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PSC 595.01: Strategic Human Resource Management

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Political Science 595
Strategic Human Resource Management
Summer 2008

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Course Description

This experimental course offers you an opportunity to help close the gap between theory and practice by imagining how to “realize” the concept of strategic human resource management (SHRM) in the public/nonprofit sectors. This will entail spending 10 weeks in entirely uncharted territory. Although the subject is highly abstract, we will work through each concept sequentially and collectively and then seek to apply each to the government or nonprofit agency with which you are most familiar.

Required Text

None. A series of articles and book chapters will be posted to the Library’s Electronic Reserve for you to read each week. (Click on Blackboard’s **Readings** button. Your password is psc595)

Course Requirements

Lessons must be completed each Thursday by roughly midnight.

Students are required to read all assigned readings, participate on the Discussion Board, submit six brief writing assignments as email attachments (20 points each) and a final, integrated paper entitled “Strategic Human Resource Management and Agency Performance” (100 points). A = 205-215; A- = 198-204; B+ = 191-197; B = 183-190.

Note 1: You must choose a small nonprofit agency, small government program or office, or discrete work unit within a larger agency for purposes of your writing assignments. The work being done must be relatively narrow and focused if our analysis is to succeed.

Note 2: This is a readings-centered course that requires you to think deeply about core concepts and how they might be applied to your organization. Thus, grading will be based primarily on thoughtfulness/sophistication of analysis.

Weekly Reading and Writing Assignments

Lesson 1: SHRM and Organizational Performance (Due May 29)

Read the mini-lecture and the article referenced below, and respond to the questions posed on the Discussion Board.

Jonathan Tompkins, "Strategic Human Resources Management in Government: Unresolved Issues," *Public Personnel Management* 31 (Spring 2002), 95-109.

Lesson 2: Creating Public Value (Due June 5)

Read the mini-lecture and the two readings referenced below, and respond to the questions posed on the Discussion Board.

Mark Moore, *Creating Public Value* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 13-43.

Burt Nanus and Stephen M. Dobbs, *Leaders Who Make a Difference* (SF: Jossey-Bass, 1999), pp. 27-45.

Lesson 3: The Agency's Mission and Value Proposition (Due June 12)

Read the mini-lecture and submit Writing Assignment #1 by email attachment.

Writing Assignment #1: In 1 or 2 pages (double-spaced), describe your agency/program/work unit's mission. This should be a no-rhetoric description of what it exists to accomplish (mission) and the value it seeks to create for society (value proposition).

Lesson 4: The Agency's Vision of Excellence & Strategy for Success (Due June 19)

Read the mini-lecture and the two readings referenced below, respond to the questions posed on the Discussion Board, and submit Writing Assignment #2 by email attachment.

Paul R. Niven, *Balanced Scorecard: Step-by-Step for Government and Nonprofit Agencies* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), pp. 3-44.

James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy* (Basic Books, 1989), pp. 8-10 and 21-23. (Identify Principal Hogan's vision of school excellence and his "success strategy" for bringing his vision into being.)

Writing Assignment #2: In 2 or 3 pages, paint a vivid picture (vision) of what a state of excellence would look like for your agency/work unit and, second, identify your "success strategy" for bringing your vision into being, including key "performance drivers".

Lesson 5: Human Capital and the Knowledge Worker (Due June 26)

Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignment referenced below, respond to the questions posed on the Discussion Board, and submit Writing Assignment #3 by email attachment.

Davenport, Thomas, *Human Capital: What It Is and Why People Invest In It* (SF: Jossey-Bass, 1999), pp. 3-62.

Writing Assignment #3: In 1 or 2 pages, describe the core value-creating process in your agency/program/unit by which core workers use their human capital to transform something of lesser value into something of greater value. Clarify whether this value is produced for internal stakeholders or external stakeholders. Most agencies, for example, have a predominant kind of worker, e.g. teacher, social worker, application processor. See if you can capture what core workers actually do as part of some larger, transformational process that creates public value.

Lesson 6: The HR Value Proposition: Learning the Language (Due July 3)

Read the mini-lecture and the two readings referenced below, respond to the questions posed on the Discussion Board, and submit Writing Assignment #4 by email attachment.

Brian Becker, Mark Huselid, and Dave Ulrich, *The HR Scorecard: Linking People, Strategy, and Performance* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2001), pp. 1-36.

Dave Ulrich and Wayne Brockbank, *The HR Value Proposition* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2005), pp. 1-15 and 74-80.

Writing Assignment #4: Earlier you identified the “performance drivers” central to your success strategy. Now, in 1-3 pages, identify and describe the HR Drivers and HR Enablers that are critical to the success of your strategic vision.

Lesson 7: Developing a Strategy Map (Due July 10)

Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignment referenced below, respond to the questions posed on the Discussion Board, and submit Writing Assignment # 5 by email attachment.

Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton, *Strategy Maps* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004), Chapters 2 and 14.

Writing Assignment #5: Submit a one-page strategy map, using the examples on electronic reserve as points of reference.

Lesson 8: Creating an HR Scorecard (Due July 17)

Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignment referenced below, respond to the questions posed on the Discussion Board, and submit Writing Assignment #6 by email attachment.

Brian Becker, Mark Huselid, and Dave Ulrich, *The HR Scorecard*, pp. 53-77.

Writing Assignment #6: In 1 or 2 pages, discuss the feasibility of measuring your leading HR drivers and enablers, and propose measurable indicators (HR Scorecard) for those drivers and enablers for which measurement makes sense.

Lesson 9: Putting the Puzzle Pieces Together (Due July 31)

Final Paper: Integrate your six previous writing assignments into a final paper that addresses the goals of this course. You will need to write an introduction and conclusion for the paper, and flesh out the analysis in the six writing assignments where needed to enhance the overall coherence. Possible paper outline:

- I. Introduction to Paper (e.g., subject and purpose)
- II. Introduction of the work unit, its mission, its core value-creating work process, and its value proposition (integrate assignments #1 and #3).
- III. The work unit's vision of excellence and success strategy (assignments #2)
- IV. Role of HR staff in driving organizational performance (integrate assignments #4, #5, and #6; you will want to present enough narrative for your strategy map and scorecard so that the reader can comprehend the overall success strategy and HR's contribution to making it work)
- V. Conclusion (analysis of relevance of the private sector literature for practicing SHRM in public and nonprofit agencies; is the whole concept impractical and impossible?)