

# Students provide free human resources consulting services

[Randall Holcombe](#) - June 13, 2017

For the sixth consecutive year, students from Western Carolina University's [master's degree program in human resources](#) provided online human resources consultation services at no cost for organizations across the U.S.

During the recent spring semester, about 25 students were involved in the consulting work in courses taught by Marie-Line Germain, associate professor of human resources and leadership, and assistant professor Siham Lekchiri.

Client organizations included the N.C. Museum of Art Foundation; Jimmy V Foundation of Cary; Chanco on the James of Spring Grove, Virginia; Apex Precision Audio of Chula Vista, California; Loaves and Fishes of Greenville, South Carolina; the Children's Home Society of N.C.; the Center for Advocacy for the Rights & Interests of the Elderly, based out of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Meridian Behavioral Health Services of Asheville; and Cary Area Emergency Medical Services in Cary.



Meridian Behavioral Health Services of Asheville, which provides child and adult mental health and substance abuse services in the westernmost counties of North Carolina, was one of the client organizations receiving human resources consultation services.

The focus of the projects varied from the revision of several employee policy manuals to the creation of an extensive applicant screening process and new employee orientation, said Marcus Conklin, a student working toward his master's degree in business administration at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. Conklin served as project manager and orchestrated the communication between Germain, the teams of students and the clients.

The five WCU graduate students who worked with Cary Area EMS created a new employee orientation process and revised a 170-page document. "The goal was to minimize the document and keep it functional," said Steve Cohen, chief of the Cary EMS. "The students did an outstanding job and achieved the goal. They were engaging, the communication was excellent and they asked pertinent questions."

Mark Garber, human resources director for Meridian Behavioral Health Services, said the WCU team he worked with was meticulous in its review to assure that a handbook created by the students was consistent with current policies and was easily readable. "Their time on this project resulted in a positive outcome which has been most helpful for our organization," Garber said.

The advocacy center in Philadelphia provided consulting work for two teams. "We are very satisfied," said Diane Menio, the center's executive director. "(We) very much appreciate what (the) students have done for us." Menio said she will encourage other nonprofits to take advantage of WCU's free human resources consulting services.

Since 2011, more than 500 graduate students in WCU's Human Resources Program have served as pro bono consultants for 70 nonprofits, small businesses and government agencies in eight states. For more information, contact Germain by calling 305-962-8668, emailing her at [mgermain@wcu.edu](mailto:mgermain@wcu.edu) or visiting [www.hrconsulting.wcu.edu](http://www.hrconsulting.wcu.edu).