



INTERDISCIPLINARY FORUM

FALL 2024



INTRODUCTIONS

Center Administration

- Patrick O'Shaughnessy, *Director*
- Tom Peters, *Deputy Director*
- Brianne Schwarz, *Associate Director of Student Affairs*
- Tammi Goerdts, *Continuing Education and Outreach Director*
- Mindy Sickels Sterbenz, *Financial Administrator*
- Janie Simmons, *Administrative Support*
- Horacio Borgen Alfaro, *Continuing Education Administrator*

TRAINEES



New Trainees Introductions

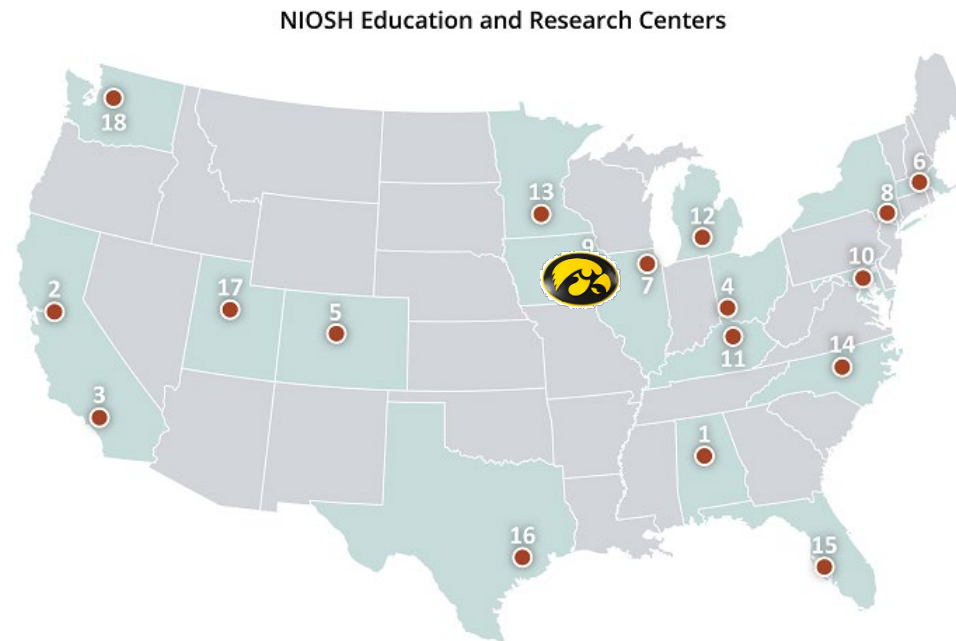
- Name
- Center Program and Degree
- Advisor
- Hometown
- Like to do? Fun recent experience?



CENTER OVERVIEW

The Heartland Center

- A “training grant” funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
- One of 18 Education and Research Centers (ERCs) in the US.



Center Programs

- Academic Programs
 - Industrial Hygiene
 - Occupational Safety
 - Agricultural Safety and Health
 - Ergonomics
 - Occupational Injury Prevention
- External Programs
 - Continuing Education
 - Outreach
- Pilot Grant Program

The Heartland Center

- Departments
 - University of Iowa
 - Occupational and Environmental Health
 - Epidemiology
 - Industrial and Systems Engineering
 - Iowa State University
 - Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering

Center Website

- [View our website](#)
 - Training Program Requirements
 - Diversity Statement
 - Trainee Info

Your Commitment as a Funded Trainee

- You are accepting federal funds (tax dollars) to support your graduate education in the field of Occupational Safety and Health
- Your commitment:
 - Perform your coursework and research to the best of your abilities
 - Complete your degree
 - Seek employment as an Occupational Safety and Health Professional upon graduation

Required Interdisciplinary Interactions and Activities

- Interdisciplinary Activities
 - This Forum
 - Heartland Center Seminars
 - Workplace Field Experience
 - Occupational Safety and Health Conference
- Interdisciplinary Course
 - OEH:5620 Occupational Health (3 s.h.)
- Professional Development Activity
 - Develop and maintain an Individual Development Plan (IDP)





OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Pilot Grant Program

- Dr. Nir Keren, *Director*
 - Ms. Janie Simmons, *Grant Administrator*
 - Ms. Mindy Sickels Sterbenz, *Financial Administrator*
- The only grant program targeted specifically to graduate students as recipients
 - Awards of \$5,000 and up to \$20,000
 - Applications due in February or March

Scholarships

- Iowa Occupational Safety and Health Council
 - 1 scholarship of \$3,000
 - 2 scholarships of \$2,250
 - September 22 application deadline

- Zwerling-Sprince OEH Scholarship
 - 1 scholarship of \$1,000
 - Fall application deadline



INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

What is an Individual Development Plan (IDP)?

- A private, dynamic, self-evaluation and career exploration tool.
- Comprised of a written list of short term and long term goals that includes goal setting for:
 - research projects or internships,
 - skills development, and
 - career planning.
- Steps:
 - View the how-to video on the [Heartland Center website](#) (17 minutes)
 - Download instructions and forms to create a draft IDP
 - Work with your advisor to discuss and finalize your IDP

IDP Form

SHORT-TERM DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS FOR IMPROVING CURRENT PERFORMANCE		
Development Needs	How are you going to acquire these skills? (e.g. training, courses, teaching, supervision)	Estimated Completion Date
Communication		
Scholarly Development		
Professionalism		
Career Development		

IDP Implementation

- Review your plan with your advisor on a regular basis (at least once per semester).
- Revise as necessary
 - Revisions may occur as you become more aware of both academic and professional skills needed to enhance your performance in both areas.



FUNDING INFORMATION

Mindy Sickels Sterbenz



The Center Budget

- Three Types of Trainee funding
 - Tuition & Fees
 - Stipends
 - Trainee Travel

Tuition and Fees Support

- **All trainees*** enrolled in a degree program are eligible for tuition support.
 - All tuition is covered
- Some **fees** are **not** covered.
 - Beginning
 - University Records and Documents Fee = \$250
 - End if submitting a thesis or dissertation
 - Thesis Fee = \$155
 - Thesis Publication Fee = \$10
- **Summer tuition is not covered automatically**
 - But, can be requested before course registration.
 - Discuss with advisor → program director makes request

*...who are US citizens or Green-card holders

Tuition and Fees Support: **Exclusions**

- **Summer Tuition and Online Courses (.EXW)** are not included as part of trainee tuition support.
- But...requests for tuition support can be made
 - Must be made during the semester prior to needing tuition support.
 - Requests will not be honored after tuition costs have been incurred.

Stipend Support

- From the NIH Grants Policy Statement:

“A stipend is provided as a subsistence allowance to help defray living expenses during the research training experience. It is not provided as a condition of employment ...”

Stipend Levels

- The Heartland Center provides stipends of any amount up to the maximum allowed by the government depending on student numbers and the overall amount budgeted to the Center.
- Stipend amounts allocated are reassessed on an annual basis
 - ***The amount you receive in a subsequent year may change***

Stipend Eligibility

- You must be considered a **full-time student** in order to be eligible for stipend.
 - ≥ 9 s.h. per fall and spring semester
- Students receiving a stipend **cannot work in an employment position >50%** during the entire appointment period (including summer).

Stipend Payments

- First monthly allotment given on the 1st of the month after the first full month on a stipend
 - For most, the first month is September, so first payment is on October 1
- Once started, stipend payments continue monthly until graduation
 - Unless you are not a full-time student, or
 - Take a job **such as a paid internship**

Stipends and GRAs

- Stipend recipients desiring to also obtain a Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA):
 - The GRA position cannot hinder academic progress
 - Requires completion of a form detailing the GRA position to all involved (advisor, trainee, GRA supervisor, program director).
 - Any recipient of a stipend cannot obtain a GRA greater than 25%
 - Any recipient of a full stipend will be reduced to a 50% partial stipend with the addition of a GRA appt.

Health Ins Contribution/Eligibility

- All trainees with an annual stipend set to at least \$10,000/year (\$833.33/month) will receive a health insurance contribution toward the [UI health insurance plan](#)
- The [UI contribution](#) and your cost depends on the plan
 - Around \$46 per month for single student.
- Trainees can maintain a UI health insurance contribution until their fellowship appointment ends (i.e. May).

Taxes

- Tuition and mandatory fees support are NOT considered taxable income
- Stipend monies received ARE considered taxable income for federal/state tax reporting purposes!!
 - NO withholding taxes are withdrawn from your stipend payment.

APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Two Appointment Processes

1. Federal Government Appointment

- Complete “xTRAIN” appointment form via the NIH portal: “eRA Commons”
- Required for ALL trainees receiving stipend and/or tuition support
- **No submission = No \$\$\$**

2. U of Iowa Appointment

- UI internal documents used to set up **stipend appointments only**
 - UI data collection form (to be filled out),
 - UI offer letter,
 - Direct deposit form

Reappointments

- Reappointments are made on an annual basis between July 1 to June 30
- Requires returning students to be reappointed through the xTrain system
 - You will receive an email in August
 - **Stipend \$\$ flow will not be interrupted**

xTrain Termination Notices (TN)

- NIOSH requires completion of Termination Notices (TN) at the end of each appointment.
- Involves getting back into xTrain to answer a few short questions during the month prior to graduating
- A trainee is also terminated in the U Iowa HR system upon completion of their stipend period.



Have a great academic year!!