Ira Staehle

Candidate for 2018 Non Academic Director

I attained my undergraduate degree at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I worked under the supervision of Professor Scott Stoudt developing hypercoordinate organo-tin & germanium molecules. During these three years of research I gained a great appreciation and enjoyment for synthesis and characterization. I then transitioned to graduate school at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) under the supervision of Professor Miguel Garcia-Garibay. My research involved synthesizing and characterizing amphidynamic molecular machines. However, during my first year at UCLA a major laboratory accident occurred resulting in large sweeping changes across all of the UC system by CalOSHA. At this time my advisor tasked me with improving the safety of our research laboratory. In addition to classes, teaching, and research I also took on the responsibility of implementing safety initiatives. During my time at UCLA I was able to publish in both a research and safety capacity. Additionally, during my time at UCLA I was awarded a teaching award for my performance as a teaching associate for both undergraduates and graduate students. Once I attained my degree from UCLA I knew that I wanted to pursue a career in safety with an emphasis on science/chemistry. I was offered a Safety Specialist position at Exact Sciences, who is the maker of Cologuard, which is the non-invasive screening test for colorectal cancer. While at Exact Sciences I developed and implemented the safety program for a rapidly expanding company. This job allowed me to generate company-wide programs, conduct training, and streamline the hazardous waste and emergency response. I was then offered a position at The University of Southern California (USC) as a Senior Hazardous Waste Specialist. This role allowed me to develop campus-wide programs which are utilized by over 40,000 undergraduates, graduates and staff. During this time USC went through a drastic inventory reduction to reduce the hazards in the laboratories on the campuses. Veolia North America (Borderlands) then offered me the EH&S Manager position in the high-hazard Sulfuric Acid Regeneration Plant (producing 400+ tons a day) inside Andeavor Refining in El Paso, TX. Here, I am the sole responsible for implementing the

safety program for all of the facility. In addition to running the safety program, I also participate in panels advising the company in matters that require an in depth knowledge of chemistry.

I would be a great asset in the Texas Academy of Science Non-Academic Director role. I strongly believe that science is an essential field for creating, gathering, and presenting data in order to make a definitive irrefutable claim that will help advance public policies and practices. This advancement for science needs to be encouraged in the next generation of scientists (undergraduates and graduate students) to further develop critical thinking skill sets and advanced problem solvers.

I offer a unique perspective coming from an academic background and transitioning to industry with experience in both a clinical laboratory setting and at a large acid regeneration site. In the Non-Academic Director role I could help provide undergraduates and graduate students a perspective into industry with an emphasis on high-hazard safety which is a growing field with many openings throughout Texas and offering much career growth potential.