**Week Overview**

 Welcome to Week 5 of BUS681 – Compensation & Benefits.  This week, students consider total compensation practices (i.e., pay and benefits) for special groups including senior executives and part time, contingent, temporary, and seasonal employees, as well as independent contractors.  Over the last several years, industry leaders, government officials, and the press and media have scrutinized executive compensation.  Several high-profile scandals involving executive compensation brought increased attention to how company leaders are paid and prompted government officials to place greater regulations on executive pay practices.  The rapid rate by which executive pay has increased over the years in comparison to the rate of increase for lower level employees has also sparked attention.  The ever-widening gap between executives’ and non-executives’ annual compensation has raised questions about the merits of executive compensation packages (Martocchio, 2011).

 Executive compensation packages are much different than compensation packages for other employees and include a number of different compensation strategies that are unique to this category of employees.  Compensation managers must understand the components of these different strategies, and some managers may focus on executive compensation in practice entirely.  Compensation managers must have knowledge of the principles and processes for setting executive compensation and the highly regulated environment in which executive is set (Martocchio, 2011).  Chapter 12 (Martocchio) will cover these topics including the debate over the justification for enormous executive compensation packages.

 A growing trend in the employment of individuals is the shift away from hiring regular full time employees towards hiring part time employees and independent contractors, known as a flexible workforce.  Part time employees may work a set number of hours a week, work on a contingent or temporary basis, or be employed seasonally. Independent contractors typically work on a contractual basis with an organization, usually for a defined period of time or on a project-by-project basis.  The nature of these employment relationships has advantages and disadvantages, as well as different compensation strategies that students will explore.  Students will also assess the influence of these compensation strategies on organizations’ compensation plans (Martocchio, 2011).  Chapter 13 of the text (Martocchio) covers these topics, as well as discussion of the reaction of labor unions to the increasing number of contingent employees in organizations.

 This week’s assignments are designed to help you understand the role of employer-sponsored employee benefits as part of employees’ total compensation (Martocchio, 2011).  The first discussion requires you to examine and discuss the differences between executive and non-executive compensation strategies.  In the second discussion, you will examine the practices associated with compensating part time, contingent, seasonal, and temporary employees, and independent contractors.  You will discuss the relationship between these compensation practices with the organization’s overall compensation plan.  The written assignment requires you to analyze and synthesize the components of your current or a former organization with the triangular perspective and make recommendations for aligning it with your organizations strategic plan.

**Discussion Post Expectations**

 Timely posts and responses to your fellow students are important aspects of learning in an online forum.  I expect that you will engage each other following the rules of netiquette.  Keep an open mind and allow your classmates to help you to expand your ideas and opinions.  Learning from each other is critical because people learn from each other in most life situations.  Remember to use the content of required readings and videos, as well as resources you locate on your own, in your responses in the discussion threads.

**Assignment Expectations(To be posted later)**

 I expect that you complete the assignment as required using APA format, 6th Edition and keeping to the required number of pages.  Remember to check for clarity, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.  Cite and reference all of your sources.  You don’t want to be accused of plagiarism.  Ashford provides students with exceptional resources to help you master academic writing.  To access these resources, click on **Ashford Writing Center** or **The Writing Reviser** found under the**Learning Resources** tab in your student portal.

**Recommended Resources**

 Please refer to your student course guide for a list of recommended resources for this course.

**References**

Martocchio, J. J. (2011) *Strategic compensation: A human resource management approach* (6th Edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. ISBN: 9780136106401