**Human Resources Workforce Management Internal Audit**

November 2024

# UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

**Submitted By:**

Eide Bailly LLP

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## Executive Summary

Eide Bailly LLP (referred to as "we," "our," or "us") was engaged by the University of Northern Colorado ("UNC," "University") to conduct a detailed internal audit of the Human Resources Department ("HR," "Central HR," "University HR") focusing on Workforce Management operations. This engagement was identified from the University-Wide Risk Assessment and Annual Audit Plan, which highlighted the important nature of HR operations in supporting University's overall effectiveness and reputation. This audit focused on mitigating risks, improving internal controls, and upholding data integrity, enhancing the operation efficiency of the University.

This assessment examined the efficiency and effectiveness of HR Workforce Management functions including recruitment, onboarding, employee performance evaluations, and training processes. This review ensured that these functions effectively align with the University's strategic goals. Additionally, we evaluated workforce planning, compliance with regulations, and the adequacy of internal controls within HR. The findings identified seven (7) areas for improvement within the current HR Workforce Management processes. Addressing these areas can significantly enhance the overall efficiency of operations.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the HR Assistant Vice President, Assistant Directors, and the entire HR team, along with HR Specialists from the University's colleges and departments. Their insights were instrumental in enhancing our understanding of the HR Workforce Management process, enabling us to provide impactful recommendations for performance improvements and control enhancements.

## Background Information

UNC's HR plays a critical role in workforce management, comprising eight (8) full-time positions, including an Assistant Vice President, two Assistant Directors, an HR Operations Manager, an HR Coordinator, an HR Specialist, and two Employment & Benefits Specialists. In addition, there are thirteen (13) Human Resources Specialists ("HRS") within the Administrative Service Centers ("ASCs") affiliated with various administrative departments and academic colleges, working collaboratively with essential campus departments.

The scope of HR encompasses a range of activities important to the University, including recruitment, onboarding, employee performance evaluations, compliance training, and employee development initiatives. HR management plays a vital part in attracting and retaining talent while aligning employee objectives with institutional goals, thereby fostering an environment conducive to professional development and institutional success.

However, HR has navigated significant challenges over the past year, staffing changes. A new Assistant Vice President joined the team in December 2023, but critical vacancy exists for the Organizational Design Specialist role, whose responsibilities include Training & Professional Development, see the organizational chart in **Figure 1** below. The delay in filling this position has created a gap in the HR department's capacity to effectively address these critical functions, aligning HR initiatives with UNC's strategic goals.

As of June 2024, UNC employs approximately 1,336 staff members, including 126 part-time employees. The implementation of a new HR software system, Cornerstone, in July 2022, has facilitated more efficient management of HR functions, enhancing employee self-service options, data management, performance evaluations, and training processes.

**Figure 1 – Human Resources Organizational Chart**
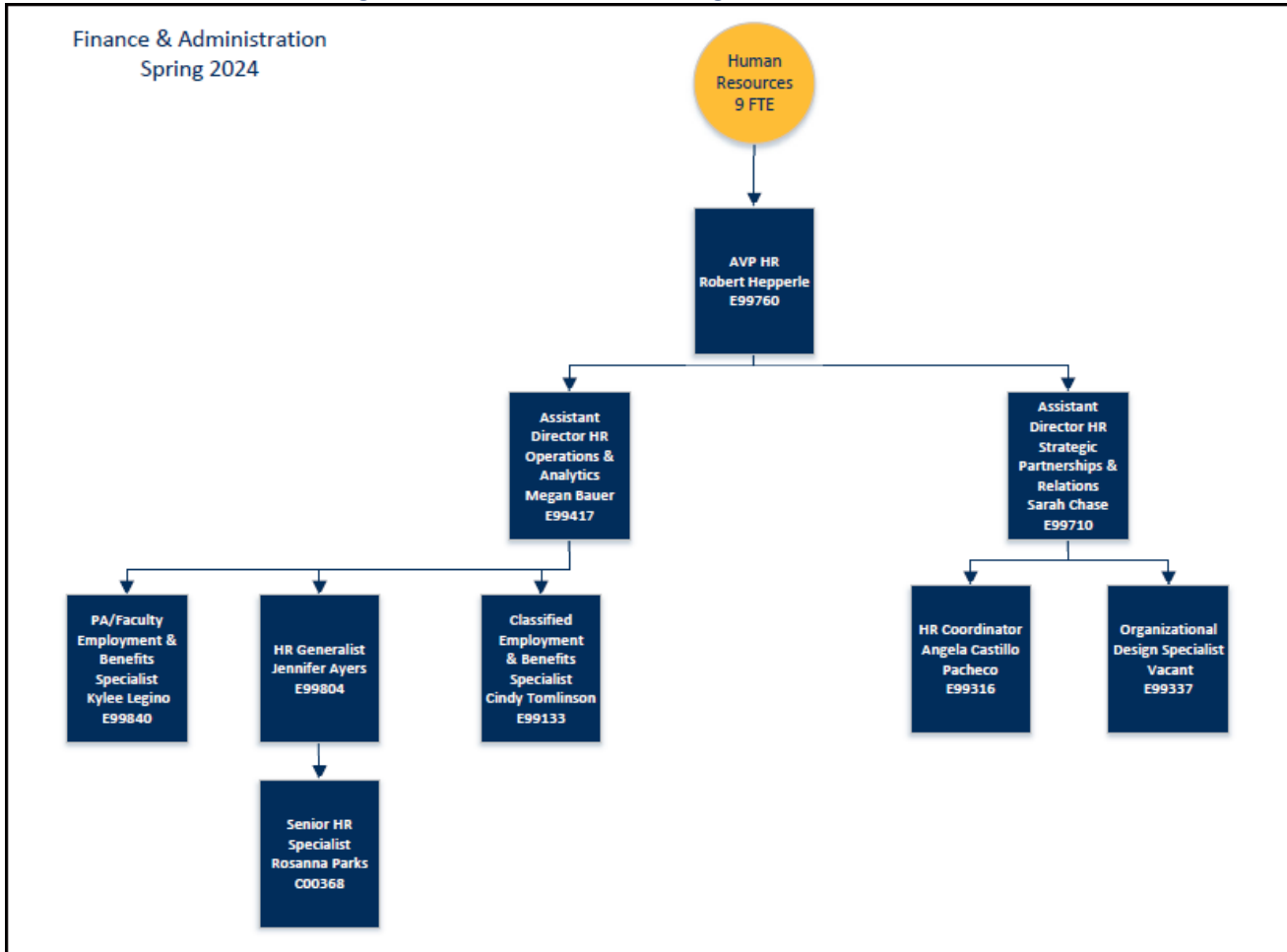


**Source:** Provided by HR Assistant Director

# Objective & Scope

The **Objective** of the Human Resource Workforce Management Internal Audit was to review the integration and effectiveness of the HR functions, including roles, procedures, and communication, are well-coordinated to support recruitment, onboarding, employee performance evaluations and training across the entire institution to ensure integration with organizational objectives. Additionally, to assess the University's workforce planning, compliance efforts, and internal control structure.

The **Scope** of the engagement encompassed the current operations as of audit date.

The engagement was performed under the Statements on Standards for Consulting Services issued by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA). We did not provide audit, review, compilation or financial statement preparation services to any historical or prospective financial information or provide attestation services under the AICPA Statements on Standards for Attestation Engagements and assume no responsibility for any such information.

## Methodology

To achieve the stated objectives, the audit procedures involved reviewing HR policies, conducting interviews with key stakeholders, analyzing recruitment processes, and assessing the overall effectiveness of HR functions across the University. These detailed activities are as follows:

- Reviewed relevant policies and procedures (P&Ps), manuals, workflows, and monitoring reports related to recruitment, onboarding, performance evaluations, and trainings.

- Conducted process walkthroughs and interviews with management and key personnel to assess the effectiveness of internal controls related to hiring, onboarding, training, performance evaluations, and terminations.

- Analyzed HR recruiting activities to determine alignment with established best practices and compliance with current rules and regulations, while also assessing their alignment with the University's strategic plan.

- Evaluated the effectiveness of communication and collaboration between HR and other departments and colleges during the recruitment process, including discussions with selected departments and ASCs to evaluate HR interactions, hand-off points, and overall efficiency.

- Evaluated the effectiveness of onboarding processes and ensured adherence to compliance hiring protocols.

- Assessed the employee performance evaluation processes to assess their effectiveness and consistency.

- Evaluated the procedures for identifying and tracking training needs., verifying whether training programs are comprehensive and aligned with employee development plans and organizational goals.

- Analyzed employee turnover metrics by department and position to understand turnover frequency.

- Assessed the design and operation effectiveness of controls within Human Resources to ensure compliance with relevant federal and state regulations, as well as internal policies and procedures.

- Determined whether the University is proactively addressing employee retention by conducting market analysis and implementing necessary adjustments to salaries and benefits.

## Results of HR Workforce Management Internal Audit

The audit identified seven (7) findings highlighting issues such as deficiencies in employee performance evaluations, the lack of formal service level agreements (SLAs), inadequate metrics reporting, and limited oversight of mandatory compliance training. In response, recommendations have been provided to improve HR operations and better align them with institutional goals. The HR department has been assigned the responsibility of addressing these findings, implementing the suggested changes, and establishing specific responsibilities and timelines to enhance HR effectiveness and ensure compliance. By addressing these findings, the University will be able to strengthen its HR operations, effectively manages and develop its workforce, and better prepare for future challenges while supporting University goals.

### FINDING #1 – Employee Performance Evaluations

The University has an established process for conducting employee performance evaluations, which is in place to enhance employee development and organizational outcomes. However, gaps were identified with the current process.

The HR department implemented performance evaluations for professional administrative staff in August 2022, with evaluations conducted annually in July and mid-year reviews from January to February. As of July 2024, the completion rate is approximately 45%.

Additionally, the HR Department does not have processes in place to measure the effectiveness of the performance evaluation process. Although the University has outlined professional development initiatives and performance evaluation measures (to be detailed with initiatives, goals, scorecards, etc.), there is no assessment tool to gauge the success or impact of these evaluations. This absence creates a substantial gap in understanding how effectively the evaluations contribute to employee development, engagement, and institutional goals.

Without measures to track the effectiveness of performance evaluations, the University risks missing opportunities for improvement in employee performance, skill gap identification, and alignment of employee development with broader organizational objectives. Additionally, this lack of tracking may result in inconsistent performance standards application, reduced accountability among managers, and potential employee dissatisfaction stemming from perceptions of the evaluations as ineffective or arbitrary. Furthermore, the University may struggle to leverage performance evaluation data for strategic workforce planning, talent management, or succession planning.

### Recommendation

To enhance the University employee performance evaluation process, it is recommended that the HR Department implement a comprehensive tracking and monitoring system. This system should establish clear deadlines for each phase of the evaluation process to promote timely completion. Automatic reminders should be utilized to notify both employees and managers of upcoming deadlines, while regular check-ins between HR and departmental management should be scheduled to monitor progress and address any challenges that may arise. Furthermore, developing a dashboard or tracking system to visualize completion rates can help identify areas needing attention. Additionally, a feedback loop should be established to gather insights from employees and managers regarding their experiences with the evaluation process.

This feedback process can be achieved through the implementation of employee feedback surveys to gauge perceptions of the evaluation process, focusing on factors such as fairness, relevance, and impact on professional growth. An analysis of performance trends over time should be conducted to explore correlations between evaluation outcomes and employee development, retention, or turnover. Furthermore, tracking the linkage between performance evaluations and subsequent professional development opportunities will help assess the evaluations' contribution to meaningful career advancement. It is also recommended for the HR Department to align the performance evaluation system with the University's institutional goals, ensuring that it effectively supports employee growth and engagement.

As an interim measure, the HR Department could perform pilot assessments or reviews to gather insights into the current evaluation process and identify areas for improvement while the comprehensive tracking and effectiveness measures are developed. By undertaking these actions, the University will not only address current gaps and risks but will also promote employee engagement, build a culture of continuous employee development, and enhance institutional success through alignment with University objectives.

### Management Response

A review of the performance management system and process is currently in place. A team, led by Brad Sharp in Information Management and Technology (IM&T) in partnership with Human Resources is currently reviewing the performance management module in Cornerstone. This review will take place over the 2024-2025 academic year. During the review, they will assess the module and make recommendations on changes to more fully utilize the tool. Initial reports from the group are positive and I expect we will have

improvements in the use of reporting capabilities and an improved user experience. In addition, they will review the actual evaluation and make recommendations on any changes. These changes will be implemented in for the 2025-2026 evaluation cycle. In addition to reviewing the performance management module, there is also a comprehensive review of the learning management system (LMS) in Cornerstone. Part of this review will be exploring linking the performance management and LMS modules to create and track professional development opportunities to the employee evaluation. Once the review is complete, Human Resources will create a system to measure the effectiveness of the evaluation process through data tracking and employee feedback surveys. Lastly, we are in the process of hiring a Training and Professional Development Specialist that will oversee the entire system and process to ensure not just execution and compliance but to also ensure alignment with the strategic plan, Rowing, Not Drifting 2030. Responsible HR parties include: Sarah Chase, Training and Professional Development Specialist, IM&T and other HR team members as needed.

**FINDING #2 – Service Level Agreements**

The HR Department currently operates without formal Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with the various University departments it supports in recruitment and hiring activities. This absence of defined agreements can lead to a lack of accountability throughout the hiring and onboarding processes.

To illustrate the impact of these undefined processes, a review of the University's open job postings as of May 2024 revealed that 59 out of 89 requisitions—approximately 66%—have remained open for more than 90 days. Among these, 46 were adjunct positions typically kept open for one year, which may justify their extended duration. However, this leaves 13 positions (about 15%) open beyond 90 days without valid reason. Additionally, procedural testing of new hires identified three positions that were filled after being open for longer than 90 days, suggesting a trend in delays and inefficiency. Approximately 23% of newly filled positions had remained open considerably longer than 90 days, raising concerns about the effectiveness of the current recruitment processes.

It is important to recognize that extended vacancy durations are a shared responsibility between the HR Department and hiring managers. Both parties must prioritize recruitment and ensure effective communication of job requirements. Delays may arise from prolonged decision-making, insufficient prioritization, or inadequate communication regarding expectations and timelines. Establishing SLAs will help define roles and responsibilities, set clear expectations, and foster collaboration, ultimately enhancing the overall hiring process and reducing the time positions remain unfilled.

Implementing SLAs is important for several reasons: they create clear expectations between HR, University departments, and hiring managers regarding the timeliness and quality of HR services. This framework helps mitigate misunderstandings and ensures alignment among stakeholders. By specifying response times for various recruitment requests, SLAs create accountability and transparency, thereby enhancing trust across departments.

Furthermore, SLAs facilitate the measurement of HR performance, ensuring that the department fulfills its commitments and aligns high-quality services with organizational needs. Implementing measurable SLAs could transform hiring practices, leading to a more agile HR function.

By establishing specific time limits for responding to requests, SLAs help HR identify opportunities for efficiency improvements and streamline processes. They allow urgent requests to be prioritized, while also addressing less critical needs effectively. Additionally, SLAs improve employee satisfaction by clarifying HR's capabilities and expected timelines for service delivery, enhancing the experience for hiring managers and prospective employees alike.

Without SLAs in place, there are no clear metrics for evaluating HR department performance, leading to significant variability in recruitment timelines across departments and individual recruiters. This inconsistency is concerning, especially given the substantial percentage of positions left unfilled for extended periods, which contributes to staff shortages and hinders the University's operational effectiveness. Establishing SLAs is an essential next step to promote accountability and streamline HR processes.

### Recommendation

We recommend that the HR Department establish clear timelines for each stage of the recruitment process, including job postings, candidate screening, interviews, and offer processing. These SLAs should clearly define the responsibilities of HR, hiring managers, and departments, clearly outlining the handoff points and timeframes for key steps in the process such as recruitment timelines.

Additionally, by leveraging metrics reporting from Cornerstone, HR can identify potential bottlenecks or areas requiring additional resources, ensuring a more efficient and effective recruitment process. To maintain compliance with SLAs, HR should implement a monitoring system to track adherence and report on recruitment performance metrics. By instituting SLAs, HR will create a structured, transparent, and accountable recruitment process that aligns with institutional goals while enhancing overall efficiency in workforce management.

### Management Response

We would agree that the implementation of formal Service Level Agreements (SLAs) will be beneficial to the various departments and will offer clarity to the hiring process. The hiring process is complex and can vary depending on the type of position. And while there are specific timelines for portions of the process, UNC does allow the hiring managers to hire at a pace that suits their needs. Establishing roles and assigning responsibilities in the hiring process will improve awareness of the process. In addition to assigning the roles and responsibilities, formalizing timelines and expectations will further enhance the process. Human Resources will do an analysis of our current hiring process, timelines, and commitments. Following that analysis, we will publish a guide outlining the process, roles, responsibilities and expected timelines for each stage of the process. Since all members of the HR team are involved in some part of the process, all members of the team will be responsible. This will take place over the next six (6) to twelve (12) months.

## FINDING #3 – Metrics Reporting

The University utilizes Banner for its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. In July 2022, UNC implemented the Cornerstone software, for Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) functions, including as recruitment, onboarding, employee performance evaluations, and reporting. However, the University is not fully utilizing the advanced reporting capabilities of Cornerstone to track key areas such as recruiting metrics, applicant status, and employee performance evaluations. The failure to track and utilize these performance metrics and workforce analytics significantly limits HR's ability for data-driven decision-making.

Without comprehensive metrics and reporting, HR leadership lacks critical insights for informed decision-making regarding workforce planning, recruitment, and retention strategies. This situation can hinder HR's ability to meet organizational demands, potentially leading to resource constraints, missed opportunities, and decreased organizational agility. Additionally, the HR department does not currently review its employee turnover metrics report to aid in decision-making such as forecasting recruiting needs, trend analysis, and evaluating market dynamics. Since the data sources and job classifications in this report changed in 2021, the turnover report has remained unexamined and outdated, resulting in inconsistencies and a lack of actionable insights regarding employee turnover trends.

The absence of consistent and accurate turnover data prevents the HR department from identifying critical patterns, such as high turnover rates in specific departments or job roles. Consequently, the University is not

positioned to develop targeted strategies aimed at reducing turnover, improving employee satisfaction, and retaining key talent. Regularly reviewing and updating the turnover report would provide valuable insights to the HR department, enhancing workforce planning and retention efforts.

### Recommendation

To improve HR processes, we recommend that the HR department identify key metrics to be tracked on an ongoing basis, collaborating with the departments it supports to determine specific metrics such as employee turnover rate, training completion rates, and employee engagement scores. HR should fully utilize the existing Cornerstone applicant tracking and recruitment data. Additionally, HR should utilize reporting from Banner for employee turnover data, ensuring that they are updated with accurate and consistent data from 2021 onward to reflect the current workforce structure.

A formal process should be established for regularly reviewing and analyzing employee turnover data, thereby ensuring the availability of accurate and actionable insights. This will enable the University to improve its retention strategies and align turnover metrics with broader institutional goals. Implementing a clear review process will help maintain the integrity and usefulness of the turnover data.

### Management Response

UNC current publishes HR data on the HR website including staff counts and some aggregate salary information based on IPEDS categories. This data set is prepared by the Business Intelligence and Data Engineering (BIDE) team following the November 1 data reporting period. HR last published the Workforce Report in FY21. Our goal is to expand the reporting capabilities of the HR department to provide more data and metrics and potentially real-time data. A modernization of the current HR system (Banner) is underway and increased reporting capabilities is an expected outcome of the project. HR aims to capitalize on the new reporting capabilities to hopefully create real-time reporting dashboards. At a minimum, we aim to establish periodic (quarterly, monthly, annual) reporting of key HR metrics. HR had previously planned to republish the WorkForce Report for FY25. This area will be completed by Robert Hepperle and Megan Bauer in collaboration with the BIDE team.

### FINDING #4 – Mandatory Compliance Trainings

The University requires new hires to complete four (4) compliance training programs: Workplace Harassment, Implicit Bias, Cyber Security, and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Additionally, a fifth training on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is required for specific employees who handle protected health information as part of their job responsibilities. Each training must be completed at the time of hire and annually thereafter. However, the HR department lacks a formal process to manage and monitor the completion of these mandatory trainings.

Since the vacancy of the Training & Professional Development Specialist role in the third quarter of 2023, there has been no designated individual or team responsible for overseeing training and development or ensuring compliance with mandatory training requirements. In August 2024, the audit identified 43 new hires in the previous 30 days as of October 2024, none of the eight (8) employees we selected for review had completed all of the required trainings.

The lack of oversight of the completion status of these trainings poses several risks to the University. First, it exposes the institution to potential non-compliance with legal and regulatory standards, which can result in serious consequences. Additionally, there is an increased liability concerning workplace harassment and data breaches, particularly if incidents arise involving untrained employees. Furthermore, a failure to provide and track necessary training leaves employees inadequately prepared regarding critical University policies and procedures. This situation can lead to reputational damage and financial penalties associated with non-compliance or related incidents resulting from insufficiently trained staff.

The insufficient oversight and tracking of compliance training not only exposes the University to multiple risks, including potential violations of legal, safety, and regulatory standards, but also deprives employees of essential professional development opportunities. This can negatively impact job satisfaction, retention, and overall workforce effectiveness. Implementing a structured process for tracking training completion is crucial to mitigating these risks and fostering both compliance and employee growth.

### Recommendation

To mitigate these risks, the University along with the HR department should implement a robust tracking system to monitor the completion of required compliance training. This system should include automated reminders for employees as they approach their 90-day deadline, as well as regular audits or reviews of training documentation to ensure compliance. Additionally, HR should develop a centralized repository for training records that is accessible for review by relevant stakeholders.

Furthermore, the University and the HR Department should consider enhancing the onboarding process to ensure that new hires are aware of the training obligations from day one, including a checklist or orientation session that highlights required trainings, and a sign-off requirement to confirm the completion of all necessary training. Establishing a feedback mechanism for new hires regarding the training experience can help improve the program over time.

Additionally, while the Training & Professional Development Specialist position remains vacant, the HR department should implement temporary processes to ensure that all mandatory trainings, such as workplace safety, anti-harassment, cybersecurity, and compliance, are completed in a timely manner. Given the critical nature of these trainings, interim measures are crucial to mitigate risk and maintain compliance with University policies and legal regulations. HR should also evaluate options for delivering these trainings in online formats, which can facilitate tracking completion status and automate notifications, such as email, to remind employees of outstanding training requirements.

By addressing these gaps, the University can ensure that all employees, including new hires, are adequately trained and compliant, thereby reducing potential liabilities while fostering a safe and inclusive work environment.

### Management Response

We are in the final stages of finalizing the hiring of a new Training and Professional Development Specialist. This position will be responsible for the maintenance of the Learning Management System (LMS) within Cornerstone. This is the system used to host and track compliance trainings. Since the position has been vacant, we have been unable to accurately track and report on mandatory compliance training sessions and was a known gap for us. This position will also be responsible for partnering with various departments across campus to develop and execute trainings for deployment and tracking from the system. As mentioned earlier (see Finding #1 Response), the LMS is part of a larger review of several modules in the Cornerstone system. This review will allow us to better take advantage of system capabilities including the reporting capabilities. The Training and Professional Development Specialist will hold primary responsibility for this area with oversight from Sarah Chase and Robert Hepperle.

In the absence of a team member in the Training and Professional Development Specialist position, the Human Resources team has setup and rolled out the mandatory trainings for the current fiscal year. Employees are currently in the process of completing the trainings with completion expected December 31.

### FINDING #5 – Policies & Procedures

The University's HR department has established several policies and procedures (P&Ps) related to hiring and recruiting, including but are not limited to Advertising Job Openings, Approving Requisitions, Classified

Performance Management, Cornerstone Hiring Guide, Creating a Job Requisition, Employment Verification, HireRight Background Check Process. During the audit we were provided 22 key P&Ps yet noted that there is no formalized process for regularly reviewing, updating, or storing these documents. Currently, P&Ps are not centralized in a repository, and the documents lack specified effective and last revision dates, making it difficult to ascertain their currency and applicability.

The absence of a formal review process and an adequate tracking system and storage system for P&Ps can lead to several risks for the HR Department. Without clear and up-to-date policies, different departments or personnel may apply rules inconsistently, resulting in confusion, inefficiencies, and employee dissatisfaction. Furthermore, the lack of version control complicates the monitoring of policy updates, reducing accountability within HR. lastly, outdated, or incorrect policies may cause non-compliance with federal, state, or University regulations, exposing the University to potential legal risks and penalties.

### Recommendation

We recommend that the HR department develop a formalized process for the storage, review, and tracking of policies and procedures. This should include implementing a standardized timeline for periodic reviews of all HR P&Ps, as well as establishing a centralized repository that securely stores all policies while allowing for easy access by relevant staff. The repository should incorporate version control features for tracking changes and maintaining historical documentation of policy revisions. By organizing and centralizing P&Ps, the HR department can improve compliance, minimize legal exposure risks, and ensure consistent application across the University. Additionally, leadership should allocate resources to develop or acquire the necessary tools and training to effectively management HR policies moving forward.

### Management Response

We recognize the lack of formal creation, review, storage and tracking system of HR policies and procedures (P&P) is a gap and area of improvement. There are many files stored in a variety of places including OneDrive, SharePoint sites and the HR website. The University would benefit from a centralized storage system for internal and external stakeholders. The current modernization of the Banner system in combination with a new University website design will allow for more capabilities than currently exist including online storage and access with security permissions as well as storage on the inter and intranet. In addition to a centralized storage system, HR will develop a systemic process for the creation and periodic review of all HR policies. Megan Bauer and Robert Hepperle will maintain primary responsibility for the P&P over the next twelve (12) months as the University implements the new website and modernization project.

## FINDING #6 – Workforce Planning & Recruitment Strategy

The University's HR function encompasses recruiting, onboarding, training, and performance evaluations through a centralized and dedicated approach. However, the University currently lacks a comprehensive and forward-looking document that outlines the human resource management strategy known as a workforce strategic plan, which serves as a roadmap for human resource management. Such as plan is important for aligning the University's human resource policies and practices with the University's overall operational strategy and long-term goals.

A well-structured workforce strategic plan should analyze the University's existing workforce and identify its future workforce needs, highlighting any gaps that need addressing. The plan should also outline the skills and competencies required for various roles along with strategies for obtaining, developing, and retaining these skills. The scope of the plan should cover critical areas such as recruitment and selection, onboarding, training and development, performance management, career planning, succession planning, and employee retention.

The objective behind implementing a workforce strategic plan is to ensure that the University has the right personnel occupying the right positions, equipped with the necessary skills and abilities, at the right time to

successfully achieve its mission and objectives. By creating a comprehensive and coordinated approach to workforce management, the University can enhance its competitiveness in attracting and retaining top talent, effectively preparing for future staffing challenges.

In addition to developing a workforce strategic plan, effective succession planning is essential for mitigating workforce shortfalls. Proactive forecasting of attrition and vacancies can help the University adapt to labor market dynamics and enhance the University's ability to analyze prior workforce changes and plan for future changes.

### Recommendation

We recommend that the HR department develop and implement a comprehensive workforce planning and recruitment strategy that involves participation from all departments during strategic planning sessions. This initiative should adhere to standardized procedures for workforce management to ensure consistency and compliance throughout the University. To facilitate this process, regular training sessions should be provided for department heads, ensuring they are aligned with the new centralized strategy.

The proposed strategy should encompass several key elements: a clear framework for workforce planning that aligns with the University's institutional objectives, standardized recruitment processes across all departments, and mechanisms for regular workforce analytics and forecasting to proactively identify staffing needs. Additionally, effective coordination between HR and department leaders is essential to ensure alignment with University goals and facilitate efficient resource allocation.

Furthermore, the University should establish a robust succession planning strategy that includes proactive forecasting to address potential workforce shortages. This strategy should involve regular analysis to identify retirement trends and predict future vacancies, utilizing data analytics to forecast attrition rates and plan for workforce needs effectively. A talent pipeline needs to be developed to recognize potential retirements and future vacancies, supplemented by a structured knowledge transfer process that ensures critical information and expertise are retained within the University. Finally, continuous monitoring of the succession planning strategy should be instituted to allow for regular reviews and adjustments based on evolving workforce dynamics and organizational requirements.

### Management Response

Workforce planning currently takes place within the individual departments. Human Resources should take a more active role in aiding the departments in workforce planning by working with department leadership to identify needs and align a recruitment strategy to meet those needs. With HR taking a more active role in the individual planning of each department, it will allow for better alignment across divisions and better allow HR to anticipate and understand the needs of the departments. This will ultimately allow HR to better support the departments through the recruiting and hiring process. AVP of HR, Robert Hepperle, will take primary responsibility for workforce planning initiatives.

## FINDING #7 – HR Strategic Initiatives Aligned with University Goals

The University has a Strategic Plan, titled "Rowing Not Drifting 2030", which is effective July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2024. This plan encompasses five vision elements: Student First, Empower Inclusivity, Enhance & Invest, Innovate & Create, and Connect & Celebrate. Within Phase II of the plan, a key action is outlined to continue the development and implementation of faculty and staff recruitment, engagement, and retention plans. This includes improving the candidate recruiting and onboarding experience, as well as reviewing administrative barriers in the search process.

Despite the clear ambitions outlined in the Strategic Plan, the University's HR department currently lacks a formal system or process to track and monitor progress in achieving the strategic vision and its associated key

actions and tactics. The department's focus on day-to-day operational demands has limited its capacity to engage in long-term strategic planning. It is essential for departmental strategic initiatives to drive long-term organizational success and align closely with institutional objectives. Tracking progress against University-wide initiatives is important for ensuring accountability, measuring effectiveness, and making necessary adjustments over time. Strategic alignment between the HR department and University leadership is critical for creating a cohesive, forward-thinking organization.

The absence of strategic HR initiatives and the failure to track them formally present several risks, including missed opportunities for optimizing the workforce, lack of alignment with broader University goals, reduced accountability within the HR department, and identifying missed opportunities for improvement.

### Recommendation

To address these concerns, we recommend that the HR department prioritize the formalization of its strategic planning and tracking processes. This can be achieved by establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure progress on strategic initiatives and ensuring alignment with broader institutional objectives. Additionally, specific individuals should be assigned ownership of each initiative to oversee and report on its progress. Finally, the HR department should leverage tools such as Cornerstone or other similar software to effectively track the status of initiatives, key milestones, and their alignment with University-wide strategic goals. By implementing these recommendations, the University can better navigate its strategic initiatives and enhance overall organizational effectiveness.

### Management Response

In the past, the HR team worked together to review the university strategic plan and identify the key actions that relate to Human Resources. They then identified those responsible for ensuring the completion of those key actions. This has not been completed with the current phase of the Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 Strategic Plan. In January 2025, the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources will lead the team through latest phase of the strategic plan to identify the key elements relevant to HR, as well as establishing metrics to measure the progress towards the elements. While all individuals on the team will have a role, the AVP of HR will initiate and track progress towards completion.