2014 Executive Summary – UI Ergonomic Program

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. The inaugural year of the UI Ergonomics Program focused on the development of infrastructure and relationships on campus, strategic planning for implementation of services, and working towards the vision 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.

In 2014, the UI Ergonomics Program began participating in and becoming an integral part of many 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 Steering Committee (Facilities Management)
- Custodial Risk Reduction Team (Facilities Management)
- Workplace Occupational and Environmental Health Committee (University of Iowa)
- Worker’s Compensation Team (Human Resources)

The impact of these groups, as well as the work by the UI Ergonomics Program, is illustrated in the key metrics improvement related to work injuries from 2013 to 2014. These include a 14% reduction in nursing injuries related to patient handling, 7% decrease in overall injuries within UI Healthcare, a 43% reduction in overall injuries across non-UI Health Care Orgs, and specifically a 22% decrease in Custodian related injuries in Facilities Management and University Housing and Dining.

In addition to a Worker’s Compensation accomplishments, the UI Ergonomics Program successfully branded itself as a free benefit to all faculty and staff, reflected in the completion of 267 on-site Ergonomic Evaluations in 2014. These evaluations were completed in all areas of work from office environments to laboratories. Satisfaction survey results of these interventions revealed that 97% of participants felt their evaluations were thorough and were satisfied with their UI Ergonomics Program experience.

In 2015, the UI Ergonomics Program looks to continue to evolve within its mission and vision. The following are priority areas:

- In conjunction with the UI Wellness Program and Facilities Management, develop and implement a program to address the holistic health and safety of UI Custodians
- Create a more fully featured, content rich, website
- Initiate development of a program in which all new employees in designated computer interface positions will receive Ergonomic Workstation Evaluations/Set ups within the first 90 days of hire

We hope you find this report helpful and informative and look forward to serving the University of Iowa faculty and staff in 2015.