

## **CSU to Offer Degree Program Meeting Highest HR Industry Standards**

*COLUMBUS, Ga.* - Columbus State University is set to launch a bachelor's degree program in human resource management that will be the first of its kind in Georgia to meet the standards set forth by the Society of Human Resource Managers, the world's largest association devoted to the HR profession.

The Turner College of Business, starting January, will be one of about 100 schools worldwide that offers a program matching the undergraduate curriculum template established by SHRM, which serves more than 250,000 members in 140 countries.

"This is huge," said Charles Little, president and CEO of Strategic HR Partners, a Columbus-based provider of human resource products and services. "I can't see any company that won't appreciate or won't benefit from this."

Little said CSU is poised to feed a demand for highly prepared HR professionals — educated according to the industry's highest standards for excellence — to companies, and especially large organizations such as Aflac, CB&T, TSYS and the Muscogee County School District. "These employers also will be able to engage in cooperative internships with CSU students in the program and essentially raise their own professionals, Little said.

Professor Neal Thomson, who is organizing the program as chair of CSU's management and marketing department, said the curriculum will qualify graduating students with two years of "exempt human resource-related work experience" to take the exam for "Professional in Human Resources" certification.

CSU Career Center Director Kimberly Mullen, SHRM's vice president for college relations in Georgia, said the program also will provide an edge to CSU graduates in a field where skilled practitioners are increasingly vital to companies.

"A lot goes on behind the scenes of a workplace," Mullen said. "Constantly changing labor laws affect HR specialists who navigate evolving legal issues such as the Family Medical Leave Act... Students who master the SHRM-adopted curriculum will know the language of business, including how to strategize, deliver effective presentations and influence senior executives."

Aflac Executive Vice President of Corporate Services Audrey Boone Tillman, a former member of the SHRM Board of Directors, said "the Society of Human Resources Management approval is important because it shows that Columbus State University grads will have been exposed to the issues and experiences we look for in a candidate for an entry-level position. It will prove that CSU students have completed a rigorous curriculum that prepares them for what it takes to be a contributor at a company like Aflac."

Thomson said many students in CSU business degree programs will be able to move efficiently into the HR management program.

Four of six courses required for the program already are offered. Human resource management

and organization behavior are presently required for management majors, while labor relations and compensation are courses designated as business electives.

The two new courses will cover staffing and training development.

CSU's HR management majors also will benefit from a SHRM student chapter on campus. A membership drive is scheduled for this fall.

CSU President Tim Mescon said the new program and its distinction dovetails with the business college's accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, which endorses SHRM standards.

"Navigating successfully through the recent AACSB International maintenance of accreditation process is a testimony to the ongoing commitment of the Turner College of Business and Dean (Linda) Hadley to the highest levels of academic quality in our undergraduate and graduate programs," he said. "The launch of this exciting Human Resource Management Program melds the rigor of accreditation with innovation demanded by business and industry in program development and design. Meeting the needs of businesses in Columbus and throughout Georgia and the nation is a critical mission driver of the Turner College. I commend the faculty for their commitment to meeting these changing needs in real time."

Little, who also serves on the State Council Board for SHRM in Georgia and the board of directors for the organization's Columbus chapter, said the new CSU program "is huge, not only for the university and business community, but also for SHRM, which serves prospective HR management majors by directing them to leading college programs. Now they can point to CSU as an option in Georgia."

For more information about the HR management program, contact Neal Thomson at 706-562-1657 or e-mail, [thomson\\_neal@colstate.edu](mailto:thomson_neal@colstate.edu).

For more information on CSU's Turner College of Business, go to <http://cob.colstate.edu/>.

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