Unlocking value with a modern HCM platform in higher education

Investing in a modern HCM platform can feel like a significant financial commitment, especially when your institution is navigating tight budgets. When it is time to justify this investment to your board or administration, you need to demonstrate the ROI for your college or university.

Here is everything you need to know about the value of modernizing your HR infrastructure.

By unifying processes across the complex lifecycle of faculty, staff, and student workers, a platform like People First reduces the hidden costs that drain your resources every academic year. From mitigating turnover among adjuncts and tenured professors to minimizing compliance errors with federal regulations, these are the **five key areas** where you should expect to see savings in as little as six months:

Reduce hiring costs for faculty and staff

Recruitment in higher education is unique and expensive. You are not just hiring employees; you are conducting nationwide searches for specialized tenure-track faculty, managing adjunct contracts, and coordinating student employment.

With AI-enabled recruitment tools like resume parsing, job description generation, and candidate matching, a modern HCM like People First can save you time, money, and administrative headaches:

- ✓ **Accelerate onboarding:** Save over 90% of the time typically spent onboarding new hires. This is crucial at the start of a semester when you need to process hundreds of employees simultaneously.

- ✓ **Shorten time-to-fill:** Reduce the time it takes to fill critical roles with automated resume screening and role matching, ensuring classes have professors and departments have support staff ready on day one.

- ✓ **Leverage internal talent:** Unlock untapped talent with skills-first hiring to identify existing staff or faculty who may be suitable for interim roles, leadership positions, and more.

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Lower turnover and boost retention

Losing a faculty member or administrator is costly. The expense of replacing an employee can range from 50% to 200% of their annual salary, not to mention the disruption to students and research continuity.

Investing in upskilling, internal mobility, and engagement helps reduce employee churn in a competitive academic market:

- ✓ **Retain institutional knowledge:** Prioritizing internal mobility helps you keep your employees for twice as long as other institutions. By offering clear pathways for advancement, whether for staff moving into leadership or faculty seeking administrative roles, you build loyalty.

- ✓ **Support career growth:** Reduce turnover by at least 10% with career pathways and performance management tools in People First. Show your diverse workforce that they have a future at your institution.

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Avoid compliance fines and regulatory issues

Higher education is one of the most heavily regulated sectors. A single mistake in compliance can be incredibly costly and damaging to your reputation.

With built-in governance frameworks, a modern HCM platform like People First acts as a critical safeguard:

- **Mitigate penalties:** Save potentially thousands of dollars in penalties for employment law violations. Automated updates keep you aligned with changing federal and state regulations.

- **Streamline reporting:** Deliver up to a 30% increase in the volume of regulatory returns handled without increasing your administrative headcount. This is vital for maintaining eligibility for federal funding and grants.

- **Manage pay transparency:** Ensure compliance with new pay transparency legislation across multiple states, which is increasingly important for institutions with remote staff or satellite campuses.

3

Drive efficiency in HR operations

Running multiple systems wastes time and money. Many universities still operate with siloed systems.

A modern HCM like People First brings everything together in one simple platform, from talent management to compliance:

- **Reclaim administrative time:** Save up to 75% of time managing HR actions with simplified processes. This frees your HR team to focus on strategic initiatives rather than paperwork.

- **Empower your campus:** Empower faculty and staff with self-service access to critical HR functions. Let them update their own information, access tax forms, and manage benefits without needing to visit the HR office.

- **Reduce errors:** Reduce the risk of costly human error with automated workflows, ensuring that complex contract renewals and tenure tracking are handled accurately.

4

Avoid productivity loss from skills gaps

The landscape of higher education is changing rapidly. From new learning technologies to changing student demographics, your workforce needs to adapt.

With personalized learning and continuous development, a modern HCM platform helps you prevent costly external hiring and lost productivity:

- **Enhance professional development:** Deliver up to a 94% increase in course completions for business-critical learning with People First. This ensures your staff is up to date on everything from cybersecurity protocols to student support strategies.

- **Align learning with goals:** Empower your teams with tailored learning pathways that seamlessly integrate with your existing tech stack.

- **Ensure rapid integration:** Set your people up for success with as many as 75% of new joiners completing onboarding plans with no reminders, ensuring they are productive members of the campus community faster.

5

Modernizing your HCM platform is a strategic move that supports the financial sustainability of your institution. By reducing administrative waste, ensuring compliance, and engaging your faculty and staff, you free up resources that can be better directed toward your core mission: educating students and driving research.

Next Steps

Audit your current HR processes to identify bottlenecks in faculty hiring, contract management, and compliance reporting. Compare these inefficiencies against the potential savings of a unified platform to build a compelling business case for modernization. Prioritize solutions that understand the unique nuances of the higher education workforce.

If you want to learn more about how People First could support your institution with workforce management, HR automation and stronger employee retention strategies, book a demo and see the platform in action. **Let's talk** ➤