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ATHENS STATE
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SHRM NEWSLETTER

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SHRM Student Chapter #5695*



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A Word from Dr. Tina Camba

Athens State Professor, ATSU SHRM Advisor

Greetings Athens State University SHRM Student Chapter Leaders and Members,

You are the future leaders of HR. You are extraordinary students who balance your studies, full-time work, and family life while choosing to distinguish yourself in the HR field by being a part of SHRM. SHRM student membership comes with countless benefits, from SHRM webcasts and toolkits tailored to equip you with practical resources for various HR scenarios to tools that elevate your confidence and set you apart from your peers. Many of you take your HR role to the next level by engaging in experiential learning.

Your SHRM Student Chapter earned the SHRM Outstanding Student Chapter Award, the most prestigious Merit Award offered by SHRM in the 2023-2024 academic year. Your SHRM Officers have designed an award-winning program for you this year. Many of you participated in HR conferences and represented SHRM at the Fiddler's Convention this Fall. Your efforts and participation create an amazing and dynamic organization.

Arguably, the most valuable aspect of being a SHRM member is the opportunity to connect with students, professionals, and faculty who share a passion for HR. This year, you have opportunities to attend meetings, workshops, conferences, and apply for scholarships. I invite you to take advantage of these offerings. I encourage you to make the most of your membership by engaging in meaningful conversations, seeking guidance from seasoned experts, and forging connections that will shape your future career path.

Shine bright HR superstars!

With warmest regards,
Dr. Tina Camba

AFFILIATE OF



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Meet the Team



Dr. Tina Camba

Assistant Professor of Management/
HR Management at Athens State, Co-Advisor
for ATSU SHRM Student Chapter



Dr. Gary Valcana

Associate Professor of Management, at
Athens State, Co-Advisor for ATSU
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Holly Baker
President



Sharifah Aburbaker
Vice President of
Student Relations



Barbara McKinnie
Vice President of
Operations



Savannah Graner Cornelius
Director of Communication and
Chapter Information Systems



Ashley Powers
Director SHRM
Merit Award



Trudy Rudolph
Secretary



Coleen Driggers
Treasurer



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A Tribute to Lilly Ledbetter

By: Barbara McKinnie

Sometimes, we have the unique opportunity to be a part of something lifechanging. In June of this year, I was approached by one of the professors at Athens State, Dr. Kim LaFevor, to do an introduction video for Mrs. Lilly Ledbetter, who was presenting at the TN Labor Management Conference in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. I will be honest and say that I had no idea who she was and was hesitant to accept the challenge. However, the more Dr. LaFevor spoke of her, the more I became interested in learning about her story. Dr. LaFevor thought it would be a great opportunity to give her the acknowledgement she was due. In my culture, we would say “give her, her flowers while she’s alive to smell them”.

I agreed to the project and with the assistance of Ta’Myia Rich, we studied and researched Mrs. Ledbetter and were blown away by her history. Her resilience for change was one to be praised. Her heart work had completely changed the trajectory of women and minorities to receive fair and equal pay. Not just receive equal pay, but to have the power to speak up against companies that refused to pay fairly.

She dedicated her life to educating the uneducated, speaking up for those who felt they had no voice, and challenged the unjust systems. The young daughter of a mechanic from Jacksonville, Alabama had persistently fought for change and had won! The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was the first act that former President Barak Obama signed when he entered office.

Her fight for equality did not stop there, she spent the rest of her life speaking and advocating for justice. I would say more, but you can read about it in her book, *Grace and Grit: My Fight for Equal Pay and Fairness at Goodyear and Beyond*.

At the TN Labor Management Conference, Mrs. Lilly Ledbetter received a roaring standing ovation from the crowd. I am thankful that she received the applause that she so desperately deserved.

On October 13, 2024, I received the news of her passing. It took me by surprise, but a sense of peace enveloped my heart. For now, she is at rest from her labor.

Mrs. Ledbetter, although, we never had the pleasure of meeting, thank you for the love and energy you poured into the world. Your work on earth is done and your reward awaits you. Your life changed the world. Thank you for being willing to fight for us, for our children, and our future. Enjoy your sweet rest.



2024 SHRM National Conference

June 23-24, 2024

What can one truly write to sum up the experience of the SHRM 2024 Conference in Chicago, Illinois? Not much, it was one of those events, where you just had to be there to fully experience the grandeur that it was.

When I arrived at the Convention Center, I knew that memories were going to be made and connections kindled. Everything was BIG; the billboards, the commercials, the welcome signs, the decorations, the greeters... it was GRAND. I had to catch my breath several times, because I had never experienced anything of that nature before.... And I hadn't even walked inside the building.

Once inside, it was evident that SHRM was in Chicago! Even the stairs bore the name of SHRM, everywhere you looked there were sayings and encouraging words that uplifted the spirit. I stood in awe and was blown away at the decorations that were set up as a city inside of a building, it was beautiful. Then, I looked around and saw thousands of people, from all over the world, different nationalities, different shades of colors, all there to learn, make connections, and support those in the HR field. It was amazing!

Sitting at the feet of remarkable speakers such as SHRM's very own President, Johnny Taylor to Sherry Shepherd, and Al Roker, who encouraged "civility" and to "follow opportunities and not your dreams". I learned that your opportunities lead you to your dreams, not to get so caught up in your dreams that you miss the avenue that is supposed to take you there. The stories were incredible! There were several mini sessions throughout the day that you could attend and an entire area dedicated to businesses showcasing their products (SWAG PARADISE!).

I also had the opportunity to attend my first concert. Kelly Clarkson did not disappoint! She sang every song flawlessly, as if I was sitting in my living room listening to the record play. It was a night that I will always remember. There were several celebrities there, Jay Leno and Shemar Moore. I learned that SHRM knows how to have a good time!

I enjoyed every moment of my experience at SHRM 2024. I am thankful for the many opportunities that Athens State University provides for their students. I would be amiss not to thank Dr. Kim LaFevor for chauffeuring us around Chicago to see the beautiful rich architecture and introducing us to amazing eateries, such as Portillo's and Buca di Beppo!

SHRM 2024 was a journey for me, one that taught me that I am exactly where I need to be. The connections made were ones that I know will last a lifetime, meeting people from all over the world from Zimbabwe to California, all with their very own HR story and their own journey, it is a memory that I will treasure forever. If you want to know how you can make the same connections, just show up and be involved. I guarantee you that there are people waiting to mentor and teach you everything that they know so that you can be successful in your career.

By: **Barbara McKinnie**



2024 SHRM National Conference

June 23-24, 2024

Attending SHRM 2024 was my first time at any SHRM or HR-focused event, and it was an incredible experience. I had the opportunity to engage with HR professionals from various fields, and I particularly enjoyed connecting with people from different locations. The small group sessions provided a great platform to ask questions and interact with senior HR professionals. This year's focus on AI was fascinating and has significantly influenced my approach to HR in my workplace.

I also appreciated meeting fellow students and staff from our college. Living in St. Louis, I had never met Dr. LaFevor or any classmates before the conference. Attending alone can be daunting given the conference's size, but it turned out to be immensely rewarding. I made numerous LinkedIn connections and received valuable advice from seasoned professionals. Overall, SHRM 2024 was an amazing experience, and I hope to attend again next year.

By: Kaylea Sparks

As a first-time attendee of the 2024 SHRM Conference in Chicago, I had no idea what to expect. The Athens State University Student SHRM Chapter's support made it possible for me to embark on this incredible journey, and I couldn't be more grateful for the opportunity. The experience was eye-opening, inspiring, and deeply enriching.

Chicago's vibrant energy set the perfect backdrop for the conference. Thousands of HR professionals gathered to share their experiences, insights, and aspirations for the future of human resources. Walking into that convention center for the first time felt like stepping into a whole new world—one where everyone was just as passionate about HR as I am. The sessions were full of practical tips, groundbreaking research, and innovative ideas that made me realize the true potential of the field I am preparing to enter.

One of the most valuable aspects of this trip was the chance to spend quality one-on-one time with Dr. LaFevor. Traveling alongside her was not only fun, but it was also an opportunity to learn outside the classroom. Dr. LaFevor shared her experiences from her own career, providing insightful context to what we learned during the sessions. Having her as a mentor throughout the trip helped me understand how to apply the conference's concepts to real-world scenarios. Her perspective made the experience even more meaningful.

Attending the SHRM Conference allowed me to see beyond textbooks and lectures. It connected me to the broader HR community and gave me a glimpse of what it means to be a part of this dynamic profession. Meeting new people, hearing the speakers, and engaging in the interactive sessions gave me fresh motivation as I continue my studies and begin planning for my career after graduation.

I'm incredibly thankful for the Athens State University Student SHRM Chapter for funding part of this unforgettable experience. The connections I made, the knowledge I gained, and the confidence I built will stay with me as I continue this journey in human resources.

By: Holly Baker



35th Annual TN Labor Management Conference

By: Ta'Myia Rich

Topic: "Building a Purposeful Future"

The Tennessee Labor-Management Foundation hosted their 35th annual conference in Gatlinburg, Tennessee on August 12-14, 2024, designed to improve labor relations.

Introduction

The conference began with the posting of the colors by Jefferson County High School JROTC, invocation, the national anthem performed by Sara Rymer, welcoming remarks, and a special breakfast.

In Memory of Lilly Ledbetter

Lilly Ledbetter, an Equal Pay Advocate, was the first speaker at the conference after our very own Dr. Kimberly Lafavor warmly introduced her to the stage.

Unfortunately, Lilly Ledbetter passed on October 12, 2024, in Birmingham, Alabama. We will all remember her courageous heart and unwavering dedication to the fight for equal pay, which inspired countless individuals.

Highlights

The conference included networking opportunities such as a golf tournament at the Gatlinburg Golf Course. Various speakers also took the stage to discuss topics involving labor-management relationships, mediation, and more. Here are a few other highlights from the event.

Dustyn Copeland, an Electrical Supervisor at Oak Ridge Laboratory, delivered a memorable keynote on safety. He described how one second altered his life as he reflected on the impact of an electrical explosion and fully immersed the audience in his story. Cassie Shropshire, a Business Relations Consultant of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, delivered an insightful keynote on neurodiversity. Jawan Qura won the 2024 Tennessee Labor Relations Management Scholarship. Brad Areheart, Howard Jackson, Ford Harrison, Mark Travis, and others conducted an amazing mock arbitration based on a previous case where an individual committed timecard fraud. The passing of the gavel was conducted by Tony McBee and Jason Andrews signifying his end of presidency.

Thank you

Athens State University SHRM Student Chapter would like to thank the Tennessee Labor-Management Foundation and its sponsors, Industrial Electronics and Kendall Electric, for having us.



57th Annual Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention

October 3-5, 2024



The smell of cotton candy and popcorn in the air, along with the sounds of laughter and melodious sounds of strings and voices can only mean one thing... it's time for the Fiddler's Convention on the beautiful campus of Athens State University.

Although, I have lived in the Athens area for the majority of 20 years, this is only my second time attending and it was through the opportunity to serve the SHRM student chapter at Athens State. After the fun I had last year, I decided to bring along my crew of 4, 3 teenagers and one preteen. As I worked the cotton candy and Bojangles booth, they safely walked around and enjoyed the sights, songs, and vendors that surrounded the campus. It was so engaging, that they did not want to leave. It is a beautiful thing when generations can come together and enjoy good wholesome fun!

I am thankful that students have the opportunity to connect with other groups outside of their usual chapters. It was a pleasure getting to work along other student leaders at Athens State and get to hear about their experiences. It is comforting to know that Athens State University has a great record of showing compassion among students of all ages and backgrounds.

Find a moment to volunteer, the connections made and the opportunity you have to make someone else's day may be the glimpse of hope that you need.

Congratulations to the Fiddler's Convention Board and to Athens State University for another successful year!

By Barbara McKinnie

In order to better understand the subtleties of the music, it could be beneficial to first review the fundamentals of traditional fiddling if you're not already familiar with it, as I was not. I was immediately drawn into a world where music was more than just an art form; it was an integral part of the community as soon as I stepped onto the convention grounds. There was a friendly and inviting atmosphere. More than just a musical experience, this event gave me, as a student, a great chance to network. I got to know students, musicians, and music enthusiasts from a variety of backgrounds. I would suggest the Fiddler Convention in Athens to anyone who finds value in music, culture, and community because it was an amazing experience all around.

At this annual event, which is one of the oldest and most beloved fiddling festivals in the Southeast, I not only developed a greater appreciation for traditional fiddling as a student, but I also discovered the perfect combination of community, entertainment, and education. I also witnessed the unifying power of music.

By Trudy Rudolph

2024 Discussion Panel

October 16, 2024



On October 6th, the Athens State SHRM Student Chapter had the privilege of co-hosting an insightful discussion panel at The LaunchBox. This panel featured three distinguished HR professionals: Van Tenpenny, Caitlin Sampson, and Jeff Powers, who shared valuable perspectives on the ever-evolving HR landscape. Covering topics from employee engagement to the complexities of labor relations, the panel provided attendees with practical insights and a glimpse into the future of the HR field.



Van Tenpenny, President of the United Steelworkers Press Association, spoke about the importance of networking, empathetic communication, and the value of unions in building fair workplaces. Van encouraged students to approach HR with an open mind toward unions as partners in creating a harmonious workplace culture.



Caitlin Sampson, HR Manager at TriVector Services, offered guidance on creating and sustaining a positive workplace culture and the importance of employee engagement. She also highlighted her journey into HR and the value of mentorship, inspiring students to prioritize professional growth and continuous learning as they develop their careers.



Jeff Powers, Assistant Vice President of HR and Chief Human Resources Officer at Athens State University, shared insights into handling conflict and the importance of employee treatment. Drawing from his extensive experience, Jeff highlighted how respectful and fair treatment of employees can lead to a more engaged and productive workforce. His advice on conflict resolution and creating inclusive work cultures offered students a valuable framework for effective HR leadership.



Throughout the discussion, the panelists explored themes like the transition into HR, workplace development and productivity, and the changing nature of workplace dynamics. Their practical advice and real-world examples gave students actionable takeaways and a renewed sense of purpose in pursuing HR careers.



We would like to extend our gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of this event, from the attendees and panelists to those behind the scenes who made it possible. A special thank you goes to Aviagen, whose support made this gathering a valuable experience for all.

By: Ashley Powers

2024 ATSU SHRM SPEAKERS

By: Kimberly Wilcox



On August 27, 2024, the Athens State University SHRM Student Chapter had the honor of hosting an exceptional presentation by Melissa Devore, who offered invaluable career advice and insights into the field of Human Resources. Ms. Devore is the Senior Vice President of Employee Experience at INTUITIVE and boasts 25 years of leadership experience. She holds a master's degree in organizational management from the University of Phoenix. Additionally, Melissa is a passionate volunteer with the Society for Human Resources, where she has held various leadership roles, including Alabama State Director and State Conference Chair in both Alabama and New Mexico. We are grateful for her willingness to share her life experiences with us.



On September 17, 2024, the Athens State University SHRM Student Chapter had the pleasure of hosting Ronda Ivey of LEAD Advisors, who shared insightful leadership and development tips on how to "Become a Leader That Your Employees Admire and Respect." The presentation highlighted the concept of "RESPECT" in leadership, delving into the behaviors and choices that define it. We extend our sincere gratitude to Ronda; we thoroughly enjoyed the information and look forward to applying these skills to our professional development.



On October 15, 2024, the Athens State University SHRM Student Chapter welcomed Jermie Howell, who delivered a presentation titled "The Human Side of HR: Keeping the 'H' before the 'R.'" Jermie carries an impressive background with extensive experience in the field of human resources. He holds a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of North Alabama and currently serves as the Director of Human Resources at Inline Electric Supply Co. His presentation highlighted the crucial role of human resources professionals in recognizing that our employees are our most valuable assets.



On November 19, 2024, the Athens State University SHRM Student Chapter celebrated the conclusion of the fall semester with an exciting event. We were thrilled to welcome Ben Eubanks, Chief Research Officer at Lighthouse Research & Advisory and author of "Talent Scarcity: How to Hire and Retain a Shrinking Workforce" and "Artificial Intelligence for HR." He is also an alumnus of Athens State University. Ben provided an insightful presentation on the "Three Keys to Succeeding in HR Today." Thank you, Ben; we truly enjoy your leadership skills and appreciate you taking the time to speak with us.

WE DID IT!



We are thrilled to share that SHRM has awarded us the
2023-2024 Outstanding Chapter Award!

This honor is awarded to student chapters that meet and surpass student chapter and operation requirements, provide chapter programming and professional development to members, support the human resource profession, and actively engage in SHRM activities and events.

Congratulations to our members, executive board, and co-advisors for your pivotal role in achieving this prestigious award. A special thank you to Ashley Powers, Director of SHRM Merit, for your hard work preparing all the paperwork necessary for us to be considered for such awards. Everyone's hard work and dedication has been instrumental in the continued excellence of ATSU SHRM!

Fall Graduates



Congratulations

**The Athens State University
SHRM Student Chapter would like to
congratulate the graduating
class of 2024!**



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Upcoming Events



Alabama HR Student Leadership Conference at Athens State University (February 24-25, 2025)

Save the Date! Mark your calendars for the upcoming Alabama State SHRM Student Leadership Conference hosted by Athens State University on February 24 & 25, 2025, where you can gain valuable insights into the HR field, network with industry professionals, and launch your career! Stay tuned for more details about this exciting event!

ALSHRM Conference in Orange Beach, AL (May 12 - 14, 2025)

Mark your calendar for the ALSHRM Conference happening from May 12th through 14th in the picturesque setting of Orange Beach, AL. This three-day event serves as a convergence point for professionals across Alabama, offering a distinctive opportunity to expand your knowledge, build valuable connections, and advance in your professional journey. ALSHRM's primary mission is to provide leadership, facilitate communication, and extend support to the numerous human resource professionals in Alabama, including those affiliated with SHRM chapters or independent members. Notably, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), with a substantial membership exceeding 250,000 individuals, stands as the global advocate for the human resources profession.

SHRM Alabama

ALSHRM²⁵
May 12-14, 2025
Perdido Beach Resort



SHRM National Conference in San Diego, CA (June 29 - July 2, 2025)

HR is changing faster than ever, and the future of work waits for no one. Staying ahead means more than just keeping up—it means leading the charge. At SHRM25, hosted in the beautiful, sunny San Diego, you have an unmatched opportunity to connect with top industry experts and peers who understand your challenges.

With over 375 handpicked sessions, you'll dive deep into cutting-edge insights on AI advancements, emerging regulations, and the latest best practices reshaping our field. Engage in dynamic discussions, practical workshops, and inspiring keynotes that cover everything from managing a diverse workforce to innovative HR technologies.

This is not just a conference; it's a catalyst for your professional growth and a chance to future-proof your career. Network with thought leaders and HR professionals from around the globe, share experiences, and gather actionable strategies to take back to your organization.



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