# Higher Ed HR Challenges Now and in the Near Future

*[This template can be used by region board members to lead and facilitate a 45–60-minute session at a chapter event. Region leaders should feel free to adjust the content and approach.]*

**Description**

The challenges for higher ed and higher ed HR continue to evolve. During this session, region board member, _____, will lead and facilitate a discussion to help us more fully understand the biggest challenges for our HR teams and for us in our higher ed HR roles. Participants will also share some of the things they are doing to address recruitment, retention and engagement challenges.

## Speaker Comments and Facilitation Guidance
*[Opening comments from region leader that restates the program description from above.]*

**Outcomes Expected**

- Strengthen connection between participants.
- Better understand challenges faced by our colleagues.
- Better understand what leaders are doing to address current and emerging recruitment, retention and engagement challenges.

**Small Group Discussion**

Let's break into small groups of 4-5 for 20 minutes to discuss the following questions. *[Note that the chapter leader coordinating the meeting will need to know about this in advance and be prepared to send participants to small groups in Zoom or help you identify the groups in the meeting room if this is an in-person event.]*

In your small groups, please identify a notetaker and a spokesperson. When we return, we will hear from some of the groups, but we will also ask our notetakers to start posting some of the responses in the chat (if this is a Zoom meeting). I will also ask our notetakers to share their notes with me via email following the large group discussion so that I can compile the responses to share with the national office.

**Here are the questions for the small groups:**

What are the biggest challenges for you and your HR team, and what are you doing to address current and emerging recruitment and retention challenges?

- What do you see as the 2-3 biggest challenges for *your HR team* right now or in the near future?
- What do you see as *your personal biggest challenge* right now or in the near future?
- We've learned a lot during the last two years. What are you and your HR colleagues doing to address the current and emerging recruitment and retention challenges?

**Discussion Process**

- Break into small groups for 20 minutes.
- Following small group discussions, facilitate group report outs for approximately 15-20 minutes. Encourage notetakers to being posting in the chat if facilitating virtually.
- On the next page of this facilitator document are the summary responses from a similar activity during the 2022 Association Leadership Program. Please feel free to incorporate some of these responses to supplement and support the comments shared by session participants.

*[When groups return from breakout groups, facilitate report outs from 3-4 groups (or more if you have time during the 15–20-minute report out segment). Following report outs, summarize overall comments and ask notetakers to send their notes to you via email. We would appreciate it if you would then follow-up within a week or so by sending the summary to [learn@cupahr.org](mailto:learn@cupahr.org) .]*

**Closing Comments**

If you are not already doing so, I encourage you to frequently visit the CUPA-HR website and use the resources we have created and curated to help you work through your challenges as a higher education HR leader. We also encourage you to continue sharing with your CUPA-HR colleagues. *[Insert other comments you would like to share to summarize the session and thank participants, including the chapter board, for the opportunity engage with the group.]*

- **What do you see as the 2-3 biggest challenges for your HR team right now or in the near future?**
  - Retention
  - Recruitment/compensation
  - Turnover/filling vacancies/applicant pool/competing with corporates/understaffed/retirement/resignations
  - Hybrid work management
  - Well-being/burnout/mental health/work-life balance/lack of engagement
  - Workload
  - Change management/crisis management
  - Resources/budget constraints/compensation equity/need for professional development
  - Technology/multiple systems/upgrades
  - Incivility
  - DEI (hiring, training committees, culture shift)/supporting DEI efforts
  - Cost of living vs. wages/inflation

- **What do you see as your personal biggest challenge right now or in the near future?**
  - Work-life balance/burnout/covid stressors/mental health/self-care/disconnecting/setting boundaries/empathy and compassion fatigue
  - Retention/succession planning/maintaining own team
  - Time/energy/motivation/patience (to re-engage with passion/for professional development/career progression)
  - Change management/new responsibilities/communication
  - Setting a good example (modeling balance)/keeping others inspired and motivated/positivity
  - Gaining leadership support/competing priorities
  - Managing remote teams/providing skills to others for managing hybrid work
  - Financial challenges/resources
  - DEI/culture

- **We've learned a lot during the last two years. What are you and your HR colleagues doing to address the current and emerging recruitment and retention challenges?**
  - Promote total compensation/offer retention and signing bonuses, merit increases, cola/referral program/paid medical leave/salary and benefits evaluation and redesign/pay equity reviews
  - Streamline hiring and make more inclusive/enhance onboarding
  - Flexibility/offer remote work/balancing workload of employees
  - Address mental health/wellness program
  - Employee engagement initiatives/climate surveys/peer recognition/telling stories/having conversations
  - Update job descriptions (incorporate DEI, hybrid work, years of experience)/coaching (on job descriptions)/hire for potential, not just skill and experience
  - Professional development opportunities/creating development plans for all/career progression coaching

- Culture (review, create, communicate)/branding initiatives/value proposition for higher ed/employer of choice
- Succession planning/internships
- Implement information systems (ATS, etc.)/data collection/use social media
- Review offboarding