Welcome to the W. T. Beebe Newsletter, written by the students of the W. T. Beebe Institute of Personnel and Employment Relations in the Robinson College of Business at Georgia State University. In this issue, we reflect on the Honors Day Award recipients, read about Benefits Communications in our practitioner article from a Beebe alum, and learn about “A Day in the Life” of a Beebe graduate student and HR Practitioner. Also, we will see what Alumni have been up to!

**HONORS DAY AWARDS**

**Congratulations to Spring 2013 Honor’s Day Recipients**

Each spring the Robinson College of Business holds an annual Honor’s Day celebration to present the many college-wide and departmental awards, scholarships, and other honors bestowed upon students during the academic year. This year, the ceremony was held on March 27th. The W. T. Beebe Institute awarded three promising graduate students with awards of academic and professional distinction. We caught up with these students to ask them a few questions about their work and school background.

Congratulations to all of the students who received awards!

**WILLIAM T. RUTHERFORD SCHOLARSHIP**

Awarded to the students in any graduate level human resource management programs who best exemplify the high achievement and zest for learning which Professor Rutherford so valued. Erin Woodard is this year’s recipient. Erin currently works at Cbeyond as a Sr. HR Business Partner. She’s previously worked at Ernst & Young, Allconnect, and worked as a Compensation Specialist for Culpepper & Associates. See the “A Day in the Life” section for more information on Erin!
HONORS DAY CONTINUED

WILLIAM P. KEY SCHOLARSHIP

Named in honor of a distinguished Atlanta human resource professional, Georgia State University graduate, and Executive in Residence at the Beebe Institute, and awarded for outstanding performance in a master’s level human resource management degree program. Alejandra (Allie) Kloster was this year’s awardee. Allie currently works at RSUI Group, Inc as the HRIS and Communications Specialist and has been with the company for a year and a half. She received a BBA in Banking and Finance with a minor in English from the University of Georgia, but found her passion in Human Resources working a part-time position during college. She loves playing tennis and staying active during the weekends, and looks forward to more free time after graduating this Spring 2013!

MICHAEL JAY JEDEL AWARD IN HR MANAGEMENT

This scholarship is named in honor of Michael Jay Jedel, a former associate dean of the Robinson College of Business and director of the W.T. Beebe Institute of Personnel and Employment Relations. It is presented annually to an M.S. or M.B.A. student who exhibits high standards of academic achievement, strong commitment to the human resources field, and outstanding leadership potential. Amy Curley was this year’s recipient. Amy earned her undergraduate degree in Computer Science from the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, and works in the Human Resources Leadership Program (HRLP) with GE Energy Management. She is a Six Sigma Green Belt and holds a Project Management Professional (PMP) certification.
Our practitioner article this issue was written by Beebe alumnae Mary Lee Moreland. Mary Lee is a Benefits Communications Consultant with Buck Consultants in Atlanta. She can be reached at marylee.moreland@buckconsultants.com.

Benefits Communications: One Size Does Not Fit All?

Your benefits package is designed to meet the different needs of your employees, but are your communications consistent with this strategy? Targeting messages to distinct audiences can better engage employees and drive certain behavior, and may increase the return on your investment.

Why Should You Target?

For a plan sponsor, it can sometimes feel impossible to reach employees’ eyes and ears, and even tougher to reach their hearts and minds. After all, all of us are on overload. We have packed schedules, competing priorities and inboxes full of things to read, respond to and do.

To engage employees and increase their likelihood of making wise decisions relating to their health or wealth, plan sponsors need to look beyond generic messages that address the entire population. The most successful employee education programs combine frequent broad-scope messages with targeted communications that send a specific message to the right audience. Building on big-picture communications and prompting unique employee motivators to drive desired outcomes provides maximum impact.

For example, open enrollment and other broad-scope health-care communications may include messages about preventive care benefits and the importance of wellness. These messages could then be followed by age-, gender- and/or risk-based wellness reminders — both to employees as well as their family members or significant others covered by the plan. Keep in mind, however, that due to confidentiality requirements, any messages related to personal health information or specific conditions the individual has or may be at risk for must be sent by a third party.

A campaign that includes targeted messages and audiences may not necessarily be less costly than one using only generic communications and does require a well-thought-out communications strategy. However, targeted messages allow organizations to push communications dollars further — or at least spend them on those from whom action is most needed — and may create opportunities for more frequent messaging across smaller groups. Furthermore, the more you focus on outcomes and who is most likely to respond to your message, the more effective your communications may be.

For example, when sending a message about the benefits of making catch-up contributions in a 401(k) plan (contributions allowed over the regular pretax limit for those age 50 or older), you may decide to target only those who meet the age requirement. But could you target further to those most likely to take action? You could zero in on those who meet the age requirement and are on track to save within a few thousand dollars of the regular pretax limit. By narrowing the target group, money that would have been spent to communicate to everyone age 50 and older can now be used to target other 401(k) plan participants with messages more relevant to them.

How Should You Segment Audiences?

When it comes to targeting benefits communications, there are three primary ways to segment audiences:

1. **By demographics (age, gender, income, ethnicity, job class, geography, life stage):** Demographic segmentation offers the easiest way to segment and may offer a solid first step for targeting a message. For example, if you are encouraging 401(k) plan participation, messages to lower-paid employees who may struggle to meet day-to-day financial demands would differ from messages to higher-paid employees who likely can better afford to save.

2. **By behavior (occasions, usage, readiness):** Behavioral segmentation could include sending a message about saving more for retirement to those getting a promotion or pay raise. Or, based on plan usage, you could remind employees to take specific actions such as completing health-risk assessments or scheduling annual physicals, or discourage them from certain actions such as a taking multiple 401(k) plan loans.

3. **By psychographics (opinions, attitudes, values, shared interests or activities):** Psychographic segmentation could include using affinity groups ("employee networking groups") to expand on other communications efforts. For example, an organization may have affinity groups for employees and their family members who share certain interests — from demographics (perhaps Asian-American employees, African-American employees or employees in certain age ranges) to interests (hobbies, learning a new language, etc.) or subjects (finance, investing, wellness, etc.). While cynics argue that these groups, particularly those focused on wellness or financial behaviors, just reinforce good behavior among those already interested in the topic, if plan sponsors use these groups to share their passion and encourage others around them, then they become role models to help reach other employee groups.

A word of caution: Always review your communications and segmentation strategy with your compliance or ethics counsel to ensure they don’t conflict with privacy or anti-discrimination rules.

How Should You Get Started?

Targeting your audience starts with knowing who your audience is. Payroll or employee plan and participation data are a great place to begin, particularly for demographic information. Plan providers or record keepers are also a good resource and can help you drill down into the data for useful insight into the behaviors and actions of your employees.

To dig deeper into issues or motivators relevant to certain stakeholder groups, consider surveys and/or focus groups, which can provide valuable insight into your employees’ opinions. This information also can be obtained through the observations of key personnel such as human resources staff and managers.

From there, the first step in developing a communications strategy includes mapping out what each group of stakeholders needs to know, potential barriers to overcome, desired outcomes and the best ways to reach each group, including how the
NAAAHR SCHOLARSHIP

National Association of African Americans in Human Resources (NAAAHR) is a dynamic and growing organization which exists to provide a forum where African American Human Resource professionals can gain information and experience, share best practices, and network.

Annually, they provide the Excellence in HR Scholarship to a person in the study of human resources management, or a related field. This year’s award winner is Brooke Dehaini.

Brooke completed her undergraduate studies at Tennessee State University in Nashville, TN receiving a B.B.A. degree with a concentration in Marketing and a B.A. degree in Speech Communication & Theatre. She has worked with Turner Broadcasting International in its Latin America division as an Acquisitions Operations coordinator for the past seven years. She will receive an MBA with a concentration in Human Resource Management from GSU through the PMBA program at the completion of this 2013 summer semester.

Throughout her life, Brooke has looked for opportunities to gain more knowledge and beneficial experiences. She has participated in various extra-curricular activities, volunteering opportunities, and held offices in various organizations. She seeks out leadership opportunities because it offers her an avenue to strengthen skills, learn new ones, improve overall and most of all, help others.

Brooke Dehaini with Geralyn K. Smith, 2012 Atlanta Chapter President of NAAAHR
What is your recent professional and academic history?
I have a Bachelor of Arts degree with a Psychology Major & Business Minor from Southwestern University (TX) and a Master's of Science in HR Management from Georgia State University. I started my HR career as a paid intern at Witness Systems (now part of Verint) in 2004. After a year, I was hired at the HR Service Center at Georgia-Pacific in 2005, which then became Koch Business Solutions (KBS) in 2009. I continue to work as a Benefits Analyst for KBS, and have responsibility for health and welfare benefit planning and communication.

What is your typical day like?
My typical day has a little work on many different projects. I'll follow one example through, which is an assignment to create a proposal for the prescription drug benefit. I set up a meeting with a coworker who manages our prescription drug vendor to understand our plan code setups and how our different employees fit into each plan code, i.e., salaried, union & nonunion. I request financial analysis from our prescription drug vendor, then have a follow up phone call to discuss the analysis, its assumptions, and the financial impacts to employees and the company. I discuss the proposal with the company's ERISA attorney to ensure it complies with the Affordable Care Act's Grandfathered plan provisions. I write up the proposal, including financial impacts, employee impacts, and the overall rationale for the recommendation and its fit with the overall benefits plan strategy. The proposal is edited by my manager, additional analysis is requested (repeat above), and then I finalize the text into a document delivered to the HR VP. I answer follow up questions to the proposal, and then it's approved.

What is the best part about your job?
I have the opportunities to collaborate with smart and skilled people with the common goal of preserving and creating value for our company. It is pretty awesome.

What's the best advice you have received that has attributed to your success thus far?
Short story needed here. When being promoted to a new role, I told our benefits director, "You know I've never done this before, right?" I was referring to establishing the health plan premiums for the company. He said, "Matt, can you add, subtract, multiply and divide?" "Yes" was my reply. "You'll be fine," he said. I mention all that to say, do good work, develop trust and credibility (this takes time), and you will be given responsibility you do not think you can handle, until you handle it.

What are the qualities that someone needs to possess in order to succeed in getting a job similar to yours?
The most valuable asset you can have is your willingness to learn, and learn fast. Have the attitude that there is nothing you do not know how to do, but only things you do not know how to do YET.
A DAY IN THE LIFE…

ERIN WOODARD - A BEEBE GRADUATE STUDENT

What is your background?
As an undergraduate student, I attended the University of Georgia and earned a B.B.A., majoring in management with a minor in mass communication. As a graduate student at Georgia State University, I am in the Flex MBA program seeking an MBA with a Human Resources Management concentration.

I worked through undergraduate school as an intern with the Better Business Bureau and with Enterprise Rent-A-Car in their management training program. After graduating from the Honors Program at the University of Georgia, I began my first job out of college at Ernst & Young as an HR Consultant. While working there, I studied for and achieved my Professional in Human Resources (PHR) certification. I accepted a temporary HR contract position before beginning graduate school full time. However, I was fortunate enough to receive a full time permanent offer at Allconnect where I was contracting. I began working as an HR Specialist there, working on process improvements and special projects. I was promoted to an HR Generalist at the corporate office and then to a Senior HR Generalist, which became a Senior HR Business Partner. After three and a half years with Allconnect, I was offered a role at Beyond as a Senior HR Business Partner at their corporate office. I accepted the role to gain more public company work experience and to work with a larger HR department and have been with them for about 7 months.

All during my time at Allconnect and Beyond, I have been pursuing my MBA in evenings. I was inducted into Golden Key and Beta Gamma Sigma for being in the top percentage of my class.

What is your typical day like?
A typical day is hard to define in the HR field. My day is never the same. I may have a to-do list with all sorts of assignments that I want to get completed in a day, but that can change in an instant with a visit by a disgruntled employee or manager. I can plan all day, but part of HR is that you have to be there when there are issues, many of which are unknown. I on-board new hires, conduct orientations, coach managers, manage employee relations, manage talent development projects, terminate employees as needed, conduct exit interviews, improve processes, assist with discipline and performance improvement plans, manage promotions and pay increases, etc. I attend staff meetings of the managers I support, meet with my internal HR team as needed, including the compensation, benefits, internal communications, and recruiting teams. In this field, you have to read almost every email, because almost every email is regarding something important and confidential. My emotions are up and down throughout the day, depending on the subject matter I am dealing with at that moment. All the while, I have to maintain my professionalism and emotions so I represent the company’s interests.

I find myself being a shoulder for employees to cry on when they are upset and sometimes having to be the bearer of bad news when the employee must be released from employment. Terminating employees is the most difficult part of my job. It does not get easier each time nor do I become numb to it. Every employee is a human and deserves to be treated with respect and compassion, so when I must move forward with a termination, I try to maintain the employee’s dignity at all costs. I am also a firm believer in providing employees with warning if at all possible to give them the opportunity to address and improve the behaviors or performance that may be lacking.

The thing about Human Resources is that I wear many hats. One day, I may be there for an employee who just lost a parent; another day, I am congratulating an employee on finally receiving their big promotion. I feel like a counselor, coach, trainer, manager, performance manager, recruiter, analyst, and business partner all wrapped up into one. So, that is my day at work. I am constantly on the move moving from meeting to meeting and dealing with multiple different issues at any one time. The great thing is that I never get bored at work, but the same also applies to school. Each course has something to offer and teach me.

After a busy day at work, I go straight from that craziness to school in the evenings. Depending on the semester, I took between two to three courses at a time. Every night I leave work, I either go to class or come home and do homework or study. Throughout graduate school, I have tried to have at least one work night where I would not do any school work at all to give myself a break. Every semester has been different in terms of workload and subject matter. Switching gears from a full day of HR work and then attending an accounting class in the evening keeps my brain in motion for sure, but I am always learning.

What are the pros and cons to getting a graduate degree?

Pros – It looks good on your resume and helps you stand out from those who do not have a graduate degree, and I get to put the letters “MBA” behind my name after graduation, which is pretty cool! The best part is having the opportunity to attend courses with other professionals who are interested in learning. The caliber of students is high, and most students are paying their way through graduate school and are thus more invested. In undergraduate school, some students are there to get a degree only because they think they have to or because their parents are making them. Graduate school is for people who want to advance their careers and have a true passion for continuing education. In the field of Human
A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Resources, I think getting an MBA is vital in order to get to the director and above level. You gain a level of strategic and critical thinking skills that will be helpful in leading. The way graduate school is defined, especially with an MBA, is to help you be a leader in your career.

Cons – It is a lot of work and takes numerous hours of studying, preparing, writing, and reading. When I graduate, it will have taken me a total of four years to complete my degree. That is a long time! Other things have to be put on hold, and sometimes you have to study when your family has a reunion or when your friends have a party. It takes a lot of dedication, and it can be exhausting after a crazy day at work. It also costs money! Getting financial aid is great, but I do not look forward to having to pay it back.

What’s the best advice you have received that has attributed to your success thus far?
The best advice I ever received is to always keep learning. If you stop learning, then you are losing your edge in your industry and in your field. No field is stagnant in this day and age. In the field of Human Resources, laws and best practices are constantly evolving. The best way to learn is to always search for opportunities to learn new things at work and at school. Volunteer for projects at work that are out of your comfort zone. Work with people who are difficult in order to gain the skill set to be able to work with anyone. Join professional organizations. Attend seminars and webinars as often as you can. Read books and articles, join email distribution lists on trends in your industry. Read things that you don’t agree with. The more knowledge you have, the better positioned you are to put that knowledge into practice and excel in your career. I am many times the first person to volunteer to lead a new project or do research on a new law, because I find learning enjoyable and extremely valuable. Although I am almost done with graduate school, I have no desire to stop learning. As soon as possible, find a mentor, someone who you look up to in your field, and learn as much as you can from him or her. I was fortunate to have a manger in my job with Alcon who was truly my advocate. She believed in me and challenged me every day to learn more and take on more responsibility, and she gave me the confidence to move up in my career. When I asked to take on a new project, she let me and encouraged me along the way.

What are the qualities that someone needs to possess in order to succeed in getting a graduate degree?
You have to be extremely motivated and dedicated first of all. You have to go into it knowing what you are looking to get out of it. Graduate school is as much as you make of it. There are numerous opportunities to get involved and network. You should go in with an open mind, knowing that you have more to learn, and you will have the opportunity to work with some great minds in the field. You have to be hard-working and able to manage competing priorities. The hardest part is balancing work, school, and your personal life. A well-rounded knowledge base can do nothing but help you. Have a passion for something. Find something that you love, and pursue it, and find out as much as you can about it. Communication, written and spoken, are extremely important skills to develop. There is a lot you can learn, so do not approach the subject matter with the intent to cram and memorize it for a test. Find a way to retain and apply the knowledge you learn. Overall, you have to enjoy higher level learning and strategic thinking. You need to be ready for the next level in your career, because if you do graduate school right, you will get there.

WANT TO BE IN OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER?

We would like to hear from you! If you have recently taken a job promotion, gotten married, had a child, graduated, passed the HR exam, or just have any interesting, fun, or exciting news let us know! Please e-mail the Beebe Institute your exciting information and include a picture of the event or yourself!

Beebe students! We would like to hear from you too! Have you recently taken an internship in HR, received a scholarship or impressive award, or simply just have some good news? LET US KNOW. Please e-mail the Beebe Institute at the address listed below and add a picture of yourself!

beebenewsletter@gsu.edu
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE OFFICERS OF THE SHRM CHAPTER AT GSU!

ROBINSON CAREER MANAGEMENT CENTER

Need help updating your resume, interviewing, or finding a job?
http://robinson.gsu.edu/career
404-413-7155

The Career Management Center (CMC) at Robinson College of Business is the place to go! Current undergraduates, graduates, and alumni can all receive services ranging from Individual Career Counseling, Self Assessment, Job Search Management to Job and Internship Interviews and Networking. The CMC is constantly putting on outstanding events, so keep checking the website for more information so you don’t miss out!

STUDENT UPDATES

Congratulations to Nicole J. Collins who graduated on May 11 with a Master of Science in Managerial Sciences with a concentration in Human Resources Management!!
ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

Colin Seal - Program Manager at The Immune Deficiency Foundation - has been at the forefront with technology as a way to help increase patient engagement with chronic illnesses. As a patient himself, he was asked to head up this project. Please read more at the link below:
http://changingmediagroup.com/on-the-record-ehealthrecord/

CONGRATULATIONS to Jenna Christensen Schonhoft who recently passed the PHR exam!

BEEBE WEDDING

Congratulations to Courtney Brooks, talent manager at Peak Campus Management, LLC, who married Chad Brooks, CEO of a sports supplement company based in Atlanta!

ALUMNI UPDATES

Angela Vela Bragg recently became Attorney/Owner at Angela Vela Law, LLC

Tara Easterling is a Team Lead at Morris | Hardwick | Schneider
ALUMNI UPDATES

- Veronica Wan-Huggins has accepted a position as Director of Strategic Planning at Emory University
- Quinton Fletcher received a promotion at his job with the City of Atlanta

- Vernon Harris, Jr. recently accepted a Human Resources Generalist position at the Georgia Department of Revenue
- Aaron Lee is now a Regional HR Generalist at Whole Foods Market, Inc.

- Crystal Hodges was recently hired as a Compensation Analyst at the Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- Kimberly Brown – is now an Employee Services and Resolutions Representative at ADP

- Ben Kramer is now Pharmaceutical Sales Representative at Merinal, a Sanofi Company
- Patricia Kellner is now Sr. Human Resources Manager at Colonial Pipeline Company

- Cindy Kun recently started as a Compensation Analyst at Culpepper and Associates in Alpharetta
- Katie Barter accepted a position as a Strategist, Business Development at CineMassive Displays in Atlanta

We want to hear from you!

Current and previous editions of the Beebe Newsletter are available online at

www.robinson.gsu.edu/beebe/newsletter.

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, submissions, or to obtain more information about our programs, please email the Faculty Advisor at lmcclurg@gsu.edu.

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