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Alumni Newsletter

Liberty University - School of Business

Letter from the Dean

Special points of interest:

- Dean's Letter
- Human Resource Competition Team—Jordan McLaughlin
- Experience as Captain of the SHRM Competition Team—Louis Lolli
- Faculty Focus: Dr. Colleen McLaughlin

This issue of the School of Business Alumni Newsletter is devoted to one of our most active student organizations, the Liberty University chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). As I reported in June, the Liberty team participated in the state and regional competition of SHRM, earning first place honors in both. Out of 28 teams in the Southeast Regional competition against teams from the University of Tennessee and the University of Alabama, among others, Liberty SHRM excelled. Louis Lolli and Jordan McLaughlin share a number of their experiences in articles that are included in this issue.

As a result of their success at the Regional competition, the team members and their sponsor were invited to the national convention of SHRM and met a host of professionals from the Human Resources field and key national business leaders. Moreover, SHRM awarded Liberty University the Outstanding Student Chapter Award to recognize our excellence in programs, activities, and levels of participation that distinguish it from other student chapters.

Dr. Colleen McLaughlin, faculty sponsor for our

student chapter, was elected to serve as president in the state-wide SHRM for 2011 and earned the prestigious Senior Human Resource Professional (SPHR) in June. Read more about her in the Faculty Focus in this issue.

This has been an exciting six months here in the School of Business. Searching to be most competitive and to offer the finest Business degrees possible, we've explored developing a new specialization in Financial Planning and hope to start offering courses in that specialization next fall. Students who successfully complete that course of instruction will be permitted to sit for the Certified Financial Planner designation and distinguish themselves in that growing and attractive career field.

Alumni will also be interested in knowing that the new dress code for the School of Business has resulted in a more professional look for our Business and Accounting majors. The school-unique dress code requires students to maintain a neat, well-groomed, and professional appearance in all 300- and 400-level classes as well as school-wide functions held within the School of Business, and students have expressed pride in how they are immediately recognizable by their more professional look.

Some of you alumni joined us this summer as we

traveled to Europe on our annual School of Business-sponsored trip to Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Berlin, Paris, and London. While we were in Berlin, our tour director presented us with a fist-sized piece of the Berlin Wall with the word "Liberty" written on it. This piece came sealed with a certificate of authenticity, and immediately upon our return, Chancellor Jerry Falwell authorized construction of a display that is housed in the Alumni Welcome Center off the Jerry Falwell Museum in



DeMoss Learning Center.

In May 2010 almost 100 alumni, faculty, students, and family members will be traveling to Italy and Greece, ending the trip with a four-day cruise of the Greek Isles. Then in 2011, the School of Business will be leading a trip to Ireland, Wales, Scotland, and England, a trip on which a number of folks have already enrolled. If you're interested



in joining that trip to [Ireland and the United Kingdom](#), you may contact the School of Business at (434) 592-3862.

Finally, many of you graduates and alumni will remember Sharon Cohick, our administrative assistant since 2001. At the end of this month, Sharon will be leaving us to take a new position at Liberty that provides her greater challenges and opportunities, and we all wish her the very best. You may send her your well wishes at secohick@liberty.edu, and I know she'd love to hear from you.

We always enjoy hearing from our alumni, and we look forward to receiving e-mails from you or seeing you whenever you and your families return to campus. Please stay in touch with us by sending us updates on your professional, personal, and spiritual lives. Our School of Business e-mail address is SchoolofBusiness@liberty.edu, and you may always check out our website at <https://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=149>. Moreover, as you talk with friends who are alumni of our school, we'd love to have you share about this information link we're attempting to establish with you.

We pray you all have a wonderful Christmas and New Year's, and we look forward to continuing these newsletters in the future.



Human Resource Team Competition by Jordan McLaughlin

The Journey. . .

I believe it is important to share the experience of being a member of the Liberty Human Resource competition team as it has related to my life academically, professionally, and spiritually, and others need to know the value of the experience. The impact that being a member of the competition team has had on my life is amazing! During my freshman year at Liberty, I had the opportunity to observe an HR Competition and sat in awe at the amount of information the competitors had mastered. I began to think that I could never achieve the level of knowledge these competitors possessed. I saw how quick and sharp the LU Society for Human Resource Managers (SHRM) team members were when answering questions and thought it was nearly impossible for me to ever be able to achieve that level of skill. I also heard about the success these students had in finding jobs when they graduated due to their level of knowledge and skills. All of this seemed to be way beyond my reach, but I thought I would give it a shot. So, the next year I began to practice with the other team members to learn the terms and concepts and realized one thing: the competition might not be as hard as I thought.

After months of practicing, my team was ready to compete in the 2009 Virginia State HR Competition. I wondered how we going to do. How will we compare to the other schools that are going to be in the competition? Those were just a couple of the many thoughts that ran through my head as we arrived for the competition. During round after round of this Jeopardy-style competition, my team and I took victory after victory. The final round came and we had not lost a single match and God seemed to remind me of one thing: when you're doing something for the glory of God, He will guide your path. I realized that it wasn't me or my other team members, Louis Lolli or Jonathan Mills, taking us to the level we were achieving; it was God. When the final round ended, we had earned the title of State Champions and received the VA state collegiality award.

Following the Virginia state HR competition and additional weeks of practice, it was time for the Southeast Regional HR Competition where we competed among 27 teams from across a number of states. The anxiety and stress was growing greater for this competition until again God seemed to whisper the same message in my ear: when you're doing something for the glory of God, He will guide your path. My fear and anxiety again disappeared. Throughout the Southeast Regional Competition my team and I again swept through the competition without losing a single match and again found ourselves sitting in the final round facing a team that we had previously defeated by a significant margin. Knowing my team and I had defeated this team a few rounds ago, my head began to fill with self-focused thoughts and I began to lean on my own understanding and confidence. Halfway through the round my team and I found ourselves thousands of points behind our competitors. That's when it hit me hard; I had begun to put my trust in myself rather than putting my trust in God. God revealed to me very quickly what I was able to do on my own... and that was nothing. I gathered my teammates up for a real quick prayer where we told God that we were solely relying on Him to help us recall our knowledge and help us come out of the competition with a victory.

As the end of the competition neared, we pulled ahead of the other team by a small margin. About four questions before the competition ended, we only needed to answer one question worth 600 points in order to seal the victory. Before the question

came on the screen I again prayed a short prayer asking the Lord to help us with a victory and thanking Him for the comeback that we were able to make. The question appeared on the screen and before I even read the question, my hand hit the buzzer. I yelled the answer to the judge before the time-limit ran out. Everything in the world seemed to slow down as I began to realize what God had done. He allowed my team and me to experience a true answer to pray.

The Rewards . . .

I gained three things from the HR competition. The first thing that I gained is the understanding that no matter how impossible the task seems to be in front of you, with God anything is possible. I look back at my freshman year when I watched the different teams go back and forth and shout out court cases, laws, and business terms that would make the average person's head spin, thinking that I would never be able to do that. I remember practicing and wondering how I was ever going to be able to recall the thousands of terms I had learned. I remember sitting in the room getting ready to compete before both the Virginia State and Southeast Regional Competitions and thinking about how a victory seemed impossible. Then I remember the amazing power of a God who cares so much about us. I look back at the competition and see how I relied on the Lord and when I began to trust in myself, He whispered in my ear that same message: when you're doing something for the glory of God, He will guide your path.

The second thing I gained is a new found brotherhood. Throughout the hours and hours of practice we engaged in every week, there were two young men that were there for me every day. To me, Louis Lolli and Jonathan Mills weren't just two students who were part of this collective "team"; they were two men of God who picked me up when I felt like quitting and encouraged me to keep on going when it seemed like I was being conquered by the world. But more important than their encouragement is the Godly attitude both of them let shine during each practice we had. Louis and Jon were there for me when I needed someone to pray with or talk to. They also believed the same truth that I did, that it is only through the power of God that we were able to win.

The third, and to me the least important, thing that I gained from the competition is the job opportunities that came with the title of Virginia State and Southeast Regional HR Competition Champion. Since that victory God has provided over a dozen job opportunities for me to choose from. I currently am working as a recruiter for two different companies. The first job was offered to me after delivering a presentation to the Virginia State Society for Human Resource Managers Executive Council board meeting. After finishing my speech, the HR director for a recruiting/staffing firm in Washington D.C. came up to me and offered me a position conducting recruiting from home. I have been able to recruit new employees for companies such as Eddie Bauer, BlueFly.com, Servicemagic.com, and J.P. Morgan Chase. The second job I currently hold was offered to me after a recruiter saw a magazine article written about the Virginia State HR Competition. The executive recruiter offered me a position as an assistant executive recruiter for a multi-billion dollar company in Lynchburg that is flexible around my school schedule.

The Heartfelt Gratitude . . .

I stand in amazement of where God has brought me. I first give glory to God who has allowed me to realize how powerful He is and how He will give us the power to do anything if we only rely on Him. The second thing to which I credit our victory is the

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), both through the Liberty University Student Chapter and the Central Virginia Professional Chapter. I have been attending the professional chapter meetings every month since my freshman year and have had the opportunity to meet and network with countless of HR professionals who have encouraged and supported my education in HR. Another person I give credit to is Liberty University's Student SHRM Advisor, Dr. Colleen McLaughlin, who served as a mentor and coach and was one of the greatest aids in us becoming victorious in both competitions. She pushed us when we didn't want to practice and encouraged us to keep going when we felt like giving up. The students from Liberty who competed considered her a mother. The amazing thing is that God blessed me with the opportunity to really call her. . . Mom.

One thing that I tell people when they ask how we were able to come out with not only one victory but two, is the importance of SHRM in my life and the impact of networking with the HR professionals. The second thing I tell people is to trust fully on God, and with Him you can be victorious and do the impossible!



Liberty University SHRM Competition Team members Louis Lolli (left), Jordan McLaughlin, and Jonathan Mills greet legendary CEO Jack Welch at the National Convention of SHM in New Orleans in June 2009.

Experience as Captain of the LU SHRM Competition Team

By Louis Lolli

In August of 2008 I began what would become a 10-month training program where literally everyday, Sunday-Friday, and even some Saturdays I would set time aside to memorize the terminology and court cases pertaining to the six main components of HR: strategic HR, staffing, human resource development, total compensation, employee and labor relations, and OSHA (Occupational and Safety Health Administration). There were continuous single and team study sessions along with in house competitions. I say in house because Liberty University sent three teams to the Regional Competition, so we used this to our advantage and sharpened one another's skill by battling each other in simulated HR games.

Our three-person team included Jordan McLaughlin, Jonathan Mills, and me, and during those months something happened that wasn't fully noticeable to me until after we had won the Southeast Regional Competition. The most amazing part is that the Lord had done this through prayer and common purpose in glorifying his name. Although there were countless moments where God had shown up time and time again there is one moment in particular I would like to mention.

It was during the final round against the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, a team that we had already beaten strongly earlier in the day 4,600, to 2,800. To understand this score better, each game board consisted of 25 questions with each question having a value assigned to it ranging from 200-1,000 points. For the first time our team found itself trailing, by over 2,000 points, and I began to ask God why he was allowing this to happen. Questions were being asked, and my mind could not produce the answers. Then I asked the Lord if I should begin preparing my heart for defeat? Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. At that moment I couldn't understand what the

Lord was doing, but I do now. The entire day my confidence grew in myself and my team's capabilities to the point that I had forgotten it was the Lord's choosing for Liberty University to be there that day. Our goal had been to glorify Him and not for Him to glorify us! In the second half of the final round we came back to take the title in order for the Lord's purpose to be fulfilled, for us to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

I truly believe the Lord wanted us to be his witnesses in New Orleans at the 2009 SHRM National Conference. By his grace we were. On June 30, 2009 in front of over 15,000 professionals of the worlds' largest companies Liberty University was recognized as the Southeast Regional Champion. It gives me great joy to know that closely attached to Liberty University's name is its mission statement, "Training Champions for Christ." May we not forget the purpose of our existence in the midst of our greatest opportunities to proclaim the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

FACULTY FOCUS– Dr. Colleen McLaughlin

By

Dr. Bruce Bell

“I was one of those young girls who had been abused as a child and had come to believe I was unlovable. When I heard about the love of a heavenly Father, though, I was drawn to that love and surrendered my life to Him. I was changed forever.” Those words punctuate the passion that Dr. Colleen McLaughlin feels for the Lord and for the students she meets with every day.

Since arriving at Liberty in 2005, Dr. McLaughlin has developed single-handedly the Human Resource Management specialization and has been the force behind Liberty’s chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). In her role as faculty sponsor of SHRM, she coaches relentlessly all the teams that have competed in the Human Resource (HR) competition at the state and regional levels. Her passion for the Lord and for her students is matched by her passion for excellence in the HR field, and her teams have won the Virginia State and Southeast Regional Collegiality Awards in 2008 and 2009 and the state and regional competitions in 2009.

A serious academic, Dr. McLaughlin earned her undergraduate degree in Computer Science from the University of Central Texas before earning a master’s degree in Human Resource Management from Tarleton State University, completing her Ph.D. in Organization and Management with an HR Management specialization from Capella University.

Before coming to Liberty, she worked as owner of a floral and gift design shop, HR consultant to churches and Christian schools, career counselor at the Liberty Godparent Home, and as a Youth Bible Fellowship teacher.

“Through trials and triumphs, I have learned the importance of submerging myself in the Word of God and relying on His commands and promises for peace, comfort, and joy,” she says. “My experiences have caused me to be sensitive to others in need and to utilize the passion He gave me to serve the Central Virginia community, my church, and the students at Liberty University.”

Students who are specializing in HR Management know that passion very well. As course manager for the Human Resource Management specialization, Dr. McLaughlin teaches all HR courses at Liberty, including Human Resource Management, Compensation Management, Human Resource Development, Workforce Planning & Employment, and the Human Resource Practicum.

“Some of the greatest moments I’ve experienced at Liberty have been advising students in our SHRM chapter and coaching the HR competition teams,” says Dr. McLaughlin. “I have been challenged, impressed, and in awe of the dedication and motivation of our students.”

In addition to her HR courses, Dr. McLaughlin has also designed and taught Personal Finance, a course taken by students from all majors, instructing them in biblical principles of stewardship and personal finance.

As one who practices what she preaches about Human Resource Management, in June 2008 she was certified as a Senior Human Resource Professional (SPHR), a prestigious designation earned by few HR professionals. Additionally,

she serves as a member of the board for SHRM of Central Virginia and has been elected president for SHRM of Central Virginia for 2011.

A wife of 22 years to a retired Army officer, Dr. McLaughlin and her husband Scott have two children, Karen, who graduates from Liberty Christian Academy in June and Jordan, who graduates with a degree in Business from Liberty in May. To celebrate the accomplishment of graduating from LCA and Liberty respectively, the entire family is joining the School of Business on its European tour to Italy and Greece immediately following the Liberty graduation ceremony next spring. Dr. McLaughlin claims Philippians 4:13 as her favorite verse of Scripture: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” She smiles as she adds, “We can do nothing without Him. We are each fully equipped with the gifts, talents, and motivation when we rely on Him and are obedient to His call.”



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