

# ESN

## EKU Safety Newsletter

News of the people and events associated with EKU's safety degree programs

ISSUE 4 | SPRING 2024

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# EKU

DEPARTMENT OF  
SAFETY AND SECURITY



# Graduate Student Spotlight



## Gustavo M. Ortiz

**M.S. Safety,  
Security &  
Emergency  
Management**  
Est. 2025

**Hometown:** San Antonio, Texas

**Undergraduate Major:** B.S. Organizational Management

**Why did you decide to pursue a graduate degree at EKU?:**

I decided to pursue a graduate degree at EKU because it offers one of the very few Master's programs in Safety nationwide. During my research, I encountered several unaccredited programs, but EKU consistently stood out. The university's commitment to providing a reputable and specialized Master's degree in Safety, coupled with its positive reputation, made it my top choice. The rest is history, and now I find myself here, confident in the decision to pursue my graduate studies at EKU.

**In my current role:** I am proud to serve as the Senior Safety Scientist for the Space Division at Southwest Research Center. This position not only reflects the culmination of my extensive experience but also allows me to apply my knowledge in a dynamic and cutting-edge environment. The challenges and responsibilities associated with ensuring safety in space-related endeavors are both exciting and fulfilling, driving my continued commitment to excellence in the realm of safety and security.

**What do you like most about EKU?:**

One of the aspects I appreciate most about EKU is the exceptional accessibility to professors and my student advisor. This accessibility has truly enriched my academic experience. Professors at EKU are not only experts in their fields but also approachable and willing to engage in meaningful discussions, offer guidance, and provide valuable insights. The open lines of communication create an environment where I feel supported in my learning journey.

**Tell us something you learned in your Grad program that surprised you:**

While it's still early in my graduate program, I've been pleasantly surprised by the immediate applicability of the safety courses to my work.

**Do you have any advice for students that are interested in this program:**

Certainly, for students venturing into the safety field, my advice would be to not only absorb the theoretical knowledge provided in the program but also actively seek opportunities to apply it in real-world scenarios. Practical experience is invaluable in understanding the nuances of safety practices and enhancing problem-solving skills.

# Employer Spotlight



## **Amazon.com**

Founded in 1994 by Jeff Bezos is an e-commerce, cloud computing, digital streaming company founded in Seattle, WA. The company has grown to 1.5 million employees across 58 countries. Amazon.com has more than 1,000 warehouses across the United States, with locations in all 50 states. Amazon.com has numerous corporate offices across the United States in cities such as Seattle, Nashville, and Arlington, VA.

### **“Safe to Go”**

Amazon has a culture of safety imbedded as soon as an associate begins their first day. Amazon associates are trained in safety on a weekly basis, covering topics such as a proper handling, slip, trip, fall prevention, and risk mitigation. Amazon hosts quarterly safety training which covered 33 safety modules to ensure associates are set up for success during their safety career. Amazon leaders receive extensive safety training within the scope of risk mitigation, root cause analysis, and incident investigations.

### **Career Opportunities**

Amazon offers workplace, health, and safety (WHS) internships as well as a full-time university program which is targeted at new grads with an undergrad degree in occupational safety that have graduated within the past 5 years. Amazon offers careers in all 50 US states as well as international opportunities.

### **Safety Jobs**

<https://www.amazon.jobs/en/teams/workplace-health-safety>

# Faculty Spotlight

## Dr. Barry Spurlock

Professor

School of Safety, Security &  
Emergency Management



### **How long have you been at EKU?:**

10 years

### **Highest degree earned?**

Juris Doctor- Northern Kentucky University,  
Salmon P. Chase College of Law

### **Favorite part of your job:**

This is one area where I can name a favorite. My favorite part of my job is interacting with students and the relationships that form over time through both the classroom and leading the student section of ASSP.

It is extremely rewarding to see students grow in their ability to grasp and apply the concepts covered in class, and for them to seek advice on the direction of the careers and even personal lives. This allows you to know you are at least making a difference beyond just imparting knowledge.

### **What brought you to EKU?:**

Growing up in Southeastern Kentucky, I always valued our high school tours and events at EKU, and knew at an early stage I wanted to attend EKU. As an undergraduate and graduate student at EKU, I was also inspired by the faculty and knew one day I would love to teach in this particular program at EKU.

Later, while working as an OSH professional, I had the opportunity to teach as an adjunct professor for Indiana University and realized my passion for teaching. Sadly, no full-time teaching positions were available. So, I pursued my next passion, the law and graduated law school with plans of focusing my practice in the world of OSHA and employment law.

After practicing law full time in the world of OSHA and employment law, an opportunity arose at EKU to join the DSS faculty and allow me and my family to move closer to our Southeast Kentucky roots.



(cont'd)

## Faculty Spotlight

**Dr. Barry  
Spurlock  
Professor**



**EKU ASSP  
Student Section**

### **Favorite class to teach**

I can narrow this to three classes which are likely my most favorites, and those are OSH 350 – Measurement of Safety Performance, OSH 390 – Workers’ Compensation and its graduate companion, SSE 822 – Workers’ Compensation and Labor Law.

The subject of safety performance measurement is near and dear to my heart, and is one that I most passionate about. This endearment to safety performance measurement relates back to my graduate research work which was inspired by the frustrations I experienced in industry with how most organizations measured safety – which was focusing on lagging indicators such as OSHA injury rates. My research and work to measure safety with true performance indicators/leading measures opened up speaking opportunities across the nation and is a topic that has truly been on the frontier of safety management over the last two decades.

I enjoy teaching about workers’ comp because it relates to a field of law that is relatively non-intuitive for students, and it is extremely rewarding to employ the Socratic method of teaching and watch students obtain “ah hah moments” as the semesters progress.

# EKU Advantage and Corporate Educational Partnerships

TIME TO

## *break it down*

Benefits of the EKU Advantage include:

### **MORE HOURS, LESS MONEY, FINISH FASTER**

EKU will partially match your company's tuition benefit with a flat-rate tuition discount for your employees. All undergraduate and graduate students will receive free textbooks as part of the EKU Booksmart program.

Plus, get a 20% discount on EKU's Workforce Development courses.

### **LOCKED-IN TUITION**

Students are guaranteed a fixed tuition rate from initial enrollment for up to two consecutive years of enrollment.

### **ENHANCED CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Expedited and enhanced customer service assistance to employees to expedite and prioritize the admission processes, class registration, financial aid and scholarship applications. Dedicated academic advisors to provide individual attention to help employees move toward degree completion.

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Access for student employees and dignitaries to all EKU facilities and events enjoyed by EKU students.

### **Investing in Employees**

Employers will enhance educational opportunities for its employees and maintain a competitive advantage in employee retention.



**Benton D.  
Shirey**

Director,  
Corporate  
Educational  
Partnerships

**Benton.Shirey  
@eku.edu**

**(859)622-2264**

**corporate.eku.edu**



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**TOGETHER**

we can make a difference for Eastern's students.

**Help the ECU Occupational Safety (OSH) program.**

**ECU OSH faculty have identified the need to establish a new fund to create a foundation of support for their students.**

**Greatest needs funds across campus provide program-specific support to students, including professional development opportunities, supplies and training materials, and services that enhance the classroom experience.**

**<https://securelb.imodules.com/s/1763/giving19/interior.aspx?sid=1763&gid=2&pgid=524&cid=1360+&dids=407&appealcode=23OSH>**

**Make a  
Gift**

**Our first step is to raise the \$1,000 required to start a charitable non-endowed fund at ECU.**

**Your gift will help us reach this goal so that we can provide exclusive support for OSH students.**





## EKU ASSP Student Section

### Student Officers

**President:** Madeline Ping

**President Elect:** Joseph Kelley

**Undergraduate VP:** Madison Amezcua  
Cortez

**Graduate VP:** Elaheh Siahkouhi

**Secretary:** Jacob Carretti

**Treasurer:** Brittini Hart

**Faculty Advisor:** Barry Spurlock

## Faculty

**Ron Dotson, Ed.D.**

Ron.Dotson@eku.edu

**Scotty Dunlap , Ed.D., CSP**

Scotty.dunlap@eku.edu

**Chad S. Foster, Ph.D.**

Chad.Foster@eku.edu

**Joanne McGlown**

Joanne.McGlown@eku.edu

**Troy A. Rawlins, Ed.D.**

Troy.Rawlins@eku.edu

**Tom Schneid, J.D., Ph.D**

Tom.Schneid@eku.edu

**Randy Shaw**

Randy.Shaw@eku.edu

**Barry S Spurlock, J.D., CSP**

Barry.Spurlock@eku.edu

**David Stumbo, Ed.D., OHST, CSP**

David.Stumbo@eku.edu

**Bill Sullivan**

Bill.Sullivan@eku.edu

**Brian K. Simpkins, Ed.D.**

Brian.Simpkins@eku.edu



Fall 2024



Save  
The  
Date



# Spring Job & Internship Fair

March 6, 2024

85 Employers

270 Students

400 Connection Made

In-person interviews

Virtual interviews

Day-after interviews



Pre-registration  
will open in

August

on

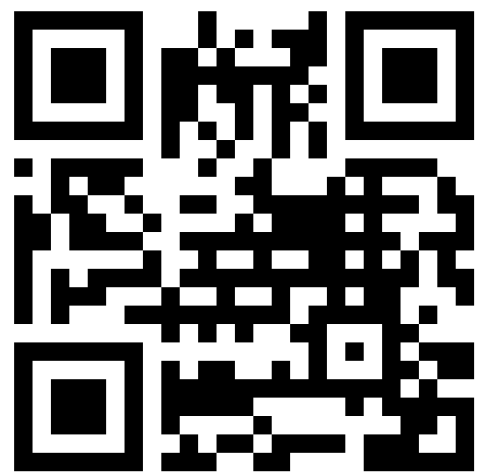
Handshake



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Link to ECU OACS

(859) 622-1296

oacs@eku.edu

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Trevor.George@eku.edu



Catalog Link

# Stay Connected



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**OSH Facebook**



**OCCUPATIONAL  
SAFETY PROGRAM**

## **EKU Safety Newsletter**

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### **Editor**

Dr. David Stumbo, OHST, CSP

David.Stumbo@eku.edu





COLLEGE OF JUSTICE, SAFETY & MILITARY SCIENCE

# OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH

**Median Base Salary for full time OSH professional: \$97,000/yr**

**Source:**  
BCSP/ASSP 2018 Salary Survey

**Top 5 Industries**

- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Insurance
- Oil, Gas, and Petrochemical
- Government/ Public Sector

**Source:**  
ASSP Database

**High demand and fastest growing profession in the United States**

**GREAT EARNING POTENTIAL  
HIGH RATE OF EMPLOYMENT  
INTERNSHIPS AVAILABLE**

[occupationalafety.eku.edu](http://occupationalafety.eku.edu)

