

Meet CSHEMA Volunteer Jesse Decker

**Title:**

Director for Safety - College of Engineering

Institution:

14+ years

Current leadership role in CSHEMA:

Co-leader Embedded Safety Professionals (w/Mary Lindstrom of MIT)

How long have you worked in EHS?

14+ years

How did you get into EHS?

Started in biotech as a molecular bio researcher and Rad Safety Officer out of college. I was brought on to help a university with chem/bio/rad safety after being a stay-at home dad for 10 years. I found the Safety/RM field fascinating, challenging and rewarding.

How long have you worked at your current institution?

3+ years

Best career advice?

Say yes to opportunities until you have to say no.

What is the biggest problem you face at your institution?

Funding and time. Almost every safety issue can be solved if there is available funding and time to put towards it.

Proudest professional accomplishment so far?

Received the Academic Staff Excellence award from the College. In a College full of talented and devoted individuals, the fact that they felt the safety director deserved this award meant a lot to me.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Continuing to be a leader in the push to improve academic safety culture and safety communication. Continuing to grow my knowledge base and becoming more effective in my role.

What do you think the future of the EHS profession will look like?

I want high quality VR trainings for academia! We have the ability to do this now, we need to fund and partner with people who can make this happen.

How has being a member of CSHEMA benefited you/your institution?

As the sole safety person at an institution, it provided a lifeline to knowledgeable people ready to share experience and insight. CSHEMA still serves that purpose, but is also a sounding board for ideas and to hear about how others are able to solve similar issues. It allows me to share some and save time/effort for others

Hobbies?

Reading & Birding - and if I can combine birding with some kayaking or scenic hiking, I'm a happy guy.

Areas of expertise?

Hard-core generalist. I've covered chem/rad/bio, haz waste, emergency mgmt., env. & occ. safety/health, field research, youth activities, insurance, ergonomics and animals and am generally knowledgeable about all of them.

