Using Membership Directories of Professional Societies to Assess Academic Program Alumni Success

AI HCE
Philadelphia, PA

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Presentation Topics

- Why assess alumni?
- Background
- Methodology
- Findings
- Discussion
- Future plans
A Question?

- Why assess academic program?
  - Quality Assurance
  - Continuous improvement
  - Constituents
    - University administration, employers, alumni, prospective students, current students, internal and external review groups
A Sub Question

Why assess alumni success?

- Monitoring alumni activities provides a different type of assessment
- Long term success is at least as meaningful as short term success.
- A warning: you might find alumni are not doing as well as you had hoped
Background

IH Program at UCM

- IH program started in 1973
- First graduates 1974
- 501 graduates total
  - BS, MS
- Name change in 2006 (CMSU)
Background

- Assessment activities used by academic programs
  - Exit exams
  - Exit interviews
  - Advisory board reviews
  - Portfolios
  - Evaluations of Internships
Background

Assessment activities used by academic programs

- External reviews (NIOSH, ABET)
- Surveys of alumni
- Surveys of OSH professionals
- Focus groups
- Faculty perceptions of student work
Background

John N. Zey & and one of his 6 sisters

Which one is John?
Methodology

What is needed

- Membership directories of professional societies
  - Two of the authors are members of five OSH professional organizations
- An interest in how the program graduates have performed
- Willingness to invest time in tracking alumni activities
Methodology

- 1997 started compiling a list of alumni from IH programs
  - Initially used word of mouth
  - List from alumni office
  - Used memberships directory lists to better track employer, certification, service to the profession
Methodology

ABIH recently published the year each certification (CIH) was awarded

- Already had a list of most of the graduates from the IH program at UCM
- Combined that information with the data on alumni and if they were certified
Results

~500 alumni

- One of the largest IH alumni groups
- 42.5% (213) obtained CIH
- 12.7% (64) CSP,
- 6.8% (34) CHMM,
- 1% CPE, CHCM, COHN, QEP
- 48.9% obtained at least one certification
Results

- **Time to obtain CIH**
  - 6.2 years after getting degree
    - Range was -2 to 23 years
    - 58.4% (4-9 yrs)
    - 17.8% (10-23 yrs)
  - Some alumni are double or triple certified
  - Some have earned J D, 2nd MS, Doctorate
Alumni continued:

- 25-35% of the technical committees for AIHA & ACGIH have UCM alumni
- About 75% of the alumni are still active in the OSHE discipline
Limitations of the Data

- Unable to track some of the alumni
- Not all alumni are members of professional societies
- Several alumni obtained degrees part-time
- Some obtained certification shortly after receiving MS
Discussion

- The data suggests the IH program has produced the type of graduate employers are seeking.
- We are unable to compare our data to other programs as very little information appears on this issue.
- Emphasis on program assessment should provide future data.
Conclusions

- Use of membership directories is a very valuable tool for assessing long term success of programs.
- It is expensive both in time required and money if your employer doesn’t pay for dues.
Conclusions

- Program assessment is conducted for constituents
  - University administration
  - Employers
  - Prospective & current students
  - Alumni
  - Peer programs
  - Others
Future Efforts

- One of the authors is embarking on a comprehensive assessment of the industrial hygiene masters program.
- This should provide richer information on the alumni.
- We hope other programs will report this type of data.
Questions?