



Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Northwest Center for Occupational
Health and Safety



**ENVIRONMENTAL
& OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH SCIENCES**
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Strategic Plan 2020–2025

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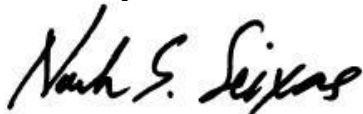
Overview

This Strategic Plan was created as a roadmap to guide future programming and to assess ongoing progress towards meeting the Center's overall mission.

This plan is the result of many months of introspection into the Center's aims, activities, and the workers and communities it benefits. We worked closely with a strategic planning consultant to identify and evaluate the strengths and gaps in our current programming, and create goals and objectives for where we want the Center to move. We employed an iterative process that sought input from community needs assessments, external reviewers, and the students and directors involved with our programs in order to validate our framework and ensure alignment with program initiatives.

We recognize that this is a living document, one that will continue to evolve as the needs of our Center adapt to meet future occupational health and safety demands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Noah S. Seixas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'N'.

Noah Seixas, PhD
NWCOHS Director

Vision and mission

Vision

A safe, healthy, and thriving Northwest region workforce, supported by evidence-based programs, policies, and professionals that respond to the challenges of new technologies, changing workforce dynamics, and employment conditions of an evolving economy.

Mission

The Northwest Center for Occupational Health and Safety provides science-based expertise to understand and promote employment, job conditions, and health systems that support worker health, safety, and well-being. This is achieved through conducting research to understand and reduce work-related health and safety hazards, training a new generation of health and safety professionals with an understanding of the multi-dimensional influences on health and well-being, providing state of the art evidence-based education to current OSH practitioners, and providing information and tools to business, labor, healthcare providers, and the public spheres addressing healthy and safe work.

Values and guiding principles

Value #1 | Health, safety, and well-being for all workers

Principle: We strive for a thriving workforce through prevention of illness and injury while promoting health and well-being. This requires a focus on justice and fair treatment for the vulnerable among us, both within our own workplace, and for workers throughout the region.

Value #2 | Diversity, equity and inclusion

Principle: We embrace diversity in people, perspectives, and approaches recognizing that this leads to a richer and more effective world of work. Internally, we strive for a learning environment that is open and safe for all participants. We also use our research, training, and practice, to identify and challenge inequitable conditions that undermine worker health, safety, and well-being throughout the region.

Value #3 | Collaboration

Principle: In teaching, research, and service to the community, we encourage interdisciplinary engagement and problem solving. We seek to form partnerships among the many academic disciplines and institutions, which can contribute to holistic understanding of work's impact on health. We also create opportunities to involve stakeholders in identifying problems, prioritizing issues, and formulating solutions to address work related health and safety impacts.

Value #4 | Evidence-based impact

Principle: By teaching and using evidence-based approaches, we strive to provide effective solutions to occupational health and safety problems and promote resilient working communities. We do this through continuous improvement and evaluation of our programs.

Value #5 | Forward thinking

Principle: Recognizing the changing nature of work and workforce, we seek the use of cutting-edge technologies, research methods, and teaching practices to provide leadership, innovation and excellence in occupational health and safety. We foster the translation and adoption of these approaches to business, labor, and policy-makers who can best make use of them.

Goal 1 | Awareness and understanding



In the next five years, the NWCOHS will expand awareness of OH&S and increase understanding of its value in promoting a healthy workforce and productive economy.

Working conditions play a key role in determining population health and yet most people accept the conditions of work as a given. Further, non-occupational factors frequently over-shadow the work environment in the public's perception of health risks. We seek to raise the profile of work and work-life balance in creating health and well-being.

1.1 Engage and network with practitioners at the national and regional level during professional and practice meetings each year.

1.2 Provide OHS expertise in our collaborations with industry, community organizations, unions, government, and other constituent organizations on research and student training on a project-specific basis.

1.3 Provide messaging about health impacts of working conditions through the development and cultivation of a media presence about occupational health and safety throughout the year.

1.4 Engage underserved and underrepresented communities in connecting work with health through research, training, and outreach projects yearly.

1.5 Introduce broader perspectives on the multiple aspects of work and work-life balance that impact health to the OHS community through our on-going work in professional and academic communities.

Goal 2 | Applied research



In the next five years, the NWCOHS will address regional priorities through research on the impact of work and working conditions affecting the health and well-being of the workforce.

Research informs our ability to address conditions affecting the working population, and these needs are constantly shifting with new technologies, demographics, and work arrangements.

2.1 Pursue innovative questions and methodologies in occupational health through faculty and student research projects addressing trends in work organization, climate change, and other contextual factors.

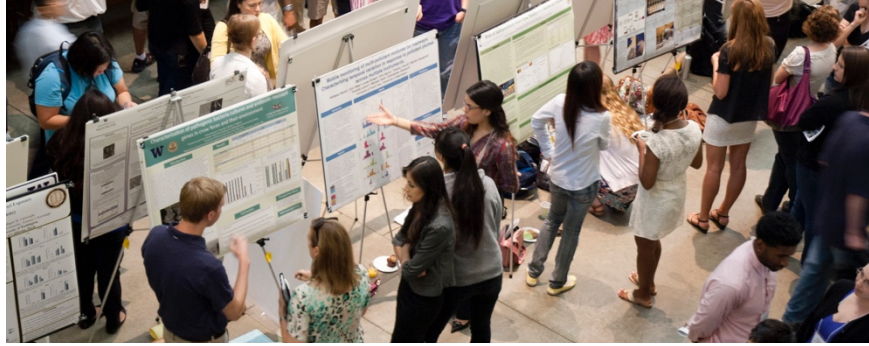
2.2 Highlight research questions and methodologies addressing OH disparities and needs of underrepresented underserved groups, through research, mentorship, and seminars.

2.3 Ensure integration of ethical principles and methods into coursework, research training, and participation in research studies.

2.4 Increase interactions between academic disciplines, and regional institutions through research collaborations and scientific conferences.

2.5 Stimulate community/labor/industry/government collaborations on research projects through educational forums, community-based research, and student mentorship placements.

Goal 3 | Education and training



In the next five years, the NWCOHS will cultivate a prepared professional and research workforce to address the occupational health needs of Region X in the coming decades.

Multiple disciplines contribute to ensuring safe and healthful work and serving the needs of injured or sickened workers. To maintain a competent and ready professional workforce, academic and continuing professional education is needed.

3.1 Expand the diversity of graduates through active recruitment of qualified underrepresented trainees to broaden our perspectives, increase equity, and better meet the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce.

3.2 Update curricula for all programs based on continuous evaluation of regional needs, student feedback, and effective pedagogical methods.

3.3 Integrate scientific concepts and research methods into the curricula to develop the next generation of OH&S researchers, and science-based practitioners.

3.4 Conduct discipline-specific training that prepares students for effective professional practice through a combination of classroom based, and practical experience, and community-engaged learning opportunities.

3.5 Promote inter-disciplinary collaboration through student interactions and training across disciplines to solve complex occupational health problems.

3.6 Provide training to maintain and enhance up-to-date knowledge and skills for existing Region X professionals through regularly offered continuing education, information dissemination, and consultation.

Goal 4 | Dissemination and impact



In the next five years, the NWCOHS will deliver evidence-based information and approaches to promote health-enhancing practices in work.

Translation and dissemination of research and best practices is ultimately needed to improve the health of workers. Therefore, in our research, training, and service activities, we support making concrete changes that improve the lives of workers in the region.

- 4.1** Address the OHS needs identified by business, labor, and policy-makers through participation in regional conferences and outreach.
- 4.2** Develop and evaluate the impact of innovative solutions to occupational health problems in real-world settings in partnership with the affected communities.
- 4.3** Share research findings in a timely manner with affected stakeholders in a use-ready modality.
- 4.4** Prioritize intervention and dissemination projects that aim to decrease disparities and increase equity in OH&S outcomes among working populations.
- 4.5** Provide input and guidance to regional policy makers on effective approaches to addressing OHS problems at least annually.

Contact Info

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The University of Washington occupies the traditional land of the Coast Salish peoples. Without them, we would not have access to this working, teaching, and learning environment. We honor and acknowledge the original caretakers of this land, who are still here.

Hummingbird background © Nlakapamux artist Andrew Dixel (Enpaauk). In Coast Salish cultures, the hummingbird symbolizes both a messenger and a healer to those who suffer injury or loss.

