PARTNERING FOR SAFETY: LEVERAGING SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT TOOLS

FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY

Within a mutually beneficial partnership, the California State University and University of California systems have collaborated, and the CSU has adopted three modules of the UC Safety Suite of web-based and mobile applications, which resulted in more efficient safety and compliance pr Eactices.

As with most higher education institutions, California State University has had to find ways to do more with less. To meet this demand, it has focused on improving and expanding safety programs by collaborating with other organizations, including the University of California.

While there are great differences between the two organizations in terms of funding, structure and governance, their safety issues are similar, and both work to create efficiencies and improve safety. At the campus level, the desire to increase collaborative efforts has been strong, and over the past few years, there have been several examples within the areas of environmental health and safety (EH&S) and risk management of mutually beneficial partnerships.

Growing the collaboration to encompass the two university systems required securing support from leadership at the highest levels of both organizations. Even though partnerships pose many complex challenges, the leadership recognizes the exponential rewards.

One of the largest implementations of the UC/CSU collaboration was the CSU's adoption of the UC Safety Suite of web-based and mobile applications. The tools include software that streamlines several crucial risk management and safety processes and helps ensure regulatory compliance. The suite includes:

- Assessment: A tool for assessing hazards in laboratories and other workspaces and tracking the recommendations provided by the system.

- Chemicals: A chemical inventory management system.

- Inspect: An inspection tool that provides streamlined inspections using a mobile device.

- LOTO: A tool for creating and sharing lockout/tagout procedures to prevent the unintended release of hazardous energy from equipment.

- Waste: A complete hazardous waste management system that provides automated hazardous waste tracking, generates regulatory-compliant tags and schedules pickups for proper disposal.

MILESTONES

Jan 2015
- Regina Frasca, CSU San Marcos director of Safety, Health & Sustainability Services, and others seek to collaborate with UC Environmental Health and Safety regarding technology.
- Frasca views a demo of the UC Risk and Safety Solutions' (RSS) lockout/tagout tool (LOTO).

Aug 2015
- Director Frasca enquires about obtaining LOTO.

Fall 2016
- UC RSS presents its suite of tools at a meeting of CSU EH&S directors.
- CSU Fresno requests piloting the chemicals application.
- CSU surveys all of its campuses to identify their top EH&S software needs. The results are the assessment, inspection and chemicals assessment tools.

Mar 2017
- CSU San Marcos implements UC RSS's LOTO.

Sept 2017
- CSU Sacramento adopts five UC RSS tools.

Jan 2018
- The CSU creates first system-wide agreement providing financial support for campuses to adopt the UC software, which UC RSS offers at a discount.

Currently, all of the CSU campuses have adopted one or more of the tools and some have even purchased additional modules to supplement their safety programs.

The collaboration is mutually beneficial. The UC received funding from the CSU to support operational and maintenance costs and future software development, and the CSU has benefited from more efficient safety and compliance practices.

QUANTIFICATION AND RESULTS

To date, all 23 CSU campuses have adopted one or more of the UC RSS tools.

UC RSS has trained more than 700 CSU employees on use of the tools.

Since July 2018, 896 people at the CSU have conducted hazard assessments with a total of 916 conducting assessments system-wide.

The CSU system is using the inspect application to get a baseline reading of inspection findings. Since July 2018, 1,345 findings have been documented.

Since March 2017, CSU has created 78 lockout/tagout procedures using the UC RSS LOTO app.

IMPACT AND BENEFITS

The benefits to both university systems have been significant:

- For CSU, the UC RSS software and their associated dashboards provide a streamlined, consistent way to identify potential hazards in a laboratory or other workspace, to inspect and identify trends in workspaces, and to manage and track chemicals in a specific space or across a campus.

- As a result of the partnership, UC RSS has reinvested the funds from CSU into improving its products to the benefit of both university systems.

- Perhaps most importantly, because RSS continues to improve and refine its software based on input from end users; UC end users will benefit from the feedback of CSU's unique and varied 23 campuses.

LESSONS LEARNED

1 It's important to find a collaborator with similar needs and then to evaluate and improve the relationship as the effort progresses.

2 Start with small goals, but look for ways to inspire people to imagine something bigger.

3 Engage leadership at the system level once an achievable route and end goals have been established.

4 Persistence is key: Forming a partnership between two large institutions with no common funding, structure or governance was an incredible challenge, but the payoff was rewarding for both institutions.

MILESTONES

Apr 2018
- The California State Auditor releases a report critical of CSU's oversight of health and safety on its campuses.

Aug 2018
- A new agreement is approved by both organizations for the CSU Risk Management Authority to provide financial support to its campuses to implement UC RSS tools. Each campus is required to adopt the assessment and inspect applications. The chemicals program is optional.

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