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To: Students enrolled in HUS 520 Working in Human Services Administration, Spring 2 term 2016, Savannah Campus at Saint Leo University .

From: Bill Griffin, Instructor

March 9, 2016

Subject: **Greeting Letter**

Dear Students,

Welcome to the course. I will be your instructor. We will be meeting at Saint Leo's Savannah campus, beginning on Saturday March 12. The class will meet from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. We will meet for eight weeks. I look forward to working with you.

If you need to contact me, please use my office phone, 912-349-7989. It has a good phone mail system. My cell phone does not have as good reception, but you can use it if you like, 912-667-1970. If you want to contact me via e-mail, please use the Saint Leo e-mail system, williamgriffin06@saintleo.edu. Simultaneously, you should send communications to my personal e-mail address, which is billgriffin@theleadershipcenter.com.

For our textbook we will be using *Human Resources Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, by Joan E. Pynes. Fourth Edition. 2013. Josey Bass Publisher, division of John Wiley. San Francisco. ISBN 978-1-118-39862-3 (paperback). 978-1-118-46032-0 (e-PDF). 978-1-118-46034-4 (e-pub). Regardless of which version you buy, you need to bring the text to class each time we meet. This textbook seems to include about three-fourths human resources content and one-fourth strategy and management content. I think it can be very useful to build a relationship between HR questions and strategy questions, because I have seen many employers make mistakes by failing to build this bridge. In particular, I have seen many employers fail to link their strategic goals (e.g., growth) and compensation system (e.g., paying people based on profitability), and this resulted in employee behavior that did not promote the strategic goals.

You will find that I ask you to read news clips occasionally. These are used to discuss current events that I believe are relevant to the course. The textbook material can be rather abstract. So I find it helpful to discuss real-world events described in newsclips, things we can visualize and discuss in a concrete way. If I find articles and research papers that look interesting, I may include them in the materials for the class. If you find a news clip that would stimulate an interesting class discussion, please bring it to class and give it to me.

I usually prepare an Agenda for each class. I will try to send it to you in advance of the class session. I will use e-mail to do this in most instances. Sometimes I will update the Agenda once or twice. You should check your e-mail before you come to class, because it may contain an updated Agenda. If I can become skillful on Saint Leo's learning platform, I may begin using it to send things to you.

Why did Saint Leo decide to hire me to teach this course for you? I think there are a couple of reasons. I have been teaching in colleges since 2000. For five universities I have taught law courses, including: Employment Law, Occupational Safety and Health Law, Administrative Law, Corporations Law, Business Law, American Law, and Legal Environment for Global Organizations. I have taught Employment Law for two colleges, but different formats and textbooks were used than you will see in our course. For Saint Leo I have taught two undergraduate business law courses. I have taught HUS 530, which includes a substantial amount of material on how to create and manage a new nonprofit organization.

I have taught college courses in management (including Management of Human Resources, Management of Nonprofit Organizations, and Creating new Human Services Agencies), business, public administration, ethics, math, science, and engineering (a total of about 42 course titles).

All of my graduate work was done as a nontraditional student on evenings and weekends. My graduate education includes degrees in engineering, law and management, and I have worked in all three fields. I have been an engineer and manager since 1970 and an attorney since 1978. During three decades in industry and government, I was involved in many aspects of HR management and employment law. Some examples are recruiting, retention, termination, compensation, benefits, employee stock ownership, regulatory compliance, performance appraisal, union matters, training and development, employment litigation, policy making, and others.

I have worked in the nonprofit world in two capacities.

- First, I was a founder and Executive Director of a national trade association for 18 months. For five years I also was their lead lobbyist, media spokesperson, and a committee chair. On another activity, I helped found and run a business "think tank."

- Second, I have been a volunteer with a number of nonprofits (e.g., board member, committee member, docent tour guide, science fair judge, etc.).

My wife is Louise Walters. In the capacity of “subject matter expert,” she will be helping us with the course. She has 30 years of experience managing nonprofit organizations. That includes trade associations, professional societies, and economic development organizations. Louise is completing her doctorate in organizational leadership, and her dissertation research involves the communication process between nonprofit board members and paid staff people. Louise and I write and publish research papers on human resources and leadership topics. We will make them available to you during this course.

I am an international person. I am a US citizen, but I try to live in other countries when an opportunity presents itself. One reason I do this is I want to understand how people think and behave in other countries. For example, many Americans (including some close friends of mine), are highly critical of the French, saying they are lazy and cowardly. But I have lived in France for five summers, and I find the French people to be hard working and honest. I also like to read about international topics, because that provides a valuable perspective. My international perspective helps me better understand US law and how it compares with the employment law situation elsewhere.

- Did you know that Wal-Mart sold all of their German stores because the German labor laws were fundamentally inconsistent with Wal-Mart’s business model?
- Did you know that US workers earn less vacation time than workers in most western countries?
- Did you know that US workers spend more time on the job each year than the workers in most modern economies?

You will find the discussions in this course to be wide ranging, probably broader than you see in most courses. Do not hesitate to share your opinions. In this class we always have a friendly audience. Many of you have had professional or personal experience that is relevant to the course, and I want you to share that with the class. We will have plenty of time to talk about these things. We will be in class together for 40 hours. Bring your ideas and stories to class.

I have developed a Syllabus for the course. Please try to read it before the first meeting of the class. Remember that the Syllabus is subject to change. Sometimes the Agendas will be more current than the Syllabus.

Note that there are two short written assignments that are due early in the course. If you can complete them before our first meeting, that would be great. But if you need to wait until Week 2, that is OK.

- Plan for the Course. Prepare a 300-word discussion on the following topic. *What are your goals in this course? What skills do you want to have when you complete this course? What are you prepared to do to achieve these goals? The university provides you with resources to achieve these goals (e.g., instructor, classroom, library). Which resources do you expect to use?* You can earn up to 4 points on this assignment. Come to class prepared to discuss. Note that, at the end of the course, you will be writing a similar paper on how/whether you achieved your goals. It will be called Course Recap. You will be able to earn 4 points on it.
- *A Human Resources Management Experience.* Look back and try to identify one or two situations where you observed human resources management or employment law in action. It could be something ordinary. It could be something dramatic or interesting that happened at your job. Title it *A Human Resources Management Experience*. Write a 300-word paper. Bring it to class. Come to class prepared to discuss. The following is an example from my experience.

I was General Counsel for a small national company in the utility billing business. It was a start-up company, and one of the policies that helped recruit and motivate employees was the opportunity to become shareholders (equity owners of the company). Our IT Manager was David. He believed that Howard, our CEO, had agreed that David would be able to earn a one percent ownership share of the company.

In the company's second year, David explained a problem to me. The company had been established using Excel software as a billing platform. Later, as we grew, the company migrated to the Access data base platform. Now the company needed to migrate again to a bigger program, SQL Server, but top management did not want to make that investment. David told me that the Company's Access billing platform was inadequate, and the company could not succeed unless it migrated to a more powerful program like SQL Server.

As David had predicted, our company's IT operations began to have many problems. Even though it had been Howard's decision not to invest in the upgrade to SQL Server, Howard blamed David for our IT troubles, and Howard lost confidence in him. David was fired. When David left the company, he did so with the belief that he had a right to continue owning one percent of the company. However, Howard did not want David to own any part of the company, because Howard had lost confidence in David, and David was no longer an employee.

David hired a lawyer, and he sued the company. Although his principal gripe was breach of contract regarding ownership of stock in the company (a

benefits and contract issue), his lawsuit was not packaged as a breach of contract lawsuit. Instead, his lawsuit was packaged as an employment discrimination lawsuit. His lawyers made accusations of employment discrimination based on David's status as a gay man and David's status as HIV positive. After a year or so, the case was settled. The company was forced to give David all of the stock he had wanted to buy, and we also were forced to pay him over \$200,000 in cash. In other words, although the company had not been discriminating against David because of his sexual preferences or medical condition, employment law proved to be more "fertile" than contract law as a tactic for David to bring his lawsuit.

During our Week 1 class, I want each student to say a few words about your professional and personal life. What is your "day job?" Why are you pursuing a graduate degree? What sort of personal situation do you have? Have you been involved in HR work, or do you plan to enter the HR field?

See you soon. Call me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Bill Griffin