

## **Original Contribution through Community Engagement**

### *WCU & the Wider Community: Pro Bono Human Resources Consultants Engage in Real World Projects*

For the past five years, faculty member Marie-Line Germain ([mgermain@wcu.edu](mailto:mgermain@wcu.edu)) has engaged her students through the Master of Science degree in Human Resources program offered through the Department of Human Services in the community as pro bono consultants. They and their professor have served over 45 nonprofit organizations, small businesses and local government agencies located throughout NC, SC, TN and VA. Since the MSHR program is delivered online, the students' work is performed remotely using digital communication. Thus far, they have completed over 65 HR pro bono consulting projects, all completed within a 10-week timeframe. The work is part of every course taught by Marie-Line Germain, associate professor of human resources and leadership, who supervises the students' consulting projects. A last semester MSHR graduate student serves as the projects coordinator – the liaison between the organizations' executive director, the teams of students, and the faculty member. HR consulting projects range in scope, from the development of employee handbooks to employee compensation analyses, to city-wide employee satisfaction surveys. Some of the organizations served include the Town of Canton, NC, Green Opportunities, NC, Big Brother Big Sister, the YMCA, and Habitat for Humanity – Asheville.

About this collaborative project as an example of community engagement, Professor Germain said that “Our pro bono HR Consulting initiative has been serving both the Community at large and our MSHR students who see real value in applying the skills they learn in our courses. The opportunity to solve real organizations' HR challenges has also strengthened my approach to teaching. The University places community engagement at the forefront of its mission and, via our pro bono consulting work, it is my goal to continue to support it.”

For more information see: <http://thereporter.wcu.edu/2015/06/human-resources-students-serve-as-consultants-to-businesses-organizations/>; <http://clearvision.wcu.edu/archives/1671>

If you would like your community engagement work recognized through the *STAR Engagement Projects* program, please submit your proposals through the [Community-based Activities Faculty Survey](#) administered annually in the spring semester from early April – late May.



