

Mesa State HR teams in championship form

The room is quiet except for the fervent whispering. Two teams of three college students each sit at tables hurriedly discussing possible responses, their hands hovering over a bell that looks as though it was last used at a hotel registration desk.

The answer is read for a second time: "This allows past employers to share relevant job-related personal information about an applicant with future employers."

Darcie Thompson rings in for her Mesa State College team: "What is the qualified privilege doctrine?"

Emcee: "That is correct!"

Applause erupts from among her teammates as well as spectators who signal their amazement at these future human resource management professionals.

Mesa State College not only hosted the 2008 Colorado HR Games state championship, but also captured first and second in the "Jeopardy" style competition testing knowledge of HR subjects.

Mesa State hosted two teams each from the University of Colorado at Boulder and University of Northern Colorado at Greeley.

The students spend months preparing for the event. Although they don't compete for money, there are rewards associated with success in the HR Games: school recognition, bragging rights, *esprit de corps* and a singularly significant accomplishment to proudly include on résumés.

That's not to mention the opportunity to advance to the regional HR Games set for March 28 and 29 at the University of Texas in San Antonio.

The Western Colorado Human Resource Association sponsored the 2008 Colorado HR Games. Amy Allen, Terri Gird and Shelly Williams, all members of the WCHRA and HR practitioners themselves, served as co-chairwomen of the games. They created a program that will serve as a model for future events.

The event began on a Friday night with contestants meeting at GJ Scores for bowling and camaraderie.

The next morning, contestants and their advisors enjoyed a continental breakfast and welcoming remarks by Morgan Bridge, chairwoman of the Mesa State College Department of Business Administration.

And then it was time for the games to begin. Volunteer timekeepers, scorers, emcees and judges hurried to their posts in numerous rooms at the W.W. Campbell College Center at Mesa State. Two opposing teams competed in each room.

Until late in the morning, teams fought for dominance of the categories on the board, including such topics as employee compensation and rewards, employee and labor relationships, human resource development, risk management, strategic management and workplace planning.

At about 11 a.m., the semifinal rounds were

played with Mesa State, CU and UNC each with at least one team left in the running.

Upon completion of the semifinals, the first and second place teams were announced: Mesa State College Red Team would play Mesa State College White Team for the state championship.

When the last bell rung, a team comprised of Ryan Farlow, Darcie Thompson and Amanda Wilkinson emerged victorious. The team of Tyler Deines, Donté King-DeFlora and Michelle Moats secured second.

All of the Mesa State students put in countless hours studying alone and in groups, in the daytime, in the evening and in weekly practice sessions to hone their competitive skills and enhance their already considerable wealth of knowledge of all things HR.

In the end, they were victorious because of their knowledge, of course, but also because of their ability to stay on task in the process of preparing for the games. The six are to be commended not only because they demonstrated superiority in competition, but also because they're all full-time students who have active adult lives, jobs and numerous other demands on their time outside of school.

The Mesa State students will advance to the regional competition to compete against students from a 10-state area that also includes Arizona, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and Utah.

Congratulations and appreciation for the highly successful 2008 HR Games in Grand Junction are extended to Sarah Kjellerson and Terri Gird for coaching the Mesa State teams; the WCHRA for its constant and generous support of the Society for Human Resource student chapter at Mesa State; Steve Norman for his many contributions as co-advisor of the Mesa State SHRM chapter; Carlene Goldthwaite and Pam Nicholson of the Colorado Society for Human Resource Management; Tracy Jennings, the advisor at CU; and Milan Larson, the advisor at UNC.

Appreciation also is heartily extended to the many volunteers who dedicated their time on a Friday and Saturday to ensure the HR Games were a success. In addition, American National Bank, Choice Hotels, Enstrom Candies, LaVonne Gorsuch State Farm Insurance Agency and Rocky Mountain Health Plans all provided substantial support for this event.

Patrick Schutz, a certified Senior Professional in Human Resources, is a management professor at Mesa State College in Grand Junction and advisor of the Society for Human Resource Management student chapter there. He also serves as director of college relations for the Western Colorado Human Resource Association. The WCHRA meets at 11:30 a.m. the third Wednesday of each month at Two Rivers Convention Center, 159 Main St. For more information, log on to www.WCHRA.org.



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