MARY LINDSTROM: Candidate Statement for CSHEMA Board of Trustees
Election 2024
Office of Vice President

Candidate Name: Mary Lindstrom

Candidate’s Current Professional Role: Laboratory Safety Advisor, Harvard University

Please describe your professional experience relevant to the Board of Trustees position.

It’s a great honor to be chosen as a candidate for Vice President of CSHEMA. I’m currently a Lab Safety Advisor at Harvard University. I have a bachelor’s degree in molecular biology from William Jewell College, with a year spent at Cambridge University, and a master’s degree in immunology and molecular pathogenesis from Emory University. Following graduation I spent 18 years at MIT, first as a Lab Manager and then as an EHS Coordinator, before transitioning to Harvard.

Being a successful leader in CSHEMA requires a strong understanding of the EHS profession and the university populations we serve. I have a thorough understanding of the student and researcher viewpoints gained from my years in college and in the lab of a Nobel laureate. As an Embedded Safety Professional, I gained valuable insight into academic department operations and the needs of university staff. My EHS roles have also given me a broad understanding of specialties such as biosafety, emergency management, environmental management, facilities, fire and life safety, industrial hygiene, and radiation safety.

I’m skilled at analyzing complex situations using qualitative and quantitative methods and have significant experience with written and oral communications. I have a track record of successful leadership within labs, departments, EHS teams, and CSHEMA. I enjoy bringing people together and utilizing their unique strengths towards common goals. I seek to understand how changes may impact stakeholders and determine what is needed for successful implementation. I also have experience serving on Institute-level committees.

Overall, my professional experience has prepared me to successfully serve on the BoT and to identify and implement initiatives that will be beneficial and appeal to the range of populations within our Association.

Please describe your CSHEMA experience, involvement and leadership involvement.

CSHEMA has been critical in my development as an EHS professional and I have a strong desire to give back to the Association and the people that have made it an important part of my life.

I was introduced to CSHEMA in 2014 when I was on a lab manager safety culture panel at a regional conference. I’m currently Chair of the Conference Planning Committee for the 2024 Annual CSHEMA Conference in Tampa. I previously was Co-Lead of the Embedded Safety Professionals (ESP) Community of Practice (CoP), served on the Conference Education Committee, presented at 4 Annual Conferences, organized the Circle of Lab Life webinar, co-led development of the ESP 101 Academy Course, and represented CSHEMA on a joint COVID-19 webinar with representatives from URMIA (University Risk Management and Insurance Association) and SCUP (Society for College and University Planning).
Please state your goals for CSHEMA while serving on the Board of Trustees.

I’m excited by the prospect of using my practical knowledge and my skills in communication, collaboration, and leadership on the BoT and would value the opportunity to work on behalf of the CSHEMA membership. We don’t know what challenges we’ll face in the next three years or how our member needs will evolve. I’m prepared to take on challenges that arise and listen to input from other CSHEMA leaders and our diverse member population in shaping future goals.

My overall goal is to use my skills to build on CSHEMA’s reputation as a top educational and networking organization for the university EHS community by focusing on specific ways to strengthen our community and maintain our financial security.

Our members, ranging from early-career professionals to seasoned EHS administrators, are our greatest asset and we exist as an organization to serve them. I have several goals related to expanding and strengthening the CSHEMA community, including 1) developing a more detailed onboarding process for new members and new leaders. 2) increasing awareness of the CoPs as platforms for sharing technical expertise, troubleshooting issues, and forming professional relationships, and 3) promoting development of effective educational programing aimed at different EHS audiences by actively recruiting presenters, encouraging collaborative presentations between CoPs and with our partner associations, and developing resources aimed at helping people create more effective presentations.

An organization’s success relies on having financial resources to provide services that will attract and retain members. CSHEMA is in the fortunate position of having a solid financial portfolio, thanks to the dedication and careful planning of past and present leaders and other volunteers. I would work with our Treasurer and other BoT members to 1) ensure that fiscally sound choices continue to be made, 2) invest in initiatives that will provide value to our members, and 3) expand revenue sources by seeking creative ways to acquire and retain new institute members, increase sponsor engagement, and develop more revenue-generating educational programming.

In closing, I’m greatly honored to be chosen as a candidate for the position of Vice President. I strongly believe in serving our community. As Conference Planning Committee Chair, I have worked diligently to gain an understanding of overall conference planning best practices, assess previous conferences for lessons learned, meet with people from different EHS populations to better understand diverse viewpoints, lead an amazing Conference Planning Committee, and create new processes that will streamline the planning of this and future conferences. I would be bringing this same work ethic, desire for collaboration, persistence, and organizational skills to the BoT.