

DECEMBER 2024

# Lifelong Network News



School of Human Resources  
and Labor Relations  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

**#LIFELONGNETWORK**



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## CAMPUS PHOTOS

*Courtesy of MSU University Communications*

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# Dr. Jason Huang

Dear HRLR Community,

As I reflect on my first semester as Director of the School of Human Resources and Labor Relations, I am filled with gratitude for the remarkable faculty, staff, students, and alumni who make this School a leader in HR and labor relations education. **Your commitment to advancing our mission is truly inspiring** and has made my transition into this role both rewarding and energizing.

This semester has been one of growth and innovation for the School. We've celebrated achievements across our community, explored exciting new research opportunities, and strengthened our lifelong network of alumni. Together, we are advancing research and practice on critical topics such as the transformative role of technology in shaping work and worker experience, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and flexible workplace policies.

Looking ahead, I am eager to build on these foundations. We are actively exploring new ways to connect and engage, including expanding professional development opportunities and enhancing alumni involvement. **Your input and support will be invaluable as we chart an ambitious path forward**, and I encourage you to stay connected with the School and share your ideas.

**Thank you for being an integral part of HRLR's success.** I look forward to working together as we continue our shared mission to educate and develop exceptional HR and labor relations professionals. Please feel free to **reach out** to connect with me and stay engaged with the School.

Wishing you a joyful holiday season and a successful year ahead.

Warm regards,  
Jason Huang, PhD



Director and Professor  
School of Human Resources and Labor Relations

# Overview of HRLR

It's been a minute since our last newsletter and we are so excited to let you know what we've been up to lately. We hope you enjoy the overview of what we currently do!

The School of Human Resources and Labor Relations is committed to advancing knowledge and practice in the field through a comprehensive approach that integrates research, education, and outreach.

Our **faculty** conduct cutting-edge, interdisciplinary research on a wide range of topics, such as staffing, training and development, HR strategy, leadership, DEI, union organizing, alternative work arrangements, and work-life flexibility policies. As the leader of the **Future of Work Initiative**, we leverage our expertise to help organizations and individuals navigate the transformative impacts of advanced technology and changing workforce demographics.

Our **for-credit education** programs span undergraduate to PhD levels:

- » The **Bachelor's degree in HRLR** focuses on the people side of business, offering students a broad foundation in the field and preparing them for various entry-level HR roles across industries.
- » The **interdisciplinary minor in Leadership in Organizations** equips students with both conceptual and practical knowledge for effective leadership across diverse organizations.
- » Our **signature master's program** continues to be highly regarded, offering the depth of expertise necessary to prepare future leaders in human resources and labor relations.
- » The **PhD program** plays a vital role in contributing to the School's research and teaching missions while preparing the next generation of scholars.

Our **outreach programs** offer professional development opportunities tailored to HRLR professionals at every stage of their careers. This includes workshops for entry-level practitioners, as well as the prestigious **CHRO Leadership Academy**, which provides learning and coaching for newly appointed CHROs. Our outreach programming also provides **labor education** to support union workers across Michigan and beyond.



# Technology & the Future of Work

Organized by **Dr. Tara Behrend**, Director of the Future of Work Initiative, the 2024 Future of Work Convening brought faculty from across MSU colleges and representatives from community organizations together to collaborate and engage on how technology will impact your job and the future of work.

Expert-led interactive discussions centered on four topics, including human interaction with artificial intelligence, accessibility changes to technology, new skills in the labor market and government engagement.

Additionally, graduate students presented their research on the future of work.

The Future of Work Initiative is funded by the **MSU College of Social Science** and supported by the generous philanthropy of **John and Susan Butler**.

Special thanks to **Dean Brent Donnellan** and **Associate Deans Anna Maria Santiago** and **Carl Davidson** for their ongoing support.



Dr. Behrend introduces Drs. Carter, Chang, Mollaoglu, and Srivastava as part of a panel discussion.



Wenjia Cao, an economics PhD student, presents her winning research poster on AI and skill groups.

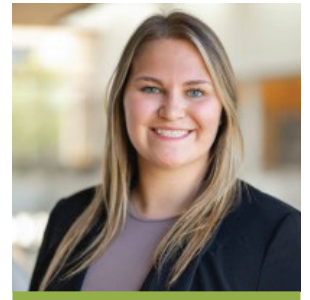
# Undergrad Program Renamed

We are excited to announce that, effective Fall 2024, our **undergraduate major has been officially renamed Human Resources & Labor Relations**. Formerly known as Human Capital and Society, this new major name better aligns with the program's focus on the people side of business, preparing students for a wide range of professional careers in fields such as business, government, healthcare, education, labor organizations, and non-profits.

The new major name also reflects our intention to equip students not only with the skills to serve business needs, but also with the competencies to navigate the complex dynamics between employers and employees, including union interactions, collective bargaining, and advocating for equitable workplace practices.

“Joining the School of Human Resources and Labor Relations was the best decision I could have made for my future, but it came with one problem: the undergraduate major title of Human Capital and Society. I found myself continually being asked what HCS means... Having the major title switched to Human Resources and Labor Relations felt like a weight was lifted off my shoulders. I no longer had to try and ‘convince’ people that I was going to school to learn about Human Resources.

- **Abby Vasilnek**, HRLR undergraduate (Fall 2024)



Abby Vasilnek

# Congratulations Dr. Lima Aranzaes

Dr. **Carla Lima Aranzaes** successfully defended her dissertation on organizing efforts among Amazon workers in the U.S. South and has started her new roll as a tenure-track assistant professor at the School of Labor and Employment Relations at Penn State University in Fall 2024.

Dr. Lima Aranzaes research is primarily focused on **collective action, collective voice, leadership, social networks, solidarity, intersectionality, and workers well-being** throughout the different stages of the unionization process and collective bargaining that workers must undergo to improve their working conditions and gain or maintain a collective voice. Recently, her work has examined unionization efforts among Amazon workers in the US South, exploring how these dynamics contribute to attempts to establish a collective voice. Her approach utilizes a combination of **quantitative and qualitative methodologies** to offer a comprehensive analysis of these complex dynamics.



Dr. Carla Lima Aranzaes

**Supervising Chair: Maite Tapia**

# MHRLR Case Competition

MSU's MHRLR students recently participated in the prestigious Penn State Case Competition, where they garnered top honors in a challenge focused on the intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and HRM.

The competition brought together six student teams from top universities including Georgetown, MSU, Minnesota, Purdue, and Penn State.

Representing MSU, the HRLR team consisted of four outstanding students: **Shweta Adsul**, **Jessica Robach**, **Jacob Roberts**, and **Deshawn Will**.

Senior HR executives from leading companies such as GE, Deloitte Consulting, Korn Ferry, Jefferies, and VISA served as judges and advisors, making this an invaluable experience.

This year's case posed a unique challenge: school-based teams were asked to self-organize into new cross-university teams, requiring students to collaborate with peers from other schools. Despite being split into separate teams, MSU's competitors excelled.

Jacob Roberts' team took home first place honors, while Jessica Robach's team secured second place. These victories reflect the talent, adaptability, and problem-solving abilities of MSU's HRLR students.

"We are so proud of our students for representing HRLR and MSU with such distinction," said **Jeff Ericksen**, a MHRLR faculty member and team advisor. "Their success in a challenging and innovative competition highlights the caliber of our students."

Please join us in congratulating Shweta Adsul, Jessica Robach, Jacob Roberts, and Deshawn Will on their outstanding achievements.



Case Competition participants (pictured L to R): Deshawn Will, Jacob Roberts, Jessica Robach, and Shweta Adsul



# The Power of Networking

My name is **Kelly Manzo Montes** and as a first-generation Latinx graduate student at Michigan State University, I've learned firsthand just how crucial networking can be in shaping your career. Throughout my journey, I've leveraged my connections to unlock opportunities I never thought possible. I've had the honor of working with scholars and young professionals, helping them discover the right career paths by tapping into the power of networking. I'm passionate about sharing how building and nurturing relationships can open doors and set you on the path to achieving your career aspirations.



Kelly Manzo Montes with Sparty

In today's competitive job market, landing a career that aligns with your skills and passions requires more than just academic achievements and a polished resume. Networking is one of the most effective tools you can use to unlock job opportunities, career advice and mentorship. For students, especially those preparing to enter or re-enter the workforce, mastering the art of networking can be an absolute game-changer!

*Excerpt from Kelly's piece from The Graduate School. [Read the entire Spotlight story.](#)*

## Thank You Students & Alumni

In 2024, our goal was to transform the student and alumni experience. We wanted to create an environment where everyone can feel welcomed and encouraged to be active contributors in our **"HRLR lifelong networked community."**

### Some of these efforts included:

- » **A welcome back lunch** for graduate students in the fall.
- » **Expanding fall orientation** to better prepare incoming students.
- » **The practitioner seminar series** with senior leaders on topics of interest to engage students in learning outside the classroom.
  - » **Tom Zaidan**, VP of HR at Eaton Corporation, HR Trends in Manufacturing, January
  - » **Tim Richmond**, CHRO Abbvie, Talent Philosophy and Management, April
- » **Empowering, guiding, and supporting student groups** to be more effective in engaging the student body.
  - » **The Leadership Banquet** in November
  - » **The SHRM conference** in February



# Career Team Leaders

## The Secret Ingredient to Success in MSU's MHRLR Program

At the heart of MSU's Master of Human Resources and Labor Relations program is a unique initiative that sets our students apart: **Career Team Leaders** (CTLs).

These second-year students, carefully selected and trained as peer career coaches by HRLR's Director of Career Development & Placement, **Megan Jursch**, are integral to helping first-year students navigate the rigorous internship recruitment process.

Through their hands-on guidance and industry insights, CTLs have become the "secret ingredient" behind the program's career and placement success.



Our beloved Career Team Leaders, Director of Career Development and Placement Megan Jursch, and alumnus Dennis Liberson enjoying lunch together.

## Why Career Team Leaders Make a Difference

- » **Peer Mentorship:** CTLs bridge the gap between academic concepts and real-world applications. Having recently navigated recruitment and internships themselves, they provide first-year students with relevant, meaningful guidance rooted in firsthand experience.
- » **Career Readiness:** From resume reviews and mock interviews to networking tips, CTLs empower students with the confidence and skills essential for career success.
- » **Community Building:** CTLs cultivate a supportive culture among students, encouraging collaboration and connection well beyond the classroom.
- » **Advocacy Support:** CTLs also keep HRLR's Director of Career Development updated on students' ever-evolving interests, top company preferences, and existing offers. This insight enables the Director of Career Development to effectively advocate for students when engaging with recruiting employers.

In a fast-paced and competitive field like HR, CTLs give MHRLR students a distinctive edge. Through their mentorship, career support, and community-building role, CTLs ensure each student has the foundation they need to excel throughout graduate school and beyond.

To learn more about the Office of Career Development & Placement and the Career Team Leaders, contact **Megan Jursch, Director of Career Development & Placement** at [jurschme@msu.edu](mailto:jurschme@msu.edu).

# Faculty Achievements



## Tara S. Behrend, John Richard Butler II Endowed Professor

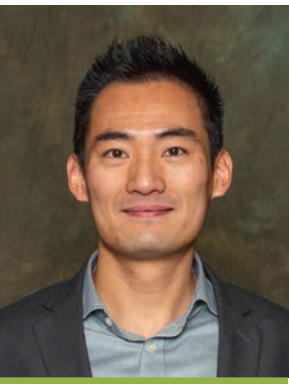
Tara S. Behrend, the John Richard Butler II Endowed Professor, joined our faculty in August 2023. Dr. Behrend is renowned for her impressive scholarly record, interdisciplinary research, and influential leadership in the field of industrial and organizational psychology and beyond. Her recent achievements include:

- » Board Member, National Academies - Board on Human-Systems Integration (2024)
- » President, Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) (2023 - 2024)



## Peter Berg recognized as 2024 LERA Fellow

The LERA Fellows Award recognizes scholars and practitioners who have made contributions of unusual distinction to the field and have been in the profession and field for longer than 10 years.



## Jason Huang recognized as 2024 SIOP Fellow

Every year, SIOP recognizes members whose research identifies solutions to workplace problems, whose practice changes the course of the field, and whose teaching guides the next generation of I-O psychology. Fellowship is one of the highest honors a member can receive.



## John Beck recognized for 33 years of service to MSU and over 20 years supporting the Excellence in DEI Awards (EDEIA) program

For more than 20 years, John Beck has lent his expertise to the EDEIA program, including serving on the selection committee and, per DEI Report and Plan recommendations, was instrumental in the process of expanding the program to an all-university award from 2022 to 2023.

# Outreach Highlights

## 2025 Professional Development Programs Now Available

We are excited to share our 2025 Professional Development program catalog! We invite you to explore opportunities to grow your knowledge and credentials, and consider sharing these programs with others who can benefit from advancing their skills in the coming year. [View the Catalog](#)



## CHRO Leadership Academy

The CHRO Leadership Academy continues to establish itself as one of the elite programs of its kind in preparing HR professionals to become CHROs. We celebrated our latest cohort that completed the program in October at our annual Advisory Board meeting.



## Labor Education Program

The Labor Education Program is working with UAW-Ford National Joint Programs to design and deliver 24-hour training programs in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Participants are members of joint labor-management DEI committees in Ford facilities nationwide. The program is very successful, and our partnership with UAW-Ford is ongoing.

In addition, the Labor Education Program has launched online programs in stewards training, collective bargaining, and labor and employment law. These core labor programs continue to serve a wide range of unions throughout Michigan and around the country.

We also offer in-person training programs on request. A recent example was a 3-day program with union staff representatives of SEIU 517m.



# Engage. Reconnect. Inspire.

As proud members of the HRLR community, your involvement fuels our success. We invite you to stay connected with the School, share your expertise, and help shape the next generation of HRLR leaders.

## Ways To Engage



Support What We Do



Mentor & Guest Lecture



Recruit HRLR Students



Participate in Outreach Activities

**Let's continue to advance the future of work—together.**

STAY CONNECTED



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