



## ASSP Foundation Scholarship, in memory of Willie Piispanen, CSP for \$2500

Baylee Bolton

Montana Technological University

*Master's Degree*

*Industrial Hygiene*

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Baylee's direct words of gratitude:

*Hello, my name is Baylee Bolton, MS, GSP. I am honored to have received this scholarship as it will help me in the future. I have always been passionate about safety and health. Currently, I am working in the construction industry and look forward to every day and ensuring people have a safe and healthy work environment.*

*I love being able to practice what I have been in school for. It is not every day people get to do what they love in the aspect of work and I enjoy building relationships with the people I work with.*

*Your scholarship is very generous and I appreciate everything you guys do for the future safety professionals of the world!*





## Questions from Baylee's Application:

### **How will you use your degree to make a difference in the future of occupational safety and health?**

*I am currently a graduate student in Industrial Hygiene at Montana Tech. During two of my three previous internships, I observed a significant lack of Industrial Hygiene practices in the companies where I worked. I plan to return to one of these companies and help them develop a comprehensive Industrial Hygiene program to ensure the safety and well-being of their employees. While initiating this program may be challenging, I am confident it is achievable.*

*My goal is to make a positive impact in the industry, emphasizing our role in safeguarding and supporting workers. I believe that implementing an Industrial Hygiene program in a construction company can significantly reduce exposures to hazards that employees might not even be aware of. This program would include training sessions to educate employees about potential exposures and strategies to minimize these risks. My plan involves building this program from the ground up and expanding it throughout the company's operations across the United States. I intend to start by collecting and analyzing data on the exposures I noticed during my three-month internship to confirm their presence. Following this, I aim to identify and address additional Industrial Hygiene hazards that have not yet been mitigated.*

### **What attracted you to the safety industry and how has your education affected your opinion of the field?**

*Growing up, I always wanted to help others, which led me to pursue nursing after high school. I'm naturally the type to support friends and family, aiming to improve their quality of life. However, a severe car accident changed my plans, leaving me unable to handle the physical demands of nursing. After the accident, I reassessed my career options and explored how I could continue to make a positive impact. My family introduced me to Occupational Safety and Health, and I was drawn to the idea of preventing injuries and illnesses before they happen, helping people avoid the pain of workplace accidents.*

*As I studied, I realized this field aligned perfectly with my desire to help others and my interest in promoting well-being in various environments. I genuinely enjoy waking up each day for classes, internships, and my future career. Learning about safety protocols*



*and risk management is incredibly rewarding. I'm particularly excited to specialize in Industrial Hygiene, where I can address health hazards related to chemicals, physical agents, and biological factors at work. By deepening my knowledge in this area, I aim to protect workers from long-term health issues, ensuring they can work safely and thrive. I feel grateful to have found a career path that matches my values and goals. Contributing to a safer work environment is more than just a job for me—it's a mission. Each day, I feel fulfilled knowing I'm making a real difference in people's lives, and I can't imagine a more rewarding journey ahead.*

**What are some of your educational and professional goals, and how do you plan on achieving them?**

*My goal is to develop a comprehensive skill set in Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) that spans regulatory compliance, hazard identification, risk management, incident investigation, ergonomics, and workplace health concerns. Over the next year, I aim to complete my thesis on slip resistance in public buildings, where I'll collect data, analyze risks, and provide recommendations to improve public safety. I will also strengthen my communication skills by defending my findings in an academic setting, which will help me convey complex safety concepts clearly and confidently.*

*In the long term, I aspire to apply my skills in a construction setting, ensuring the safety and health of workers in a high-risk environment. I'm particularly focused on reshaping the perception of safety professionals, aiming to be seen not as enforcers, but as approachable allies. My goal is to build trust with workers, offering guidance and education rather than policing, and ensuring they feel comfortable coming to me with concerns. I want to foster a safety culture where workers know I genuinely care about their well-being, and that my role is to protect them, not obstruct their work.*

*Alongside my education, I am committed to continuous professional development. After obtaining my Graduate Safety Practitioner (GSP) certification, I plan to expand my qualifications by pursuing certifications in audiometric testing, Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH), Certified Safety Professional (CSP), Construction Health and Safety Technician (CHST), and Safety Trained Supervisor Construction (STSC). I also plan to pursue specialized training in fall protection and other critical safety measures to stay at the forefront of safety management in diverse industries.*



*Ultimately, my vision is to contribute to a workplace culture where safety is not seen as a set of restrictive rules but as an integral, collaborative part of the workday. I want to create environments where workers feel empowered to prioritize their health and safety, and where safety professionals are trusted partners in protecting their well-being. By combining technical knowledge with strong communication and a human-centered approach, I hope to make safety a more approachable and integral aspect of every workplace.*

**What leadership and/or volunteer roles have you taken within the safety profession, and what positions do you envision yourself taking in the future?**

*While working toward my bachelor's and master's degrees, I was fortunate to gain hands-on experience as the Safety Officer at a Volunteer Fire Department. This role provided me with the opportunity to apply my academic knowledge in a high-stakes, real-world setting, and allowed me to deepen my understanding of safety practices in an emergency services environment. As Safety Officer, my primary responsibility was to ensure the safety and well-being of all fire department personnel during emergency responses and training exercises. This included conducting risk assessments before each incident, ensuring that all safety protocols were followed during operations, and identifying potential hazards at the scene. I was responsible for managing the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), ensuring that firefighters were properly equipped and prepared to handle the unique dangers posed by each call. This experience gave me a hands-on understanding of how to manage safety under pressure and in high-risk environments.*

*I also took part in safety briefings and debriefings, where I played a critical role in identifying safety gaps and recommending improvements. After each call or training session, I conducted incident investigations to determine the root causes of any accidents or near-misses. This experience reinforced my knowledge of safety regulations and best practices, as I worked to identify corrective actions and strategies to mitigate future risks. It was an invaluable opportunity to apply my knowledge of OSHA regulations and risk management strategies in real-time, and to engage directly with individuals in high-pressure situations to promote safety awareness.*

*Additionally, I was involved in organizing and leading safety training for both new recruits and seasoned members. I assisted in delivering training sessions on topics such as proper lifting techniques, fire ground safety protocols, emergency medical*



*procedures, and the safe operation of fire equipment. This experience honed my ability to communicate complex safety information clearly and effectively to diverse audiences, ensuring that every team member understood the importance of adhering to safety guidelines in potentially life-threatening situations.*

*Working as a Safety Officer in a volunteer fire department also taught me the importance of leadership, teamwork, and effective communication, especially in fast-paced and often chaotic environments. I learned how to collaborate with others to ensure that safety was always prioritized, even when time was of the essence. This experience reinforced my commitment to building a culture of safety that not only emphasizes compliance but also promotes a genuine care for the health and well-being of all personnel involved. I plan to continue working with volunteer fire departments in my future, I have seen what types of hazards all firefighters are exposed to, and how it can harm in short and long term periods. I want to help ensure there is someone there to help where they can, and I want to be that person to help.*

**What is your greatest takeaway from the current school year? How do you think this knowledge will impact yourself and others throughout your career?**

*One of my biggest takeaways from this year in my master's program in Industrial Hygiene is the interconnectedness of health, safety, and environmental factors in the workplace. I've learned that industrial hygiene isn't just about identifying hazards like chemicals or noise—it's about looking at the whole picture and understanding how different risks can affect each other. For example, poor ventilation might not only increase exposure to chemicals but can also create ergonomic issues, making it harder to find solutions. This holistic view has changed the way I approach risk assessment and has shown me the importance of addressing multiple hazards at once.*

*Another important lesson has been the focus on data-driven decision-making. Through learning about exposure assessment, statistical analysis, and epidemiological studies, I've realized how valuable data is in identifying, prioritizing, and managing risks effectively. This gives me the tools to make evidence-based recommendations, rather than relying solely on regulations or guesswork. For example, using air sampling or noise mapping allows for accurate hazard identification, which will help me make more informed decisions about which risks need immediate attention. This knowledge will have a big impact on both my career and the people I work with.*



*On a personal level, it has reinforced the idea that worker health and safety are at the core of what I do. I feel more prepared to advocate for better safety practices that go beyond compliance and truly protect people. Being able to back up safety recommendations with solid data will also help me gain trust and communicate more effectively with decision-makers and workers. For others, I hope this knowledge leads to a shift in safety culture. Safety shouldn't be seen as something imposed from the outside but as an essential part of daily work. By using data and comprehensive assessments, I can help create work environments that are safer, healthier, and more productive. I also plan to promote greater worker engagement in safety processes, so everyone feels they are part of the solution and not just following orders.*

*Overall, this school year has deepened my commitment to the field of industrial hygiene and has shown me how much more there is to learn. I'm excited to apply this knowledge in my career, knowing it will help me create safer and more sustainable workplaces, where people can thrive and go home healthy at the end of each day.*

### **What makes you stand out as an applicant?**

*The demand for skilled safety and health professionals is growing rapidly, as industries across the globe continue to expand and evolve. With this increased demand, the need for qualified individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also passionate about protecting workers and improving health outcomes has never been more critical. I firmly believe that with this scholarship and the opportunity to further my education, I can make a significant impact in this field, contributing to the safety and well-being of workers in various industries.*

*As a first-generation college graduate, my academic journey has been one of determination, resilience, and a commitment to excellence. I have worked diligently to maintain high academic standards, and my strong grades reflect my focus, discipline, and ability to excel under pressure. The road to earning my degree has not always been easy, but it has fueled my drive to succeed and make the most of every opportunity that comes my way. Being the first in my family to pursue higher education, I am deeply motivated by the desire to not only set an example for others but also to make a lasting contribution to the field of occupational safety and health. I have always had a strong passion for making a difference and ensuring that people can work in environments that are safe, healthy, and supportive. My enthusiasm for this field is not just theoretical; I am excited to apply my knowledge in real-world scenarios. I am*



*confident in my ability to transfer the skills I've gained through both academic learning and hands-on experience into practical solutions for workplace health and safety challenges. I have developed a solid foundation in hazard identification, risk assessment, and safety protocols, and I'm eager to take on greater responsibilities that will allow me to contribute to a safer, healthier working environment for employees.*

*Additionally, I am highly committed to continuous improvement and lifelong learning. I understand that in the field of occupational safety and health, knowledge is always evolving, and I am dedicated to staying ahead of the curve by seeking out advanced certifications and expanding my expertise. This scholarship would not only support my academic goals but also provide the resources necessary to enhance my professional development, ensuring I am well-equipped to tackle the challenges of an ever-changing field. Ultimately, I stand out as an applicant because I combine academic excellence with passion and dedication to the field of safety and health. I am driven by the belief that I can make a real impact in improving workplace safety standards, and I am eager to bring my skills, experiences, and personal drive to the next phase of my career. I am committed to making the most of this opportunity and using it to help shape a future where health and safety are prioritized in every workplace.*