



Happy Campus

Private Liberal Arts University

From ‘Scape Goat’ to Strategic Partner: Revitalizing HR & Payroll at a Private University

Following a period marked by substantial obstacles and transitions, the Human Resources (HR) & Payroll Department at a prominent private university found itself struggling with decentralized and inefficient processes, incomplete employee records, a patchwork for HR & Payroll-related systems, and an absence of strategic leadership. A number of the difficulties they encountered stemmed from modifications to systems and multiple attempts at outsourcing—initiatives that been designed to simplify processes but ultimately led to operational inefficiencies and adversely affected the employee experience.

This downward spiral prompted the university’s leadership to partner with CampusWorks to provide the strategic leadership and expertise to guide HR & Payroll back to stability and effectiveness.

Reimagining the Future of HR & Payroll

CampusWorks invited key university stakeholders to participate in a Process Reimagine & Redesign (PRR) of HR & Payroll. The goal of this initiative was to co-create a shared vision of the ideal employee experience and align the university’s processes to support that vision.

CHALLENGE

When a prominent private university found itself without a Chief Human Resources Officer and unsustainable HR processes and systems, its leadership turned to CampusWorks for strategic guidance.

CAMPUSWORKS PARTNERSHIP

- ▶ HR Process Reimagine & Redesign
- ▶ Interim CHRO
- ▶ HR Managed Services

RESULTS

- ▶ Stabilized HR operations and provided leadership to address critical challenges and rebuild the organization.
- ▶ Discussion about returning to a single system of record to centralize employee data.
- ▶ Addressed payroll issues and executed wage increases for faculty and adjuncts with no errors.

KEY CHALLENGES UNCOVERED BY THE PRR:

- ▶ **FAILED OUTSOURCING ATTEMPTS:** The university had recently outsourced its HR function to a firm that lacked expertise in handling the specific needs of higher education, causing policy neglect and decentralized hiring.
- ▶ **INSTABILITY IN HR LEADERSHIP:** The cycle of outsourcing and insourcing led to instability at the leadership level in HR, which led to a critical gap in strategic HR management and operational effectiveness.
- ▶ **SYSTEM DISINTEGRATION:** The use of multiple, unintegrated systems for HR and payroll management led to errors, inefficiencies, and a failure to leverage technology effectively for administrative tasks.
- ▶ **POLICY AND PROCESS GAPS:** Lapses in HR policies and the absence of centralized hiring practices, combined with systemic inefficiencies, posed formidable challenges in administration and compliance.

Rebuilding HR & Payroll from the Ground Up

Since CampusWorks had demonstrated success in providing IT managed services for the university and possessed a strong reputation in strategic interim leadership and managed services in higher education, the university's leadership expanded the partnership to include HR managed services.

HR Managed Services & Interim HR Leadership

An HR expert from CampusWorks was appointed as the university's interim chief human resources officer (CHRO) to begin rebuilding the department and guide the transition to managed services, which included onboarding the university's HR staff.

Upon arrival, CampusWorks' interim CHRO prioritized building relationships, understanding organizational needs, and charting a clear transition plan aimed at rectifying operational inadequacies.

Immediate priorities included:

- ▶ **Integrating Enterprise Systems:** CampusWorks' interim CHRO underscored the importance of integrating HR and payroll systems and recommended migrating to the ERP system as the primary system of record to enhance data accuracy and operational efficiency.
- ▶ **Revamping Policies and Procedures:** A holistic approach to redefine HR policies, strategies, and procedures was adopted to ensure the department evolved into a strategic organizational partner.
- ▶ **Enhancing the Employee Experience:** An emphasis was placed on improving employee experiences and the customer service aspect of HR to foster an environment of support and efficiency.
- ▶ **Strategic Student Hiring Practices:** The implementation of new student employment rules and strategic student hiring practices required a focus on successful onboarding and payroll processing.

Repositioning HR as a Strategic Partner

In just four months, the CampusWorks team has made tangible improvements while keeping an eye on persistent issues. As a result, the university is already starting to see real progress on the path to becoming a strategic partner:

- ▶ **Successful Onboarding and Payroll Management:** Even amidst strategic shifts, the onboarding of new leadership and managing payroll complexities, such as increased wages for faculty and adjuncts, were executed seamlessly.
- ▶ **Stabilized Operations:** With an interim expert leader, the team was empowered to focus on major areas of HR improvement, including optimizing the ERP system and its associated databases, to ensure that the transformations are sustainable and supportive of the university's future endeavors.
- ▶ **Permanent leadership:** A permanent CHRO has been hired to continue leading HR & Payroll's transformation.

“Adept leadership, combined with strategic outsourcing, can pave the way for organizational stability and transformation in higher education institutions amidst complexities and challenges.”

Liz Murphy
CEO & Chief Evangelist, CampusWorks