Welcome to the W. T. Beebe Newsletter, written by the students of the W. T. Beebe Institute of Personnel and Employment Relations in the Robinson College of Business at Georgia State University. In this issue, we introduce RCB’s new dean, welcome two new PhD students, discuss workplace wellness programs, learn about “A Day in the Life” of an HR practitioner, read up on research that was conducted by a GSU professor, discuss updates from the GSU chapter of SHRM, and congratulate Beebe graduates. Also, we will see what Alumni have been up to!

NEW DEAN FOR ROBINSON COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Richard D. Phillips, associate dean of academic initiatives and innovation at Georgia State University’s J. Mack Robinson College of Business since 2012, has been named dean of the college, effective July 1. Phillips succeeds H. Fenwick Huss, who resigned after 10 years as dean of the college. Huss is now the Willem Kooyker Dean of the Zicklin School of Business at Baruch College, part of the City University of New York System.

A risk management scholar, Phillips joined Robinson in 1994 as an assistant professor and became chair of the Department of Risk Management and Insurance in 2006. Under his leadership the department shifted from an insurance-centric focus to a broader study of risk dedicated to understanding, quantifying and developing strategies for managing risks faced by individuals, organizations and society.

He has served on many college-wide initiatives, including as chair of the task force that laid the foundation for the college’s Vision 2020 strategic plan. Phillips, the C.V. Starr Professor of Risk Management and Insurance, holds a Ph.D. in insurance and finance from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. He serves on the board of the American Risk and Insurance Association, is co-editor of the Journal of Risk and Insurance and past president of the Risk Theory Society.

Article posted at http://robinson.gsu.edu/news/robinson-appoints-new-dean/
**WELCOME PH.D. STUDENTS**

What are you getting your Ph.D. in?
I am getting my degree in Organizational Behavior.

What is your background?
I have a BS and MS in Electrical Engineering from North Carolina A&T State University.

What work experience did you have prior to coming to GSU?
My working experience is in Human Resources departments and Management Consulting firms. The last four years I was in the role of HR Manager in a Greek manufacturing company. From my role there I worked on improving company’s practices based on our own survey evidence, on initiating and implementing training programs and I also acted as an internal trainer for our executive team. This role has contributed to my desire to become a professor as I find fascinating to transfer knowledge and assist others in applying management tools.

How did you become interested in earning a Ph.D and why did you choose GSU?
My goal soon after entering college was to become a professor, but realized that I didn’t like Electrical Engineering enough to spend the rest of my life baking silicon wafer. So I figured I’d chosen the wrong career and found a job in information technology consulting (because it was the hot field at the time). I enjoyed it for several years, but as I moved up into management, two things happened – (1) I was asked to lead more projects with an organization, process, and strategic focus and (2) I began working on a day-to-day basis with executives. Through this experience I became interested in organizational behavior – what makes good and bad leaders, what affects their decision-making, what drives an organization’s culture? I realized that my desire to be a professor had not gone away; it just remained dormant until I discovered my true passion. I chose GSU because my research interests matched several of the professors here at Robinson. I felt I’d have many opportunities to work on relevant and interesting research. Also, after talking with the professors and current PhD students, I felt that the environment was very supportive, not competitive like other programs with which I was familiar. It was the logical course and even though it’s only even a few weeks, I know it was the right one!

What do you enjoy to do in your spare time?
I enjoy reading mystery novels (although they’ve taken a backseat to journal articles), watching football and college basketball, and vacationing with friends.

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**Tanja Darden**

**Artemis Boulamatsi**

What are you getting your Ph.D. in?
I am getting my degree in Organizational Behavior.

What is your background?
I have a BS and MS in Electrical Engineering from North Carolina A&T State University.

What work experience did you have prior to coming to GSU?
I worked in federal consulting for more than 15 years in the Washington DC Metro area, primarily providing project management and organization & strategic consulting support for information technology organizations in Defense, Intelligence, and Civilian federal agencies. I worked for top 5 consulting companies IBM and Booz Allen as well as a 60-person start-up.

How did you become interested in earning a Ph.D and why did you choose GSU?
My personal experience in business settings, my passion to the discipline of organizational behavior and my curiosity drove me to develop the desire of looking for answers in a more systematic way and doing a PhD especially in Georgia State University will have a beneficial impact on my interests. I chose Georgia State University because it is a prestigious academic institution that conducts topnotch research and I can obtain the best training to promote my career. My aspiration is to become a competent researcher looking for impactful research evidence for the business world and the society.

What do you enjoy to do in your spare time?
My hobbies are playing tennis and travelling. I have visited many places in Europe and I am interested in exploring the USA and Latin America. I also play regularly tennis so I hope to be able to continue it in Atlanta as well. In my spare time I also enjoy visiting museums and attending music festivals.

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**Welcome Ph.D. students**

**Tanja Darden**

**Artemis Boulamatsi**
WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAMS: A PRIMER

By Dr. Kelly Anne Grace

Wellness Programs (WPs) are one method employers are using in the hopes of improving employee health which reduces health care and absenteeism costs while increasing employee satisfaction. These programs generally take the form of health risk assessments (through questionnaires or biomedical screening) coupled with interventions to aid employees with chronic problems like diabetes, heart disease and chronic pulmonary conditions. They also may include programs to help employees with tobacco use, inactivity, and poor nutrition, lifestyle choices which contribute to 75% of chronic diseases.

WPs are cost-beneficial, saving companies money in health-care expenditures and producing a positive return on investment. Baicker, Cutler, and Song (2010) found an average return on investment of $3.27, e.g., employee health care costs fell by $3.27 for every $1.00 spent on WPs. Organizations that have publicly reported cost savings or positive returns on investment include Johnson & Johnson, Citibank, Procter & Gamble, Chevron, California Public Retirement System, Bank of America, DuPont, Duke University, and Highmark (Anderko et al., 2012). As to attendance, Baicker et al. (2010) evaluated the savings associated with lower absenteeism and found that absenteeism costs fall by $2.73 for every dollar spent on WPs.

While many commentators and consultants laud the effectiveness of WPs, we know that despite the availability of programs, participation is low. A RAND employer survey found that about half of employees (46%) complete a health risk assessment (Mattke et al., 2013). However, actual participation in lifestyle or disease management programs was substantially lower ranging from 7% (smoking cessation) to 26% (weight management) of those who completed the assessment. Participation rates are disheartening.

There are legal issues related to the collection of data on which to base interventions and the use of incentives and penalties. The option which carries the least risk under current law appears to be a voluntary program with modest penalties or incentives based on participation. WPs should be most beneficial to the least healthy, however, it appears that those individuals are the most challenging to engage in a WP. Still, interest continues to grow.

REFERENCES


“A Day in the Life…” is a portion of the Beebe Newsletter in which we interview people from different roles that are potentially relevant and of interest to our readership, in order to gain a better understanding of what a typical day is like for people in their current roles. In this edition, we will focus on the role of a practitioner through an interview with Melissa Polun.

**Melissa Polun - A Practitioner**

What is your background?
My undergraduate degree is a BS in Business Administration from the University of Buffalo in Buffalo, NY. I started working in Corporate Communications for a technology company right out of college, and was quickly a part of a corporate downsize. I found myself in the finance and banking industry shortly after, and my finance career brought me from upstate New York to Atlanta, where I went through several mergers and acquisitions with my firm. During that time, I started interfacing with HR professionals on a regular basis, and I was hooked. I walked away from my banking career in May of 2008.

Soon after leaving banking, I began doing industry research on the HR field and began my MBA in Human Resources at Georgia State. During my research, I found The Society for HR Management (SHRM-Atlanta) and I quickly signed up. The first meeting I attended helped me make the connections to transition into Human Resources. I finished my MBA at Georgia State and also completed my Professional in Human Resources (PHR) designation while working full time as an HR generalist for a non-profit and going to Georgia State at night. I spent the next several years as a compensation and data analyst in the banking industry before transitioning to my current firm in May of 2014.

What is the best part about your job?
The best part about my day-to-day job is interacting with amazing talent all over the world. I really enjoy working for a global organization and have learned so much from my colleagues.

As the VP of Member Relations with SHRM-Atlanta, I love nothing more than watching someone grow in their own career. Whether it’s making an introduction to someone, or seeing someone at a meeting and hearing they got that promotion or that new job they were looking for. Being a part of a professional organization that really cares about the professional growth of its members is so satisfying. I feel so great being able to give back to others the way someone else gave back to me and helped launch my HR career when I was first starting.

What is the best advice you have received that attributed to your success thus far?
Before you commit to a project or a proposal, be absolutely certain that what you are doing will be impactful to the business. There is nothing worse than spending time on something that no one will use or that won’t aid someone in making a decision. It is so imperative that the work that you do has a broader reach on the goals of the organization, no matter how small your contribution seems. Not only won’t you grow, but your organization isn’t getting the value out of your skills it needs to succeed.

What are the qualities that someone needs to possess in order to succeed in getting a job in your field?
Always keeping an eye out for an opportunity to do something better, different and/or more efficient. Create challenges and opportunities for yourself. Get out in your community and network. Learn from other professionals. You can’t choose your co-workers, but you can choose your professional network. Surround yourself with people who are different from you. Being in compensation, I’ve gotten some of my best ideas from my recruiting, marketing, and HR Generalist colleagues.

Continue to challenge your skills and take the ownership to expand them. It’s not your company’s responsibility to take care of you! If you want to teach yourself VBA, buy yourself a book. Don’t wait for your manager or your company to offer. Look at what people are doing in places you want to be and fill the skill gap yourself. No one will take care of your career and your growth like you will!

What advice would you give to those looking to get a job in your field?
I was able to transition from banking into Human Resources by networking with other professionals. I would strongly encourage future students to not only get involved in their local SHRM Student Chapter on campus, but also get involved in SHRM-Atlanta. It is a vibrant community of professionals at all stages in their careers, and I would not be in the position I am without the connections I have made at SHRM-Atlanta.

From a day-to-day career perspective, I would suggest always looking for new ways to solve old problems. I started out as a generalist and found a gap in the data I felt I needed to accurately make decisions. Instead of ignoring it or waiting for someone else to do it, I started gathering data and analyzing it myself. That not only taught me new skills that I use now in my career, but helped me open new doors and continue to grow within my organization.
Recently published in the Journal of Behavioral Decision Making, GSU’s own Mark Keil joins Jong Seok Lee and Kin Fai Ellick Wong in publishing their recent research titled "The Effect of Goal Difficulty on Escalation of Commitment." (Mark Keil is a member of the multi-discipline/department GSU “People at Work” (PAW) research interest group within the Beebe Institute.)

One of the most challenging decisions an individual must face is what to do when a previously chosen course of action does not produce a desired outcome. It is well known that individuals frequently choose to invest additional resources into the previous course of action despite negative feedback—a phenomenon that has been labeled "escalation of commitment." Indeed, the decision challenge associated with escalation situations is so common that the poker-playing phrase "know when to hold 'em and know when to fold 'em" has worked its way into the general vernacular.

The exact nature of the relationship between goals and escalation remains unclear. Thus, a fresh theoretical perspective is needed in order to develop a better understanding of how goal-feedback discrepancies influence escalation behavior. To accomplish this, Keil and his colleagues draw upon goal setting theory (which has seldom been used in the escalation context) to examine the relationship between goal difficulty and escalation of commitment.

So, through this research, the authors investigate the effect of goal difficulty on a decision of whether to invest further time and effort into a previous course of action despite negative feedback. The objectives of this research were to: (1) investigate the relationship between goal difficulty and escalation of commitment over a wide range of goal levels and (2) to examine the mediating mechanism for the relationship between goal difficulty and escalation.

This research involved two laboratory experiments. Experiment 1 was conducted to investigate the effect of goal difficulty on escalation of commitment over a wide range of goal levels. Experiment 2 was conducted to replicate the findings of Experiment 1 and to investigate the mediating mechanism underlying the effect of goal difficulty on escalation of commitment.

The experimental task in Experiment 1 involved identifying the letter “a” by circling each occurrence in a short passage of text from a business magazine article. They recruited 207 undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory business course at a large urban university in the southeastern United States (mean age = 22.48 years, SD = 5.97; 50% men and 50% women). Participants were randomly assigned to one of six experimental conditions (each representing a different level of goal difficulty: 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, and 100%).

The results of Experiment 1 indicated that greater goal difficulty can increase escalation at least up to a point. Individuals with a difficult goal tended to allocate more resources to the previous course of action despite negative feedback than individuals with an easy goal. The findings suggest goals that are more difficult but still viewed as achievable actually promote escalation. By testing a broad range of goal difficulties, Experiment 1 suggested a curvilinear relationship between goal difficulty and escalation. Specifically, as goal difficulty continued to increase, the linear relationship between goal difficulty and escalation began to break down. Extremely difficult goals actually decreased an individual’s willingness to continue a failing course of action, thus causing de-escalation to occur. This same pattern of results was also seen in Experiment 2 which provided further evidence that individuals with a more difficult goal are more willing to continue working on a failing course of action, but this positive relationship turns negative when the goal becomes extremely difficult.

The findings of Experiment 2 also provided strong support for an expectancy mechanism governing the relationship between goal difficulty and escalation. Specifically, the findings from Experiment 2 suggest that individuals become strongly committed to a more difficult goal because they anticipate a higher level of satisfaction of goal attainment for a more difficult goal and not because of greater extrinsic rewards that may be associated with attaining a more difficult
RESEARCH FOCUS CONTINUED...

goal. Further, individuals’ level of commitment to a more difficult goal is influenced by a higher level of expectancy of goal attainment for a more difficult goal than a less difficult goal. Ultimately, it is this commitment to a goal that leads to willingness to continue a failing course of action. However, the authors found that these positive relationships break down at the point at which the goal becomes extremely difficult. The findings of Experiment 2 also suggest that negative feedback regarding goal attainment affected goal commitment and thereby played an important role in willingness to continue a failing course of action. These findings draw attention to a negative side effect of goal setting in which moderately difficult goals lead individuals to continue a failing course of action.

In summary, this research showed that individuals continue a previous course of action because of the anticipated satisfaction or attractiveness of attaining a goal, along with expectancy that they can attain the goal if they put in more effort.

SHRM AT GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER OFFICERS

Danielly Johnson, chapter president, is pursuing her BBA in Finance and Managerial Sciences with a concentration in HRM and a minor in Hospitality. She is graduating in Fall 2015. She has spent many hours developing the 2014-2015 chapter strategic plan and budget and has worked closely with the executive board.

Rashida Sheffield, vice president of communications, plans to graduate in spring 2015 with her BBA in Managerial Sciences with a concentration in HRM.

Jennifer Rivers, vice president of member development and relations, is graduating in spring 2015 with her BBA in Managerial Sciences with a concentration in HRM. She has been instrumental in recruiting a record number of new members this fall as well as training chapter officers.

Larry Floyd is the vice president of graduate student relations. He has a BBA from Caldwell University. He will graduate in December 2015 with an MBA concentrating in human resource management.

Lindsay Bickerton, a graduate of Furman University, with a BA in Business Administration and Spanish, is vice president of merit awards. She tracks chapter activities to ensure compliance with national guidelines. Lindsay is pursing her MBA with a concentration in HRM and will graduate in May 2015.

Cabrina Hall, a graduate of the University of Georgia School of Law and licensed to practice law since 2011, is the vice president of corporate relations. She is pursuing an MS in managerial sciences with a concentration in human resource management and expects to graduate in May 2016.

Rashida Sheffield, vice president of communications, plans to graduate in spring 2015 with her BBA in managerial sciences with a concentration in HRM.
We are SHRM at GSU, and we are here to learn about the exciting field of Human Resource Management. We are closely tied with experienced HR specialists, alumni, professors, and other SHRM chapters. Our mission is to help our active members prepare for HR careers. This semester, our chapter has had many exciting activities.

**Fall Semester Events**

**Project Catalyst Support**
We were honored to participate in the Freshman RCB Organization Fair supporting Project Catalyst. We advised GSU freshman on ways to catapult their careers early in their college years through campus involvement.

**Linked In Workshops**
We hosted two informative LinkedIn Workshops this semester. Earlisha Louis, HR Executive, explained how to use LinkedIn, a powerful business-oriented social networking tool, to expand professional circles and find a great job or internship. The second portion of this workshop series featured personal 30-minute consultations to review members’ LinkedIn profile and took head shots.

**SHRM Atlanta Meeting**
Nineteen SHRM at GSU members attended the SHRM Atlanta Meeting held at the Fox Theatre. We hope for an even larger turnout at the SHRM Atlanta meeting to be held at the Georgia Aquarium on December 3, 2014.

**Food Drive**
We are hosting a holiday food drive on December 16. We are ecstatic about the opportunity to partner with other GSU organizations to give back to the Atlanta community.

**Member Highlights**

Olivia is an undergraduate senior majoring in Managerial Sciences. She is the Volunteer Management Intern at the Georgia Lions Lighthouse Foundation where she performs all HR related activities including recruiting and selecting volunteers, revamping the volunteer and employee handbooks, and posting volunteer descriptions online. Way to go Olivia!

*www.linkedin.com/in/oliviabazemore*

![Olivia E. Bazemore](image)

Larry will be starting an internship with Kellogg within the coming weeks.

*www.linkedin.com/in/larryfloyd*

![Larry Floyd](image)

Rashida has accepted a spring semester position with Southwest Airlines’ “No Limits” internship at the headquarters in Dallas, Texas. She will be working directly with the Training and Curriculum Development team to complete projects within the new SWA University department. She’ll be assigned projects from editing and creating training materials and presentations to other work involving instructional design.

We are excited to see where this program takes her following its completion in May.

*www.linkedin.com/in/rashidasheffield*

![Rashida Sheffield](image)

**Other Past and Upcoming Events**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 7</td>
<td>7:00pm – 8:00pm</td>
<td>Meet and Greet featuring Melissa Polun (MBA from GSU, SPHR), Senior Compensation Analyst at McKinsey &amp; Company and the VP of Member Relations for SHRM-Atlanta.</td>
<td>Aderhold 304</td>
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<td>Friday, October 17</td>
<td>12:00pm – 1:30pm</td>
<td>LinkedIn Workshop (Part One) - led by Earlisha Louis (MBA, SPHR, PMP, CFRE), HR Consultant and former owner of Hibrid Staffing Service sold to Randstad in 2011</td>
<td>Aderhold 312</td>
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<td>Thursday, October 23</td>
<td>10:30am–1:30pm</td>
<td>SHRM Atlanta Chapter Meeting - Andy Lorenzen, Director, Organizational Effectiveness, Chick-fil-A</td>
<td>The Fox Theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, November 14</td>
<td>12:00pm – 1:30pm</td>
<td>LinkedIn Workshop (Part Two) - Members receive feedback on their profiles and can pose for professional looking headshot.</td>
<td>Bennett Brown Commerce Building</td>
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<td>Wednesday, December 3</td>
<td>11:00am–1:30pm</td>
<td>SHRM-Atlanta Chapter Meeting</td>
<td>Georgia Aquarium</td>
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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR JAN/MAY ‘14 BEEBE GRADUATES

Shaquanta Caldwell
Zhou Zhou
Sucheta Banerjee
Allison Green

Caphale Coombs
Crystal Hodges
Tifara Johnson

We are very happy when recent graduates let us know about the completion of their studies and we encourage you to email us at kgrace@gsu.edu so we can include your name and offer our best wishes. We would be delighted if you include a digital picture as well (casual shot is fine).

FALL 2014 MANAGERIAL SCIENCE COURSES

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<td>DATA MINING</td>
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<td>8430</td>
<td>NEGOTIATION</td>
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<td>ENTREPRENEUR &amp; ENTERPRISE</td>
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<td>LOGISTICS AND OPERATIONS</td>
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<td>QUALITY MANAGEMENT</td>
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ROBINSON CAREER MANAGEMENT CENTER

Need help updating your resume, interviewing, or finding a job?
http://cmc.robinson.gsu.edu/ 404-413-7155

The Career Management Center (CMC) at Robinson College of Business is the place to go! Current undergraduates, graduates, and alumni can all receive services ranging from Individual Career Counseling, Self Assessment, Job Search Management to Job and Internship Interviews and Networking. The CMC is constantly putting on outstanding events, so keep checking the website for more information so you don’t miss out!
MOLLY KATE CHAPMAN

Beth Clenney Chapman, who is both an alumnae of our PhD program and a former instructor, and husband Scott Chapman welcomed daughter Molly on Monday, May 12, 2014, at 5:48pm. She weighed 6lbs 1oz and was 18.25 in long. Beth is currently on the faculty at Mercer University.

ALUMNI UPDATES

Natacha Hill is now a Human Resources Representative at Target

Sonia Torres has recently accepted a position as Senior Analyst at the Hay Group

Courtney James is now a Senior Financial Business Analyst at Sparks Grove, a Division of North Highland

Ryan Boggs recently accepted a position as Account Manager at Aerotek

Dethra Giles recently accepted the Managing Principal Consultant role at ExecuPrep

Jennifer Mayfield recently accepted a Human Resources Generalist position at Ebix
We want to hear from you!

Current and previous editions of the Beebe Newsletter are available online at


If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, submissions, or to obtain more information about our programs, please email the Faculty Advisor Dr. Kelly Grace at kgrace@gsu.edu;

Visit the Beebe Institute website at http://beebe.robinson.gsu.edu.

To add or remove yourself from our mailing list, please reply to beebe-newsletter@gsu.edu.

Chirag Patel was accepted to Columbia University in New York to pursue a Master of Education (Ed.M.) degree in Higher and Postsecondary Education.

Shaun Drawdy was selected for a compensation internship at HD Supply after graduating in the spring from GSU. He was recently promoted to Compensation Analyst, too. Congratulations, Shaun!

Shalena Baker recently accepted a position as Benefits Coordinator at Pacific Dental Services in Alpharetta.

Corey Conklin is now a Development Associate, Leasing and Marketing for Carter.

Kathleen Browning is now the Placement Director for Special Counsel

Quinn Giardina was recently promoted to HR Generalist/ Benefits Manager at 22squared

John Kosky is now the Executive Director, Compensation Administration at George Washington University

Judene Tulloch recently accepted a job as Compensation Analyst at PulteGroup. She also passed the PHR exam in June. Congrats!

Iqra Khan is now a Human Resources Coordinator at Capstone Logistics, LLC

Patricia Kellner is now Sr. Human Resources Manager at Colonial Pipeline Company

We want to hear from you!