January 27, 2015

SHRM

Jon Decoteau

1800 Duke Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mr. Decoteau,

Per your request, I am providing additional information regarding NHRMA’s decision to reinstate the 2015 Student Conference and Case Competition.

First and foremost, I am a “graduate” of SHRM Student Programs. Thanks to the University of Alaska Anchorage Student chapter, I found a career I love and an organization (SHRM) where I have served as a volunteer leader since 2001. I am a believer of the importance of student programs and of the impact that we all can have on them, as individuals, professionals, chapters, state councils and regional organizations like NHRMA. You cannot ask for a better advocate for student programs than me.

As of 2014, NHRMA has held student conferences for students in Alaska, Oregon and Washington for 32 years (Alaska has only participated in literally a handful of conferences over this time period). Last year NHRMA partnered with SHRM in holding the Western Region SHRM Student Conference in Portland, Oregon. NHRMA felt the co-sponsorship went well and it was a positive step. There were some challenges, partially due to the SHRM Student Conference Representative’s resignation during the planning stage, and NHRMA received negative feedback from some of the student advisors after the conference.

At our December 2014 board meeting, our former College Relations Director brought a motion to suspend the 2015 NHRMA Student Conference as information at the time indicated that only two schools were interested in the conference. In lieu of the student conference, NHRMA decided to offer students a discounted registration fee to the Annual NHRMA Conference in October 2015, and hold student networking events at said conference. Additionally, we would use 2015 to regroup, engage with advisors and find alternative ways in which NHRMA could support students in the region in lieu of a conference. . At the time of our vote, there was no information available about the location or dates of SHRM’s 2015 conference in the Western Region.

Upon announcement of our decision to the region advisors and soon thereafter the announcement of the SHRM student conference location and dates, the college advisor community expressed their concerns about our decision and the negative impact it would have on students. Although they appreciated the discounted rate at the Annual NHRMA Conference, they indicated that the dates of our conference were not ideal because it coincides with the first week of classes for that quarter. Advisors also had the added concern that the SHRM Student Conference was the week before or during finals, and they also felt the location was cost prohibitive. Further, if they were unable to attend any of the student conferences hosted by SHRM, they would also be unable to claim points for their Merit Award applications.

Based on this feedback and new information, we reached out to the advisors via e-mail and requested a confirmation of intent to participate, an estimated number of students they thought would attend the conference and a host school. The response was positive and the information received was presented to the board in the attached motion, with some verbal changes that included the venue being Portland State University and the conflict with the SHRM Student Conference dates and location. The Board had a very lengthy discussion, which included our relationship with SHRM and our desire to support the SHRM student conference. After careful consideration, the Board passed a motion to reinstate the NHRMA Student Conference for 2015. The motion also included a plan to engage with advisors and students after this year’s NHRMA Student Conference to research other ways in which NHRMA can support the students other than providing a student conference after 2015 (such as sponsoring student chapters to attend any of the SHRM Student Conferences).

The links to the academic calendars for the schools in question are below (confirming the conflict of SHRM Student Conference dates with finals week):

* Portland State University <http://www.pdx.edu/registration/calendar#/?section=winter2015>
* University of Washington <http://www.washington.edu/students/reg/1415cal.html>
* Lake Washington Tech <http://lwtech.edu/current_students/academic_calendar/docs/Academic_Calendar_2014_2015_Final.pdf>
* Central Washington U <http://www.cwu.edu/calendar?m=3&y=2015>
* Western Washington U <http://www.wwu.edu/academic_calendar>

NHRMA is entering its 77 years of existence as an organization. Our affiliation with SHRM is of utmost importance to us. We understand that student chapters are an affiliate of SHRM and as such, should be in alignment with SHRM Student Programs.

Our goal is to support the students and to give them opportunities to grow and thrive in the world of HR. We are still encouraging advisors to promote attendance at any of the SHRM Student Conferences if the dates/locations work best for them, and ultimately would like to ensure their attendance at ANY of the provided conferences.

Going forward, we would like NHRMA to have a stronger partnership with SHRM in this area (as we believe everything else is going extremely well). We know this relationship is unique, as NHRMA is the only regional organization of its kind in the SHRM structure. We would like to work with SHRM on some of the decisions that are being made around student conferences and student programs to ensure they are well received and successful.

NHRMA as an organization has a very positive opinion of SHRM and we continually analyze our offerings and identify ways in which we can continue to strengthen our partnership. As we move forward with our College Relations initiatives this year that will be at the forefront of our decisions.

We thank you for all your support and understanding. As soon as we have our longer term plan, we will promptly communicate with you. I believe that at the end of the day we will be able to achieve something that will be satisfactory to all parties and the most important thing that will best benefit the students –our ultimate goal.

Sincerely,

cc: Dianna Gould, SHRM Field Services Director

NHRMA Board of Directors