Student Engagement Strategy to Focus on Connecting with Students Locally

Students who are passionate about HR are the future of our profession. Our goal is to help them develop meaningful networks and relationships that help elevate the profession of HR. Since 1965, SHRM student programs have provided “student-focused tools and resources and promoted mutually beneficial interaction between HR students and HR practitioners.”

For the past year, SHRM membership team has been looking for more compelling ways to engage an important constituency of our members: students. We felt that there were things we could do to better expand our reach to students and create better opportunities for professional chapters and state councils to engage with students at the local level.

To accomplish this goal, we did our homework.

We conducted a comprehensive review to better understand what compels our student members to be engaged. For our review, we collected and analyzed data from internal and external sources, including online focus groups of traditional and non-traditional students and in-person focus groups with student chapter advisors.

Our review found that students want more job placement resources on our website, increased networking events, and help connecting with local professional SHRM chapters.

With the feedback received, we have decided to refresh our student engagement strategy to establish a career-long partnership between student members and SHRM through expanded outreach and broader engagement at the local level.

These changes include:

- Transitioning SHRM’s three national Case Competition and Career Summits to optional locally-held competitions hosted by states. State councils who wish to participate will be provided “plug and play” toolkits, materials and resources from SHRM to ensure a smooth transition and successful event.
- Developing several new initiatives and programs to reach a greater number of students, including enhanced virtual and in-person engagement opportunities for student members
- Identifying increased opportunities to locally connect student and professional members through our existing state/local networks and student chapters.

Our hope is that by transitioning our case competitions to the local level, the events will be more affordable and more accessible for students, resulting in increased engagement. These changes will be
implemented by 2018, and we are announcing them to allow time for planning and budgeting. More updates will be given regarding the “plug and play” toolkits, materials and resources.

These are the first of many announcements that we are excited to roll out between now and throughout 2018. We believe that because of these changes we will be able to engage a larger portion of our student member population, and students – the future of our professions -- will be able to develop strong relationships and elevate the profession of HR.

SHRM STUDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Does this new student engagement strategy include a review of student chapters? Are student chapters going away?**

No. The student engagement strategy refresh did not include a review of the current student chapter structure, requirements or staff support. However, this concept is being integrated into the Chapter Review project currently underway and expected to conclude later this year. In the interim, there is a “hold” on chartering new student chapters, although existing, inactive chapters are continuing to be reactivated upon request.

**The national SHRM Case Competitions were very successful. Why is SHRM taking them away?**

Although our research confirmed that there is perceived value with HR competition-style events as a means of connecting students and professionals, student members and advisors frequently cite lack of funding, overall cost, scheduling challenges and distance as prohibiting factors. The data also confirms that SHRM historically averages 500-600 student attendees annually, a small percentage of the more than 21,000 student members.

**How is SHRM going to ensure students and HR professionals stay connected? The Career Summits were important opportunities to engage students with practitioners.**

As supported by student feedback, a critical component of SHRM’s refreshed student engagement strategy involves opportunities to better connect student and professional members via local/state affiliates. In most cases, student chapters are located near one or more professional SHRM chapters. In all cases, there is an affiliated state council that includes a College Relations volunteer role on the council. SHRM will be identifying new opportunities and provide support to ensure these connections continue, including toolkits, materials and resources in a variety of event formats for affiliates who wish to hold a local HR student competition, as well as sample agendas for hosting an HR Corporate Experience Day.

**Our state council may not be able to host a separate student HR competition/event in 2018. What options are available?**
Although hosting a student event is optional, state councils may wish to consider the following when identifying a potential student engagement opportunity, leveraging tools and resources provided by SHRM:

- Partner with a neighboring state council to host a stand-alone HR student case competition, HR games competition or HR corporate experience day.
- Incorporate a student event into the existing state conference or state leadership conference.
- Partner with a local SHRM professional chapter in the state to co-host the event.
- Partner with a SHRM student chapter in the state to co-host the event at their college/university.

In addition, a panel of state council representatives who currently hold existing local student competitions and events will be featured at a 2017 Volunteer Leaders’ Summit state council breakout session to share success stories and best practices and answer questions.

Who do I contact if I need more information?

For further information, please contact your state’s assigned Field Services Director, who would be happy to assist you.