

Conducting Peer Audits under the EPA Audit Policy: The AICUP Success Story

Presenter(s)

Mr. James McCormick, Director of Environmental Health and Safety, Bucknell University
Ms. Victoria Justus, President, Turning Bird Consulting, Ltd.

Abstract Text

Faced with the challenge of increasing regulatory oversight and impending enforcement inspections within EPA Region 3, the Association of Independent College and Universities of Pennsylvania (AICUP) leveraged the power of their member institutions to constructively model and implement a new approach by using peer evaluators under the EPA Audit Policy. AICUP felt strongly that by conducting audits at peer institutions with individuals trained in auditing practices and with access to comprehensive electronic audit protocols, colleges and universities would be able to share areas of expertise, keep regulatory awareness at a functional level, and cut costs that would normally be associated with the hiring of consultants. The approach has been successful from an economic standpoint as well as a cultural one. The strong sense of community among the college and university sector has nurtured the growth and communications between auditors and audited institutions to the point that not only the successes are readily shared, but the skeletons are no longer a deep, dark secret.

This Breakout session is presented by the EHS Director of the largest institution participating in the peer audit program and the key individual who was instrumental in developing and negotiating this ground breaking program and unique approach. The presenters will address the challenges they faced and describe the approaches they took in defining, developing and implementing a wide-scale peer audit program for the 44 participating private colleges and universities in Pennsylvania.

Presenter Bio(s)

Mr. James McCormick, Safety Manager, Department of Safety Services, Bucknell University

Mr. McCormick has been employed by Bucknell University in the environmental health and safety arena for 26 years. As a certified OSHA 501 instructor, he has extensive experience with local, state, and federal regulatory agencies, and has been instrumental in developing a multitude of health and safety regulatory programs for Bucknell. These programs include Hazard Communication and Laboratory Safety. As a Certified Hazardous Materials Manager, his design for the hazardous materials storage area on campus was a contributing factor in keeping the University compliant with RCRA regulations. Mr. McCormick's department's primary focus has been environmental stewardship integrated with all aspects of voluntary compliance. By charting and observing emerging regulatory standards, he is able to adjust existing University health and safety programs into updated EH&S programs without a lengthy transition process. His work as Chair of both the Radiation Safety Committee and the Laboratory Safety

Committee and as an EH&S consultant for the Workplace Safety Committee has resulted in many innovative, proactive, and ambitious projects being initiated at the University.

Ms. Victoria Justus, President, Turning Bird Consulting, Ltd.

Ms. Justus has experience in consulting, governmental and educational environments. She is the President and Principal Consultant for *Turning Bird Consulting, Ltd.* and has focused her company's efforts on providing comprehensive environmental health and safety auditing and programmatic development services to public and private higher education institutions. Her work has been instrumental in establishing baselines and templates for the EPA Audit Policy disclosures for Colleges and Universities in EPA Regions 1, 3, and 7 and is involved in initiating similar programs nation-wide. Most recently, her work in developing peer audit protocols for a large coalition of private schools in Region 3 has been precedent setting in technology, scope and duration. The project, started in 2004, is a significant part of a cooperative compliance program negotiated with EPA Region 3 under the EPA Audit Policy and is the baseline for all of the peer audit programs that are now being rolled out in the Region 4 states. Prior to her work as a consultant, and her 6 ½ years of work at the University of Maine, she also developed model health and safety programs for Sandia National Laboratory and has been a driving force behind several state-wide EH&S organizations. Ms. Justus is a frequent speaker to clients, professional organizations and at conferences nation-wide.