A UTILIZATION-FOCUSED PROGRAM EVALUATION OF THE
GRADUATE SAFETY PROGRAM AT UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL MISSOURI

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ABSTRACT

Program assessment has historically and continues to be a critical element for academic programs to ensure continuous quality improvement of their programs. In the recent years, occupational safety, health and environmental programs have embraced assessment by external groups to validate their internal assessments. The University of Central Missouri, a mid-sized school in Western Missouri has produced 969 alumni with graduate degrees in occupational safety management. The graduate program is within the Department of Safety Sciences in the College of Health, Science and Technology. A comprehensive evaluation was conducted with the goal to assess what alumni of the program think of their preparation by the Department, as well as their perspective on what courses and skills an entry level safety professional should have upon graduation. The assessment instruments used in this research study included an online survey to alumni with a review of historical documents by the researcher.

The results reflected alumni believe their preparation by the Department for their careers in the safety profession was above average, has maintained quality and sustainability across the forty-four year tenure. The practitioner skills and courses far outweighed the research based courses on importance from alumni. The program has gone through many degree nomenclatures, curriculum changes, faculty and administration, but has stood the test of time.