2015 Executive Summary – UI Ergonomics Program

2015 marked year two in the development and implementation of the UI Ergonomics Program. The goal of year two was to further evolve the program within its mission and vision. The mission of the UI Ergonomics Program is to provide an efficient and safe work environment for all employees of the University of Iowa to allow the University to fulfill its mission of education, research and creative work, outreach, and healthcare. This is fostered by the vision of the UI Ergonomics Program of being recognized by peer institutions as a leader in prevention and education programs, ergonomic risk assessment and consultation, and an innovator in implementation of control measures to limit ergonomic risks in the work environment.

Building upon the development of infrastructure and relationships on campus and strategic planning from year one, we further advanced the implementation of services. The target goals of services were focused on 3 key areas: University worker’s compensation metrics, faculty and staff satisfaction of UI Ergonomics Program interventions, and Departmental educational opportunities.

In 2015, the UI Ergonomics Program continued to participate in, and lead, committees and work groups across the University to impact employee health and safety. These committees and work groups focus on the identification of problems areas and the development and implementation of safety programs and interventions to address them. The committees and work groups are:

- Ergonomic Safe Patient Handling Work Group (UI Health Care)
- Safety Hawk Team and Sponsor Group (Facilities Management)
- Incident Investigation Work Group (EHS, Facilities Management, University Housing and Dining)
- Workplace Occupational and Environmental Health Committee (University of Iowa)
- Worker’s Compensation Team (Human Resources)

Through the efforts of these groups, significant improvements in key metrics related to work injuries was made from 2014 to 2015 including, but not limited to:

- University-wide reduction in lost days of 28% and restricted days of 17%
- Nursing Services saw a decrease of 6% in lost day cases, 34% decrease in actual lost days, and 40% reduction in restricted days compared to 2014 despite a significant growth in staffing levels due to high patient census throughout the year
- UI Housing and Dining and Facilities Management experienced a decrease in Custodian reports of injury due to over-exertion of 45%
- Perhaps most significant, Facilities Management Custodians saw a staggering decrease in lost days of work of 72% compared to 2014

The UI Ergonomics Program increased the number of on-site Ergonomic Evaluations 14%, from 267 in 2014 to 303 in 2015. Satisfaction survey results of these interventions revealed that 100% felt they were contacted and scheduled promptly, 99% of participants felt their evaluations were thorough, and 97% were satisfied with their UI Ergonomics Program experience.

In 2015, the UI Ergonomics Program created a more fully featured, content rich, website to provide another outlet to help educate faculty and staff. Additionally, the UI Ergonomics Program provided a wide range of educational presentations and opportunities to groups around campus ranging from the College of Dentistry, to the UI Library staff, to the Carver College of Medicine Office of Student Affairs. Topics covered ranged from office/computer work to a holistic injury prevention approach to physically demanding jobs.
In 2016, the UI Ergonomics Program will continue to work within its Vision with focus of the following priority areas:

- Create a My Quick Coach video to be utilized for educational opportunities, and offered to all new employees during the onboarding process.
- Expansion of involvement in campus wide construction projects including work towards LEED and WELL Building standards.
- Collection, analysis, and communication of worker’s compensation injury data campus wide to drill down in to specific high utilization areas to assist in allocation of resources for injury prevention and safe work environment initiatives.

We hope you find this report helpful and informative and look forward to serving the University of Iowa faculty and staff in 2016.