

Shaping the Future of HR Together: Reinvigorating and Leveraging the External/Executive Advisory Board for the HRM Department in SMLR

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Overview and Problem Statement

This project entailed creating/reconstituting an external advisory board for the Human Resource Management (HRM) department in SMLR to:

- advise on curriculum innovation
- to assist with student placement
- to be active in the teaching/research activities of the department
- to assist with department's outreach efforts in business community

Problem statement:

Our academic (UG and Masters) programs are oriented toward professional practice, but we lacked an external, professional board to whom we could turn for advice.

Prior boards and connections dormant or lost due to faculty turnover and transitions, and we lost touch with the practitioner community in many ways. Simultaneously, however, we are in process of rebranding and rethinking direction of our programs.

Alignment with Rutgers University Strategic Plan

- ◆ Transforming student experience – bringing “real world” experience to classroom (guest lectures and enhancing internship and other opportunities)
- ◆ Enhancing visibility and strengthening brand identity through ongoing interaction/collaboration with senior global HR executives

My pre-project benchmarking of peer schools with similar degree programs (Cornell, Texas A&M, Ohio State, Michigan State, U of Iowa, etc.) revealed that nearly all of them have these kinds of advisory boards, either stand-alone or associated with a related center.



Organizing steps

- ◆ Identify/refine the type and ideal # of individuals we wanted
 - HR executives at a certain level; no consultants; in companies we have relationships with already or would like to; within driving distance
- ◆ Gather and scan prior advisory board list + generate new suggestions from faculty and elsewhere about other possible names
- ◆ Legwork to find contact information: Internet/LinkedIn searches, colleagues' emails, other sources
- ◆ Plan logistics of first meeting: Budget and staff support, dates/room/food/parking, etc.
- ◆ Communication strategy:
 - Messaging – “Come See What’s New at Rutgers”
 - Medium – several emails plus followed up with snail mail letter (“ask” went to ~24 people)
 - Formed a LinkedIn Group (although not all are on LinkedIn)

Kick-off Meeting – December 2, 2016

Agenda:

- Networking breakfast
- Welcome by Associate Dean
- Introductions and overview
- About Our Programs – program directors, placement staff, other new initiatives (new concentration in HR analytics, branded internships, etc.)
- Faculty focus – 5 faculty presented current research “briefs” (speed dating style – 5 minutes each)
- Advisory board dialogue
- Lunch (most stayed, so another 1-1.5 hours informal)



Where are we in terms of goals I set for the project?

I would rate things as “still in progress” . . .

Goals were:

1. Organize a **first meeting** – *DONE!*
2. **Goal was 15-20** individuals total, with aim of having 10+ on a regular basis. Currently have **8** who came to first meeting (**5** who could not but are interested in being involved)
3. Due to smallish numbers at first meeting, we did not get into crafting and **adopting a charter + structure** for the group yet.
4. To prepare to **transition coordinator role** to a permanent leadership situation (not me) after first meeting (I am currently working on this, involving a junior faculty person+possibly a staff person)

Since December meeting + Next Steps

- ◆ Follow-up: Sent meeting materials to “interestededs”
- ◆ Several follow-up conversations re: HR Analytics courses content and possibly projects/guest speakers; also solicited them for follow up interviews after a NJBiz story about our MHRM program
- ◆ Next meeting – originally planned for this Friday, but postponed to later in semester
 - Need more members to enlarge the group
 - Discuss basic draft of a charter and structure (have them select a “leader”?)
 - Draft agenda/topics for consideration:
 - Our needs re: project sites/data for our new HR analytics
 - New faculty member started January-- introduction her to them + have her discuss her research a bit
 - Practice/research conversation about effect of technology/big data/analytics on future of “people” management
- ◆ Meanwhile. . .some new challenges. . .