INVESTIGATING ISSUES IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

Instructor information

Your course instructor is a Regents Professor of Public Administration at the University of New Mexico and a practicing labor/employment arbitrator with the National Academy of Arbitrators, Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, American Arbitration Association, California State Mediation and Conciliation Service, US Postal Service/American Postal Workers, Federal Aviation Administration/National Association of Air Traffic Controllers, and Pantex Guards Assoc. /BWXT Corporation. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Southern California and MA from UCLA. Dr. Reeves has authored or co-authored ten books in areas of Hungarian modern history, dispute resolution, labor-management relations and human resources management, as well as numerous academic articles and professional publications. He serves as a grievance hearing officer to a wide variety of public, private, and not-for-profit organizations and was a Personnel Hearing Officer for the City of Albuquerque from 1987 to 2012. Dr. Reeves currently is on the Board of Directors of Outcomes, Inc., Julius Rezler Foundation of Budapest, Hungary, and the City of Albuquerque Personnel Board.

Zane Reeves may be reached anytime at tzane@unm.edu. Office hours are made by appointment only.

Goals

This course is a graduate level independent readings into the concepts, policies, and practices of federal, state, and local jurisdictions in human resource management and development. Particular attention is given to investigating human resources issues in public administration.

Objectives

Students will be encouraged to investigate public human resources management as an systematic approach rather than exploring its fragmented or isolated components, i.e. performance appraisal, affirmative action, testing or labor-management relations. Students are asked to investigate and research consequences or outcomes of HRM decisions in addition to various techniques. Students will weigh different HRM utilization options by criteria of employee morale as well as organizational productivity. Among others, students will investigate the following types of specific HRM administrative skills:

(1) To weigh competing ethical considerations in making HRM decisions
(2) To investigate HRM issues by preparing an evidence-based plan.
(3) To select a fair and neutral investigator
(4) To collect and analyze reactive and non-reactive data
(5) To develop sound interviewing skills for structured and non-structured interviews.
(6) To make findings of fact based on evidence
(7) To reach reasonable conclusions after considering facts
(8) To make recommendations for action by decision makers
(9) To appreciate the following HRM tools and techniques:

In essence, the course combines assigned readings on theoretical issues of human resources management, the importance of policy making in setting expectations for a more productive public bureaucracy, transforming the workplace and the development of specific management skills. Responses to the Self-Assessment questions should rely on appropriate readings from *Preparing an Evidence-Based Report* and *The Suspension of Nurse Kevin* as well as a requirement to include independent research.

**Methodology**

The course does not meet in a classroom setting, rather students are required to complete thirteen (13) reading assignments and answer the Self-Assessment exercises at the end of each chapter. There are no deadlines for completion of these assignments, but all must be completed by December 5, 2015. When completed, send assignments electronically to www.tzane@unm.edu. Please do not send hard copies.

**Readings**


Readings on Ereserves in library for the *Suspension of Nurse Kevin* (access by lobo525)

**Course Outline/Assignments and Agenda**

1. **Ethical considerations in off- & on-duty conduct**
   - Purposes of HR issue investigations
   - Ethics in the Public Service
   - Professional ethics
   - Ethical considerations for investigators
   - Cultural values versus universal ethics
   **Readings:** Reeves, Ch. I, “Deciding whether to investigate”
   Answer Self-Assessment exercises for “Molly O’Rourke’s Stand”

2. **Preparing to investigate**
   - Finding the “facts”
   - Collecting and weighing evidence
   - Conducting a fair & neutral investigation
   **Readings:** Reeves, Reeves, Ch. II, “Preparing to investigate”
   Answer Self-Assessment exercises for “Trouble in Loboland”

3. **The fair and neutral investigator**
Investigator competence and character
Purposes of the investigation
Organizational trust level
Employees as investigators
Readings: Reeves, Ch. III, “The neutral investigator”
Answer Self-Assessment exercises for “Following in Solomon’s Footsteps”

4. Gathering reactive data
Uses of reactive and non-reactive data in investigations
Structured and non-structuring interviewing
Preparing structured interviews
Knowns, unknowns, and known unknowns
Readings: Reeves, Ch. IV., “Crafting the Skillful Interview”
Answer Self-Assessment exercises for “Rowdy in Roswell”

5. The Fact finding investigation
Improving perceptual skills
Fact finding reliability
Beliefs as facts
Who is Bill Clinton?
Evaluating evidence
Readings: Reeves, Ch. V, “Finding Facts”
Answer Self-Assessment exercises for “Case of the Missing Chick”

6. Inferring facts from evidence
Confusing evidence as facts
What are not facts?
Distortion tendencies
Analyzing evidence for facts
Human biases
Readings: Reeves, Ch. VI, “Inferring Facts from Evidence”
Answer Self-Assessment exercises for “The Grinch who Stole Mardi gras”

7. Disconnects between facts and conclusions
Separating beliefs from conclusions
Conclusions derived from personal experiences
Memory distortions
Making credibility assessments
Readings: Reeves, VII, “When Facts Don’t Add Up”
Answer Self-Assessment exercises for “Making Dixie Cups”

8. Investigating just cause
Accusatory investigations
Role of intuition
Tests of just cause & Standards of proof
Non-disciplinary discharge investigations
Readings: Reeves, Ch. VIII, “Jumping to Conclusions”
Answer Self-Assessment exercises for “Power Surge in OKC”
9. **Disciplinary recommendations**
   - Adverse Actions as Management Right
   - Progressive Discipline
   - Negligent Actions
   - Documentation and Interviewing
   **Readings:** Reeves, Ereserves #1
   - Answer Self-Assessment exercises for “The Suspension of Nurse Kevin”
   Students also may earn extra credit by attending class on November 7, 2015

10. **Fact finding recommendations**
    - Making recommendations for disciplinary action
    - Non-traditional disciplinary options
    - Reform and rehabilitation
    - Preparing appropriate recommendations
    - “Nudging” the decision maker
    **Readings:** Reeves, Ch. IX., “Making Disciplinary Recommendations”
    - Answer Self-Assessment exercises for “Culture Clash at Ramah Navajo”

11. **Writing a persuasive report**
    - Format, style and presentation
    - Preliminary feedback
    - Handling remand and rejection
    - Timeliness issues
    - Writing persuasively
    **Readings:** Reeves, Ch. X, “Writing a Persuasive Report”
    - Answer Self-Assessment exercises for “Medical Marijuana in Coquille”

12. **Investigating harassment claims**
    - Four types of harassment claims
    - Designing a fact finding investigation
    - Making a recommendation for resolution
    **Readings:** Reeves, Ch. XI, “Gender Discrimination Investigations”
    - Answer Self-Assessment exercises for Reasonable Suspicion in Gillette

13. **Investigating problems, not people**
    - Investigating for problem solving
    - Formulating an investigative plan
    - Avoiding the blame game
    **Readings:** Reeves, Ch. XII, “The Problem-solving investigation”
    - Answer Self-Assessment exercises for “Phoenix Rising”

**Criteria for Evaluation**

Students are expected to complete all course assignments in a professional and timely manner. Specifically, the evaluation criteria are as follows:

Case studies must be completed by specified dates. Students should prepare written responses to
self-assessment exercises at the conclusion of each case study for submission and be prepared to discuss these cases in small groups. Response papers will be graded by: 1) the quality and depth of analysis, 2) expository writing style, 3) professionalism [grammar, spelling, and presentation], 4) and incorporation of outside [non-assigned] readings and research.

Students will be graded by the following criteria:

- **A+**  All Self-Assessment assignments must be outstandingly written.
- **A**  Excellent contribution on all case studies
- **A-**  Solid contribution on most case studies
- **B+**  Excellent contribution on a majority of case studies
- **B**  Solid contribution on a majority of case studies
- **B-**  Solid contribution on at least half of case studies
- **C+**  Unacceptable level of performance on most case studies