

Human resources students help meet nonprofit organizations' needs

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Students in the master's degree program in human resources offered through the Department of Human Services served as consultants to nonprofit organizations in North Carolina and in Virginia during the fall semester as part of an online employee and labor relations course.

Under the supervision of Marie-Line Germain, assistant professor of human resources and leadership, and working with student Charlotte Akers, who served as liaison between the students, professors and organizations, four teams of five students each helped their clients address a specific need.

One team created a Family and Medical Leave policy, and an FML best practice guide for The Arc of Southside in Danville, Va., and Tonya Fowler, executive director, said the students did a wonderful job. "They made the process easy and the outcome for us as a nonprofit is incredible," said Fowler.

Another team developed a guide to non-monetary incentives to increase motivation and retention for Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Central Piedmont in High Point. "During the process, the students proved to be professional, prompt and full of great ideas that really focused on getting the end results we needed," said Krista Johnston, vice president of the organization.

A third team developed an on-boarding PowerPoint presentation, a new hire welcome letter and an on-boarding checklist for the YWCA in High Point. "The team far exceeded my expectations," said Heidi Majors, executive director of the YWCA. "I am so excited to have this new orientation program as a tool for the YWCA."

The fourth team project drafted an employee handbook for the Archdale-Trinity Chamber of Commerce. Beverly Nelson, president of the chamber, said they had needed an employee handbook but had not had the time or resources to make it happen. "The students and faculty were great to work with and were really focused on meeting my chamber's needs," said Nelson.

The project also was rewarding for students, who overwhelmingly reported they benefited from the experience, said Germain. Jessica Brundige, an online student from Raeford, assisted with creating the employee handbook for Archdale-Trinity Chamber of Commerce and described the experience as the most interesting and beneficial so far during her graduate work. "We went into the assignment prepared to create a very basic employee handbook but ended up with a very detailed employee handbook and procedures/policies manual," said Brundige. "It was much more valuable to my learning experience than writing a research paper, as it was something I will do in my career."

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