

# The Role of the Human Resource Office in the Collegiate Environment: Lessons from the USA and the Conference

## Identifying the Components of Being a Strategic Partner

### Handout Reference

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## **The 26 Independent Variables**

1. Human resource staff regularly participates in strategy setting meetings with the chief executive officer (CEO).
2. Human resource staff regularly attends staff meetings of the CEO.
3. Human resource staff participates in employment searches for executive officers including the CEO, the chief academic officer, vice presidents, and deans.
4. The CHRO believes the office is adequately staffed (staff, people, FTE).
5. The CHRO believes the office is adequately funded (budget, operating dollars, discretionary dollars).
6. The CHRO believes the office is adequately equipped (office, space, technology).
7. The college or university has a mature (greater than three years old) long-range or strategic plan.
8. The human resource office has a mature (greater than three years old) long-range or strategic plan.
9. The human resource strategic plan is aligned with the college or university's strategic plan.
10. The human resource office is central in the university's performance management system.
11. The human resource office is effective at introducing and managing change (especially change relative to human resource issues such as benefits plan design).
12. The human resource office has an established procedure or process for regular self-evaluation or measuring effectiveness.
13. The human resource operational plan is measured annually for outcomes at the CEO level.
14. The CHRO is a key participant in strategic planning processes and determination of annual action agendas for the institution.
15. The CHRO regularly attends periodic policy-setting meetings that involve the CEO.
16. The CHRO establishes the compensation philosophy and recommends the annual salary budget.
17. The CHRO establishes the benefits plan, design, and administration philosophy and recommends periodic modifications to executive officers.
18. The CHRO is the responsible official for all human resource related policies for the institution.
19. The CHRO is involved in assessing the effectiveness of executive leaders and/or in strategies/processes to improve leadership effectiveness.
- 20, 21, 22. The CHRO is the final authority for adjudication of: grievances, sexual harassment, and claims of discrimination.

23, 24. When significant changes in the institution are required which involve the workforce, the CHRO is expected to advocate, without regard for the required outcomes, for faculty needs and for staff needs.

25. When significant changes in the institution are required which involve the workforce, the CHRO is expected to provide strategies that meet business objectives while balancing workforce needs.

26. The CHRO has responsibility for policies affecting faculty.

In addition to the above noted quantitative questions, each CEO and CHRO was asked one qualitative question: “Do you consider your human resource office as a strategic partner in the management of the college or university? Yes/No; please explain.”

# Institutional Participation in the National Survey of Higher Education Institutions

## Total Number of Institutions in the United States

	Research	Doctoral	Master's	Baccalaureate	Total
Public	82	66	273	87	508
Private	<u>40</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>249</u>	<u>537</u>	<u>869</u>
Totals	122	109	522	624	1377
% of Total U.S.					
institutions		8.9%	7.9%	37.9%	45.3%

## Total Number of Institutions Requested to Participate in the National Survey

Public	59	48	98	62	267
Private	<u>29</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>193</u>	<u>343</u>
Totals	88	79	188	255	610
% of Total U.S.					
institutions		6.4%	5.7%	13.7%	18.5%

## Total Number of Institutions Participating in the National Survey

Public (% of those requested)

40 (67.8%)	32 (66.7%)	65 (66.3%)	37 (59.5%)	174
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Private (% of those requested)

<u>18</u> (62.1%)	<u>20</u> (64.5%)	<u>45</u> (50.0%)	<u>101</u> (52.3%)	<u>184</u>
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Totals (% of those requested):

58 (65.9%)	52 (65.8%)	110 (58.5%)	138 (54.1%)	358
			(58.7%)	

Percentage of total # of institutions surveyed:

16.2%	14.6%	30.7%	38.5%	100.0%
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## Hypotheses

- Ho1:** There is no relationship between the title of the chief human resource officer and their subsequent role of strategic partner.
- Ho2:** There is no significant difference between those chief human resource officers who have, and those who do not have, regular contact with the president of the institution and their role of being a strategic partner.
- Ho3:** There is no relationship between the number of human resource staff members and the ultimate role of human resources being a strategic partner.
- Ho4:** There is no significant difference between the funding level of the human resource office, as perceived by the CHRO, and the perception by the CEO of the strategic partner role of the CHRO.
- Ho5:** There is no significant difference in the strategic partner role of the human resource office operating at a university with a strategic or long-range plan, and the office operating at a university without a strategic or long-range plan.
- Ho6:** There is no significant difference between the human resource office that has a strategic plan, and the human resource office that does not have a strategic plan, and their role as a strategic partner.
- Ho7:** There is no significant difference in the strategic partner role of the human resource office that has a strategic or long-range plan aligned with the strategic plan of the CEO, and the human resource office that has a strategic or long-range plan that is not aligned with the plan developed by the CEO.
- Ho8:** There is no significant difference in the strategic partner role of the human resource office whose chief human resource officer perceives the office to be adequately equipped, and whose chief human resource officer does not perceive the office to be adequately equipped.
- Ho9:** There is no significant difference in the strategic partner role of the human resource office that has representation on search committees for executive officers (president, chief academic officer, vice presidents, and deans) and the strategic partner role of the human resource office that does not have such representation.
- Ho10:** There is no significant difference in the strategic partner role of the human resource office that centrally manages the college or university's performance management system and the human resource office that does not centrally manage the performance management system.
- Ho11:** There is no significant difference in the strategic partner role of the human resource office that effectively introduces and manages change (relative to human resource programs and issues) and the human resource office that does not effectively introduce and manage change.

**Ho12:** There is no significant difference in the strategic partner role of the human resource office that has implemented a method of self-evaluation or measuring effectiveness and the human resource office that has not implemented a method of self-evaluation or measuring effectiveness.

**Descriptive Statistics of the CHRO Responses to Part I, The Specific Functions of the HR Office**

<b>Functions of HR Office</b>	<b><u>M</u></b>	<b><u>SD</u></b>	<b><u>N</u></b>
1. Records and Information Services	4.66	0.657	253
2. Benefits Plan Administration	4.61	0.974	252
3. Employment Hourly Non-exempt	4.51	0.886	252
4. Employee Relations	4.51	0.850	253
5. Compensation Hourly Non-exempt	4.38	1.016	250
6. Compensation Salary Exempt	4.23	1.005	251
7. Employment Salary Exempt	4.21	1.037	252
8. Training and Development Hourly Non-exempt	4.15	1.065	250
9. Training and Development Salary Exempt	4.11	1.045	250
10. Payroll, Appointment Processing	3.94	1.441	249
11. Organizational Development, Internal Consulting	3.77	1.085	247
12. Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity	3.74	1.267	249
13. Benefits Design and Contracting	3.74	1.538	247
14. Organizational Development, Leadership Development	3.38	1.183	245
15. Organizational Development, Workforce Planning	3.11	1.191	245
16. Labor Relations	3.00	1.711	197
17. Workplace safety	2.89	1.217	247
18. Payroll, Production	2.87	1.724	246
19. Employment Faculty	2.40	1.383	250
20. Training and Development Faculty	2.38	2.772	247
21. Compensation Faculty	2.32	1.326	245
22. Institutional Research	1.65	0.857	243
23. Training and Development Students	1.37	0.797	240

**The Top Ten Beliefs of the CEO and of the CHRO on Factors of Importance,  
and the Top Two Factors of Little Importance, in Being Considered a Strategic Partner**

<b>CEO response (rank):</b>	<b>CHRO response (rank):</b>	<b><u>Common Factors of Importance—brief description:</u></b>
4.32 (1)	4.40(5)	The two strategic/long-range plans are aligned.
4.27 (2)	4.31(6)	The university has a strategic/long-range plan and has included HR in establishing it.
3.99(3)	4.31(7)	HR routinely establishes a strategic plan.
3.98(4)	4.58(1)	HR is responsible for all HR related policies of the institution.
3.95(5)	4.46(2)	HR is adequately staffed.
3.94(6)	4.43(3)	HR is lead office when making changes to HR related functions e.g., benefits, employment, employee relations.
3.89(7)	4.43(4)	HR is adequately funded.
3.88(8)	4.30(9)	HR is adequately equipped.
3.86(9)	4.31(8)	HR manages the performance management system for the college or university.
3.73(10)	4.22(10)	When significant institutional changes are necessary (e.g., budgeting, staffing), HR is expected to provide strategies that meet business objectives while balancing workforce needs.
3.70(11)	4.03(11)	HR has a process by which their effectiveness is measured.
3.61(12)	4.02(12)	HR establishes benefits plan, design, and administration philosophy and makes recommendations to executive officers.

**Common Factors NOT of Importance**

1.99(1)	2.04(1)	Advocating for faculty.
2.39(2)	3.07(2)	Responsible for policies for faculty.

NOTE: the above mean scores are in descending order, from greatest to least, when considering the CEO responses.

## The 12 Hypotheses Revisited

**There was no significant relationship found in the following three hypotheses. Therefore, these components DO NOT impact HR's ability to be a strategic partner.**

- Ho1:** There is no relationship between the title of the chief human resource officer and their subsequent role of strategic partner.
- Ho3:** There is no relationship between the number of human resource staff members and the ultimate role of human resources being a strategic partner.
- Ho8:** There is no significant difference in the strategic partner role of the human resource office whose chief human resource officer perceives the office to be adequately equipped, and whose chief human resource officer does not perceive the office to be adequately equipped.

**The following nine components DO impact HR's ability to be a strategic partner:**

- Ho2:** There is no significant difference between those chief human resource officers who have, and those who do not have, regular contact with the president of the institution and their role of being a strategic partner.
- Ho4:** There is no significant difference between the funding level of the human resource office, as perceived by the CHRO, and the perception by the CEO of the strategic partner role of the CHRO.
- Ho5:** There is no significant difference in the strategic partner role of the human resource office operating at a university with a strategic or long-range plan, and the office operating at a university without a strategic or long-range plan.
- Ho6:** There is no significant difference between the human resource office that has a strategic plan, and the human resource office that does not have a strategic plan, and their role as a strategic partner.
- Ho7:** There is no significant difference in the strategic partner role of the human resource office that has a strategic or long-range plan aligned with the strategic plan of the CEO, and the human resource office that has a strategic or long-range plan that is not aligned with the plan developed by the CEO.
- Ho9:** There is no significant difference in the strategic partner role of the human resource office that has representation on search committees for executive officers (president, chief academic officer, vice presidents, and deans) and the strategic partner role of the human resource office that does not have such representation.
- Ho10:** There is no significant difference in the strategic partner role of the human resource office that centrally manages the college or university's performance management system and the human resource office that does not centrally manage the performance management system.
- Ho11:** There is no significant difference in the strategic partner role of the human resource office that effectively introduces and manages change (relative to human resource programs and issues) and the human resource office that does not effectively introduce and manage change.
- Ho12:** There is no significant difference in the strategic partner role of the human resource office that has implemented a method of self-evaluation or measuring effectiveness and the human resource office that has not implemented a method of self-evaluation or measuring effectiveness.

## **Chief Human Resource Officer themes**

The responses of the chief human resource officers could be categorized as follows:

### **“Opportunity News” for being a strategic partner:**

1. The Human Resource office is represented on strategic matters by their respective Vice President.
2. The Human Resource office is not responsible for faculty matters.
3. Strategic Human Resource matters are determined at the state systems level.
4. Decentralization within the college or university makes it too difficult to be a strategic partner.
5. The Human Resource office is not a strategic partner due to the management style of the chief executive officer.
6. The Human Resource office is considered a “service” department that is too focused on transaction processing.
7. Miscellaneous and less prevalent themes:
  - ❖ the Human Resource office is being used more often in a consulting capacity.
  - ❖ the Human Resource office is too focused on compliance issues.
  - ❖ the Human Resource office needs proper staffing.
  - ❖ the Human Resource office is generally disregarded on strategic Human Resource matters.

### **“Good News” for being a strategic partner:**

1. The Human Resource office is emerging in its strategic role but has not quite reached the level necessary to be considered a strategic partner.
2. The Human Resource office is considered a strategic partner on technical matters e.g., legal personnel matters, benefits management, and retirement.
3. The Human Resource office is a member of the President’s cabinet and/or is closely aligned to executive officers.

## **Chief Executive Officer themes**

### **“Opportunity News” for being a strategic partner:**

1. The Human Resource office is represented by their respective Vice President.
2. The Human Resource office does not have responsibilities for faculty policies and issues.
3. The Human Resource strategies are established at the systems level.
4. The college or university’s decentralization impacts the Human Resource officer’s capability to be strategic.
5. The Human Resource office is not a strategic partner because of the ineffectiveness of the chief human resource officer.
6. The Human Resource office is considered in an advising role but not in an executive or strategic role.

7. Miscellaneous and less prevalent themes:

- ❖ being a strategic partner is a sensitive issue to the Human Resource office.
- ❖ the Human Resource office has membership on important college/university committees and task forces.
- ❖ the Human Resource office should be a strategic partner but for various reasons is not.
- ❖ the Human Resource office is more a facilitator of strategic planning.
- ❖ the Human Resource office would be more strategic if fully staffed.

**“Good News” for being a strategic partner:**

1. The Human Resource office is emerging in its strategic role.
2. The Human Resource office is strategic in helping align recognition and reward structures with institutional goals; and, is also strategic in Human Resource legal matters including employment and perhaps benefits.
3. The Human Resource office does provide input and/or is on the president’s leadership team.
4. The Human Resource office is considered key to the well-being and overall morale of employees; a vital function.

### **Greatest Differences Between the CHRO and CEO**

[The scores between ‘degree’ and ‘importance’ differ the **greatest**; this implies there is a significant gap between the importance factor and the degree factor indicating a gap between that which is important and what activity is taking place; the scores and differences are listed below each factor—importance minus degree.]

#### **CHRO**

1. CHRO attends CEO staff meetings.  
[3.88 – 2.46 = 1.42]
2. HR is key participant in institutional planning and action agenda setting.  
[4.06 – 2.77 = 1.29]
3. CHRO attends strategy setting meetings involving the CEO.  
[4.23 – 2.96 = 1.27]
4. CHRO is involved in assessing effectiveness of executive officer(s)  
[3.72 – 2.47 = 1.25]
5. CHRO believes HR is adequately funded.  
[4.43 – 3.18 = 1.25]

#### **CEO**

1. CEO believes the HR office has an established mechanism of measuring effectiveness.  
[3.70 – 2.96 = .74]
2. CEO annually measures the outcomes of HR’s operational plan.  
[3.25 – 2.54 = .71]
3. CEO believes the HR office develops a strategic plan to reach established HR plans.  
[3.99 – 3.32 = .67]
4. CEO believes the HR office is adequately funded.  
[3.89 – 3.24 = .65]
5. CEO believes the HR office is adequately staffed.  
[3.95 – 3.41 = .54]

### **Least Differences Between the CHRO and CEO**

[the scores between ‘degree’ and ‘importance’ differ the **least**.]

#### **CHRO**

1. CHRO is the lead official for making changes to HR related processes.  
[4.43 – 4.20 = .13]
2. CHRO has responsibility for managing the institution’s performance management system.  
[4.58 – 4.37 = .19]
3. HR office is responsible for managing the institution’s performance management system.  
[4.31 – 4.08 = .23]
4. CHRO establishes benefits plan design, administration philosophy, and makes recommendations for change.  
[4.03 – 3.70 = .33]
5. When changes are necessary HR advocates for staff needs without regard to outcomes.  
[3.66 – 3.33 = .33]

#### **CEO**

1. CHRO is the lead official for making changes to HR related processes.  
[3.94 – 3.99 = -.05]
2. HR office has responsibility for policies affecting faculty.  
[2.39 – 2.30 = .09]
3. HR office is responsible for managing the institution’s performance management system.  
[3.86 – 3.75 = .11]
4. When changes are necessary HR advocates for staff needs without regard to outcomes.  
[3.43 – 3.29 = .14]
5. CHRO is responsible official for all HR related policies for the institution.  
[3.98 – 3.80 = .18]