

SSPC and CES Department at the University of Limerick welcome leading experts in chemical process safety for a 2-day industry-focused master class



Dr Mary Shire, VP Research, University of Limerick, Dennis Smith, Emeritus Industry Representative, Eur Ing Keith Plumb, Director of Integral Pharma Services Ltd, Michael Kennedy, Director of SPDS Ltd., Keith O'Neill, Takeda Ireland Limited, Peter Davern, Conference Chair and Jon O'Halloran, SSPC General Manager.

“There’s an old saying that if you think safety is expensive, try an accident. Accidents cost a lot of money; and, not only in damage to plant and in claims for injury, but also in the loss of the company’s reputation”.

Trevor Kletz (1922 – 2013), founder of process safety and inherently safer design.

It is clear that ongoing research, development and innovation are essential for sustaining and growing the pharmaceutical industry in Ireland. However, such efforts will only succeed when underpinned by robust and effective chemical process safety management systems. Process safety is a disciplined framework for managing the integrity of operating systems and processes that handle hazardous substances by applying good design principles, engineering, and operating practices. It deals with the prevention and control of incidents that have the potential to release hazardous materials or energy. Such incidents cause toxic

releases, fires or explosions and often result in serious injuries, fatalities, property damage, lost production, and adverse environmental impact.

Against this backdrop, the Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre (SSPC) and the Chemical & Environmental Sciences (CES) Department, University of Limerick, collaborated to offer a 2-day industry-focused Master Class in Chemical Process Safety. The objective of the event was to bring together internationally and nationally recognised experts in the domain to share their knowledge and experience in the safe day-to-day running of pharmaceutical production plants. As such, the Master Class involved a blend of plenary lectures and interactive workshops delivered by the process safety experts on the following core topics: process safety management, thermochemical safety, electrostatic hazards, human factors, dust explosion hazards, and regulatory considerations. Over 80 chemical engineers, chemists and process safety specialists/managers attended from all of the prominent bulk pharmaceutical manufacturers in Ireland with a view to improving their awareness of and competence in chemical process safety.

John Bresland, the Master Class keynote speaker and former chairman and CEO of the US Chemical Safety Board (CSB), said,

“Hazardous operations in the Pharma industry and process safety need to be understood. It is important to recognise, focus and educate on process safety issues and for management to lead by example to support the avoidance of hurting employees and the environment.”

Peter Davern, Conference Chair and CES Dept. lecturer in Pharmaceutical Organic Chemistry and Chemical Process Safety, who has significant industrial experience said,

“While throughput, quality and occupational safety are readily recognised as key performance indicators in many bulk pharmaceutical companies, it is widely acknowledged that a ‘blind spot’ can exist across all levels in many organisations when it comes to the true importance of process safety. The idea behind the Master Class was to help raise awareness of process safety’s importance among those who are directly involved with or who influence chemical production activities from either a technical, managerial or strategic perspective.”

SSPC and the CES Department at the University of Limerick were privileged to welcome esteemed keynote speakers and experts in their field, including, John Bresland, former chairman and CEO of the US Chemical Safety Board (CSB), Professor Francis Stoessel, , Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (Lausanne) and former Head of Chemical Process Safety (Swissi Process Safety), Simon Gakhar, Dekra

Insight (UK), Pat Conneely, Head of the COMAH, Chemical Production & Storage Unit, Health & Safety Authority (Ire) , Michael Kennedy, Director, SPDS Ltd. (Ire), Eur Ing Keith Plumb, Director of Integral Pharma Services Ltd. (UK) and Dr Martin Pitt, Senior Lecturer in Chemical Engineering at the University of Sheffield (UK).



Dr Martin Pitt, Senior Lecturer in Chemical Engineering at the University of Sheffield, John Bresland, former chairman and CEO of the US Chemical Safety Board (CSB), Peter Davern, Conference Chair and Pat Conneely, Head COMAH, Chemical Production & Storage Unit at the Health & Safety Authority (HAS, Ireland).

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About the Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre (SSPC)

The Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre (SSPC) is a Global Hub of Pharmaceutical Process Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing, funded by Science Foundation Ireland through its Research

Centres programme and the Pharmaceutical industry. It is a unique collaboration between 22 industry partners, 9 research performing organisations and 12 international academic collaborators. The SSPC comprises over 150 active researchers and has funding of over 40 Million Euro for 6 years from mid-2013. This large research collaboration has particular skills in active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) synthesis, purification and crystallization.