

## **Background**

The Department of SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT (S&RM) reviews all reported work-related accidents, incidents and injuries on our O.U. campuses. S&RM uses these reports and subsequent investigations to compile statistics for OSHA reporting purposes, compile information for Worker Compensation claim settlement, identify specific injury/illness trends, design safety training programs and to recommend changes in workplace practices, policies or employee training.

O.U. does have effective occupational health and disability management programs. However, we believe that there is a void related to prevention. Without an increased emphasis on incident prevention, we will not be effective at reducing our numbers of work-related injuries.

After many years of evaluating individual incidents and trends, our opinion is that changes are needed. Those changes must originate at the very top of the institution and then flow downward through the ranks. Those changes must become a university priority. As a university of workers, we are experiencing too much human pain and suffering from preventable injuries that can permanently alter our employees' lifestyles, and we are paying too high a cost in Worker Compensation claims, medical expense, and lost time. This report is an effort to alert the university administration to the worsening problem. Blame is not what we wish to assign. Rather, we want to encourage certain systemic changes that we firmly believe will halt the steady increase in monetary cost and human suffering associated with work related incidents.