

Meet CSHEMA Volunteer Beth Welmaker



Title:
Executive Director EHS

Institution:
Nova Southeastern University

Current leadership role in CSHEMA:
2022-2023 President

How long have you worked in EHS?
25+ years, but who is counting!!

How did you get into EHS?
My first job out of college was with OSHA! I was an Industrial Hygienist. After leaving OSHA, I did IH work at a military installation before falling in love with Higher Education working at Princeton University EHS.

How long have you worked at your current institution?
A little over 6 years.

Best career advice?
Don't be afraid to fail.
I did not like this advice! In truth, as I forced myself to imagine an outcome resulting failure, I quickly realized I would be able to cope and it has pushed me outside my comfort zone to go for it!

What is the biggest problem you face at your institution?

Our biggest..... *hmmm*. My current focus is on how we will better track contractors working on our campus and their safety. A current initiative we just launched is our EHS Liaison program. We now have an EHS Liaison in every college and university department to expand our reach and improve communication.

Proudest professional accomplishment so far?

This is an easy question! The opportunity to serve the professional organization I value so highly as president.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

I love my work. I would be very happy to still be volunteering for CSHEMA and working with my amazing colleagues at NSU in 5 years' time. Our institution continues to grow rapidly, so hopefully our team will be larger in 5 years as well!

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

I wear many hats in my role today and I think that will continue for EHS professionals in the future - for example we see the lines between biosafety and engineering merging. There is more collaboration in science challenging us in EHS to expand our knowledge base. It is exciting!

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

Our NSU EHS team is small and I have always felt that I had a larger team behind me as a member of CSHEMA. With a few key strokes, I could reach out and ask my question and get half a dozen responses and examples to emulate. I am grateful to belong to such a generous and supportive community.

Hobbies?

I love reading in my "spare" time. I cherish time with friends and family. My guilty pleasure is any British TV show - I watch a lot of PBS shows/

Areas of expertise?

I consider myself to have great expertise in consuming Sour Patch Kids but I am sure you mean professional expertise! Not that I consider myself an expert, but I have spent a large part of my career in biosafety, including BSL-3 labs. I enjoy working with researchers, and also married a chemist!

