



Nomination for: Advancing the HR Profession Award

Program: DHRM University

State: Utah

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Utah DHRM's Corporate University

1. Brief Program Description

DHRM University (DHRM U), the Utah Department of Human Resource Management's internal learning program, has been established to expand the professional capacity of the state's HR professionals and prepare staff for advancement opportunities within the HR profession. DHRM U course are divided into four categories, namely:

- **NEO:** Consists of courses for new employees to familiarize them with the functions, culture, and standards of DHRM and state government.
- **Basic HR:** Consists of courses largely focused on learning HR systems and basic HR skills (e.g. position analysis, recruitment, and compensation) needed to excel as an HR Technician and HR Analyst.
- **Advanced HR:** Consists of courses largely focusing on liability issues associated primarily with the HR Specialist (employee relations specialist) job title, as well as HR analytics that all employees should develop as an advanced skill.
- **Leading HR:** Consists of courses designed to develop management and strategic leadership skills in HR staff; some of these courses are existing general offerings provided by DHRM to personnel in all state agencies and others are custom designed for HR professionals who have current leadership responsibilities or potential for advancement into leadership roles. (See image of [DHRM U home page](#) on DHRM Intranet)

The knowledge and skills addressed in courses offered through DHRM U were identified through a training needs assessment and are supported by a [competency model](#) designed to promote the transition from delivering transactional to more strategic HR programs and services.

DHRM U course are designed to enable DHRM employees to:

- **Master their current job:** DHRM U sponsored or sanctioned courses begin the moment a new DHRM employee is hired with NEO and basic training on systems and processes used at the relevant job level. Courses for current incumbents have included the following topics: Job analysis and position classification; recruitment and selection; basic liability (online course); advanced liability; and workplace investigations.
- **Prepare for their next likely role:** Learning programs offered to current position incumbents are subsequently or concurrently offered to persons in lower level positions to prepare them for possible advancement. All of the above listed courses have been offered to individuals with potential to succeed at higher levels or in different roles.
- **Develop for the future:** DHRM U has integrated a couple of existing management/leadership development programs sponsored by DHRM into its course offerings. The programs include a four-course live instruction series called Leadership Skills for Supervisors, and the Utah Certified

Public Manager® program. These programs are made available to DHRM employees in management and leadership roles, as well as other DHRM employees who want to explore their leadership potential and/or develop their management skills.

A unique feature of DHRM U is the award of badges to employees for each course completed. While some contemporary learning programs award badges electronically, DHRM U provides each DHRM employee a [badge board](#) with a metal backing that supports the award of magnet badges, which employees then proudly display in their respective offices or cubicles. The magnet badges are often awarded at large DHRM functions to recognize staff and encourage continuous learning.

2. Duration of Program

DHRM U has been in operation since July 1, 2014. The first course offering was titled Advanced Employment Liability. In this course new and prospective HR specialists (who are largely engaged in employee relations matters) were instructed on state and federal employment laws and other liability issues. We rolled this course out first due to the anticipated near-term retirements of many HR specialists.

The second course was position analysis and job classification. These two skills and processes are fundamental to many other HR functions and developing skills in these areas was seen as critical for developing strategic HR capabilities and to support our operational excellence initiatives.

3. Why DHRM U was Created

While DHRM had a couple of learning programs prior to the development of DHRM U, they were relatively fragmented and infrequently offered. DHRM U was a strategic initiative chartered by our executive director, Debbie Cragun. Debbie perceived of a need for a corporate university style program to enhance HR professionalism, support succession planning within DHRM, and to provide newer DHRM employees opportunities for early learning and growth that they otherwise would not have had. Providing learning opportunities was perceived as critical for employee retention. Additionally, there was a perceived need to change the skills and perspectives of experienced DHRM employees to be more strategic.

4. DHRM U Program Costs

For the most part, DHRM U instructors perform their instructor roles as additional duties. Likewise, the program's courses are designed and coordinated by Rick Hughes, DHRM's director of learning and development, as an additional duty. Therefore, the additional costs of the program are low. In 2015, DHRM purchased an LMS that supports student learning and course records management. This application costs about \$22.00 per year per user, thereby costing approximately \$3,000 per year for DHRM.

5. Program Funding

The relatively minimal direct program costs are funded in DHRM's regular budget.

6. Measuring Program Success

DHRM U's success for most learning programs is assessed through in class assessments of student learning and skills transfer back to the worksite. For most courses, participants are given practical assignments, which are submitted through the learning management system and reviewed; participants are then given feedback. For attendees currently serving in the roles for which training was provided, their actual work is periodically evaluated against what was taught in training.

Another key measure of success is the number of persons who have taken a course for a future role and then are subsequently promoted, and the quality of promotions made from among course participants. Through the submitted practical assignments, we are able to evaluate participant skill levels. This has been a great aid in identifying promotable employees within DHRM.

7. How DHRM U has Changed since Inception

Since its inception we have made a few modifications to DHRM U. One modification is the awarding of badges for non-DHRM U course learning, such as learning from working on a project team, completing university or other coursework, or taking on new roles. DHRM employees who desire a badge for such an activity submit an electronic form describing what they learned and requesting a badge. Badges are also awarded to employees who have completed the SPHR, PHR, SHRM-SCP, and SHRM-CP exams.

Something we noticed upon completing our competency model was the congruence between many of the competencies we desire in HR managers and directors and the lessons taught in the state's Certified Public Manager[®] (CPM) program. Given this finding, we have now better integrated CPM into DHRM U, and reserve two seats in each CPM cohort for DHRM employees who are current leaders or have leadership potential.