medicine has many strengths. We have a broad range of knowledge about occupational and environmental exposures and conditions, disease processes, clinical care, and health-care management."

Holland's career has emphasized the connection between occupational and environmental health issues. He is the medical consultant for a community medical monitoring program in Ruston and North Tacoma, near the former ASARCO copper smelter. Residents are tested twice a year for lead and arsenic levels. The program, which has been in existence since 1996, gives him a chance to discuss health concerns related to historical environmental contamination of soil in the area.

Holland is an assistant clinical professor in our department and the Department of Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine. He also is an occupational medicine consultant to private employers, including Union Pacific Railroad, United States Steel Corporation, Weyerhaeuser Corporation, and government agencies including the Washington state Department of Labor and Industries, the state Department of Corrections, and the US Public Health Service.

He believes his MPH from the University of Washington gave him a strong foundation in occupational health, population medicine, and health services. The department's emphasis on community involvement and lifelong learning for professionals is "something I have tried to incorporate in my own career over the years." The spirit of collegiality among students and faculty "has perhaps helped shape and enrich my career as much as any other factor. Many of the professional friendships I formed as a graduate student in the department have continued."

Occupational medicine, he said, has the potential to improve the health of workers, workplaces, and the environment.

(*Profile originally published in 2001-2003 Biennial Report)*

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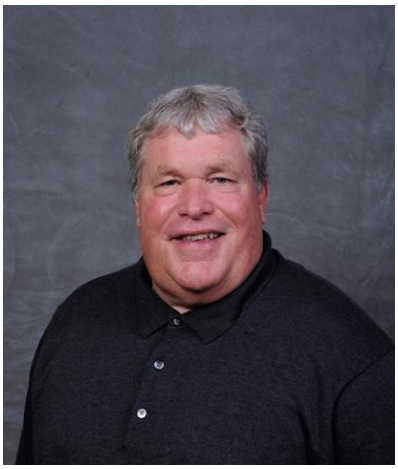
Northwest Center for Occupational Health & Safety

Alumni Profiles

Douglas Briggs, 1984 – MS Industrial Hygiene & Safety

Enterprise Safety Director, The Boeing Company (Retired as of 2010)



At the bottom of every email Douglas Briggs sends is the saying: "The business of safety and the environment is personal." It could sum up his work. He leads the development and deployment of a new company-wide effort to further improve workplace safety called "Safety Now" at The Boeing Company, where he's worked since 1990. Underlying this effort is the concept that everyone is responsible for his or her own safety as well as the safety of co-workers.

"It's one of the most rewarding positions I've held in 35 years," says Briggs. He lauds the commitment that Boeing has taken to best its already impressive workplace safety record.

He started his career working for the US Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) as a field industrial hygienist, inspecting steel mills and foundries in Chicago. Then, in 1977, he received an OSHA training grant, and he enrolled in the Industrial Hygiene and Safety program at the UW to research health hazards in shipbuilding.

In 1981, he took a job at Todd Shipyards Corporation as the corporate director of environmental/occupational safety and health. "I wanted to make a difference," says Briggs.

In 1998, Boeing offered him a senior-level position at its Renton factory. Senior Lecturer Emeritus Stan Freeman, one of Briggs' instructors in DEOHS, had worked at the same Renton factory as a senior safety manager. Briggs remembers Freeman took an operating or systematic approach to environmental health and safety and management. What he taught me, said Briggs, "is foundational to how I look at the world." A systematic approach sees compliance with safe and healthy practices and processes across company divisions as fundamental to a company's ability to increase productivity and quality.

Briggs describes himself at the start of the master's program at the UW as a rugged individualist: a hard worker, a tenacious person that outworked everyone else, putting in 16 hours a day, making inroads through his own efforts. But through graduate school projects, he was encouraged to collaborate, and he found that practice instrumental to how he approached his work in subsequent positions. "No matter the position, you have to work with people," he explains.

Briggs says his communication skills and business acumen were as valuable as his technical competency in his career.

For 10 years, Briggs served on the advisory board of our Northwest Center for Occupational Health and Safety, an Education and Research Center. This experience, as well as his continuing relationship with the department, puts him in regular contact with DEOHS faculty, students, and staff. He advises students to keep their "eyes wide open" to jobs in which they can apply their technical knowledge, but also to be cognizant of what other values they can bring to an organization.

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