The Future of Higher Education Work is Now!

Framing Where We Are Now, the Challenges Shaping the Workforce and Higher Ed, and Charting Our Path Forward

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ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC & LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES

Your hosts for this session

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Leader from the Field

Higher Ed, Like Most Sectors is Experiencing Great Resignation and Needs to Make Significant Changes Now

Situation

- Pre-Covid over 4M people worked in academe

- Significant layoffs/furloughs during Covid

- Changing requirements from employees

Complication

- Low unemployment rate in the US, high levels of burnout, and increasing resignations

- Lower pay than private industry

- More flexibility and attractive benefits in private industry

Resolution

- Get to know your people and use data to understand needs of the institution

- Consider models of fewer employees but with higher pay and benefits

- Increase flexible working arrangements and connection to mission, vision & values

Source: https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-congress-can-save-colleges/, by Paul Friga, PhD, *"Time For A Strategy Refresh for Your University"* – Trusteeship Magazine by Paul Friga, PhD; www.paulfriga.com

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- Recommended Next Steps

Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Institution's Mission

FILE - The Arch at the University of Georgia. *Joshua Jones/Athens Banner-Herald*

Recruitment, **Retention**, and **Approach** to work must be grounded in support of the institution's mission.

Recruitment, **Retention**, and **Approach** to work must be grounded in support of the institution's *priorities*.

Institution's Values

Recruitment, **Retention**, and **Approach** to work must be grounded in support of the institution's *values*.

Higher Education Challenges

- **Higher education institutions have not been evenly impacted** by COVID-19 and will not be evenly impacted in the future.

- **The 2025 Enrollment Clif**f did not go away.

- Budgets have already been impacted and more budget cuts will likely occur in FY 21-22 (and potentially beyond).

- **The number of international students has significantly decreased** this academic year. Will we return to pre-pandemic enrollment levels?

- **The race relations and equity and inclusion challenges** faced by our nation and our colleges and universities have not disappeared.

- **Student and employee mental health and well-being** have been significantly impacted by COVID-19 and race relations challenges during the past two years. We can anticipate this will continue.

- **Uncertainty will continue.**

Your Challenges

Think about any stats, events or other points that illustrate some top concerns for your member campuses or the campus leaders you represent and support [non-exhaustive examples below]

- [Example – 50% turnover rate in student services positions < 1 year]
- [Example – Specific budget cuts]
- [Example – Critical open positions]
- [Example – Visibility or introduction of DE&I initiatives]
- [Example – Students voicing safety / equity concerns – for selves and campus workers]
- [Example – Lower student enrollment]

Emerging Workforce Trends and Challenges

Employees largely prefer more flexible work environments. Employers who embrace this reality will have the upper hand in attracting and retaining critical talent.

How work is defined is changing, including how we use technology; how we define duties, responsibilities and working hours; and work performed by employees vs. outsourced to contractors.

Increased emphasis has been placed on employers to support the mental health and well-being of their employees.

Competition for Talent

74% of employees want to work **remote 2+ days a week**

Work from home has many benefits for employees – lack of commute, impact on finances, flexibility, etc.

Big tech and large companies are leading the way in work-from-home opportunities

"The return to work will be effective only when employees are on board. If they're not, companies should be prepared to lose talent."
-PwC

"Talented workers have always had more options than most and now organizations compete for that talent without the limitations of geographic boundaries." – The Conference Board

Why Are Employees Leaving?

54% didn't feel valued by their managers

52% didn't feel valued by their organizations

51% didn't feel a sense of belonging at work

90% who took new jobs in "new cities" during the last 6 months did not have to relocate

Employees are tired and need a renewed sense of purpose in their work

Source: https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/great-attrition-or-great-attraction-the-choice-is-yours

Higher Education Workforce Challenges

- Higher education suffers from negative perceptions that may influence the availability of future talent – especially diverse talent.
  - <25-year-olds do not regard the culture and compensation offered by higher ed as desirable
  - 70% of Black and 60% of LGBTQ+ Americans do not feel higher ed is a comfortable place to work

- High attrition, budget cuts, reduced staffing and increased risk of burnout will all compound to make retaining talent difficult.

- Leaders believe that the institution's mission "requires" everyone to be "on campus."

Your Workforce Challenges

Why Are Employees Leaving?

Think about specific current challenges for your institution and any that are being discussed or considered – non-exhaustive examples below]

- [Ex - High attrition rates in faculty or support staff positions]
- [Ex – Difficulty attracting or retaining talent for key positions]
- [Ex – Community voiced concern over hiring process/results not reflecting commitment to DEIB]
- [Ex – Lower fall enrollment of on-campus students than expected]
- [Ex – Budget cuts preventing typical annual raise or bonus process]
- [Ex – Employee mental health and well-being
- [Ex – Low employee morale]

How do your workforce challenges compare to overall higher education workforce challenges?

Specific recruitment challenges?

Specific retention challenges?

Areas where burnout might be the highest?

Similarities and differences from higher education overall?

Attrition to Attraction

Instead of being an organization that employees run from, we need to focus on how we are the organization that they run to! It's more than just pay!

Where are departures occurring?

What is the culture? What improves the culture? What creates a sense of belonging?

The best people will always have other opportunities. How do they know that their work matters and that they are valued as leaders and individuals?

Are employee benefits designed for 1980 or 2021?

What Can Managers Do to Get Them To Stay?

Employees with bad managers are more likely to leave.

- Many leaders will have to reframe how they lead.

- Teams are far more likely to feel burned out when their managers are.

- The manager skill most valued by employees is confidence.

- The manager skill most lacking is communication.

- Lead by example—prioritize self-care, schedule one-on-ones.

- Be clear that it's important to take time off to recharge (for you and your employees)

- Implement flexibility in where and when work is performed.

Emerging Workforce Trends and Challenges

Five strategies to implement now

- Re-recruit your team

- Reward them and express your gratitude

- Engage them

- Show gratitude

- Move from talk to action

- Give employees a sense of purpose and community

Change Recruitment Strategies—internal talent and nontraditional candidates

- Strengthen internal recruitment efforts

- Convince managers that they need to consider nontraditional candidates

- Challenge hiring managers who are looking for "purple unicorns."

- Consider candidates with "skills adjacent"

Key Considerations for the Future

- Childcare continues to be one of the top concerns for workers, even when remote (PwC)

- The next step in flexible work strategies will consider output vs. time spent working (Gartner)

- Work from home may increase equity concerns, especially for women and women of color (Gartner)

- IT infrastructure and virtual collaboration tools will be top new investments for businesses (PwC)

- 87% of executives expect to make changes to their real estate strategies in 2021 (PwC)

What are the most important areas of focus?

What Does All This Mean for Your Organization and Your Campus Leaders?

Based on your current and anticipated workforce challenges, what are the 2-3 most important areas of focus for you and your team during the next 12 months?
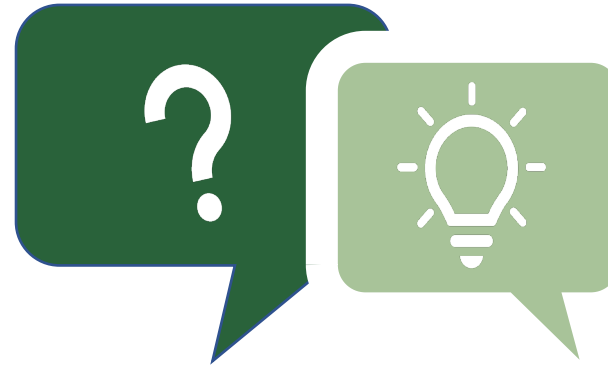
We Have to Create the New Normal!

- Acknowledge there is no "back to normal"

- Develop our "Go Forward" strategy

Value Proposition and Competitive Advantage

Where do these intersect?

How do you combine these to ensure that your institution remains in a favorable or superior position?

Value creates relevance, and relevance creates value!

- **What are you seeing on your campus and in conversations with other presidents?**

- **What is your reaction to these proposals previously discussed?**

- **What advice do you have for leaders moving forward?**