

Inside WCU  
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### **Online master's in HR provided more than 400 hours of pro bono HR consulting**

Students in the online Master of Science in Human Resources provided more than 400 pro bono hours, working on 14 HR-related projects for nonprofits and small businesses in our region and in Colorado, Louisiana, Tennessee and Ohio.

“Our growth has been exponential over the past 11 years. Part of our success is due to our students’ high-quality consulting work for our clients and their passion for helping,” said Marie-Line Germain, professor of human resources and leadership and founder of HR Consulting Initiative.

This spring, clients included The Joseph Maley Foundation in Indiana, GuilfordWorks, James Oxygen & Supply, Status Forward, Community Partners of Hope, Well Played Asheville, Asheville GreenWorks, Roots Hummus, BIOMILQ, Knights of Heroes in Colorado, A Hand Up for Women in Tennessee and BDSRA in Ohio. The HR projects included job description analyses, the creation and revision of employee handbooks, the update of job interview processes and the development of an executive succession plan, among others.

Client Dawn Chavez with Asheville GreenWorks, an organization whose mission is to inspire, equip and mobilize individuals and communities to take care of the places we love to live, provided the following testimonial: “Our organization has been undergoing significant growth, adding several new staff positions over the past couple of years. Our Employee Manual was in desperate need of an update. [Student consultant] Heather guided us through the process with confidence and skill. I appreciated the opportunity to have regular check-ins with Heather and Dr. Germain. We ended up with a great product and plan on working with the HR Consulting Initiative in the future on a Volunteer Handbook.”

Another advanced consulting student assisted Knights of Heroes, an organization that provides outdoor adventure programs for Gold Star families to empower children who have lost a parent in service to our Nation by providing positive adult mentorship, character development and lasting friendships through outdoor adventures. KOH requested support with the creation of a Mentor Handbook and Safety Guidelines reference. Steve Harrold, founder and board president, stated that “for 15 years, our organization has been in need of HR expertise to consolidate our guidance and policies for our volunteer corps. The WCU Consulting Initiative provided us exactly what we needed. We are extremely grateful for the work provided by the WCU team. Thank you for helping us further our mission of supporting families of our fallen military heroes.”

The HR Consulting Initiative continues to partner with the Small Business and Technology Development Center to serve local Cullowhee and Asheville businesses. SBTDC is an extension of the business and technology services from the University of North Carolina that provides management counseling and educational services to small and midsize businesses in the area.

Since 2011, more than 940 MSHR students have worked on 450 pro bono consulting projects for over 300 nonprofits, local government and small businesses in 20 states. It has provided more than 21,000 hours of pro bono HR consulting. For more information about the HR Consulting Initiative, contact Marie-Line Germain at [mgermain@wcu.edu](mailto:mgermain@wcu.edu).