# HIGHER ED HR MAGAZINE

Fall 2019


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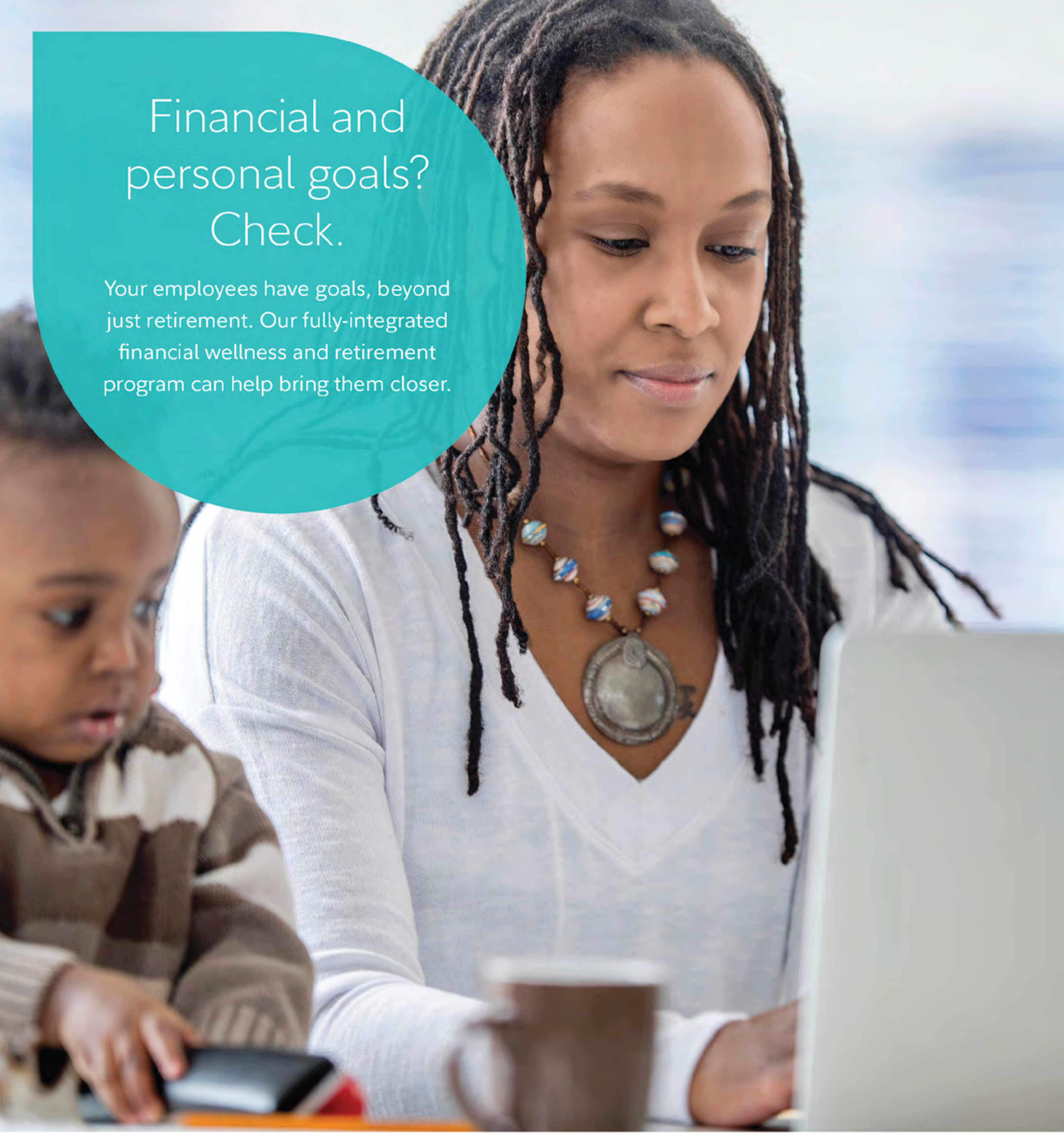


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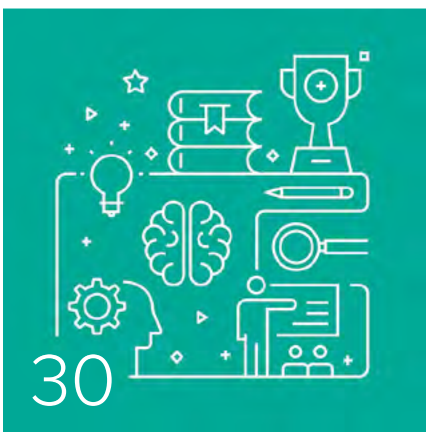



## ON THE COVER



## DEPARTMENTS



## FEATURES



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# HIGHER ED HR MAGAZINE

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# A New Normal for Higher Ed

The campus is alive with all the start-up activities of the fall semester. New freshmen and transfer students have begun to find their way around campus, and returning students have unloaded all the stuff they had packed into their parents' basements during the summer. A celebratory opening convocation preceded the first day of classes to welcome the new students and connect them to some of the traditions that make the college special. The semester begins, and just five days later, the president calls and asks you to come to a meeting that begins in 30 minutes.

The first reports from the registrar's office confirm that the institution has missed its enrollment target by more than 100 students. It also missed enrollment targets for the last two years and had to dip into already limited reserves to balance the budget. This cannot be the solution for this year.

Help me finish the scenario:

1. **The budget must be reduced by $2 million. There is no plan for addressing the deficit.** Everyone had crossed their fingers and hoped that admissions would "come through" to fill the new class and that a "higher than normal" percentage of students would return. You have been called into the president's office with 10 others to determine the actions that need to be taken immediately. Everyone in the room has a different opinion regarding how to proceed … some with clear agendas that protect their turf. A plan is thrown together that needs to be implemented within 48 hours. (A variation to this scenario is that you were not one of the 10 included in the meeting, but were instead called 24 hours after the meeting and told what HR needs to do make this happen.)
2. **The budget must be reduced by $2 million. Last year, you worked with the president and others to develop a plan should an enrollment deficit occur again this year.** The leadership team determined the two programs that will need to be eliminated. Key members of the board were also advised. Severance packages for impacted employees have already been determined, and a thoughtful communications plan has already been developed to share the news with the impacted employees, the campus community and the local media. The difficult process begins in accordance with the timeline that was established.
3. **Based on the trend of the last couple of years, a budget was created and approved last year anticipating a potential decrease in students.** Necessary but painful discussions were held last winter to give faculty and staff the opportunity to help identify areas of cost savings and the programs and services that are core to the learning, development and retention of students. The changes you and your colleagues had to communicate last April were difficult, but they helped position the college for a new normal with fewer students.

I am sure you could add other scenarios, but the bottom line is that many of our institutions are facing the challenge of a "new normal" as the number of traditional college-aged students continues to shrink as we approach the 2025 higher ed enrollment cliff. With low unemployment in most parts of the country, some high school graduates who a decade ago might have continued their education are instead choosing to go directly into the workforce. Low unemployment is also impacting the number of non-traditional students seeking additional academic credentials. Over the last several months, CUPA-HR national and regional board members have discussed the enrollment cliff challenges with their enrollment management colleagues and other campus leaders. Based on these discussions and our collective work, we have developed recommended actions for higher ed HR leaders to help prepare for not just the 2025 enrollment cliff, but the significant challenges of our institutions now and into the future. Some of this information is included in the cover article.

I encourage you to act now to help other campus leaders prepare, and to help ensure the actions that impact employees are carefully and thoughtfully planned and implemented.

# New Survey Finds College Presidents Are Paying More Attention to Student Mental Health Issues

College student mental health has increasingly been in the spotlight over the past few years, and college and university presidents appear to be taking notice and prioritizing how to address the issue on their campus.

In a recent survey by the American Council on Education (ACE) of more than 400 presidents of U.S. higher education institutions, eight out of 10 indicated that student mental health is more of a priority on their campus than it was three years ago. Seventy percent of the presidents surveyed said they had reallocated or identified new funding to address the issue. Presidents are also being brought into the loop on student mental health much more frequently than in the past. The survey report states that nearly one in three presidents of four-year institutions and one in five two-year college presidents reported hearing once a week or more about students struggling with mental illness.

Other findings from the report:

- The top mental health concerns presidents are hearing about are anxiety and depression.
- Presidents at public institutions were more likely to hear about students facing addiction and food insecurity than presidents at private institutions.
- Presidents at two-year colleges were twice as likely to hear about housing insecurity than presidents at other types of institutions.
- Ninety-two percent of presidents surveyed said they rely on their vice president of student affairs or dean of students to help address student mental health concerns.
- Ninety percent of presidents agreed that their staff is spending more time addressing student mental health concerns than they were three years ago.
- Eighty percent of presidents indicated that student well-being is mentioned in their institution's strategic plan, and more than 40 percent of plans mention mental health specifically.

Read more about the findings on ACE's blog, HigherEducationToday, at higheredtoday.org.

# DOL's Final Overtime Rule Could Come as Early as October

On August 12, the Department of Labor (DOL) submitted the final rule updating the salary threshold for the "white collar" exemptions to the Fair Labor Standards Act's overtime pay requirements to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA). OIRA, part of the president's Office of Management and Budget, is required to review all draft and final standards as well as all regulatory actions before implementation. This is the final step before the overtime rule is published. While OIRA has 90 days to conduct its review, in most cases review takes 30 to 60 days. If this timetable holds true, it is likely that DOL will publish a final rule in October or November.

The proposed rule released to the public for comment in March raises the standard salary threshold from its current level of $455 per week or $23,660 annually to $679 per week or $35,308 annually. It also raises the salary level for the highly compensated exemption to $147,414 from its current level of $100,000 and does not make any changes to the duties requirements.

# The Higher Ed Staff Workforce Is Aging

With nearly one-third of the U.S. higher education staff workforce age 55 or older, the implications are many for colleges and universities. New research by CUPA-HR on the aging of the higher ed workforce highlights some challenges institutions will likely face in the coming years as staff begin to retire in large numbers.

Here's what the study found:

- Higher ed has a greater share of older workers than the U.S. workforce in general.
- Skilled craft, facilities, and service/maintenance areas have the highest percentages of older workers, with nearly 40 percent or more of these workers age 55 and older.
- Pay inequity remains an issue for higher ed staff. While salaries for men show a steady increase with years in position, salaries are largely the same for women with between eight and 22 years in their position, suggesting that when staying in the same job long-term, women's pay increases consistently fall short of men's pay increases.
- Pay compression is also an issue for higher ed staff, with the positions of deputy head of student admissions, IT programmer analyst and student success professional topping the list for which institutions pay longer-serving employees equal to or less than new hires.

What does this mean for higher ed? Says Adam Pritchard, Ph.D., senior survey researcher at CUPA-HR and lead author of the research report, "Higher education leaders must act to ensure that the pipeline for key positions is adequate to fulfill future staffing needs. Seeking external expertise in a competitive job market is going to be more challenging, so efforts to prepare staff for internal promotion must become more of the norm."

Other steps higher ed leaders can take now to prepare for a possible shortage in staff in the coming years include developing a plan to anticipate and address shortages in highly competitive jobs; identifying and addressing pay equity and salary compression issues; and rethinking retention strategies.

Read the full brief, *The Challenges of an Aging Higher Ed Workforce*, at www.cupahr.org/surveys/research-briefs.

# Survey on Graduates' Meaningful Experiences in College

Results of a new survey of 1,575 college graduates found a relative lack of meaningful relationships between students and faculty or staff members. The Elon University poll was conducted with the Center for Engaged Learning. Participants were given a list of common college experiences and asked to report how frequently they encountered them.

The most common reported undergraduate experience was receiving feedback from faculty or staff members on a submitted final project, with 72 percent saying they got this kind of feedback multiple times. But just over half (52 percent) of respondents reported having had meaningful relationships with faculty or staff members, making this the least commonly reported experience. And 17 percent of graduates said they never had such a relationship. The survey also found that 55 percent of graduates said they had opportunities to reflect on how the different parts of college fit together, while 17 percent reported never having this opportunity.

*This brief originally appeared in Inside Higher Ed on August 1, 2019.*

# Defining Success With a Higher Ed HR Competency Model

Over the past decade, human resources in higher education has made significant strides in expanding its role as a strategic leader and partner for institutional and student success. Where is your institution in its transformation journey? And how can you and your team acquire and fine tune the knowledge, skills and abilities you need to keep that transformation in motion?

One solution is to use a competency framework to align HR's work, set standards of excellence, and put action items around what it means to be successful. With the right tools in your toolkit, you can strengthen the inclusive nature of your workplace culture, the diversity and satisfaction of your workforce, the effectiveness of HR communications and processes, HR's impact on the leadership pipeline and, ultimately, HR's impact on student success.

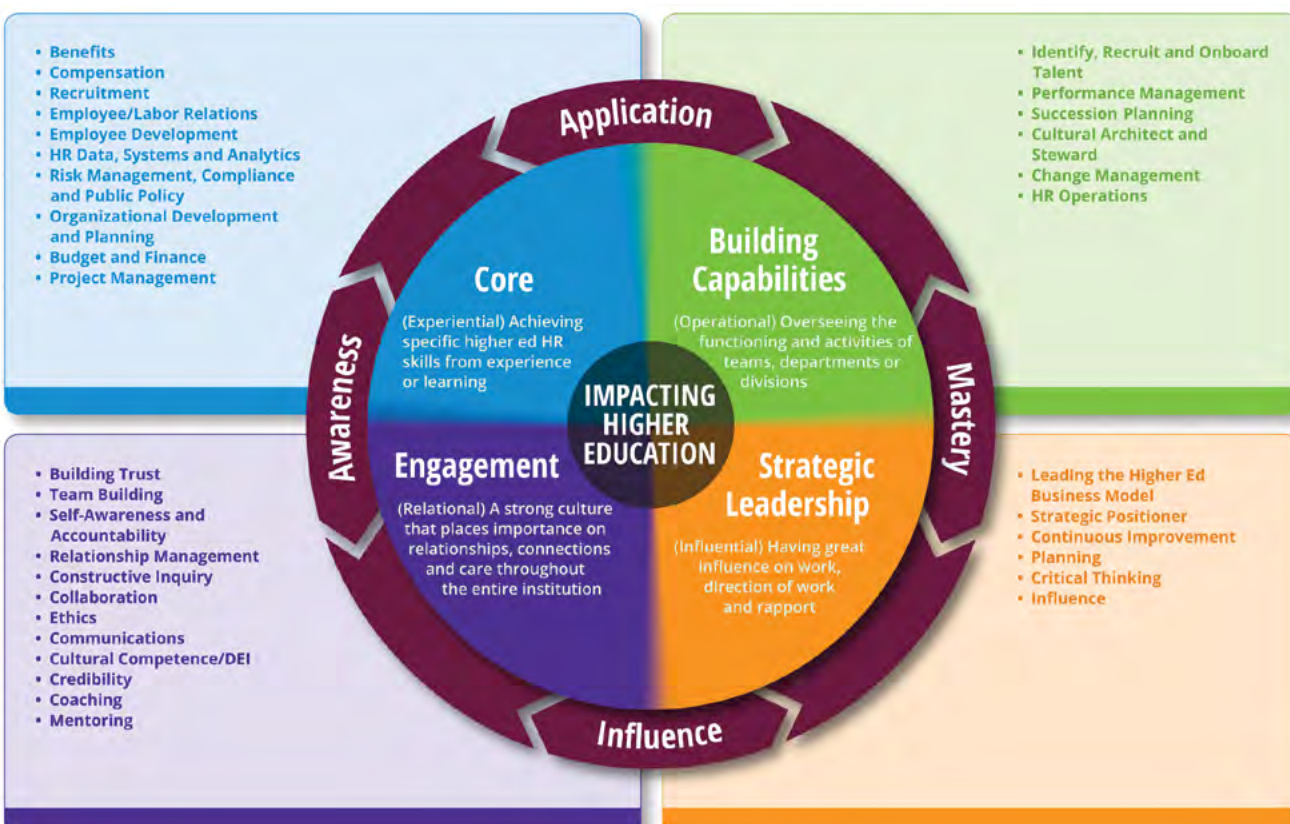
The CUPA-HR Learning Framework, developed with input from hundreds of higher ed HR professionals and recently revised, provides the foundation for identifying strengths and gaps for both individuals and teams. Find it online at www.cupahr.org/framework.

## Tips and Resources for Implementation

Implementing a new approach to learning and development requires planning. Here are a few tips and resources you may find helpful:

### *Explore the Framework as a Team*

The easiest way to get everyone on the same page is to get everyone in the same room. CUPA-HR offers several facilitator resources to help explain the framework and develop action plans for professional development, whether the goal is to create individual plans or to put competencies in the context of team roles and learning.



**What's the Difference Between Competencies and Skills?** We sometimes use these words interchangeably, but they represent different sides of the same learning coin.

**Competencies** are combinations of knowledge, skills and abilities that are predictors of successful performance. They are often transferable across roles and are likely to grow from one career level to the next.

**Skills** are generally specific, learned activities. They are often suited for a specific job and don't necessarily grow from one career level to the next.

Visit the CUPA-HR website for more information:

- Learning Framework Explained (PowerPoint presentation)
- The What and Why of the CUPA-HR Learning Framework (10-minute video)
- Learning Framework Workshop Agenda for Individual Planning
- Learning Framework Workshop Agenda for Team Planning

### *Align With Institutional Goals*

Wherever possible, make connections between the competencies and institutional goals. How do individual and team competencies contribute to the success of the team? How do they support the mission and values of the institution? What is the connection between your work and student success?

### *Provide Coaching and Training*

Once competencies have been assessed and prioritized, be sure to provide opportunities for professional development. This could involve mentoring, job-shadowing, taking classes, or tapping into the many resources available through CUPA-HR online and at events across the country. Be sure to check out:

- Creating Your Individual Development Plan (free e-learning course)
- HR Toolkits in the CUPA-HR Knowledge Center
- CUPA-HR Connect (the online community for higher ed HR professionals)
- CUPA-HR Calendar of Events (virtual and in-person learning events)

### *Communicate*

Like any other change initiative, the successful implementation of a competency model requires open and honest communication throughout the process. Make competencies a regular part of your departmental communications, professional development discussions and planning.

## Exploring the Framework on Your Own

Competency models can be used by anyone to assess strengths and gaps in the skills and competencies they need to succeed. Start by familiarizing yourself with the competencies outlined in the CUPA-HR Learning Framework. As part of that process, you'll also want to explore the four levels of proficiency — awareness, application, mastery and influence. For example, you may find that you have mastered a competency, but want to improve your influence related to that competency. These resources will help you explore the CUPA-HR Learning Framework on your own, and you can use them to create a plan for your professional development:

- Professional Development Planning for Individuals
- Creating Your Individual Development Plan (free e-learning course)
- Printer-Friendly Framework

## Make an Impact

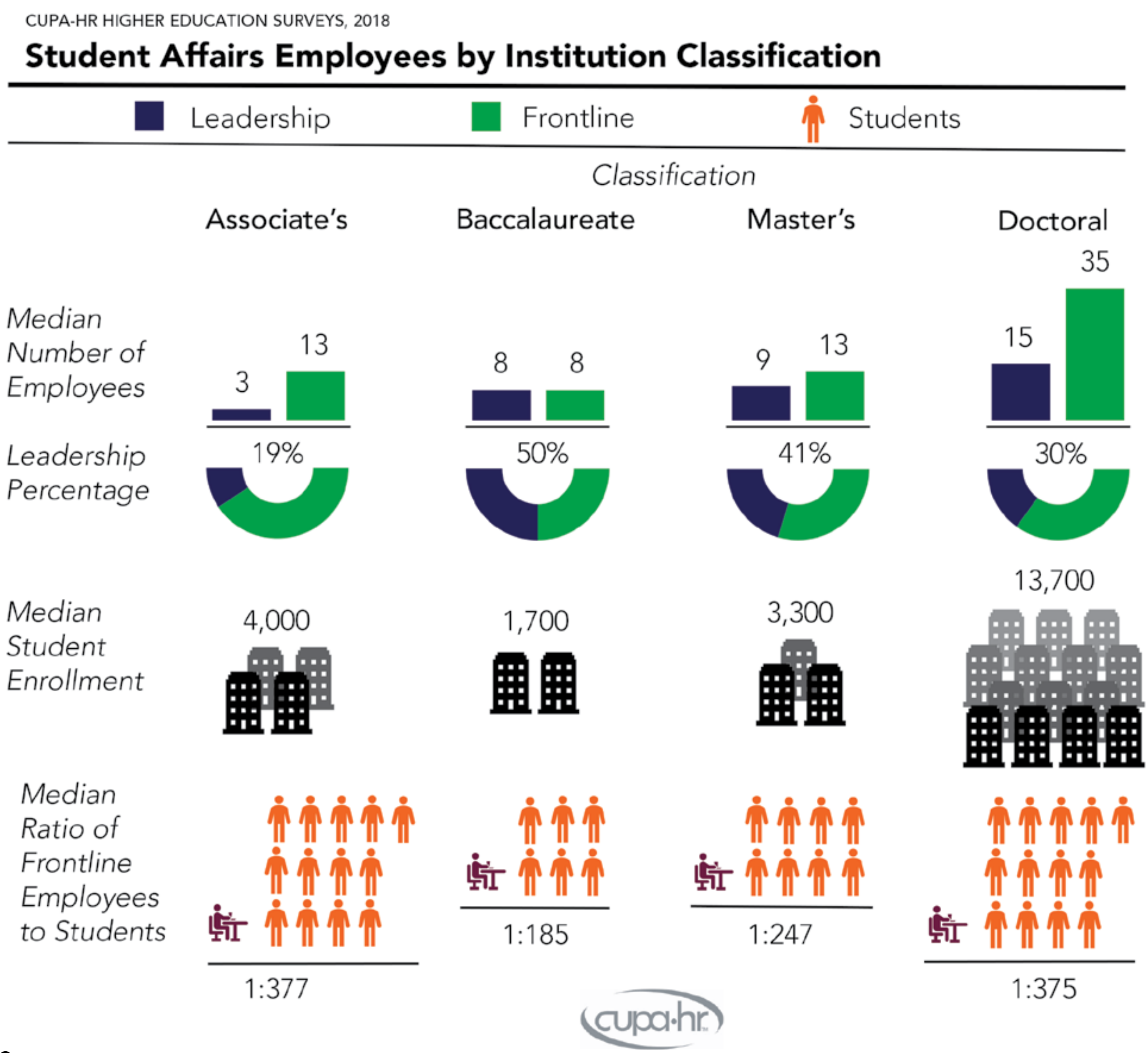
The goal of growing knowledge, skills and abilities is to make a meaningful impact not only on your career, but also on your institution and, ultimately, on higher education. That's why the CUPA-HR Learning Framework has at its core "Impacting Higher Education." Wherever you are in your professional journey, and wherever your team is in its journey to become a strategic partner to campus leadership, the CUPA-HR Learning Framework can be a foundation for propelling you forward.

# What Can You Learn From Student Affairs Staffing Ratios?

By Adam Pritchard

One of the ways in which the work of HR impacts student success is by staffing the positions that interact directly with students on a regular basis. The most well-known ratio is the faculty-to-student ratio; however, on the staff side, there are many other ways to think about how the right levels of staffing can be a factor in student success.

After faculty, student affairs professionals at colleges and universities are the employees most directly responsible for student success. The student affairs workforce, however, is not one-size-fits-all. As highlighted in CUPA-HR's *Focus on Student Affairs, 2018* research brief, staffing in student affairs differs greatly in size and composition for different types of institutions. Some key ratios are provided in the figure in this article, and there are several insights that can be gathered from these data.



## Classification Matters

Institutions with different classifications have a different balance of leadership and frontline student affairs employees. Leadership positions include chief officers, heads and supervisors; frontline positions include coordinators, counselors and other student affairs professionals who deal directly with students. The balance of leadership to frontline positions is usually related to an institution's size — at the median, half of student affairs employees at baccalaureate institutions (with a median enrollment of around 1,700 students) are in leadership positions; 41 percent of the student affairs professionals at master's institutions (with a median enrollment of around 3,300 students) are in leadership positions; and 30 percent of student affairs employees at doctoral institutions (with a median enrollment of around 13,700 students) are in leadership positions.

There are, of course, certain necessary leadership roles in student affairs regardless of institution size. However, these data show only marginally more leadership positions in larger institutions, with a much greater increase in the proportion of frontline professionals to accommodate larger student enrollment. The number of frontline student affairs staff does not simply increase to match enrollment, however. Each frontline student affairs employee also serves more students when enrollment is higher. In other words, student affairs at larger institutions must "do more with less."

Data show that baccalaureate institutions employ one frontline student affairs professional for every 185 students; master's institutions employ one frontline employee for every 247 students; and doctoral institutions have one frontline employee for every 375 students. These figures highlight a tension between providing necessary services and doing so more efficiently when enrollment is higher — a tension that must be balanced by HR when deciding the levels at which to staff these positions.

At associate's institutions, student affairs workforce ratios are very different from the rest of higher education. At the median, only 19 percent of student affairs employees are in leadership positions at associate's institutions — the lowest proportion among the four major classifications. The frontline student affairs professionals-to-student ratio is 1:377 (on par with the workload at doctoral institutions despite being only a fraction of the size). These ratios reflect unique needs and budget realities at associate's institutions. Looking at median ratios can give us clues about how the typical associate's institution is addressing these challenges, compared to other types of institutions.

## What These Ratios Mean to You

As with any benchmarking ratio, thinking about staffing levels in student affairs positions can help an institution compare itself against similar institutions. Medians point to what is typical for comparators, so they may reflect best practices — or these ratios might represent "average" service levels that your institution can aim to exceed to set itself apart.

Some variation between institutions is normal and may be affected by other factors not considered here. However, if your institution greatly differs from the median for your classification, this may be a good opportunity to investigate further. Does your student affairs department have too many or too few leadership positions for your size and classification? Are your frontline student affairs staff over-burdened with higher-than-typical student-to-staff ratios, or does your institution put far more staffing resources than necessary into this area while adding little to the student experience?

Using data like these can be a great starting point for considering how to best allocate resources toward the goal of student success. Thinking beyond traditional faculty-to-student ratios can given an institution an edge in an increasingly data-driven world and might make all the difference in ensuring that students get the most out of all your institution has to offer.

***About the author:*** *Adam Pritchard, Ph.D., is senior survey researcher at CUPA-HR and lead author of the CUPA-HR research report, Focus on Student Affairs, 2018: Understanding Key Challenges Using CUPA-HR Data.*

# A Reshuffling at the Department of Labor

By Josh Ulman, Christi Layman and Basil Thomson

After more than two years of service, on July 12, 2019, Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta submitted his resignation to President Donald Trump, setting off a flurry of personnel changes at the Department of Labor (DOL). Acosta's move came amid renewed criticism and media coverage of his 2008 role as the U.S. attorney in Miami, who oversaw a non-prosecution agreement for sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Acosta tendered his resignation, effective July 19, in a joint press conference with the president, saying that he did not want the Epstein coverage to become a distraction for the president's agenda. During that same conference, President Trump announced the appointment of Deputy Secretary Patrick Pizzella to the position of secretary on an acting basis. Then on July 18, the president began the process to nominate Eugene Scalia to be the next secretary of labor.

The resignation of a cabinet secretary traditionally has a significant impact on that department's agenda, as secretaries wield an enormous amount of control and power over personnel and policy decisions. While sub-agency heads, such as the wage and hour administrator for instance, are subject to Senate confirmation and are nominated by the president, there are many important senior political positions that are filled at the discretion of the secretary that exercise an outsized role on the direction of the department and its policy agenda.

Press reports suggest that Acting Secretary Pizzella may be more aggressive in pushing regulatory changes than former Secretary Acosta, who was known for being cautious and deliberate.

## Acting Secretary Pizzella

Patrick Pizzella was confirmed and sworn into office as deputy secretary at DOL in April 2018. Prior to his appointment, he served as a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA). He was nominated to that position in 2013 by President Barack Obama and designated acting FLRA chairman by President Trump in January 2017. Pizzella ran his own consulting firm from 2009 to 2013, and before that served as assistant secretary of labor for administration and management from 2001 to 2009 during the George W. Bush administration.

Pizzella worked at Preston Gates Ellis & Rouvelas Meeds, LLP, as a government affairs counselor from 1998 to 2001 and as director of coalitions from 1996 to 1997. He also served as the director of the office of administration at the Federal Housing Finance Board from 1990 to 1995 and served as the deputy under secretary for management at the Department of Education from 1988 to 1989 under the George H.W. Bush administration.

Like Acosta, Pizzella's past has grabbed media attention and has fueled objections by Democratic members of Congress and groups concerned with the department's agenda over his appointment as deputy and acting secretary. During his time at Preston Gates Ellis & Rouvelas Meeds, LLP, Pizzella lobbied on behalf of the Northern Mariana Islands against efforts to impose federal labor laws, such as minimum wage and other worker protection laws, on the islands.

While at Preston Gates, Pizzella also worked with Jack Abramoff, the infamous lobbyist who went to prison for fraud and corruption. Despite his prior government service, Democratic senators and human rights groups argued during Pizzella's deputy secretary confirmation hearings that his past work with the lobbyist on labor issues in the Northern Mariana Islands precluded him from taking a position with oversight of U.S. labor laws and enforcement of minimum wage laws. During his confirmation, Pizzella worked to distance himself from Abramoff by stating that he was not included in the group of 21 associates convicted of or pleading guilty to the wrongdoings that Abramoff was convicted for in 2005.

Pizzella is well known in D.C. labor circles and has a track record of aligning with management-side interests. As mentioned previously, press reports suggest that some expect Pizzella will be more aggressive than Acosta in finalizing pending regulations. This is significant, as several major regulatory initiatives are nearing completion, such as the proposed changes to overtime regulations, regular rate regulations, and joint-employment regulations.

### The Pizzella Front-Office Team

Acosta is not the only high-level staff change at DOL. Former DOL Chief of Staff Nick Geale left his role at the end of May and his replacement, Molly Conway, who has served within DOL since February 2017, announced shortly after taking over the role that she would be leaving by the end of the summer. In addition, Wage and Hour Division Deputy Administrator Keith Sonderling, who served as acting wage and hour administrator for the first four months of 2019, overseeing the release of three major proposed rules, has been nominated to be the new Republican commissioner at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

DOL's new chief of staff under Pizzella is Tim Taylor, and his deputy chief of staff is Catherine Bartley. Taylor, a Harvard-educated lawyer, most recently served a brief stint as general counsel for the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy and prior to that served as the deputy assistant secretary for policy at DOL, one of the highest-ranking policy positions. Bartley previously worked for Pizzella in the Office of the Deputy Secretary at DOL, as his deputy chief of staff. Pizzella also named Joseph Mazzara, a Marine Corps attorney, to be acting executive secretary in the Office of the Executive Secretariat, a position that has been vacant since last year.

This team is expected to hit the ground running and continue the review of regulatory comments and execution of the final regulations currently underway, as President Trump hopes to ensure his current labor agenda is enacted prior to the 2020 elections. Just how much they accomplish and how quickly may depend in large part how quickly the Senate confirmation process of Eugene Scalia takes. A new fully confirmed labor secretary will have his own team and his own take on the Trump labor agenda.

### Labor Secretary Nominee Eugene Scalia

Eugene Scalia is the son of late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. He is a partner at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher in Washington, D.C., where he currently co-chairs the firm's administrative law and regulatory practice group. He previously co-chaired the firm's labor and employment practice group for 12 years. He is also a member of the firm's appellate and constitutional law practice group and has served on its executive committee and its partnership evaluation committee.

Outside of his extensive legal career, Scalia served as solicitor of DOL under President George W. Bush's administration from 2002 to 2003, special assistant to U.S. Attorney General William P. Barr during the George H.W. Bush administration from 1992 to 1993, and as a speechwriter for Education Secretary Bill Bennett from 1985 to 1987 during the Reagan administration.

**Press reports suggest that Pizzella may be more aggressive in pushing regulatory changes than former Secretary Acosta, who was known for being cautious and deliberate.**

Scalia is well known in the labor-policy world and has played a role in numerous cases, shedding light on his approach to labor laws and regulations. Scalia's firm lists 18 cases in which Scalia led litigation to successfully reverse federal and state regulations of businesses. In 2006, for example, Scalia successfully argued on behalf of the Retail Industry Leaders Association in a case involving a Maryland law, dubbed the "Walmart Bill," that required large companies (defined as those with 10,000 or more employees) to spend at least 8 percent of their total payroll on healthcare. The judge in the case ultimately struck down the law, finding it was preempted by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.

Scalia also argued on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce and the Financial Services Roundtable against DOL's fiduciary rule, which was ultimately vacated in 2018. In the 1990s, Scalia was involved in the litigation effort against the Clinton administration's "ergonomics rule" on repetitive stress injuries, calling ergonomics a "junk science." This position made confirmation in the Democratic-controlled Senate as Bush's solicitor general at DOL difficult, but he was eventually awarded a recess appointment.

Scalia is facing some scrutiny and criticism for his role in a 2010 case in which he argued on behalf of SeaWorld after a trainer was attacked and killed by an orca whale. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) investigated and concluded that SeaWorld should have known about the danger posed to a trainer from one of its orca whales. Scalia in return argued that it was never the intent of Congress for OSHA to regulate entertainment activities that pose threats to those who participate in them. While SeaWorld and Scalia ultimately lost the case, the lone dissent in the 2-1 decision came from then-appellate judge and now-Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh.

Scalia is known for being an aggressive litigator against labor regulations on behalf of prominent corporate clients. The media outlets believe his new role may allow for pro-business deregulatory actions that will be hard to block in court. He is well-regarded within the conservative legal community. Scalia and Pizzella are expected to work well and fast on the regulatory front but will likely encounter opposition from Senate Democrats, as Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) has already claimed Scalia is not pro-worker.

## Next Steps Toward a New Secretary

The Senate is expected to move quickly through the confirmation process, but likely won't confirm Scalia until October, at the earliest. The August recess slowed the process but also provided an opportunity for the Senate Help, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee to have some down time to prepare for Scalia's confirmation hearing. If all goes smoothly in the committee hearing and Scalia's confirmation is approved by the committee, it will move to a vote on the Senate floor in the week or so following the confirmation approval.

***About the authors:*** *Josh Ulman is chief government relations officer for CUPA-HR. Christi Layman is manager of government relations for CUPA-HR. Basil Thomson is government relations specialist for CUPA-HR.*

# Helping University Staff Contribute to Student Success

By Patrick Guilfoile and Kristi Krimpelbein

**Students interact frequently with staff members at higher education institutions to obtain critical information about financial aid, housing, library services, student organizations, dining services, records and registration, advising and many other areas. Students may also need support for emotional or physical concerns. Interactions between students and staff are intended to lead to two results — students gain the information or support they need and have positive experiences that further their desire to remain at school and complete their degree programs.**

Clearly, staff who are positive, helpful and focused on student success play a critical role in ensuring that students are retained on campus. Therefore, it is important that staff have the support they need to provide the type of interactions that will help students stay in school.

We believe one key element in engaging staff is to make it clear that staff members' opinions are sought after and valued. In many cases, staff members who are working directly with students have a perspective that is not available to faculty, supervisors or administrators regarding areas where change could improve the student experience.

At University of Wisconsin-Stout, one way we work to gain feedback from staff is to have yearly engagement sessions. These meetings are the result of extensive planning which leads to a focus on two or three key topics. The engagement sessions begin with a presentation of the topics and are followed by small-group feedback sessions. This feedback is compiled, acted on and then reported out in a "You Said, We Did" session each year, providing clear examples of how the institution has used information from the engagement sessions to continue to improve how the university functions.

We believe another element that contributes to staff engagement is a clear understanding of the institution's mission and the role of each individual in that mission. This can be challenging in higher education, because mission statements are often broad, and a great deal of activity could fall under an institutional mission. At UW-Stout, as a polytechnic institution, we have a mission that is based on tenets of applied learning, a career focus and collaboration that provides clear guidance. This clarity of mission, in turn, helps staff focus on their roles and how they assist with applied learning (perhaps they help develop student internships that promote applied learning), focus on careers (many of our staff engage employers in our career conferences and through other means) or collaborate (both on and off campus) to help ensure student success.

**It is important that staff have the support they need to provide the type of interactions that will help students stay in school.**

We also work to ensure that UW-Stout employees understand the university's mission and the importance of the work they do through a comprehensive onboarding process. Before beginning employment at the university, employees complete three online orientation modules that outline what they need to know to have a successful start at the university. They also participate in a half-day in-person orientation session. At this half-day session, employees hear from the chancellor, the provost and the vice chancellor on the mission, vision and values of the university. In addition, the chancellor presents on "everyday leadership." Through stories of his own experiences as a student, faculty member, dean and now, chancellor, the presentation emphasizes that every single employee at the university is a leader and has an impact on the lives of the students. Separating the policy and procedures into online modules allows for a more positive in-person orientation experience with quality time devoted to employees connecting with administrators. Employees hear first-hand how important the university's mission, vision and values are to the culture of the university.

Investing in opportunities for staff professional and personal growth is another way the university supports engaged staff members. Professional development programming is revised annually to address changing needs in technology and trends in higher education. The programming is varied to meet a wide range of needs and employee roles and includes training on software, leadership skills and conflict management as well as personal growth topics such as wellness, financial planning and stress management. In addition to opportunities offered on campus, professional development support is available for attendance at conferences, and a tuition reimbursement program is available. As we continue to face competition for talented employees, providing professional development opportunities to support our employees has become more important. Staff that are supported professionally and personally in their growth translates to enhanced student experiences throughout the university.

Another key to ensuring staff can continue to provide high-quality service to students is to address workload at a time when budget cuts have reduced the number of staff members on our campus.

Frequently, in dealing with budget cuts, the dictum has been to "do more with less," but we think a more appropriate slogan would be to "do less with less" in a way that still meets student needs. One strategy that we have used in our work is to provide a level of autonomy and flexibility to staff to develop more efficient ways of doing things, so they can more effectively use their talents. At UW-Stout, staff have contributed to streamlining many processes, which has enabled us to do less with less but still meet student and faculty needs.

As many institutions increasingly depend on tuition revenue, the time-worn saying that "all campus employees are engaged in recruitment and retention" takes on even greater importance. Consequently, it becomes even more critical that colleges and universities take the necessary steps to ensure that staff have the tools and information they need to enhance student success.

*This article first appeared in The EvoLLLution online magazine in August 2017.*

***About the authors:*** *Patrick Guilfoile is provost at University of Wisconsin-Stout. Kristi Krimpelbein is chief HR officer and senior special assistant at University of Wisconsin-Stout.*


Personal Information
Benefits
Introductions
Training
Identity Badge
Health Insurance
New Hire Checklist

# **Making** the **Case** for **Tailored Onboarding** for **Student Affairs Professionals**

*By Jennifer Edwards*


A recent study by Kronos and the Human Capital Institute of several hundred U.S. organizations found that onboarding is a missed opportunity for many employers. Of the more than 350 HR leaders that participated in the study, three-quarters reported that onboarding practices at their organization are underutilized. Sixty percent of respondents said the top purpose for onboarding is to integrate employees into the culture of the organization, yet people and culture make up less than 30 percent of the focus in their programs. Additionally, three out of four respondents reported that their organization isn't effectively onboarding new hires, and less than half (47 percent) believe their onboarding program helps retain new hires.

However, onboarding done right can be a game changer when it comes to not only preparing new employees for their role in an organization, but also in retaining new hires. According to Dr. Talya Bauer, author of *Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success*, research on new employee onboarding has shown that when onboarding is done correctly, it can lead to higher job satisfaction, better organizational commitment, lower turnover, higher performance levels, better career effectiveness and lowered stress, among other things.

## Targeted, Tailored Onboarding

Three years ago, in response to high turnover rates in student affairs, Bryant University implemented an onboarding program tailored specifically to its student affairs employees. A collaborative effort between the student affairs division and human resources, the onboarding program is designed to supplement and complement the university-wide onboarding process, helping to create a more welcoming and inclusive division, retain new employees, and ensure that student affairs professionals are bringing a high level of job satisfaction to their work with students.

While guidance from HR is imperative to ensure new employees' compliance with processes and procedures, collaboration with a liaison from the student affairs division allows for a more detailed, targeted and thorough onboarding experience for Bryant's student affairs professionals without taxing HR staff to figure out all the specific details for each division and departmental new hire. This partnership allows HR to focus on the big picture while the division develops its own supplemental onboarding process.

The student affairs onboarding program consists of:

- A detailed onboarding manual that can be sent electronically to a new hire on day one or prior, consisting of:
  - The student affairs mission and guiding principles
  - A photo directory of directors and coordinators within the division
  - A student affairs organizational chart
  - Information on finding and communicating with colleagues
  - Public safety policies
  - Parking options
  - Personal use of campus services
  - Dining options
  - Technology and software systems
  - Ways to get involved with the student affairs division
- A welcome gift that is consistent across all departments.
- A formal announcement introducing the new hire via email and at a divisional meeting.
- A Clifton StrengthsFinder survey for the new hire to complete to acquire their top five strengths, which all members of the student affairs division receive a copy of and all new hires are asked to include in their email signature (this particular component has been expanded by the HR office to other divisions within the university).
- Lunch or coffee with a member of the vice president for student affairs leadership team, enabling the new hire to ask questions and learn more about the university and the division. New hires are paired on a rotational basis with leaders from the career center, counseling services, public safety, health services, diversity and inclusion, student engagement, residence life and student affairs.

**Once experiencing turnover that required 21 new hires in a year, student affairs at Bryant has seen that number cut to less than half.**

- A survey sent to new hires within six months of hire to gain feedback about their onboarding experience.
- Periodic focus groups with new hires to hear about their experience and to solicit ideas for improvement.
- Additional tailored onboarding within each department created by the new hire's supervisor and based on each new hire's skills, needs and position.

## A Positive Impact on Retention

The student affairs onboarding program at Bryant has had a positive impact on the division. Once experiencing turnover that required 21 new hires in a year, student affairs has seen that number cut to less than half. New hires' enthusiasm for how they are acclimated to the university spills over into their work with students, thus enhancing the student experience.

The retention of student affairs professionals helps build a team that can maintain student rapport year to year while also enabling student affairs professionals to gain institutional knowledge and provide students with a greater sense of comfort and continuity.

## Looking for the Next Innovation

To quote the founder of GoDaddy.com, Bob Parsons, "Never stop investing, never stop improving, never stop doing something new." Bryant's student affairs onboarding program is a great example of that.

In order to continue making improvements to the student affairs onboarding program, the division regularly solicits feedback from new hires via surveys and focus groups — and this feedback has provided some great ideas for how to move forward and expand the program. Particularly, younger new hires are hungry for exposure to leadership early on and have suggested providing monthly opportunities for new hires to meet with leadership. In Dr. Bauer's publication on onboarding, she emphasizes the importance of connecting new hires to peers and leaders. As she writes, "Meeting and starting to work with organizational 'insiders' is an important aspect of learning about any organization. In addition, new employees need to feel socially comfortable and accepted by their peers and superiors. Research has long found acceptance by peers to be an indicator of adjustment."

New student affairs employees at Bryant have also requested mentoring from tenured employees, as well as a detailed tour of the campus to help new hires acclimate more quickly to their environment outside of their personal workspace.

## An Innovative Partnership

Bryant's student affairs onboarding program would not be possible without a strategic partnership between the division and HR. HR's willingness to allow student affairs managers to be innovative to address the specific issues within their division and to provide the needed guidance to ensure success is a win for everyone — most importantly the students served.

***About the author:*** *Jennifer Edwards is director of planning and assessment for student affairs and special assistant to the vice president for student affairs at Bryant University.*

# The Looming Higher Ed

“U.S. Birthrate Drops 4th Year in a Row, Possibly Echoing the Great Recession”

“U.S. Births Fell to a 32-Year Low in 2018; CDC Says Birthrate Is in Record Slump”

“The U.S. Birthrate Is Still Falling”

“College Students Predicted to Fall by More Than 15 Percent After the Year 2025”

These are just some of the headlines that have been making the rounds in the media of late. According to the data, when the Great Recession hit in 2008, the birthrate took a nosedive that many attributed to the economy. However, while the economy has rebounded in the decade since, the birthrate has not. The implications of a declining U.S. birthrate are widespread, not the least of which is how the nation's colleges and universities will be impacted by a rapid drop in college-aged individuals in the general population. This looming enrollment cliff is being talked about among presidents' cabinets and boards of trustees across the nation, as higher ed leaders look to get in front of this challenge.

What conversations are happening, and what actions are higher ed institutions taking to prepare for a possible decline in tuition dollars in the coming years? What can HR leaders do to prepare for the cascading effects of fewer students on campus?

# Enrollment Cliff

*By Missy Kline*

## The Stats

While not all colleges and universities will see a decline in student enrollment, many of those that do will be hit hard. In a recent article in *The Hechinger Report*, columnist Jill Barshay writes that elite institutions will likely fare much better than regional four-year colleges and universities, which are expected to be impacted the most. According to the article, which cites research by economist and Carleton College professor Nathan Grawe, regional bachelor's institutions are expected to lose more than 11 percent of their students by 2029, while demand for elite institutions may be up to 14 percent higher in 2029 than it was in 2012.

**Fertility Often Rises and Falls with Economic Cycles**

*Annual number of births per 1,000 women of childbearing age*


Note: 2012 data are preliminary.

Sources: Statistics calculated using data obtained from U.S. Census Bureau, National Center for Health Statistics and Heuser, Robert L. *Fertility tables for birth cohorts by color.* U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. DHEW Publication No. (HRA)76-1152

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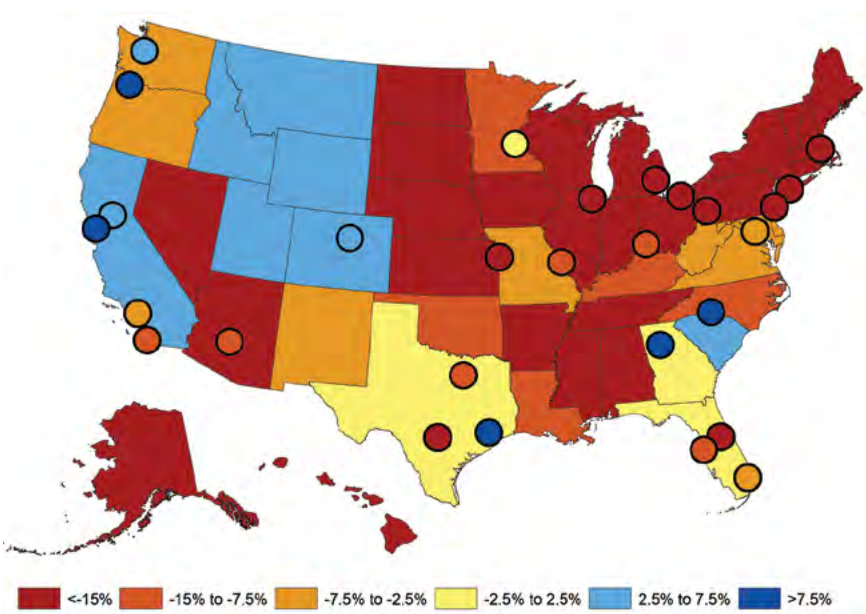
Why the contrast? As Grawe explains to Barshay in the article, "elite colleges are less affected by the birth dearth because they're a small, niche market of fewer than 200,000 students." He also cites the boom in the Asian-American population, which, he says, has a "high attachment to higher education, and elite higher education in particular." In addition to institution type, location will have some bearing on the impact of the declining college-age population. Citing Grawe's research, Barshay writes in the article, "the Northeast, where a disproportionate share of the nation's colleges and universities are located, is expected to be the hardest hit. By contrast, mountain states, where there are fewer students and fewer colleges … may see slight increases in student demand," as could institutions in the Southwest due to high rates of immigration over the past several years — although immigration has slowed considerably as of late.

The bottom line is that many of the nation's colleges and universities will face declining or stagnant student enrollment rates beginning in about six years, a reality which will require a thoughtful, strategic approach to ensure the viability and sustainability of those institutions.

**Forecasted growth and decline in college-going students, 2012-2029**




*Source: Nathan D Grawe, Carleton College.pdf*

And while human resources leaders may not always be invited to participate in high-level conversations among executive leadership, HR must ensure that it's proactively contributing to the conversation and taking steps now to be ready to act when change comes calling.

**Many higher ed institutions will face declining or stagnant student enrollment beginning in about six years, a reality which will require a thoughtful, strategic approach to ensure the viability and sustainability of those institutions.**

## A Sweeping Reorganization in Progress

University of Tulsa (TU) is taking action now to cement its place in the future of higher education by reimagining its purpose and reorganizing its structure. Among the changes: the phasing out of 84 low-demand degree programs; the grouping of the business, health and law colleges into one "professional college;" the creation of a university studies program in which all incoming freshman will start their academic journey; and a shift away from academic departments to interdisciplinary divisions. And it's happening quickly — over the next two years (although the university has committed to teaching out students currently enrolled in the affected degree programs).

TU's new model includes a STEM-heavy curriculum, a high-touch education providing both practical and professional training, and a focus on undergraduate studies. Explains TU Provost Janet Levit in communications to the TU community, "These changes are about reprioritizing and reallocating our resources to support those programs with the greatest demand, which will have the greatest opportunity for success as we navigate into uncharted higher ed terrain."

Change of this magnitude touches every campus constituent — students, staff, faculty, the surrounding community — and requires thoughtful consideration, innovative thinking and strategic collaboration to carry out. How will the reimagining of TU impact the university's workforce? University leadership has pledged to undertake this change without an immediate reduction in force and without eliminating tenured or tenure-track faculty appointments, instead offering an early retirement option for qualified faculty. In addition, all TU employees will receive a 2 percent pay increase.

The magnitude of change at TU will no doubt present its share of challenges, but it will also offer a multitude of learning opportunities for the university's human resources organization.

## Spreading Awareness and Anticipating Challenges

Indiana University (IU), which includes the Bloomington campus, IUPUI and seven other regional campuses, is another institution facing the likelihood of a decline in student enrollment in the coming years, as the number of high school graduates in the Midwest is projected to drop off significantly beginning in 2025. IU sees this enrollment cliff as a looming challenge.

John Whelan, the university's chief HR officer, has made it a priority to create awareness and share with other university leaders HR's perspective on how fewer students will impact IU's workforce. "There are certain people in the university who understand the implications of the enrollment decline based on their jobs, but the broader IU staff and faculty generally don't know

**HR leaders at institutions looking down the pike at an enrollment decline should be having regular conversations now with their senior leaders to understand the details and nuances around the issue.**

much about this," says Whelan. "My priority has been to bring up this topic in every HR meeting and forum at IU over the past year, and I'll continue to do so."

Additionally, Whelan says he has been encouraging his HR staff to engage the financial and enrollment leaders within their campuses, divisions and units to understand the impact of fewer students on their specific areas. "Some of our programs are already feeling the pressure, while others probably won't feel the pain for several years, if at all," he says. "Through these collaborative, campus-wide conversations, our HR professionals are getting a clearer understanding of how HR can be part of the solution."

Whelan suggests that HR leaders at institutions looking down the pike at an enrollment decline should be having regular conversations now with their senior leaders to understand the details and nuances around the issue. While the overall problem is easily explained, he says, each organizational unit will have different challenges that will require unique solutions — and understanding the financial and enrollment data will make this a more tangible project to focus on.

Because most higher education institutions rely on tuition dollars as their largest revenue source, a decline in enrollment has the potential to keep revenue flat or to even reduce it. On the flip side, salary and benefits costs make up the vast majority of expenses in most universities, and these need to grow each year in order to keep salaries competitive and to adjust for the increased costs in healthcare.

"If revenue stays flat or declines," Whelan says, "there will be a significant impact on institutions' abilities to maintain their workforces. Those colleges and universities that will be hardest hit by this enrollment cliff need to start planning now in order to reduce the likelihood of reductions in force in the future, or at least to ensure if layoffs are unavoidable, they're done in an equitable and non-discriminatory way." Whelan also points to the need for HR to focus its efforts on employee morale and engagement. "Staff and faculty who will be asked to do more with less can easily become discouraged and frustrated, and with a strong economy and low unemployment rates, these workers will have many options to find other employment," he says.

Whelan says in order to help ready their institutions for the challenges the next several years stand to bring, HR leaders need to be involved in discussions and planning around finances, data mining and data-driven decisions, change management and communication strategies. "In bringing our expertise to the table, we as HR leaders have an opportunity to be proactive instead of reactive — to show our value as a strategic partner and a contributor to our institutions' missions, values and goals."

## Best HR Practices

At a recent meeting of the CUPA-HR board of directors, the enrollment cliff was the main topic of discussion. These higher ed HR leaders from different institution types across the country served as a think tank of sorts, sharing their thoughts on what the higher ed landscape might look like in five to eight years, sharing their institutions' current and coming realities around enrollment and retention, and discussing what HR can and should be doing to help higher ed leaders and their institutions prepare for whatever the future may bring.

Some of the suggestions that came out of that discussion:

**Engage with campus leaders now,** as this will up the odds that HR is called upon as a partner when decisions are being made. Susan Norton, vice president for human resources at Augusta University in Georgia, shares that when she reached out to her recently hired vice president of enrollment and student affairs in preparation for the board discussion, the VP replied that she had never been asked about enrollment by an HR colleague and was excited about the opportunity to partner with HR. Says Norton, "This is an example of how we have an opportunity to engage with campus leaders; everyone is a recruiter. Every encounter we have with someone is an opportunity to be an ambassador for our institution."

**Bring data to the table.** HRIS at Clemson University has partnered with the budget office to create a data analytics dashboard. "Being able to provide data for deans, divisional leaders and vice presidents to help them make decisions is a value add for our customers," says Dr. Ale Kennedy, associate chief HR officer at Clemson. "There are a lot of decisions the university is making, and they want and need data to make those decisions. Because HR was proactive in bringing that data to the table, our university leaders are now relying more and more on us to provide those stats and numbers."

Marie Williams, associate vice chancellor for HR at North Carolina State University, adds that HR's mission shouldn't be to be at the table at all times, but instead "we should focus on bringing value and influence by being prepared to share with institutional leadership the data they need to make decisions."

**Collaborate.** Kennedy shared that at Clemson, HR strategic consultants (a new position) are working on workforce planning and human capital strategic initiatives across the university. Says Kennedy, "HR strategic consultants collaborate and work closely with all the HR services teams and centers of excellence across campus to put HR ahead of the necessary changes, so we can position our organization to be proactive."

**Understand the business of higher education.** Says Jay Stephens, vice president for human capital services at Kansas State University, "As HR leaders we have to understand enrollment, the tie to budgets and the strategic initiatives our campuses are undertaking to address those things. Without that demonstrated knowledge to our colleagues, namely our provosts and chief financial officers, we won't be pulled into the discussion and decision-making; instead they will bring us in on the back end, when the decisions have already been made. We have to be credible partners in understanding the business of higher education."

**Hone your consultative skills, communication and business acumen** — all important skills for HR professionals to have in order to contribute in a meaningful way to discussions and planning around how the institution will navigate challenges related to student enrollment and retention. Says John Martin, director of client services at Princeton University, "This seat at the table is something that must be earned — it's not necessarily guaranteed."

**Build resilient HR teams.** It is important to build resilient HR teams that can represent the mission and purpose of the various offices of the university. "HR teams should be empowered to say 'yes' and only get the chief HR officer involved when a 'no' is necessary, as this this will help in building collaborative relationships across the university," says Pierre Joanis, vice president for HR at Bucknell University.

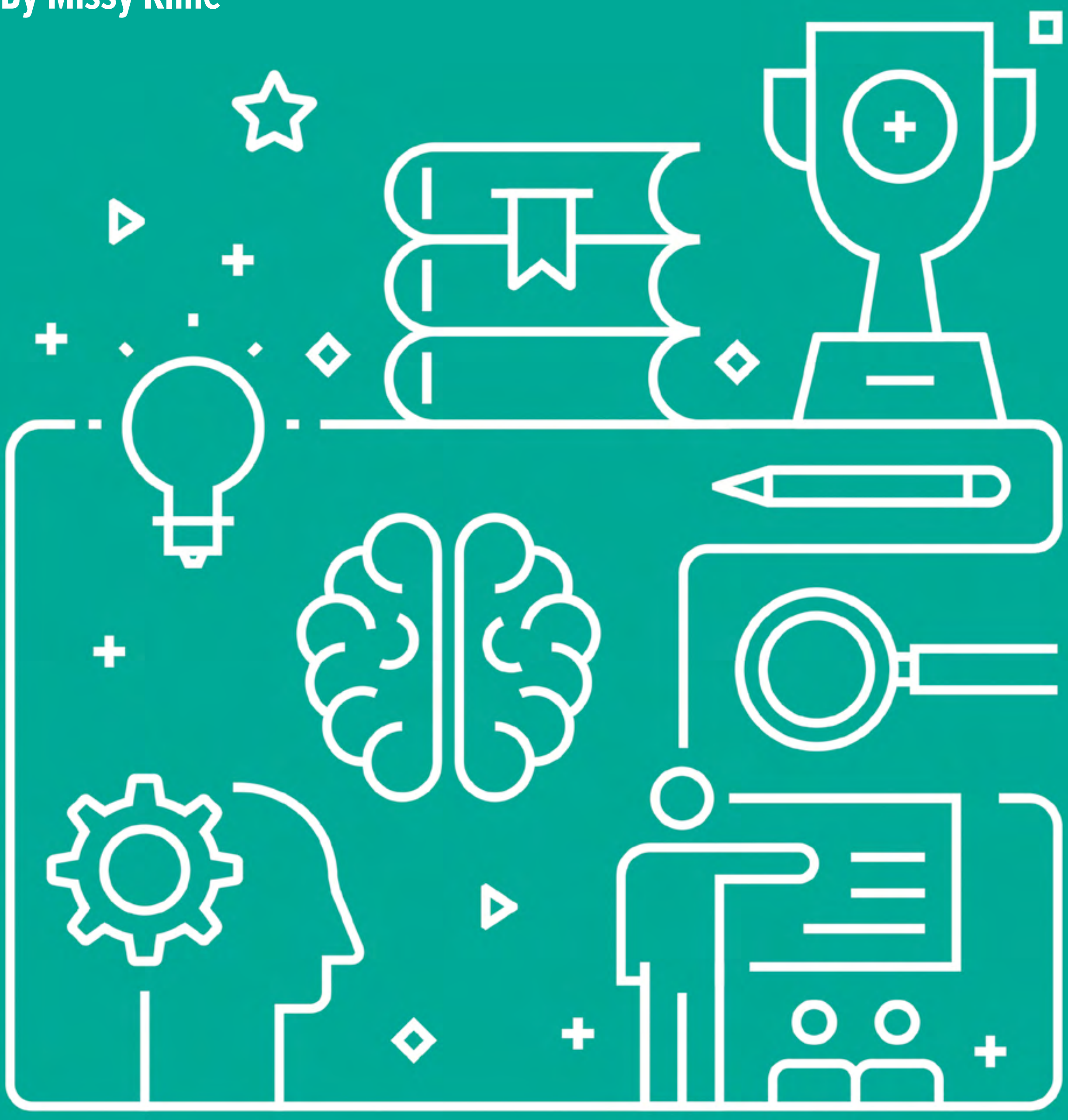
## Taking the Long View

Whether your institution expects the impact of the steep decline in high school graduates to be minimal or extensive, now is the time to spread awareness and position HR as an invaluable resource to other campus leaders.

***About the author:*** *Missy Kline is content manager for communications and marketing at CUPA-HR and managing editor of Higher Ed HR Magazine.*

# DRIVING FACULTY EXCELLENCE THROUGH LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

By Missy Kline



Student success depends in large part on the competency of faculty, and human resources at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) is taking a deliberate approach to helping its faculty build their skills and knowledge.

As a two-year technical college offering more than 200 career-focused degree, diploma, certificate and apprenticeship programs, NWTC largely recruits faculty from industry. While newly hired faculty members are subject matter experts in their respective fields, the majority have little to no teaching experience before coming to campus. Through education, application and coaching, the HR and learning organizations at NWTC are helping their faculty learn and develop the student-centered instructional practices needed to facilitate student success.

## Faculty Progression Structure

Up until six years ago, NWTC faculty received training and development through the college's Instructor Preparation Academy (IPA), which was run out of the HR division and led by faculty development consultants. In addition to formal training, new faculty met with faculty development consultants once a month for three years to provide opportunities for ongoing growth and development. The IPA was designed to transition new faculty from an industry career to an instructional career.

In 2013, HR and learning (curriculum development and instructional designers), working collaboratively with faculty, expanded the IPA to provide continuous training and development until instructors are fully transitioned and to assure continuous development thereafter. The model is known as the Faculty Progression Structure (FPS). Of the FPS, Lisa Maas, vice president for human resources at NWTC, says, "We wanted to build off the IPA because we knew that after that three-year period was over, there was still a need for learning. And we wanted to make sure there was consistency in the knowledge and expertise of all our faculty around subject matter expertise, instructional excellence and student success."

### *A Three-Tiered Learning and Development Model*

NWTC's Faculty Progression Structure model consists of three levels, providing at least three years (oftentimes more, as it is recommended that each faculty member spend three years at each level) of guided development. With a minimum requirement of 40 hours of professional development per year, all 275 benefits-eligible faculty members are immersed in learning throughout the program. Performance measures and are tied to the competencies at each level.

**Level I:** Building off the original Instructor Preparation Academy, Level I is designed to help new faculty assimilate to the college and to learn the ropes of teaching. Examples of Level I competencies include utilizing available technology for teaching and assessment; engaging in department and/or college-wide activities, committees and projects; being current in industry standards and maintaining required industry certifications if applicable; having an awareness of key student success metrics; and the ability to teach to different learning styles.

Required professional development topics for Level I instructors include teaching methods; assessment; diversity training; student success; data and evidence analysis; participating as a mentee; course design and evaluation best practices; culture training; and instruction in the college's key learning systems technologies. After the performance metrics for Level I have been met, instructors then move on to Level II. (Faculty are expected to progress to Level II by the start of their fourth year as an instructor).

**Level II:** Level II instructors are expected to be active in establishing business and industry relationships; develop and utilize successful student engagement strategies; assist in the development of part-time faculty; deliver instruction using evidence-based student success strategies; infuse current industry practices in instruction; and more.

Twenty of the required 40 hours of professional development for Level II instructors should be within their area of subject matter expertise because, as Maas says, "The further faculty get into teaching, the further away they become from their industry. However, in order to teach effectively, they need to stay up to speed on industry standards and best practices." Development focuses on cultivating reflective instructors who are able to analyze their current instructional practices and then enhance with researched best practices. NWTC faculty are expected to master the Level II competencies and progress to Level III by the start of their seventh year as an instructor.

**Level III:** Level III instructors are expected to engage in industry-specific activities outside of their teaching responsibilities; develop cutting-edge curricula; mentor and coach peers; contribute to course and program data interpretation to help ensure continuous improvement in course success, program persistence and completion rates; maintain an assessment plan (at both the course and program level) using varied strategies to measure student achievement of course competencies and program outcomes; and more. Development continues to emphasize reflective, high-impact instructional practices that promote student success.

## Individual Development Plan

To help them stay on track with their learning goals, all NWTC faculty are required to create an individual development plan (IDP) and share it with their supervisors biannually. Based on the performance expectations and measures identified for their current Faculty Progression Structure level, instructors identify goals they want to achieve; action items, professional development and/or resources needed to help them meet those goals; and a timeline with which to work. Goals are developed in three areas: subject matter expertise, instructional excellence and student success. Instructors also have the opportunity to create goals around their career aspirations.

In order to make the IDP more meaningful and personal, there is also a "reflection" piece. Faculty are asked to reflect on and answer in writing several questions, including:

- How are you learning about current trends in your industry and applying that skill/knowledge in your instruction?
- How will you use what you are learning in your role as an instructor? How will you refine or change based on success or lack of success of the interventions? What enhancements have you made as a result of learner feedback?
- How will you use what you are learning in your role as an instructor to improve your student outcomes?
- What were your contributions and initiatives to your team and how did you support your team?
- What are you most proud of in your teaching over the last two years?

Faculty are encouraged to review the goals identified in their IDP at the start of each spring semester and modify the document as needed.

## New Endeavors in Supporting Faculty

This past spring, HR and learning opened the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) to help further support faculty. The TLC is staffed by employees from HR (faculty development consultants), learning (instructional designers) and faculty members. Consultants and faculty collaborate together to provide a coaching experience which promotes life-long development, meeting the personalized needs of faculty. Instructors use the TLC for both planned and on-demand learning needs. The ability for faculty to drop in when problem-solving situations arise is viewed as a strength of the center.

## A Unique Partnership Between HR and Academia

Human resources driving faculty learning and development is not the norm at most higher ed institutions. The collaborative relationship between the academic side of the house and HR at NWTC was no doubt inspired by the implementation of an HR strategic business partner model, wherein HR partners are part of the leadership teams of the divisions they serve.

"Our HR partners are involved in budget conversations, strategic planning, training and development, and other high-level conversations in the divisions they serve," says Maas. "This 'seat at the table' has enabled HR to contribute in a strategic way to the college's number one goal – student success."

***About the author:*** *Missy Kline is content manager for communications and marketing at CUPA-HR and managing editor of Higher Ed HR Magazine.*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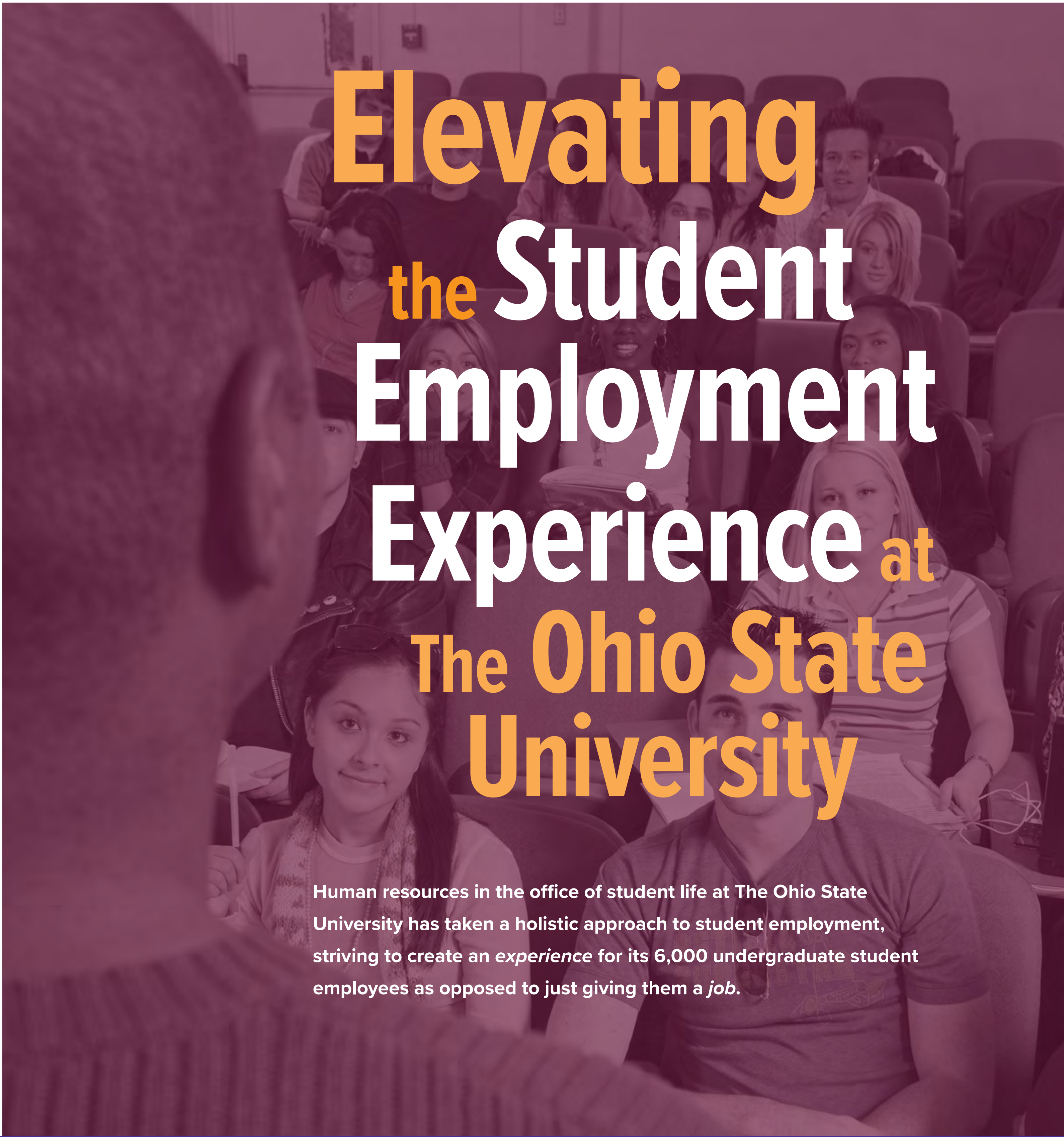

# Elevating the Student Employment Experience at The Ohio State University

**Human resources in the office of student life at The Ohio State University has taken a holistic approach to student employment, striving to create an *experience* for its 6,000 undergraduate student employees as opposed to just giving them a *job*.**

We talked to Andrea Gintert, senior director; Tessa Smith, learning and development consultant; and Sarah Bohman, manager of learning and development, all of The Ohio State University office of student life, to learn about the division's innovative approach to student employment.

### Q: What does student employment look like in the office of student life?

**Tessa Smith:** Our student employment program (Student Employment Experience, or SEE) is learning-centric. We don't want our students to just come "do a job," we want them to learn new skills and grow their competencies along the way. The SEE program is comprised of three main parts: the students' employment role, development opportunities and reflection. These components are geared toward learning competencies, and we offer feedback and support in each area. While the program is run out of HR, employee supervisors play a huge part in the student employee experience, as they are the ones on the front lines, as it were, working with them on a regular basis.

**Andrea Gintert:** We have been very intentional about creating well-defined position descriptions, designing a fair and consistent compensation structure, and ensuring that student employees have a meaningful job experience.

### Q: How do you get these supervisors invested in the development of student employees, especially given the high turnover rates in student employment in general?

**Andrea Gintert:** When we started this program, we found that our supervisors were hungry for an effective way to connect with their student employees and give them a good experience, so they appreciated the packaged way this program allows them to do so easily and consistently. The majority of our supervisors are excited to be contributing in a tangible way to student success.

### Q: How does HR help support these supervisors to ensure the goals of the student employment experience are being met?

**Tessa Smith:** We do regular trainings for supervisors of student employees around how to effectively supervise students and how to incorporate learning throughout a student's employment experience. We've also been intentional about helping our supervisors understand, so that they can then help their student employees understand, how students' work relates to their academics and career aspirations.

**Andrea Gintert:** When a student is in an internship, it's pretty clear how that work relates to academics and career aspirations … maybe not so much when a student is working in the campus bookstore or answering phones in a department office or working the cash register in the dining hall. There are certainly transferable, translatable skills in those instances as well (such as critical thinking and problem solving, information literacy, ethical and moral reasoning, global citizenship and civic engagement, interpersonal engagement, self-efficacy and self awareness) — it's just sometimes difficult for supervisors to identify them.

## What Are the Goals of the Student Employment Experience?

1. Lead student employees to **reflect** on what they are learning through their employment role.
2. Guide students to **connect** that learning from work to class and future careers.
3. **Support** supervisors of students to incorporate learning into all aspects of a student employee's experience (from hiring to exit).

## Preparing for Change

The office of student life employs more than half of The Ohio State University's 12,000 undergraduate student workers each year, and they're all hired through the division's HR organization. Before HR could implement its new student employment model, a lot of work had to be done on the front end. Here's how they ate the elephant:

1. **They reviewed all student life student employee jobs.** In order to get a better handle on what they were embarking upon, HR reviewed all the student employee jobs in the division.
2. **They created job descriptions.** HR, working with each department's managers, created intentional yet meaningful position descriptions/roles for most student employee jobs in student life. This was not an easy task, according to Andrea Gintert, senior director in the office of student life. "We have 2,600 student employees in dining, but they all have one of only 17 roles," she says. "We have this structure in several departments within student life. Yet, we also have some departments that have only two employees."
3. **They designed a compensation strategy**, aligned with federal work study parameters, in order to make distinctions among complex roles and experience.
4. **They didn't rush it.** The preparation and implementation of the new student employment model took three and a half years. "We really wanted to make sure every student life student employee receives an intentional job experience, so we took our time with this process to ensure we got it right," says Gintert.

## Q: One of the foundations of your division's student employment program is "reflection." What does this look like?

**Tessa Smith:** We see the reflection piece as the cornerstone of the program. We call it OSU GROW (adapted from the University of Iowa's model). For the GROW (guided reflection on work) piece, supervisors hold a 30-minute conversation once per semester with each student they supervise to help them make connections about what they're doing at work and their classroom experience and to talk about the connection between their work and their career goals. We provide supervisors with a simple, four-question facilitator's guide for these conversations.

## Q: What's next for the Student Employment Experience?

**Andrea Gintert:** We've already expanded the program to two units outside of student life — our alumni association and the college of education and human ecology (which is a great partnership because this college hosts the higher ed student affairs academic program). And just recently SEE was chosen as the student employment talent strategy for the entire university, so we're currently looking at how to expand the program to reach all 12,000 undergraduate student employees.

**Sarah Bohman:** We also recently revamped the student employment website (https://see.osu.edu). The site includes information about the program; resources and information for current student employees, potential student employees, supervisors of student employees, and parents; a listing of professional development opportunities and training workshops; and assessment reports demonstrating the impact of the program on student employees.

**BENEFITS TO LIFE**

**1.8x**

**SEE** students are 1.8 times more likely to report that they think about how their employment can benefit them in other areas of their life.

**CONNECTING WORK TO LIFE AS A STUDENT**

**2.5x**

**SEE** students are 2.5 times more likely to report that their supervisor helps them make connections between their work and life as a student.

**PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE**

**2.0x**

**SEE** students are 2.0 times more likely to report that their supervisor helps them consider how their role is preparing them for their future.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## September 2019

**September 17**
Webinar – "And HR Did Nothing!" – Navigating in a Gotcha Culture

**September 18-20**
Kentucky Chapter Conference – Lexington, Kentucky

**September 19-20**
InterMountain West Chapter Conference – Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

**September 20**
SoCal Chapter Conference – Irvine, California

**September 26**
Webinar – CUPA-HR Surveys: What's New for 2019-20

**September 26**
New York Metro Chapter Conference – New York, New York

**September 26-27**
Rio Grande Chapter Conference – El Paso, Texas

## October 2019

**October 1**
Indiana Chapter Legal Seminar – Indianapolis, Indiana

**October 1**
Webinar – Who? No Seriously, Who? Implementing Succession Planning in Higher Ed

**October 3**
Eastern Pennsylvania/Delaware Chapter Meeting – Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

**October 4**
Northern New England Chapter Conference – Lyndonville, Vermont

**October 4**
Maryland Chapter Meeting – Baltimore, Maryland

**October 8**
Virtual Workshop – Creating a Culture of Inclusion on Campus

**October 8-9**
West Virginia Chapter Conference – Roanoke, West Virginia

**October 10**
Webinar – Quarterly Washington Update

**October 15**
Webinar – Preparing for the Transition to a Shared Services Model

**October 17**
Webinar – Building Effective Collaborations to Confront Campus Climate Challenges: A Student Affairs Perspective

**October 20-22**
CUPA-HR Annual Conference and Expo – Denver, Colorado

**October 24**
Oklahoma Chapter Conference – Stillwater, Oklahoma

**October 30-31**
Kansas Chapter Conference – Wichita, Kansas

## November 2019

**November 1**
Alabama Chapter Meeting – Montgomery, Alabama

**November 4-6**
North Carolina Chapter Conference – Asheville, North Carolina

**November 8**
Oregon Chapter Conference – Salem, Oregon

**November 14-15**
Missouri Chapter Conference – Osage Beach, Missouri

**November 14-15**
Ohio Chapter Conference – Granville, Ohio

**November 15**
Louisiana Mississippi Gulf Coast Chapter Conference – Biloxi, Mississippi

**Visit www.cupahr.org/events/calendar for a full listing of conferences, webinars, virtual workshops and chapter meetings.**


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