Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), under the direction of President Toro, has recently undergone important and needed measures to assess and improve the climate, safety, and culture of the institution.

President Toro convened a Task Force on Sexual Misconduct, Bullying and Campus Climate (Task Force) in 2018. The Task Force recommended the retention of a third-party consultant to review and help reengineer the Human Resources Department and the Office of Diversity and Equity.

In response to this recommendation, Sibson Consulting (Sibson) was engaged to continue the important work of the Task Force, as well as expand on the detailed findings and recommendations from their Report. Sibson’s charge included the review of the Human Resources Department, the Office of Diversity and Equity, and the Office of the Ombudsperson.
To achieve the objective, Sibson completed the following:

- Conducted a thorough content review of a significant volume of documents, data, and other relevant materials provided by CCSU.
- The Sibson team conducted **sixty-six** (66) in-depth, one-on-one interviews and focus groups that covered a diverse range of leaders and campus stakeholders:
  - This included the Executive Committee, faculty leaders, union leaders, students, faculty, all HR and ODE staff, and the Presidential Task Force members.
- Our approach was open, collaborative and intended to provide participants with a trusting and confidential environment to provide input and feedback.
- Reviewed comparative institutions and identified best practice models for diversity and equity.
Sibson was specifically engaged by CCSU to assess the **Human Resources Department (HR)**, the **Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE)**, and the **Office of the Ombudsperson (Ombud)**, and to develop recommendations relative to:

**Background and Overview**

**Approach and Methodology**

- The mission, strategies, services, and practices of the HR, ODE, and Ombud functions and their alignment to the broader Institution mission, vision, and strategic objectives, and priorities
- The effectiveness and efficiency of current organizational structures and staffing relative to the needs of the Institution and best practices
- The roles and responsibilities of the Office of the Ombudsperson, Human Resources, and Office of Diversity and Equity
- The processes by which services, programs, and transactions are developed and delivered, including methods and approaches for fostering an inclusive culture and climate
- The tools and technologies used to support the functions and services
- Current training and development efforts and effectiveness relative to Institution’s needs and best practices
CCSU’s HR, ODE, and Ombud units were assessed along the following independent yet interrelated dimensions:

- **Background and Overview**
- **Assessment Approach**

The alignment of HR, ODE, and Ombud practices, services, structures, processes, and policies with CCSU’s strategic vision and goals

The tools and technologies used to support HR, ODE, and Ombud functions, processes, and transactions

The processes by which HR, ODE, and Ombud services, programs, and transactions are developed, delivered, and communicated

The cost to deliver and support HR, ODE, and Ombud services, programs, processes, and systems

The HR, ODE, and Ombud organization’s structures, people, policies, rewards, measures, capacity, and culture
Central Connecticut State University has many areas of strength to build upon:

- A wide spectrum of both faculty and staff members expressed significant praise for President Toro, especially with respect to her efforts to be inclusive of all points of view on campus, despite some pockets of resistance to change
  - In particular, stakeholders positively viewed Dr. Toro's actions to:
    - Hold people accountable
    - Act as a positive and much needed change agent for the University
    - Communicate frequently and transparently with the campus community

- Many CCSU HR team members were described by stakeholders as hard-working, committed and well-intentioned, despite facing many challenges

- ODE’s important role and function was nearly universally accepted on campus, with the office demonstrating several current strengths and emerging competencies
  - In-person Title IX, diversity, and bystander training were viewed positively by those who have attended such training opportunities
  - Recent changes to the culture and hiring process used to attract more diverse candidates by ODE have been well-recognized and appreciated by the CCSU community
  - ODE’s sponsorship of many events, programs, and partnerships with various groups on campus focused on promoting diversity and inclusion are seen as positive influences

- Following the sudden resignation of the prior Ombudsperson, the Interim Ombudsperson was praised for his efforts to absorb the additional responsibilities of the interim role
There are a number of opportunities for improving the HR, ODE and Ombud functions, as identified in the following four key areas:

- CULTURAL
- STRUCTURAL
- OPERATIONAL
- STRATEGIC
A culture of diminished trust exists campus-wide; consequently, this culture has permitted and tolerated behavior that has not fostered a consistent sense of safety and security for students, faculty, and staff

- A historic lack of action to address cultural and behavioral issues has contributed to a culture of diminished trust, where significant issues have remained unaddressed or ignored
  - A lack of communication and collaboration between ODE, HR, campus police department, University Counsel, and Student Affairs, has created confusion, duplicative investigations, and challenges addressing issues
  - In particular, University Counsel has not been consistently consulted or engaged by HR and ODE to provide legal guidance and advice on management and disposition of issues, which is inconsistent with best practices

- Lengthy and cumbersome processes and a lack of sufficient resolution of issues and complaints within HR and ODE have contributed to this culture

- The lack of sufficient action and solutions to address these behaviors and incidents has reportedly resulted in diminished trust and credibility of the HR and ODE functions among campus stakeholders

- There has not been a culture of education, training, and awareness on campus
  - While there is training by ODE, there is a lack of accountability for completing required training
  - There is a need and desire on campus to have proactive training and education that goes beyond compliance and focuses on promoting diversity and inclusion, open communication, and increased equity on campus
The HR unit does not have the staff and full range of capabilities necessary to support broader strategic workforce needs

- The HR unit is reportedly reactive and consumed with transactional and operational activities, limiting the ability of the unit to provide a deeper level of support to the workforce and to drive the broader culture transformation that is needed

- The HR unit has not been perceived as a helpful or supportive place for employees, which has contributed to diminished levels of trust and confidence in the unit

- HR has not had the capacity or the full range of necessary skills and competencies to support the level of HR services demanded by the workforce

The ODE is lacking the necessary staff and capabilities to effectively serve the needs of the University

- The ODE has lacked sufficient staffing in key areas, particularly investigators, in order to perform the duties required of the office in a timely and seamless manner

- The office has been structured as a compliance function and until recently has lacked strategic leadership to focus on broader diversity and inclusion efforts

- There is a lack of clarity around how the Women’s Center’s goals, initiatives and activities align with the Office of Diversity and Equity and broader University goals and objectives
Detailed Findings

Misconduct investigations have been conducted following inconsistent protocols and lacking procedural safeguards to ensure unbiased and timely resolution.

- Key practices and protocols for misconduct investigations have contributed to a culture of diminished trust and have resulted in potential risk to the institution, including:
  - Breakdowns in communication and coordination, especially between HR, ODE, and Legal
  - A failure to escalate, surface issues appropriately, seek appropriate legal advice, and assess the level of severity of claims
  - Employing a single investigator model where the person investigating claims is also making the determination on disposition

- Students, faculty, and staff have cited confusion about the process for filing sexual harassment, diversity, or misconduct complaints and surfacing issues

- The investigation process was described as particularly challenging and too lengthy

- There are multiple avenues to report a misconduct or EEO claim, as well as widely dispersed resources, which limit effective and efficient management and tracking of these issues

- Many interviewees expressed concerns that ODE and HR engage in separate investigations that are often duplicative and potentially harmful to victims

- The ODE’s application of certain processes (especially the single investigator model) is not aligned to best practices
Detailed Findings

Technologies are outdated and processes are manual/inefficient within HR and ODE, limiting the overall capacity of staff and their ability to provide more value added services and support

Office of Diversity and Equity

- Tracking of training requirements on campus is reportedly insufficient, making it difficult to monitor compliance and potentially increasing institutional risk
- Affirmative Action Search Plan (AAP) forms are manual and paper-based, and require multiple hand-offs and layers of review and approval
- ODE technologies were described as inefficient and in need of updating
- The current space for ODE is reportedly not sufficiently meeting the needs of the ODE office in terms of size or providing sufficient confidentiality

Human Resources

- Numerous HR processes used were identified as largely manual, paper-based, and burdensome (hiring, onboarding, appointment forms, employee records, performance management, timesheets approval, benefit administration, retirement processes)
- Leaders and customers expressed frustration over these processes and what is viewed as slow turnaround times and reduced service levels as a result
- Cumbersome manual processes and ineffective technology require significant focus and time of HR staff on processing transactions, substantially limiting capacity to support more value-added support and services
Detailed Findings

The Office of Diversity and Equity is viewed as having a narrow compliance focus and lacks a clear and commonly understood strategy and vision that aligns with the strategic direction of the University

- The office has developed a historic reputation for being a barrier rather than a helpful and supportive haven for faculty, staff, and students
- The office has historically been viewed as a compliance function with limited focus on broader diversity and inclusion programming and campus climate

**HR is largely transactional and is lacking a number of strategic areas that are critical to effectively support the needs of the workforce and successful implementation of the strategic priorities of the institution**

- The Human Resources Department is viewed as transactional, and does not provide strategic services and support in key areas
  - Employee engagement, culture initiatives, training and development, workforce planning, developing and providing guidance on policies
- HR currently lacks the capacity to provide the full range of strategic or best practice HR services
- Stakeholders cited a need for HR to improve service levels to the campus
- High turnover and lack of consistent deep skills among the HR team are additional barriers to a high performing HR organization
HR is largely transactional and is lacking a number of strategic areas that are critical to effectively support the needs of the workforce and successful implementation of the strategic priorities of the institution continued

### Best Practice HR Model

- Workforce and Succession Planning
- Compensation Planning
- Leadership Development
- Culture/Engagement
- Organizational Development/Design

### Central Connecticut HR Services

- Very Few Services
- Some Services
- Predominant Services

- Administrative
- Consultative
- Strategic

- Payroll and Benefits Administration
- Record Keeping
- Compliance
- Employee Relations
- Recruiting and Selection
- Training Delivery
- Performance Management

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**BEST PRACTICE HR MODEL**

**CENTRAL CONNECTICUT HR SERVICES**
Detailed Findings

HR and ODE policies are outdated, difficult to access and navigate, and there are not clear processes for developing, approving, and revising institution-wide policies

- Policies are difficult to find and access
- There is a lack of effective education, awareness, and training on policies
- Many employment-related policies are lengthy and difficult to understand
- HR lacks a commonly understood structure to manage and update policies on an ongoing basis to maintain legal compliance and conform to updates in cultural norms
- There are gaps in policies, including missing policies or those with outdated or missing content

The role and purpose of the Office of Ombudsperson is not widely understood or viewed as value-added to the campus

- There is confusion on what the role the Office of the Ombudsperson plays at CCSU
- The function is a potentially valuable resource that is reportedly not being utilized to its full potential
- The Ombudsperson is typically (although not currently) a faculty member, creating a number of potential conflicts
- The lack of any records with this office makes it difficult to track the number of people utilizing the services of the function or important cultural trends
Detailed Findings

HR, ODE, and Ombud are in need of a clear delineation of tasks and a collaborative approach to oversight, and are lacking a commonly shared mission, vision, and strategy to guide overall focus and priorities

➢ There is no diversity and inclusion strategic plan, resulting in each area lacking a clear and commonly understood vision and supporting strategies to guide priorities and activities
  • These units are not in regular contact and little coordination exists to work together toward shared diversity and inclusion goals
  • Activities of the offices do not align with a clear and commonly understand vision and goals for ensuring a diverse and inclusive workplace

➢ The Human Resources department does not have a strategic plan that aligns with the overall goals and mission of the University or that guides the priorities and activities of the office
Recommendations

Summary

- Transform the culture of the campus with a holistic culture and climate improvement initiative
- Revise the Ombud model to an unbiased mediation model and clearly articulate this change to the wider campus community for greater utilization
- Centralize and reconstruct the investigative model and consider expanding technology, including case management capabilities, tracking, and reporting
- Implement technologies and revise current processes to reduce manual efforts, gain efficiencies and capacity, and decrease institutional risk
- Establish a clear and compelling mission, vision, and strategic plan for Office of Diversity and Equity that includes an integrated and collaborative approach with key stakeholders
- Revise the structure and staffing model for the Office of Diversity and Equity and address operational challenges to position the office for future success
- Launch a formal HR transformation and strategic planning initiative to clearly establish the mission, vision, and goals for the HR function and implement organizational changes

Sibson Consulting
Recommendations

Cultural- Detailed Steps

1. Transform the culture of the campus with a holistic culture and climate improvement initiative

- Identify and clearly articulate the desired future state culture and campus climate for CCSU
- Launch a formal and comprehensive effort to address culture and climate issues
  - Design and launch a comprehensive climate survey for faculty, staff, and students
  - Engage in an effective, action-planning effort to identify culture priorities from the survey and this assessment, and clearly define and inform priorities and areas of focus
  - Define clear milestones and mechanisms to measure progress
- Ensure strong senior level support for the culture transformation initiative and identify an executive sponsor for the effort
- Consider forming a cross-functional team to help guide and oversee the effort
- Establish a supporting communication strategy for the effort
- Develop a training plan to support transformation of the culture
Recommendations
Structure and Staffing Focus

2. Revise the structure and staffing model for the Office of Diversity and Equity and address operational challenges to position the office for future success

- Identify clear priorities and needed investments, such as additional staff or student workers, to support the full range of needs of the campus community (see potential organizational chart)

- Consider the following changes with the input from the new ODE leader
  - **Short-term**: Elevate the Chief Diversity Officer to a Vice President level in order to reflect that the role is intended to be more strategic in nature and provide executive-level leadership. Timing: Immediately to eight months
  - **Short-term**: Hire two investigators to solely conduct Title IX and misconduct investigations. Timing: One currently being hired by CCSU; one additional within eight months
  - **Mid-term**: Create an Associate Vice President position that will serve as the Title IX Coordinator and provide oversight to two Title IX investigators, Victim Advocacy and Training, and the Director of Affirmative Action. Timing: eight months to eighteen months
  - **Mid-term**: Create a full time position to focus on Affirmative Action planning and campus adherence to the plan, rather than having a part-time staff member create the plan and the ODE associate manage the search process and ensure adherence. Timing: eight months to eighteen months
  - **Long-term**: Replace the ODE Associate role (these job duties will be absorbed by the new roles outlined) with a Student Advocacy Services and Academic Support role. Timing: eighteen months to three years
  - **Long-term**: Create an ADA coordinator position to coordinate ADA requests and accommodations. Timing: eighteen months to three years
Recommendations
Structure and Staffing Focus

2. Revise the structure and staffing model for the Office of Diversity and Equity and address operational challenges to position the office for future success continued

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Women’s Center to better understand the Center’s alignment to the greater ODE strategy, address the structure and model for the unit, and identify other opportunities to improve operational, organizational and cultural aspects of the unit.
Recommendations
Potential ODE Organizational Structure

Office of Diversity and Equity

Key:
- No Change
- Proposed New FTE
- Change in Position

University President

Vice President of Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
1 FTE

Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Assistant
1 FTE

Associate Vice President & Title IX Coordinator
1 FTE

Investigator
1 FTE

Director of Affirmative Action
1 FTE

Victim Advocacy & Training
1 FTE

Investigator
1 FTE

Women's Center Coordinator
1 FTE

University Assistant
1 FTE

Student Advocacy Services & Academic Support
1 FTE

Student Worker
Recommendations

Mediation Model

3. Revise the Office of the Ombudsperson model to an unbiased mediation model and clearly articulate this change to the wider campus community for greater utilization

➢ Consider reimagining the model of the Ombud to an in-house conflict resolution function to support faculty, staff, and students
   • This person should have no teaching or administrative responsibilities to ensure appropriate focus on the role and to prevent conflicts of interest from occurring
   • Reporting line should be to the President, consistent with best practices

➢ Ensure the new model includes reporting and tracking metrics to be able to view how many people utilize the services

➢ Communicate the new role and purpose of the revised function
   • Send out regular communications to the campus so there is continued awareness of the function and how best to use the services
   • Consider re-branding the name of the Office of the Ombudsperson to more accurately describe the new function of the unit
Recommendations

Investigative Model

4. Centralize and reconstruct the investigative model and consider expanding technology including case management capabilities, tracking, and reporting

- Following Sibson’s process mapping and redesign phase, clarify and document all points of entry for reporting and scenarios for intake of the investigative process
- Eliminate current use of single investigator model and adopt ATIXA Civil Rights Investigation Model
- Establish an effective case management approach
  - Start tracking data on claims and issues to allow identification of trends, common issues, and risk areas across campus
  - Clearly define roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities for those involved in the investigate process
- Identify a communication and feedback loop for people involved in the investigation process (e.g., target, advocate, and responding party)
- Utilize technology for case management consistently, rather than an excel spreadsheet and paper files
- Engage and collaborate with the University legal counsel office regularly to ensure that proper actions are taking place
5. Implement technologies and processes to reduce manual efforts and gain efficiencies and capacity

- A cross-functional working group of HR staff, ODE staff, and other relevant stakeholders will work with Sibson to map and reengineer processes in order to identify opportunities for gained efficiencies and reduced institutional risk.

- Sibson will comprehensively map processes using swim lane methodology to document current state processes and redesign future state processes.
  - Reduce handoffs and eliminate paper-based forms
  - Identify opportunities to automate processes with existing or new technology.

- Following the mapping and redesign process, create a plan to communicate and educate all impacted parties (faculty, staff, students, leadership, etc.) on changes to processes.

- Create a change management plan to ensure the campus fully adopts the process changes and integrate the changes with the culture transformation work.

- Clarify current HR IT system capabilities (Banner, ATS System) and needs for additional technology.
  - Explore additional technology solutions to gain efficiencies and elevate service levels.

- Automate and digitize employee files so they are no longer paper-based.
Establish a clear and compelling mission, vision, and strategic plan for Office of Diversity and Equity that includes an integrated and collaborative approach with key stakeholders:

- Commence a formal strategic planning initiative for ODE and HR that builds upon the current strengths and compliance focus, and establishes a broader and more strategic vision and plan for each area.
- Develop a comprehensive diversity strategic plan for the campus to guide future diversity and inclusion strategies, plans, and activities.
- Identify ODE connections to the broader campus strategic plan and Human Resources strategic plan.
- Establish a clear approach and plan to enhance collaborative partnerships with Human Resources, University Counsel, the Office of the Ombudsperson, and Student Affairs.
- Coordinate formalized goals and accountabilities for ODE leaders and staff.
- Establish formal mechanisms and approaches for ODE and Human Resources to collaborate and communicate to ensure sufficient integration of strategies and activities.
- Launch an effort to rebrand ODE and communicate the future mission and vision internally within the department and externally to the CCSU community.
- Address the physical space needs for ODE to foster greater collaboration, confidentiality, and the overall perception of the office.
Recommendations

HR Transformation

7. Launch a formal HR Transformation and strategic planning initiative to clearly establish the mission, vision, and goals for the HR function and implement necessary organizational changes

- Ensure high level, strategic HR leadership to help shepherd and drive a comprehensive transformation of the HR function
  - Attributes and experience should include developing or leading strategic HR functions and programs (organizational development, training and leadership development, workforce and succession planning, culture and engagement) and leading large-scale culture change

- Develop a clear mission and vision for HR to guide future services, priorities, and initiatives that align to the University’s vision and goals, as well as workforce needs

- Design and prioritize long-term strategic HR service offerings not fully addressed by the current HR model
  - New or expanded HR services and offerings may include: strategic recruiting and hiring, workforce and succession planning, expanded training and development, culture and engagement strategy and support

- Develop a staffing and development plan to support the future model

- Develop clearly defined roles and responsibilities across all HR functions

- Establish service level agreements for HR

- Establish an implementation plan with a timeline and key milestones for all changes
  - Rebrand HR and develop a change management and communication plan
Recommended HR Organizational Model*

Key:  
- No Change
- Proposed New FTE
- Change in Position

University President

Assoc. VP for Human Resources, CHRO 1 FTE

Administrative Operations Assistant 1 FTE

Director, HR Operations 1 FTE

Sr. Generalist, Benefits 1 FTE
- Benefits strategy development
- Benefits consultation
- Benefits administration

Payroll Specialist 1 FTE
- Manages time and labor entries
- Coordinates payroll tasks and activities with finance

Compensation and Classification Specialist 1 FTE
- Position Classification
- Compensation Analysis

Employee and Labor Relations Director 1 FTE
- Oversees labor relations and employee relations efforts

Training and Development Director 1 FTE
- Conduct training, workforce planning and culture initiatives

Employee Relations Specialist 1 FTE
- Manage employee relations issues for faculty and staff
- Performance management

Talent Acquisition Manager 1 FTE
- Recruiting strategy and consultation
- Diversity recruiting
- Workforce planning
- Succession planning
- Compensation strategy

University President
- HR and workforce strategy
- Strategic OD and workforce strategy development
- Consultative HR partner to leaders
- Culture and engagement strategies

Oversee day to day HR operations
Supervise HR team
Drive process and customer service improvements
Support VP of HR
Execute HR and workforce strategy

Payroll Specialist 1 FTE
- Manages time and labor entries
- Coordinates payroll tasks and activities with finance

HR Assoc. HRIS/Records Mgmt 1 FTE
- HR Systems
- HR Analytics
- HR reporting
- Process Improvement

Employee Relations Specialist 1 FTE
- Manage employee relations issues for faculty and staff
- Performance management

* This is intended to be an initial model for consideration. Reengineering and automation of HR processes and work will likely create capacity among HR staff to focus on other HR areas and support broader work within the unit. Accordingly, a final structure and staffing levels cannot be determined until processes are redesigned and potentially automated.
Consider the following changes with the input from the new Human Resources leader and in congruence with the process improvement and technology upgrade efforts:

- **Short-term**: Add a HR Operations Director to oversee day-to-day HR operations, supervise the HR team, drive process improvements, and execute the HR and workforce strategy. Timing: within eight months
- **Short-term**: Create an Employee Relations specialist position that will serve to support the Employee and Labor Relations Director, employee relations issues, and performance management. Timing: within eight months
- **Short-term**: Create a position that provides training and development for employees and leads culture initiatives. Longer-term consider adding additional training roles. Timing: within eight months
- **Mid-term**: Refocus a role to be a specialist in benefits strategy development, benefits consultation, and benefits administration. Timing: eight to eighteen months
- **Mid-term**: Adjust the current classification role to be inclusive of classification and compensation. Timing: eight to eighteen months
- **Long-term**: Evolve the current recruiting role to be more a more expansive and strategic Talent Acquisition role with duties that include recruiting strategy and consultation, diversity recruiting, workforce planning, and succession planning. Timing: eighteen to thirty-six months
- **Long-term**: Create or repurpose a role to focus on HR systems, HR analytics and reporting, and records management (note: this should occur in tandem with technology improvement efforts). Timing: eighteen to thirty-six months
Overview of Next Steps

Suggested Steps for Addressing Recommendations

0–8 Months
- Communicate findings and recommendations with leaders and key stakeholders
- Launch culture survey and identify priorities
- Launch the Human Resources transformation effort
- Confirm the new model for the Office of the Ombudsperson
- Launch culture transformation effort
- Finalize model and staffing plan for ODE and Ombud
- Conduct assessment of Women’s Center

8–18 Months
- Commence the formal strategic planning initiative for ODE and begin hiring additional staff
- Design and begin implementation of new HR model
- Implement and roll out newly designed processes
- Identify and begin to implement systems and technologies to improve efficiencies
- Begin to incorporate longer-term strategic HR services
- Implement new Ombudsperson model
- Launch culture transformation plans and projects

18–36 Months
- Implement and brand new HR model and capabilities
- Implement technology improvements
- Support ongoing university-wide culture and engagement efforts
- Provide change management leadership and support for evolving the organization and culture