Initiating an Ergonomics Program at Pacific University: Supervisor Education

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Our partner:

President
Lesley Hallick

University Relations

Academic Affairs

Finance & Administration

Student Life

Office Work

Tool Use

Manual Materials Handling
Key Themes from President Hallick

- **DISCOVERY** is an integral and essential component of the education process (research, inquiry based education, creativity)

- **SUSTAINABILITY** in economic and environmental terms support highest quality program delivery

- A rich **DIVERSITY** of ideas, people, and culture are needed for Pacific’s mission of education, discovery, and service

- **EXCELLENCE** is achieved by supporting the **PEOPLE** who deliver and receive the University’s programs

- Graduates are motivated and prepared to contribute to the **GLOBAL COMMUNITY**.
Ergonomics Needs Assessment and Program Plan:

- Completed Spring, 2009, by Amie Davis, MOTS, and Christine Van Osdol, MOTS

- Identified the following needs:
  - Knowledge of ergonomics / Education
  - Prevention
  - Furniture selection
  - Budget

- Recommended Program Components
  - Supervisor education
  - Pre-hire screening
  - Detailed ergonomics evaluations
  - Recommendations for furniture purchase for multi-user groups
Importance of Ergonomics

- Annual direct and indirect costs of work-related injury and illness:
  - United States: ~ $170 billion
  - Oregon: millions of dollars

- Demand for Ergonomic Evaluations within the University

- Benefits of Ergonomics:
  - ↑ Efficiency + Productivity
  - ↓ Injuries
  - ↓ Cost of Operation
  - ↑ Worker Satisfaction
The goal of ergonomics is to design the job to fit the worker, not make the worker fit the job.
The Process

- Identified and contacted target audience
- Researched and compiled ergonomics information
- Developed policy & procedure for ergonomics evaluation request
- Developed online & in-person training materials
- Provided training
- Obtained and incorporated feedback
Identifying and Contacting Target Audience

- Identified Target Departments
- Contacted Key Individuals
- Obtained Organizational Chart

- Deans of Academic Colleges
- Facilities Director
Ergonomic Training Resources

- National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health
- Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)
- Oregon OSHA
- Washington State Labor & Industries
- Textbooks
- Research Articles

*Work design: Occupational ergonomics* by Konz & Johnson
Developing the Policy and Procedure for Requesting an Ergonomic Evaluation

**THEN**

- School of OT
  - HR
    - Health & Safety

**NOW**

1. Employee Contacts **HR**
2. HR Refers to **Health & Safety**
3. Report & Recommendations Provided to Employee, Supervisor & HR
4. Follow-up within 30 days
5. Lingering Problems?
   - Refer to **School of OT** for further Recommendations
Training Materials

- Placed online at:
  - http://www.pacificu.edu/ot/

- Provided in-person to supervisors within:
  - Facilities Department (9)
  - Schools of:
    - Optometry (9)
    - Arts & Science (4)
    - Education (3)
Quantitative Feedback
(average scores)

Ease of access for the online training
Understanding musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)
Understanding risk factors contributing to MSDs
Using ergonomic principles to prevent MSDs
Understanding the process of obtaining an ergonomic evaluation
Effectiveness of the instructors in providing quality training
Qualitative Feedback

- Strengths of the Training:
  - Applicable
    - “It was helpful to talk about my own work situation and what steps can be done to improve it ergonomically.”
  - Informative
    - “Simple concepts were taught in a very clear and easily accessible way. Good visual instructions.”
  - Practical Examples
    - “I liked the examples with the photo slides identifying the problems and coming up with solutions.”
Qualitative Feedback (continued)

- Ways to improve:
  - More Specific to Work Environment
    - “Maybe ask and use some circumstances that have arisen in our departments.”
  - Prevention
    - “Add more on how employees can prevent injuries such as those listed in Part I.”
  - Demonstrations
    - “Possibly have an actual office chair and show adjustments and recommendations for posture.”
Expected Outcomes

- **Short Term**
  - Increased awareness of ergonomics principles
  - Increased number of ergonomic evaluations

- **Long Term**
  - Ergonomic evaluations focused on prevention
  - Decreased number of injury claims
  - Decreased cost of insurance
What’s Next?
Exploring the possibilities…

- More training!
  - All supervisors and department heads
  - All employees

- Ergonomic evaluation and training for President Hallick

- Expand Ergonomics Program:
  - Scope
    - Pre-hire screenings
    - Improved furniture selection procedures
  - Locations
    - Tuality Healthcare
    - Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center

- Optometry curriculum
  - And other health professions?
Special Thanks!

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**College of Optometry**
- Staff

**College of Education**
- Staff

**College of Arts & Science**
- Staff

**Facilities Department**

**Human Resource Department**
Questions?