

University Senate

Proposed: September 23, 2016

Adopted: September 23, 2016
unanimously by 56 senators present

**RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A
M.S. IN HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT (SPS)**

WHEREAS, Human Capital Management (HCM) is defined as the strategic processes of acquiring, developing, managing, and retaining employees so that they will contribute significantly to the business; and

WHEREAS, the contemporary workplace is influenced by factors including changing workforce demographics, evolving technology, and increasingly global operations; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for strategic HCM that marries traditional human resources skills with foundations of business partnership; and

WHEREAS, the program is designed for emerging and mid-level professionals as well as recent graduates from top universities who have demonstrated strong educational performance with a focus in areas related to human resources; and

WHEREAS, the program will include a foundation of labor and employment law, finance, and HR systems and technology in addition to principles of management and organization; and

WHEREAS, the program will provide an unparalleled platform for focused theoretical analysis, targeted practical application through simulations and business case studies, and an experiential capstone project; and

WHEREAS, industry leaders have expressed an urgent need for this kind of program; and

WHEREAS, the proposed program does not duplicate any other offerings at Columbia;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate approve the M.S. in Human Capital Management at the School of Professional Studies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Education Committee review the program in five years.

Proponent:

Committee on Education

Purpose of the proposed program

Businesses don't create value; people do, as the generally accepted axiom has it. Today's Human Resource professionals have become key partners in creating and implementing business strategies. The work content of Human Resource roles has shifted over the last decade. HR professionals today focus on strategic initiatives including workforce planning, culture creation and change, merges and acquisitions; they address organization's talent needs and management capabilities. The context in which HR operates has become more complex with technology, globalization and an intergenerational workplace. This has added to the need to merge traditional human resources skills with foundations of business partnership and talent management.

In order to address this growing need, Columbia's School of Professional Studies (SPS) has developed the MS Human Capital Management (HCM). HCM is defined as the processes of acquiring, developing, managing, and retaining employees. In the context of ubiquitous technology, and increasingly global operations, there is a need for strategic HCM that marries traditional human resources skills with foundations of business partnership and talent management. The Columbia MS in HCM is a rigorous graduate program that offers emerging and mid-level professionals a path towards professional mastery. The MS in HCM will graduate students who are ready to navigate HR's evolving contexts and in business, taking on more strategic leadership roles in their organizations.

Society for Human Resource Management's (SHRM) Competency Model defines what it means to be a successful HR professional—across the performance continuum, around the globe, and from early to executive career levels. SHRM competencies emphasize skills in business acumen, communication, relationship management, consultation, global and cultural effectiveness and ethical practice. As HR professionals move to more central roles in organizations, they find themselves in a position to deliver innovative solutions that drive business impact. The proposed program aligns itself with SHRM competencies to ensure that graduates are best positioned for maximum business success.

The 36-credit MS course of studies will provide a broad educational platform for focused theoretical analysis and targeted practical application. Its flexible hybrid format delivered by SPS world class scholar practitioner faculty within the intellectual environment of Columbia University represents a unique professional growth opportunity for the aspiring HR leaders.

Need the proposed program is designed to meet

Organizations are increasingly seeking out HR professionals who can function as strategic planners: shaping work culture, engaging key business issues, and playing a key role in advancing business' missions. HR professionals don't work in isolation and need to develop the skillset and capacity to evolve with an organization's strategic goals.

While it is generally agreed that HR should have deep knowledge about workplace issues, some have criticized that "HR managers focus too much on "administrivia" and lack vision and strategic insight." One of traditional HR's biggest difficulties has been supporting business strategy.

According to a 2013 Towers Watson survey, “there is a lack of alignment in organizations’ cost, risk, and talent agenda.” HR professionals who develop this aligned perspective would be well-positioned for success in their organizations. Further, a 2015 Deloitte survey found that the skills gap are substantive when rating HR professionals’ readiness to the top trends in the profession.

The proposed MS in HCM will prepare graduates to analyze and respond to an organization’s changing needs with a focus on developing the skills to design and implement strategic plans that communicate leaderships’ goals and guide an organization’s workforce to meet emerging demands.

Have you received requests for the program?

Yes, we have received requests for this program. Given the growing importance of alignment between HR and organizational strategy, SPS has conducted market and opinion leader research to determine what kind of graduate degree program in the field is needed. Industry leaders from across a number of sectors—public and private entities; large and small organizations; local and global enterprises—have expressed an urgent need for this kind of program.

To verify we are responsive to industry needs, SPS invited an industry advisory board to help shape the MS in Human Capital Management. The board informed the articulation of market need and drove a discussion about the specific skills students would need upon graduation to make the attractive candidates for management positions in HR.

Do other institutions in the metropolitan area and in the Northeast offer similar programs? If so, describe how the program differs from those at the other institutions.

Although there are a number of known programs in HR management in the area, the proposed MS in Human Capital Management focuses building HR skills for internal consulting, design thinking and communication and ethical leadership. No program in the east coast has this combination to prepare students to think and tackle a strategic array of HCM issues in a global context.