

Special Report by The Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) and NEOED



NEOED

MODERNIZATION, DEVELOPMENT & DEI:

The Future Role of Workforce Technology in Higher Education



THE UNEXPECTED SHIFT TO A REMOTE WORKFORCE

on top of fiscal uncertainty and the long overdue conversation around racial inequality brought Human Resources (HR) and Academic Affairs leaders to a crossroads. Higher education workforce leaders are poised to address a myriad of initiatives, including an increased focus on budgetary spending; remote work; diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) needs; onboarding; training; and succession planning.

To help shed light on how institutions are navigating the new climate and adjusting their technology priorities, The Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) in collaboration with NEOED, surveyed higher education HR leaders*. **Encouragingly, 81% of those surveyed said they expected to hire at the same rate or even higher despite the troubles of the past year.** This further illustrates the need for institutions to rapidly scale their processes. Among the other questions the survey sought to answer were the future of technology's role in recruitment, onboarding, DEI initiatives, and overall institution success for years to come.

*Respondents included professionals from HR, Academic Affairs, Faculty Development, Diversity Office, and Communications. 131 were at four-year institutions, 38 at two-year colleges, and 5 other.

EMBRACING DISRUPTION OF THE STATUS QUO

Contrary to early fears about how budgets might be dramatically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, **the majority of schools (81%) reported their budget would remain roughly the same** or even exceed last year's when it came to investing in workforce technology (fig. 1).

75% of respondents said their investments in technology will go toward **continuing modernization of the long-standing, outdated processes** that have hindered their ability to be agile. Providing ongoing support to remote workers is a key initiative, with 69% of respondents saying they expect a moderate, significant, or very significant increase in permanent remote workers post-pandemic (fig. 2).

"The pandemic taught us that people can work efficiently from home."

CHERIE HARGETT, TEACHERS COLLEGE,
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK

The transition to supporting a permanent hybrid workforce will require robust and nimble Cloud-based solutions that address every stage of the employee lifecycle, from onboarding to performance management and training, as well as payroll and benefits.

"Recruiting, screening and selecting candidates, as well as continuing to retain talent are currently our biggest challenges."

TATIANA GRABOWSKI, OREGON HEALTH & SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY, PORTLAND

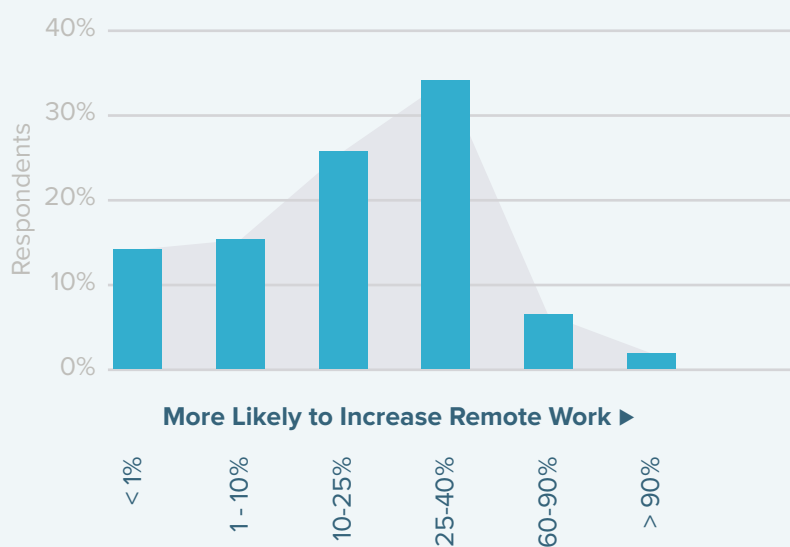
Figure 1

How will your **investment** in workforce technology change for 2021 - 2022 compared to last year?



Figure 2

What **percentage increase** do you anticipate in your **remote workforce** pre-pandemic vs post-pandemic?



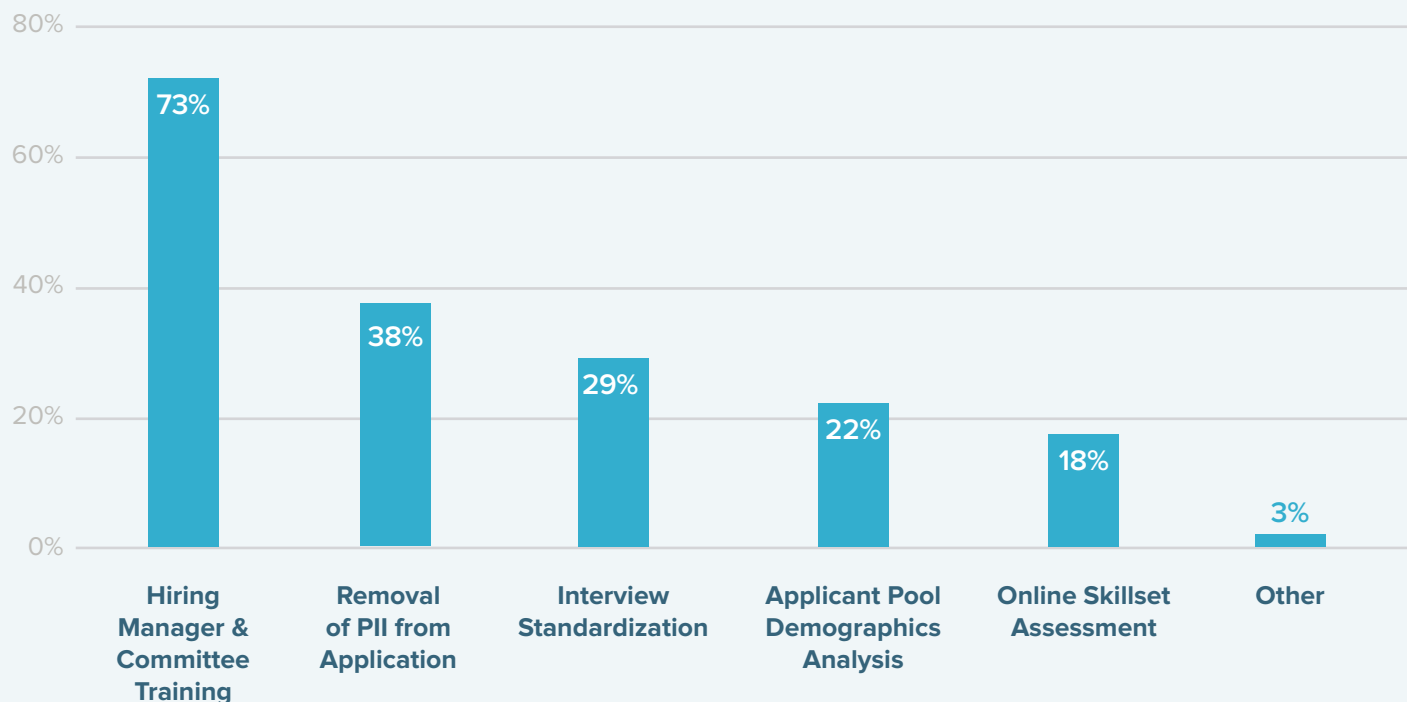
INGRAINING DEI INTO RECRUITMENT WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY

As a result of calls for social justice, HR and Academic Affairs are also examining how to better address diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts through every aspect, including technology. Among institutions looking to purchase new workforce technology in the next 2-3 years, one-fifth said that their single most important investment will be tools that help achieve their DEI goals.

When asked which workforce technology tools they would invest in to reduce bias during the recruitment and hiring phases, every respondent believed there were solutions that could help. **The majority (73%) said they would consider a DEI training tool to educate hiring managers and committees**, while nearly a quarter would prioritize software that can analyze applicant pool demographics. Over one-third (38%) said a tool that could **hide personally identifiable information** on applications and resumes (such as name, home address, or date of graduation) during the screening process would be valuable, while 29% said a tool that helped standardize interview questions through the use of rubrics or scales would be helpful.

Figure 3

Which workforce **technology tools** would you invest in to reduce bias during your screening/selection process?



“The intersection of technology, globalization, demographics, social values, and personal expectations are changing the culture of the workplace, and we must develop comprehensive strategies to address the need for a diverse and inclusive workforce.”

CURTIS POWELL, RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE, TROY, NEW YORK

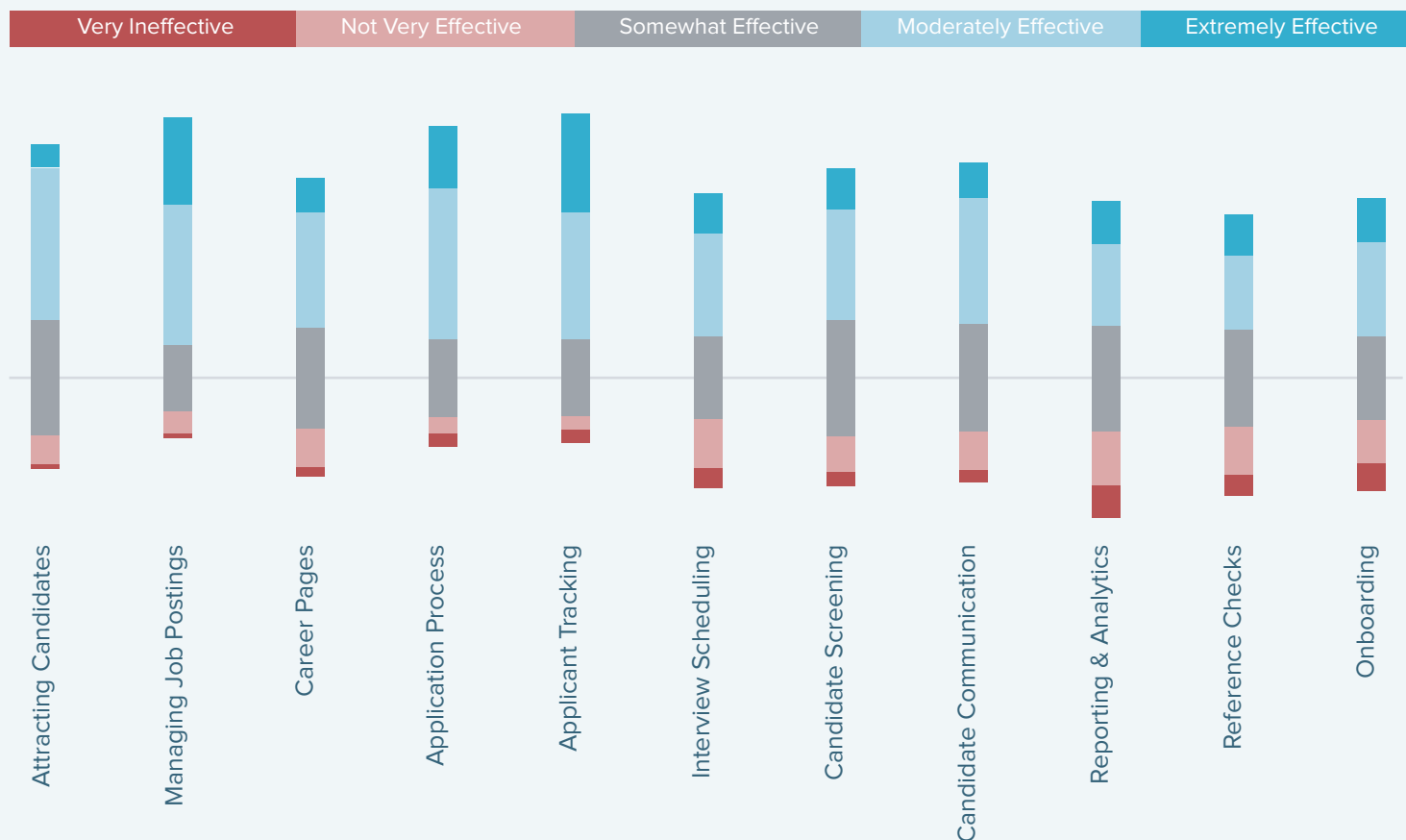
TRANSFORMING RECRUITING & ONBOARDING THROUGH AUTOMATION & CUSTOMIZATION

In response to workforces increasingly becoming hybrid (made up of on- and off-campus employees), **65% of respondents cited virtual onboarding as a critical investment for the future**. Over two-thirds concluded that streamlined logistics and scheduling of tasks, and the reduction of paper-based processes were the key benefits of virtual onboarding processes.

Even those with virtual onboarding processes expressed that more needed to be done to enhance the experience. In fact, only 13% said that their onboarding processes are extremely effective, and 28% said they are moderately effective.

Figure 4

How would you **rate the effectiveness** of the following processes in your organization?



“We now know we can work fully remotely and be effective opening up job opportunities for people living at a distance.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Figure 5

Is your **rate of hiring for 2021** expected to be higher, lower, or about the same as 2020?



Despite 80% of surveyed institutions utilizing workforce software, many are dissatisfied with their current systems and capabilities. **Only 8% say they have recruiting software that is highly customizable and easy to use.** The majority (56%) said they have little or no customization options for employer branding (e.g., adding custom photos, logos, school colors, etc.), and only 39% have a system that enables them to develop different career sites for faculty, administration, and students.

Figure 6

Do you have the functionality to **customize the applicant experience** in your current ATS (e.g., adding custom photos, videos, colors, etc.)?

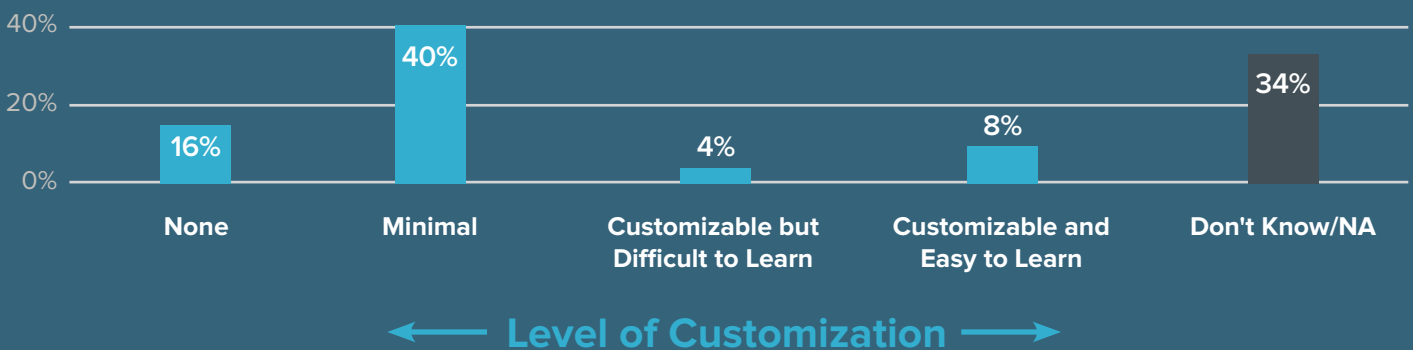
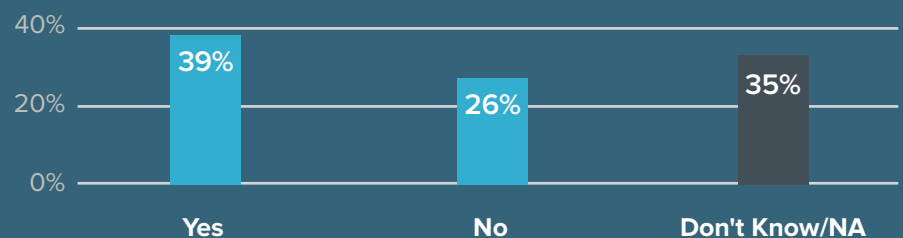


Figure 7

Does your solution enable you to create a customized applicant experience **for each category of position** you hire (e.g., faculty, administration, student)?



EFFECTIVE SUCCESSION PLANNING WITH ACTIVE DIGITAL TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Looking ahead in the employee journey, the survey found that **HR and Academic Affairs leaders are increasingly concerned about the lack of succession planning** in place to supplement the loss of retiring employees. In fact, 40% of respondents said their institution currently has no upskilling protocol in place, despite the fact that 58% expected loss of institutional knowledge through retirement to be moderately or extremely disruptive within the next 3-5 years.

Figure 8

What impact will the loss of institutional knowledge/skills due to retirement have on your institution in the next 3-5 years?

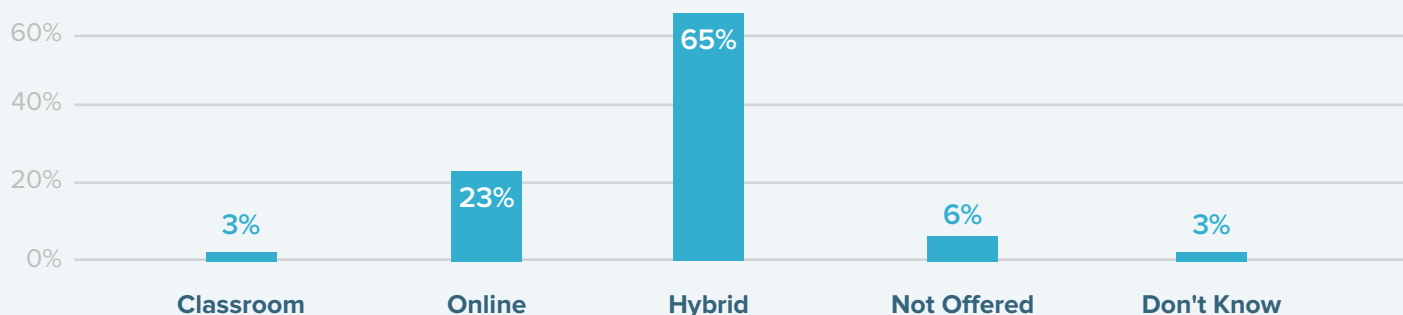


Further compounding the challenge, 48% stated that they are dissatisfied with the professional development opportunities offered by their institution. 54% of these HR and Academic Affairs leaders felt that a learning management system for career development would not only offset loss of institutional knowledge, but improve employee retention overall.

65% of institutions offer a hybrid of online and classroom learning, which can make it difficult to assign courses and track completion without a centralized learning management system.

Figure 9

How is your professional development training conducted?



"An impending retirement wave is leading to a need to replace institutional knowledge, as well as the need to provide employees with the ability to sharpen specialized skills in trades, STEM positions, etc."

CHRISTINE PHILLIPS, STATE CENTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

OVERALL DIGITAL MATURITY IN HIGHER ED WORKFORCE TECHNOLOGY

When it came to breaking down technological capabilities by specific task or function, the survey had the following findings:

PROCESSES

- **Half of the respondents use a combination of software and manual processes**
- 9% still rely fully on manual processes and use no software
- 37% are using software to support the entire employee experience

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

- 60% said that both Academic Affairs and HR use the same recruiting systems
- Despite this, **29% reported that their processes were decentralized and tangled**, and 45% said that the shared system did not adequately meet both departments' needs

ACCESSIBILITY

- 41% stated with confidence that their technology met 508c requirements for providing an accessible applicant experience
- **An overwhelming amount (48%), however, reported not knowing whether or not their systems were compliant**, suggesting that DEI efforts should be broadened in scope to consider accessibility needs

CAREER PAGES

- 46% of respondents felt their current career page strategy was at least partially ineffective
- 56% have minimal or no customization options to reflect the institution's branding on their system career pages

RECRUITING LOGISTICS

- **Most (65%) respondents felt their application process was effective**
- However, less than half felt the candidate experience was effective, with 48% saying candidate communication was only somewhat effective or very ineffective.
- Interview scheduling posed slightly bigger challenges, with 46% saying these processes were only somewhat effective or very ineffective.
- **Only 12% of respondents felt that their organization's current candidate screening process was extremely effective**

DATA, REPORTING, AND ANALYTICS

- **The biggest shortcoming respondents cited was reporting and analytics.** One in ten rated it very ineffective, saying it needs vast improvement
- 58% of respondents felt that their ability to report on and use analytics to their advantage in hiring was subpar

“Data to determine how diverse our current faculty and staff are and the diversity of our candidate pools is a big need.”

STEVE RICCOBONO, PRATT INSTITUTE, NEW YORK CITY



The Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) is a nonprofit consortium committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the higher education workforce. With over 700 colleges, universities, hospitals, research labs, government agencies, and related organizations, HERC works to ensure member institutions are sites of belonging, where all faculty and staff can thrive. HERC provides resources, networking, and outreach programs to attract, hire, and retain a diverse and qualified workforce. More information at www.member.hercjobs.org

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Members

20+
Years of Experience

4,000+
HR, Academic Affairs, &
Diversity Leaders

NEOED is the leading provider of a comprehensive human capital management solution for educational institutions. Dedicated to supporting the complex needs and compliance requirements of education HR teams, NEOED's suite of three integrated modules – Recruit, Develop, and Manage – provide a centralized platform for managing the entire employee lifecycle. NEOED is a division of NEOGOV, which was founded in 2001 and serves over 6,000 public sector organizations. More information at www.neoed.com.

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