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OU undergraduates earn top honors for indoor air quality research

A research poster presented by Oakland University undergraduates Erika Cleary and Mary Asher was awarded the grand prize by the **American Society of Safety Engineers** (ASSE) at the Safety 2017 Professional Development Conference and Exposition, held June 19-22 in Denver, Colorado.

“When we found out we won the grand prize, we were both overjoyed and so proud of our accomplishment,” said Asher, a resident of Holly, Mich. “It was an amazing feeling to have our work recognized on a large scale.”

According to the ASSE, the poster session provides an opportunity for students and other academics to report on their research. The ASSE encourages educators, students, professionals, researchers and others to submit original contributions related to the fields of safety, health and the environment that can be displayed in an educational poster format.

Cleary and Asher’s poster highlighted their research into the incidence of asthma and other respiratory diseases in Dearborn, Mich. and River Rouge, Mich. based on indoor air quality.

“We selected this topic after we came across news articles depicting a health crisis in the study area due to air pollutants,” said Cleary, a resident of Troy, Mich. “Upon further research, we discovered there was a large number of outdoor air quality studies in the study area, yet there wasn’t a lot of research done on indoor air quality.”

According to Asher, air samples were collected and logged every two to five minutes depending on the equipment used, equipment recommendations and past studies using similar instruments.

“Five public and occupational sample locations were selected in the study areas,” she said. “The sampling procedure involved active sampling methods for particulate matter and gases using air quality monitors.”

According to Cleary, the results of the study indicate that particulate and gaseous pollutant levels in facilities in River Rouge and Dearborn are a concerning human health issue.

“Indoor air quality conditions in these areas highlight the need for further research investigation to understand how indoor air quality influences respiratory health and impacts increase asthma incidence,” Cleary said.

As the overall grand prize winners, Asher and Cleary received a monetary certificate to the ASSE store, free membership to the American Society of Safety Engineers, and an invitation to publish their work in the ASSE’s Journal of Safety, Health and Environmental Research.

“I am truly proud of their achievements as graduates of the EHS program,” said Richard Olawoyin, Ph.D., an assistant professor with the **School of Health Sciences’ Environmental Health and Safety Program**. “They came, they aspired, and they excelled!”

The students' achievement is also featured in the Rochester & Rochester Hills Gazette. Click [here](#) for the story.

To learn more about the EHS program, visit <https://www.oakland.edu/shs/public-and-environmental-wellness/environmental-health-and-safety-undergraduate/>



Oakland University undergraduates Erika Cleary and Mary Asher were awarded the grand prize by the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) for their poster highlighting their research into the incidence of asthma and other respiratory disease in Dearborn, Mich. and River Rouge, Mich. based on indoor air quality.