

# EYE ON IOHRM

Industrial-Organizational Psychology and Human Resource Management  
Appalachian State University

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## About the IOHRM Program

The Industrial-Organizational Psychology and Human Resource Management (IOHRM) program at Appalachian State University is a nationally ranked, interdisciplinary Master of Arts degree program offered by the Departments of Psychology and Management. For more information, click the icons below or visit our [website](#).



**Student Editor:** Sydney Steelman  
**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Kemp Ellington



## Welcome Class of 2027!

**Back:** Marleigh Zettle, Charlie Wills, Leanna Murphy

**Middle:** Kaylee McElrath, Ailyn Sanchez Corral,  
Ella Drawbridge, Delaney Clark

**Front:** Jamie Da Costa, Tessa Trate, Sydney Steelman

## Support the IOHRM Program

Thank you for considering financial support of the IOHRM program! Contributions can be made to the IOHRM Professional Foundation through our PayPal account. The mission of the IOHRM Professional Foundation is to enhance the development of IOHRM professionals across business, industry, non-profits, and government through mentorship, networking, continued professional development, and engagement. The foundation also advocates for students and alumni seeking employment within the field.

[Give Here](#)

# IOHRM Highlights

## Alumni Spotlight

Congratulations to Matthew Laske (Class of 2020), assistant professor of behavior analysis at the University of North Texas, for being named one of the 2025 National Safety Council Rising Stars of Safety! This honor recognizes safety professionals ages 40 or younger committed to improving safety within their organization through impactful initiatives.



## Professional Foundation Advisory Board

The IOHRM Professional Foundation was established in recent years as a not-for-profit dedicated to supporting Appalachian State's M.A. IOHRM program and its alumni as a means of promoting student and alumni professional development. It is funded by our HR Summit and Safety Summit, along with faculty and alumni donations. It allows us to fund receptions, conference travel, recruitment, and professional activity directly as a not-for-profit status (501c) with Articles of Incorporation in North Carolina, By-Laws and financial accounts.

IOHRM alumni serve on the Advisory Board. We would like to thank: Chris Frazier (2011), Morgan (Jewells) Powers (2016), Adeline Brooks (2017), and Michael Boitnott (2012) for their term on the board, setting up our not-for profit status, and establishing accounts and processes to fund IOHRM activities. Over the past year, the IOHRM Professional Foundation has funded receptions for Onboarding, Internship Presentations, Accepted Students Day, and Graduation Commencement and Hooding.

As our funds grow through alumni and faculty donations, we hope to fund scholarships for summer internships and research assistantships. Our new Board has been elected and will start in January 2026. Congratulations to Erin Marion (2020), Lindsey Wuerfel (2020), Annie Jankura (2019), Danielle Kretschmer Graff (2015), and Ryan Felty (2012)!

Please contact the IOHRM Professional Foundation at [iohrmprofessionalfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:iohrmprofessionalfoundation@gmail.com) to get involved in Alumni activities and/or donate to support the good work of the IOHRM program.



# IOHRM Highlights

## HR Summit

The 2025 Fall HR Summit was held on Thursday, October 9th on Appalachian State University's campus and via Zoom with hands-on, in-person master class workshops being held on Friday, October 10. This year's theme was centered on a compelling vision: People First, Future Ready. In a time of rapid change and growing complexity, the summit emphasized the need for HR professionals to lead with confidence, integrity, and a people-first mindset. Hosted by the IOHRM program at Appalachian State University, the event brought together students, alumni, faculty, and HR professionals for two days of innovation, reflection, and collaborative learning.

The summit kicked off with a panel on the practical applications of artificial intelligence in the workplace, featuring insights from Rickey Carroll, Class of 2013 (Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits), Amanda Hutchins, Class of 2014 (Merz Aesthetics), and Daniel Shanklin (AIC Holdings). This was followed by a live-podcast style conversation with Stacey Hussey, Class of 2011 (Nederman) and Julie Morrow (ApSeed Early Childhood Education), who explored how to balance empathy and accountability in leadership. Attendees had the opportunity to participate in a series of engaging breakout sessions that ranged from "Making the Shift: Evolving from Transactional to Strategic HR" to "Architecting HR's Competitive Edge," each offering actionable strategies and space for meaningful discussion. The afternoon included a session on employment law updates with Michael Morrison (FordHarrison LLP) and Bryan Holbrook (Fisher Phillips), as well as a powerful session on congruent leadership led by Jacquelyn Wieland (Solutions Provided, LLC). The day ended with alumni Adeline Brooks, Class of 2017 (EY) receiving the Distinguished Alumni Award. Thank you to our sponsors and everyone who made the HR Summit a success!



## Save the Date!

Save the date for the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Safety Summit at Appalachian State University. The conference will be held April 22-23, 2026 and will "Elevate your Approach to Behavioral Safety!" Our featured speakers will include former executives from Oil & Gas Services, Global Mining Construction, Petrochemical Refining, and Naval Aviation.

# Meet the Class of 2027!



**Delaney Clark | Orlando, FL | SHRM Consulting Team, HR Science - Organizational Cultural Insights (OCI)**

**Undergraduate Degree:** Psychology with minors in Child Development and Social Welfare (Florida State University)

**IOHRM Interests:** Organizational culture, Employee well-being

**Hobbies:** Yoga, cooking, spending time with friends, being outside



**Jamie Da Costa | Gainesville, FL | HR Science - Foundations of Career Understanding in Psychology Students (FOCUS)**

**Undergraduate Degree:** Psychology with a minor in Business Administration (Western Carolina University)

**IOHRM Interests:** Training & development, Talent acquisition

**Hobbies:** Hiking, snowboarding, dancing, attending concerts, traveling



**Ella Drawbridge | Bristol, RI | SHRM Consulting Team**

**Undergraduate Degree:** Psychology with minors in Information Technology and General Business (Florida State University)

**IOHRM Interests:** Group dynamics, Employee satisfaction, Training, Motivation, Organizational culture

**Hobbies:** Reading, running, being outside, exploring new places



**Kaylee McElrath | Asheville, NC | SHRM Consulting Team**

**Undergraduate Degree:** Psychology with a concentration in Business (Appalachian State University)

**IOHRM Interests:** Training & development, recruitment

**Hobbies:** Reading, crocheting



**Leanna Murphy | Cookeville, TN | SHRM Consulting Team**

**Undergraduate Degree:** Psychology with a minor in Women & Gender Studies (Middle Tennessee State University)

**IOHRM Interests:** Work culture

**Hobbies:** Reading, hiking, watching reality TV

# Meet the Class of 2027!



**Ailyn Sanchez Corral | Farmington, MN | HR Science - Safety**

**Undergraduate Degree:** Psychology with a minor in Human Resources (University of Minnesota Duluth)

**IOHRM Interests:** Organizational psychology, Safety

**Hobbies:** Playing pickleball, reading, hiking



**Sydney Steelman | Salisbury, NC | SHRM Consulting Team**

**Undergraduate Degree:** Psychology (High Point University)

**IOHRM Interests:** Talent management, Training & development, Employee engagement & retention

**Hobbies:** Playing pickleball, hiking, swimming, reading



**Tessa Trate | Boone, NC | SHRM Consulting Team, HR Science - Organizational Cultural Insights (OCI)**

**Undergraduate Degree:** Psychology with minors in Business Administration and Leadership Studies (Christopher-Newport University)

**IOHRM Interests:** Motivation, Culture, Employee well-being, Organizational development, Stress management, Remote work management

**Hobbies:** Reading, spending time with her puppy, playing tennis, baking



**Charlie Wills | St. Louis, MO | HR Science - Safety**

**Undergraduate Degree:** Psychology (Truman State University)

**IOHRM Interests:** Executive coaching, Safety

**Hobbies:** Powerlifting, playing water polo, backpacking



**Marleigh Zettle | Fraser, CO | SHRM Consulting Team**

**Undergraduate Degree:** Psychology (Gonzaga University)

**IOHRM Interests:** Employee engagement, Performance management

**Hobbies:** Beading, going to the gym

# Class of 2026 Summer Internships



## Jack Bowden | Hanesbrands Inc. (Remote)

**Responsibilities:** Supported key People Analytics initiatives by pulling, cleaning, and analyzing workforce data; Built and maintained Power BI dashboards; Supported SuccessFactors reporting; Partnered with HR leaders to translate data

**Lessons Learned:** Building strong internal connections and proactively engaging with leaders across functions to understand the broader system is crucial in understanding the importance of speaking up when processes can be improved.



## Gabriella Gayoso | Premier Inc. (Charlotte, NC)

**Responsibilities:** Worked on various OD projects such as building an onboarding buddy system for new hires, creating and analyzing survey results, refining L&D operations, and facilitating team-bonding initiatives to enhance employee engagement

**Lessons Learned:** While your plans can look perfect on paper, real-world implementation can reveal obstacles that require you to adapt your approach.



## Amy Hu | BNSF Railway (Fort Worth, TX)

**Responsibilities:** Modified administrative clerk typing assessment requirements through external benchmarking; Restructured the internal investigation training manual; Designed a training activity, completed salaried position questionnaires (SPQs) of positions that determine their pay grade and responsibilities

**Lessons Learned:** Being perceptive of your place in an organization is very important to being successful in work and interpersonal relationships.



## Erin Lally | USConec (Hickory, NC)

**Responsibilities:** Process mapping for recruitment and onboarding; Created 90-day new hire surveys for employees and supervisors; Helped in selecting a new ATS for the company; Moved the exit interview process from paper to online for better tracking

**Lessons Learned:** Ask for feedback and don't be afraid to voice your thoughts. Your point of view is just as important!



## Brenna McNamara | Travelers Insurance (Hartford, CT)

**Responsibilities:** Supported the Enterprise Learning Enablement team by assisting with creation and maintenance of online learning materials; Surveyed learning professionals about skill proficiency measurement; Participated in a project related to emerging technology platforms

**Lessons Learned:** It is important to seek out exposure to the areas you don't have direct access to but are looking for experience in.

# Class of 2026 Summer Internships



## Claire Parson | Rabobank (St. Louis, MO)

**Responsibilities:** Collaborated on a range of projects across multiple HR functions including compensation, organizational development, talent acquisition, and HR business management

**Lessons Learned:** Recognize the importance of asking thoughtful questions to fully understand an issue before suggesting potential solutions.



## Elizabeth Russell | SemTech Corp (Remote)

**Responsibilities:** Created a university relations roadmap; Created offer letters for the U.S. and Canada; Created all content and handled logistics for the company's first New Hire Summit

**Lessons Learned:** When working on a group project, your vision for the project's future may differ from your colleagues'. Recognize that your ideas are just as valuable and make sure to voice them.



## Drew Sipe | Robinhood (Menlo Park, CA)

**Responsibilities:** Worked two international mergers and acquisitions; Helped with onboarding and integration for 500+ employees; Helped with people analytics on the immigration program by calculating ROI and setting up dashboards to look at the program effectiveness over time

**Lessons Learned:** As an HR Business Partner, it is important to know who to ask questions when you need answers.



## Madalyn Stephens | DriveTime (Tempe, AZ)

**Responsibilities:** Designed and developed a 2-3 day onboarding experience for employees, which stemmed from attending and facilitating meetings, creating a project proposal and presenting to leadership, and designing deliverables

**Lessons Learned:** Everyone in a professional environment is so excited to assist and help you when you ask.



## Leah Uteg-Winkelman | Hormel Foods (Austin, MN)

**Responsibilities:** Supported succession planning by building matrices and scoring rubrics that helped HRBPs and leaders assess role criticality across departments; Created a behavioral matrix for key operational business meetings; Improved early career recruitment strategies through the development of a campus playbook

**Lessons Learned:** Language is a superpower! You need to know how to speak to your audience to capture their attention

# Research Spotlights

## HR Science

### Organizational Cultural Insights (OCI)

The OCI team is focusing on two main projects. The **Well-Being and Belonging Team** is addressing a growing interest in understanding the non-financial benefits of fostering inclusive and supportive corporate cultures and how they contribute to overall employee well-being. The **Website Culture Team** is examining the organizational culture, online recruitment practices, and the job seeker perspective, seeking to assess how accurately and effectively career websites convey organizational culture to potential applicants.

### Foundations of Career Understanding in Psychology Students (FOCUS)

The FOCUS team is working on improving Eugene, a website the team put together last year where undergraduate psychology majors can select all of the courses they have taken and receive a report that outlines jobs they're qualified for and KSAs they have gained in their courses. The **Chatbot Integration Team** is working on creating and implementing a chatbot directly into the Eugene website, so that users can chat with it to better understand the output they get from Eugene.

The **KSA Methodology Improvement Team** is working on improving the process that goes into the backend of Eugene.

### Safety

The Safety team includes two sub-teams. The **Text Analytics Team** is focusing on Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Large Language Models (LLMs) interpretation of short text. This will contribute to the safety team's research by processing text data that they have previously not explored. The **Mega Team** is cleaning, checking, and harmonizing three years of safety data from a large oil refinery company. They will examine the replication of results that show the impact that behavioral observations have on incident probability reduction. They will also work on the creation of a model that will use data on safety interventions from the past to predict injury probability in the future.



## Research Projects in Progress...

Dr. Davison and Brenna McNamara have been working on a research project that focuses on sexual harassment prevalence and prevention for teens. After collecting data with Dr. Davison on a training program, Brenna decided to pursue a thesis that will compare outcomes (knowledge, trainee reaction, attitudes) based on trainer gender, trainee gender, and trainer age/status.

Dr. Acikgoz, Dr. Shawn Bergman, and Dr. Huelsman are currently working on research aimed at defining the construct of professionalism and developing a measurement tool suitable for the workplace. They have been working to discover additional definitional elements and dimensions and they are currently working on refining a measure they have developed.

# Alumni Mentors

The IOHRM program has always greatly valued its ability to maintain connections with alumni of the program. As part of the Introduction to Human Resources and Professional Issues course, taken during students' first semester in the program, each first-year student is paired with an Alumni Mentor.

This program allows students to make connections with the off-campus IOHRM family, develop networking and professional skills, receive feedback on how to create an effective and professional resume, and receive guidance on how to work to achieve their career goals.

Thank you to the mentors currently involved in this amazing program!



**Stephanie Blaszka**



**Rickey Carroll**



**Jessica Eason**



**Jessie Harris**



**Amber Harrison**



**Laverne Hibbett**



**John Misenheimer**



**Lauren Reese**



**Kate Thompson**



**Sarah Zuurhout**