

Thursday, December 17, 2009

From HRD 304 to Lean intern

Michelle Mich, an office assistant in Educational Leadership at Oakland University, took **HRD 304: Lean Principles and Practices in Organizations** during the summer and then transitioned into a Lean internship for the fall semester.

Mich is working with her HRD 304 professor, Mark Doman, for her internship. After Mich spoke with Doman in the summer about her current job and internship at OU, he told her that if there are further activities that need to be completed for the implementation of the class project after the semester ends, she can be his intern and work to get these things done.

"My favorite thing about the position is really being guided by Professor Doman," Mich said. "I learned a lot from him."

Doman acts as her mentor, advising her how to handle situations and people.

"It's just a continuous learning experience at many levels," Mich said.

The internship helped reinforce Lean thoughts and ideas, and Mich said she learned how to carry those out throughout the Lean transformation process. Her work is a continuation of her class project in HRD 304, where Mich and her classmates made recommendations on how to improve the grade change process at OU.

"We all bonded as a team, and we all knew the importance of this project," Mich said. "Having the small class of six people was perfect for that opportunity."

After the class finished its project and the course, Mich now makes sure everything is in place to implement the process and run a pilot program. A lot of the work she does is set up meetings and talk to those involved in the process – the Office of the Registrar, Office of the Provost, University Technology Services and the Office of Graduate Study – to make sure the process will work for all of them.

"What I'm learning in my internship I can take elsewhere," Mich said. "I think it's a great opportunity for students to get involved and get a hands-on, real world experience with Lean."

In her job as an office assistant, Mich applies Lean to improve processes and get rid of waste. According to Mich, the undergraduate course gives a whole new outlook on Lean.

"Lean is something that once you learn it, you will apply it to many things," she said. "There are small things that I have changed in the office, but there's so much more I could do."

There's always room for improvement, and Lean is a continuous process, Mich said.

Mich and several of her classmates also attended the New Student Convocation Involvement Fair, which went really well, according to Mich. The students answered questions about the grade change project and the class.

"We tried to promote the Lean course," Mich said. "Hopefully, we piqued some interest for new or current students to take the course."

The Lean project was also on display at OU-Macomb during welcome week. For more information about HRD 304 and other class offerings from the Oakland University Pawley Lean Institute, visit www.oakland.edu/lean.

SUMMARY

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Modified by Rachel Zynel (rezynel@oakland.edu) on Friday, January 20, 2012
Article Start Date: Thursday, December 17, 2009