

Arizona State wins award for compliance officer program

By Skip Derra, ASU News
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Arizona State University has earned an Innovation Award from the Campus Safety, Health and Environmental Management Association for a volunteer compliance officer program that has led to higher levels of lab safety and reduced costs.

The Innovation Award honors institutions that have implemented innovative process improvements, resource enhancements or initiatives that improve the safety culture on campus.

ASU began its compliance officer program in 2006 with 56 volunteer compliance officers who serve as a vital link between departments and the office of Environmental Health and Safety. The program has grown to 165 compliance officers representing more than 97 departments.

Each ASU compliance officer, as appointed by their department, is offered special health and safety training from EHS and is invited to attend two meetings a year with EHS to discuss new safety trends, laws and steps to prevent accidents and injuries. As a result, from 2007 to 2018 the rate of incidents per 1,000 employees has decreased, saving ASU an estimated \$5.1 million in direct and indirect costs.

“The program has been very successful and allowed ASU to keep its injury rates well below the national averages for universities,” said Leon Igras, ASU’s executive director of Environmental Health and Safety. “Additionally, being a compliance officer allows many ASU employees to learn about research safety, preparing them for other positions at ASU where their knowledge about this critical area will be of great value.”

“The credit for this award belongs to our faculty, students and staff who work tirelessly to advance knowledge that impacts society,” said Sethuraman Panchanathan, executive vice president of Knowledge Enterprise Development and chief research and innovation officer at ASU. “A culture of lab safety is very important for all research enterprises and, therefore, we endeavor to have this permeate all aspects of research at ASU.”

In addition to ASU, other 2018 Innovation Award winners are the University of California-Irvine, University of California-Riverside and Washington University, St. Louis.

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Main image



Those accepting ASU's Innovation Award from the Campus Safety, Health and Environmental Management Association are David Gillum, EHS chief of staff; Suzanne Kennedy, EHS director of Environmental Compliance; and Michael Long, ASU's Fire Marshal.