Mishael Theis, MS, GSP

Mishael Theis received his MS in Occupational Health Sciences (Industrial Hygiene) from Purdue University in 2020. He worked on numerous research projects focused on manganese nanoparticle exposure in Dr. Park’s aerosol research lab and collaboration with other faculty members. Upon graduation, he began his career as an Environmental, Health, and Safety Manager at Pretium Packaging, a plastics manufacturer. After this, he took a role (current) as an Industrial Hygienist for Toledo Refining Company, an oil refinery in Northwest Ohio.

What is some of the advice you would give to current students/postdocs?
Get out of your comfort zone and look for new experiences in unfamiliar areas. Many of my favorite and most valuable experiences at Purdue were initiated by trying something new.

What are some of the valuable skills and experiences you gained from your time at Purdue?
I arrived at Purdue with a novice understanding of what an Industrial Hygienist truly is. I was fortunate enough to have an outstanding advisor (Dr. Park), who was very patient while teaching me new concepts and methods, as well as invaluable research tools. I was also able to work with members of my advisory committee (Dr. Dydak and Dr. Liu) on research projects which allowed me to hone my skills before graduation. In the two years I attended Purdue, the HSCI faculty helped to advance my skills and knowledge in the industrial hygiene field much further than I could have ever expected.

What do you miss most about Purdue?
I miss the clubs I was involved in the most. I was President of the Purdue Industrial Hygiene Student Association/AIHA Student Chapter for was a very rewarding experience. The club was able to grow and create a student chapter for safety-oriented students as well during my time at Purdue. Reaching out to others and igniting their interest for a field that I am very passionate about will always be exciting to me. I was also able to attend sponsored conferences and networking events due to these clubs. Another club I was heavily involved in was the Men’s Rugby club. Playing other Midwest schools and practicing with the team will always be some of my fondest memories at Purdue.

What is your favorite memory from Purdue?
My favorite memory from Purdue would have to be when myself and Dr. Park sampled for 17-18 hours straight. I had previously sampled for 16 hours straight at an internship before I arrived at Purdue and I didn’t think I would ever break that personal record. At the time, I don’t think myself or Dr. Park enjoyed the experience very much but looking back now it is the first thing I think of when I remember my time at Purdue.

What was your first job out of graduate school?
My first job was as an Environmental, Health, and Safety Manager for a plastics manufacturer in Northwest Ohio.

What is your typical day like now?
My typical day now includes reviewing and collecting exposure data, reviewing procedures, and attending meetings.

What are your overall responsibilities, as well as day-to-day tasks?
As a refinery industrial hygienist, I am responsible for all health and safety programs related to industrial hygiene. I am also the health and safety specialist for the laboratory onsite.

Where do you see yourself in the future? What are your next steps?
My next focus is obtaining my Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH) credentials. Although I still have a couple of years before I am eligible to sit for the exam, I will begin preparing for it soon. Continuing education is extremely important to me and is a necessity in this field.

When you’re not working, what do you like to do for fun?
My favorite hobbies are exercising and spending time with my friends. The pandemic has made this difficult but hopefully in 2021 things begin to return to normal. I have become a bit of a Jeep enthusiast which has been enjoyable also.