

New Milton F. Lunch Research Fellowship Recipient

Gretchen Heberling is serving as the 2013 recipient of the Milton F. Lunch Research Fellowship, an opportunity offered by Victor O. Schinnerer & Company and the National Society of Professional Engineers. Heberling has a bachelor of science degree in architectural engineering from the University of Wyoming, and later this year she will be pursuing a masters in civil/environmental engineering focused on sustainable design and construction at Stanford University.

The fellowship, an intensive eight-week summer program in Schinnerer's offices, is structured to provide both an educational component—to advance the student's understanding of professional liability risk management in the performance of construction-related professional services—and a research assignment. The fellow prepares substantive additions to Schinnerer's body of knowledge that are shared with policyholders, design and construction industry publications, and academic institutions.

As an undergraduate, Heberling studied structural engineering as well as sustainable design during her architecture curriculum. She both received her LEED Green Associate accreditation and passed her Engineer-in-Training/Fundamentals of Engineering exam. She has published research; through a National Science Foundation grant she investigated the feasibility of light manufacturing microbusinesses utilizing sustainable construction practices to reduce building maintenance costs for retrofits or new construction. Her academic goal is to understand successful methods to reduce energy consumption directly, the construction costs associated with energy reduction, practical substitutions of alternative energy resources, and methods to affect changes in human behavior to reduce energy costs.

The basis of her summer research—and her graduate studies—will be focused on the departure of constructed projects from their simulated performance. Part of Heberling's research will include comparing virtual building models and simulated performance with real-world energy utilization data for new construction and

retrofits. She will also be looking at the sources of project problems causing the failure of building performance to meet project specifications. As part of this she will research how compliance with requirements is assessed. In addition, she is charged with examining the financial incentives tied to sustainable design and the effect the failure to meet the design parameters has on the financial viability of projects and the design liability exposure of those planning and building the sustainable project.

In addition to learning about professional liability exposures, insurance, and risk management while assessing the success of sustainability, Heberling will be assisting in the preparation of blog posts and website updates for www.PlanetRiskManagement.com.

Past interns have added to Schinnerer's body of knowledge and resources by contributing to our white paper series. Past topics include green design, integrated project delivery, and the risks of brownfields sites. The white papers produced by past Milton F. Lunch Fellows can be found at www.Schinnerer.com/Risk-Mgmt/Pages/Milt-lunch-fellow.aspx.



Kevin Collins, head of the design professionals insurance program at Schinnerer, introduces Lunch Research Fellow Gretchen Heberling to the underwriting process.