



WABASH VALLEY COLLEGIATE SHRM CHAPTER OF ISU AND SMWC

Spring 2007 Newsletter

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<http://www.clabbergirlmuseum.com/exhibits.php>

A Farewell from our President



This will be my final article as the President of the chapter since the April 18th meeting will be my last. At that time, Jennifer Eastridge will resume her duties as President and I wish her and the chapter continuing success in the upcoming future.

I thank you for allowing me to be President of this fine chapter. I have enjoyed my time with you. At the beginning of the year, the officers developed the following 5 goals:

- ♦ Have a team to participate in the HR games at the State Leadership Conference;
- ♦ Participate in the North Central Regional HR Games
- ♦ Increase the National SHRM Membership
- ♦ Participate in student organization fairs at ISU, Ivy Tech, & SWWC
- ♦ Receive one of the top ten superior merit awards from SHRM

I am happy to say that we reached almost all of them. We had our first team participate in the HR Games at the State Leadership Conference in Bloomington. The team consisted of Brittney Duell, Jennifer Eastridge, Kelli Algood, and Justin Wilson. Unfortunately, due to some scheduling conflicts the team will not be able to participate in the North Central Regional games. We did not participate in a formal organizational fair but did send two representatives to Ivy Tech to promote our chapter. Look for more involvement in the future. We will not know our Merit Award placement from the National chapter of SHRM until after the publishing of this newsletter but our chapter does an excellent job of participating in activities and I am confident we will do well in that area.

The chapter contributed to two worthy causes this year. We donated toys to the "Toys for Tots" program and contributed \$75 to Big Brother/Big Sister. I hope the chapter continues to seek out ways to get involved in campus and community service projects. Be a chapter that reaches out to others and helps those in need.

On March 14, we held our New Member Orientation meeting and had a great turnout. Fredia Haviland, the District Manager of Kelly Services was our guest speaker. Fredia is an ISU Alumnus and one of the cofounders of our chapter. I look forward to seeing the new members at our upcoming meeting in April. It will be our annual picnic meeting and election of officers. Please come and actively get involved in the chapter by running for an office. It is well worth the time and effort. Our chapter has the best advisors who are always willing to assist and encourage you in all your efforts.

Remember to always stay positive, seek out new adventures, and share your ups and downs with those around you. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your President. It has been a pleasure. I will close with this quote by Kimerly Adamson:

"The difference between the average and outstanding person is their positive attitude, perseverance to reach their goals and ability to share their success with others."

Just Wilson's Internship Experience at Toyota Manufacturing Indiana (TMMI)

I would like to start out with saying shoot for the stars when picking your Internship, put your resume in wherever you feel like. You will find that experience is the key to landing a job, and the skills that I learned from my experience at TMMI will be with me for life. I hadn't ever been in a manufacturing setting before and let me tell you to walk into a building of that magnitude for the first time was amazing.

When I was hired on as a co-op at Toyota I was in Team Member Services (TMS), the people in my office were very nice and helped me with all of my questions. I was able to conduct lunch and learn series, Organizational Development (OD) workshops, and also go on a field trip to Toyota Technical Center (TTC) in Ann Arbor, MI. The experience was one of a kind and I would recommend it to everyone.

Justin Wilson, Senior Indiana State University

Jennifer Eastridge's Internship Experience at HSBC

I am in the middle of my third year with HSBC in Carmel, IN where I am an intern in the Human Resources Department. I have been very fortunate to have been so involved with everything that goes on in our office. Our site specializes in Consumer Lending and we have over 700 employees and we keep on growing. Most of the major projects that I have worked on are based on employee engagement and appreciation. Some of the projects include organizing Habitat for Humanity where we had our employees come build the house, each year we have a Health and Wellness Fair that I am in charge of and I have vendors come from all over the city, we also host a carnival each year, which is my favorite project. I do some training with the new-hires and this past summer I taught a Labor Relations training course to all of our managers and department managers. Recruiting and interviewing are also one of the tasks I do on a daily basis. Working with HSBC has taught me so much about Human Resources and has given me so many opportunities that will help me in my future.

Brittney Duell's Internship Experience at Sony DADC

I have had the honor and privilege of working at Sony DADC since May 2006. This internship has been one of the best experiences of my life. It has opened numerous doors for me and has allowed me to experience what an HR professional does on a day to day bases. Some of my job responsibilities have included new member orientations, tuition reimbursement, publishing CD notes, carrying out background checks and drug screens, coordinating hiring activities, coordinating interviews, putting together and sending out employee performance appraisals, maintaining job opportunity bulletins and maintaining the plant training records. What I have learned from my experience at Sony DADC is irreplaceable and vital to my future. If I could give any advice to a fellow HR student it would be to make what you can of your internship. Life is what you make of it.

Welcome New Members

Adeola Adediran
Elsa Lee
Keunhyun Song
Yu-Ting Chen
John M. Krieger
Hsiao-Chien Huang
Dianna Thompson
Immanuel Ivey
Terri Clark
Amy Turner
Edith A. Okoth
Renee Wikosz
Megan Dickerson
Patty Taylor
Michelle Dickerson
Rashawnda Bonds
Angelina Bedwell
Wendy Bennett

HR Games

This was the first year for SHRM to hold state competitions for the HR games, usually there is just the regional competition and then you advance from there. However, your placement from this round does not affect your team's opportunity to participate in the regional competitions, held this April. This was the first year for our Wabash Valley Collegiate SHRM chapter to compete in the HR games and I thought we did pretty



well. Justin Willson, Brittney Duell, Kelli Allgood and I represented our chapter for the games and we had a few study sessions with Dr. Yaw and Cindy in the weeks before the competition. We felt as if we knew the material fairly well, but we were all still a little nervous. Kelli, Brittney and I played the first round and we won! But unfortunately we weren't as fast with the buzzer as our

components for the remainder of the rounds, especially against Indiana Tech (they are a very good team and they are incredibly fast! They were one of the two teams in the finals last year.) Although we did not place in the final round, we still had a lot of fun.

Photo: First Row: Brittney Duell, Jennifer Eastridge, Kelli Allgood

Back Row: Annette Spurgeon, Justin Wilson, Dr. Dorothy Carole Yaw, Cindy Crowder

RECENT RULING ADDRESSES ENFORCEABILITY OF SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS by Kelly S. Hughes, Ogletree Deakins (Charlotte)

*A thorny problem in settling employment cases often arises when an employee has a change of heart after accepting a settlement offer and either refuses to sign a written agreement or attempts to set aside the agreement by claiming that it was a mistake, was based on bad advice from his or her counsel, or was never authorized. A recent federal appellate court decision demonstrates that the employee has a very heavy burden of proof in such situations, and employers usually will be able to hold the employee to the agreement. **Harris v. Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department**, No. 05-2005, Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals (February 10, 2006).*

Factual Background

Linda Harris sued the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department alleging violations of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and state law. During settlement negotiations, Harris' original attorney, Keith Blackman, explained the terms of the proposed settlement agreement to Harris. Harris allegedly authorized Blackman to accept the agreement. Blackman then communicated Harris' acceptance to defense counsel and the court. The trial judge dismissed the action but retained jurisdiction to enforce the settlement agreement.

Months later, Harris obtained new counsel and filed a motion to set aside the dismissal. Harris claimed that she never agreed to the settlement agreement or, alternatively, that any agreement was based upon a "gross misunderstanding" on her part.

During a hearing on Harris' motion, both parties testified as to their recollections regarding the settlement negotiations and ensuing verbal agreement. Blackman testified that he told Harris she could settle the discrimination suit for a certain amount and that this settlement would not affect her separately pending workers' compensation and personal injury lawsuits. Harris testified that Blackman told her that the settlement only involved her state law discrimination claims, not her federal discrimination claims.

The trial judge credited Blackman's account of the events and held that Blackman at least had apparent authority to enter into the settlement agreement on Harris' behalf. Harris then appealed to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Legal Analysis

Harris first argued that the trial judge lacked jurisdiction to enforce the settlement agreement. The Eighth Circuit rejected this argument because the trial judge clearly had reserved jurisdiction to enforce the agreement. Harris next argued that she did not authorize settlement of her federal discrimination claims. The court noted that Harris may be bound by the agreement if Blackman had either express or apparent authority to enter into the agreement. Because express authority is the more stringent standard, the court conducted its analysis using that standard.

According to the court, express authority can be created by written or spoken words or by the principal's conduct which, reasonably interpreted, causes an agent to believe that the principal desires him or her to act in a particular manner on the principal's account. Because the trial judge credited Blackman's testimony that Harris agreed to accept the settlement after he explained that it would resolve all of her discrimination claims, the Eighth Circuit held that Blackman had express authority to enter into the settlement agreement and thus it need not consider whether Blackman had also acted with apparent authority.

Alternatively, Harris argued that she misunderstood what her attorney had said and that whatever authority she gave him was based on this mistake. The court found this argument to be insufficient. Citing an earlier Eighth Circuit decision, the court noted that arguments addressing the adequacy of an attorney's legal representation, without regard to their merit, are irrelevant in determining whether a party has expressly authorized her attorney to enter into

a settlement agreement on her behalf. Thus, the Eighth Circuit affirmed the trial judge's decision and refused to set aside the dismissal.

Practical Impact

While this and similar cases demonstrate that employees will usually have a difficult time setting aside verbal settlement agreements, the safest course is always to reduce the key terms of the settlement agreement to writing immediately and obtain the employee's signature. At the least, upon entering into a verbal agreement, defense counsel should send a letter to opposing counsel outlining the key terms of the settlement and request that opposing counsel fax back a copy of the letter with their signature confirming the employee's acceptance

Study shows international graduate teaching assistants have unique training needs

March 14, 2007

Edith Okoth, a graduate assistant in Indiana State University's industrial technology education department, conducted a small research study, which confirmed something she already knew. Training programs for international graduate teaching assistants have room for improvement.



Davison Mupinga, associate professor of industrial technology education, and Edith Okoth, a graduate assistant in ISU's industrial technology education department,

“There is a shortage of instructors, and most universities are currently relying on graduate teaching assistants to fill in the gaps,” Okoth said, “but some of the teaching assistants lack pedagogical skills; and may be from different cultures or be non-native English speakers.”

An international student herself — originally from Nairobi, Kenya — Okoth was able to use her own experience to guide her research and identify, with her study participants, ways in which training can be improved, especially for non-U.S. graduate students.

“I found that the time when training was offered, which was only in the summer, did not accommodate those students who arrived in the middle of the academic year and therefore started their assistantships in the spring semester,” she said.

Okoth also found no method for improving training from year to year, because of a break in the communication cycle.

“Supervisors working with the graduate assistants didn't have a way of communicating to the trainers to let them know if the training had been

adequate or not, so the trainers had no way of knowing if improvements were needed,” she said.

Okoth presented the paper at the 16th annual Academy of Human Resource Development International Conference on March 1, in Indianapolis, along with co-author Davison Mupinga, associate professor of industrial technology education. The conference was hosted by ISU’s department of industrial technology education.

Okoth hopes that the results of her and Mupinga’s research will assist universities in developing effective training programs for international teaching assistants.

“Doing this research and presenting it at the international conference not only gave me an opportunity to apply the content I learn in my program to a real-life situation, but allowed me to contribute to my field early on in my career,” Okoth said. “I was nervous, but it was very exciting.”

In addition to presenting with Okoth, Mupinga facilitated a roundtable discussion, with Bassou El Mansour, assistant professor of industrial technology education, on cross-cultural training programs in the United States and Europe for expatriates working in Morocco.

Carole Yaw, assistant professor of industrial technology education, presented her research on e-mentoring in virtual education, which provides human resource development professionals and practitioners with insights into this emerging trend.

Yaw also facilitated a roundtable discussion on another of her research topics — career development and mentoring in human resource development programs.

George Maughan, interim associate dean of the College of Technology and director of the Ph.D. in technology management program, presented qualitative research which examined the cognitive processes embedded in self-explanations of automobile and motorcycle service technicians performing troubleshooting tasks and solving technical problems. Cognitive processes revealed include: self-talk, visualization, linear and hierarchical thinking, use of job-aids, rule application, and the learning incidences that occur through social contact.

College of Technology Dean Tad Foster gave the conference’s welcoming address.

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Recruitment strategies in a tight labor market

By: Frank Whittle

A labor market is the area from which an employer typically recruits to fill a position. This area can vary depending on the type of job being filled. A tight labor market can make it very difficult for recruiting employees. The unemployment rate is low, so employees may have many job options available. When this takes place, companies will spend much more money to advertise their job openings, focus on retention of current employees, and begin to look at other recruitment strategies.

One of the strategies a company may try is to recruit from nontraditional labor pools. One of these nontraditional areas would be people having a felony conviction. The applicant may have did prison time or something requiring probation, which would have eliminated them from consideration in the past.

Another area to consider is the local Vocational Rehabilitation office. Every state has Vocational Rehabilitation Services, which works to place individuals with disabilities into competitive employment. The people receiving services have many different disabilities, but also have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform a variety of jobs. If accommodations are needed for the employee, then many times Vocational Rehabilitation can assist with some of these expenses.

Employers may also explore welfare to work programs. Potential employees are currently on welfare, but with proper supports can be a successful employee. These programs have the ability to pay for transportation and child care to help eliminate some of the barriers for a successful placement.


A final area to consider would be senior citizens. This population is very dependable and they perform at a high level. This could be former employees who have retired, but would be willing to come back on a part-time basis. They know the company and have the skills to do the job. There is a growing trend of retired people re-entering the workplace, usually on a part-time basis.

By focusing on the nontraditional labor pool, an organization can fill a position as well as give someone an opportunity to show that they can perform in the job. Many of these nontraditional areas also provide an incentive to the employer. The employer may be able to apply for a tax credit through the federal government. This credit is known as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and can save an employer money.

Clabber Girl Visit

On March 15, 2007 The SHRM chapter at Indiana State University took a tour of Clabber Girl located in Terre Haute, Indiana. During the tour we got to see and learn about the clabber girl building as well the history behind one of the number one selling baking powders.

"The museum is a mixture of many kinds of exhibits. The interior of building itself, which was built in 1892, has been remodeled as it was in the beginning. Oak paneled walls throughout the museum closely resemble the original work that was done in the late 1800's. The floors have been stripped down to the original wood, and "wear spots" have been left where they are, to show the foot traffic endured after 100 years. The coal powered AC Generator that once supplied electricity to the



building complex is now open for visitors to view. The 16-foot wheel rotates and little lights flash within the wheel, to show the energy released from this huge machine. In this same room we have an Otis Elevator, one of the last water powered hydraulic elevators in Indiana, as well as a train display.

A cobblestone path walks you past The Pig and Whistle Saloon and the Victorian Home Parlor with a winding oak staircase. You will come across the Communications Center that portrays the evolution of the telephone, from telegraph to ring box phones; there is also a map of the buildings in the Hulman complex, with an example of the pneumatic tube system that served the company's needs from 1892 until 2002, when it was replaced with a central computer system. View the Communications Center as you walk into a large safe, complete with old journals and office items used in the late 1800's.

An actual Indy Race Car is in the Tony Hulman, Jr. display, as Mr. Hulman bought the track at the end of WWII. Products once produced by Hulman & Company are shown in the original cases that Herman bought in 1892 - Dauntless, Rex, Farmers Pride and Crystal brand products were once manufactured and produced by Hulman & Company. Of course, there is much, much more!
