



Traveling Through

Uncharted Territory

SWASFAA | TASFAA
Conference 2023



Succession Planning, Retention, and Diversity: A Holistic Approach to Creating a Synergistic Financial Aid Office

The University of Texas at Austin





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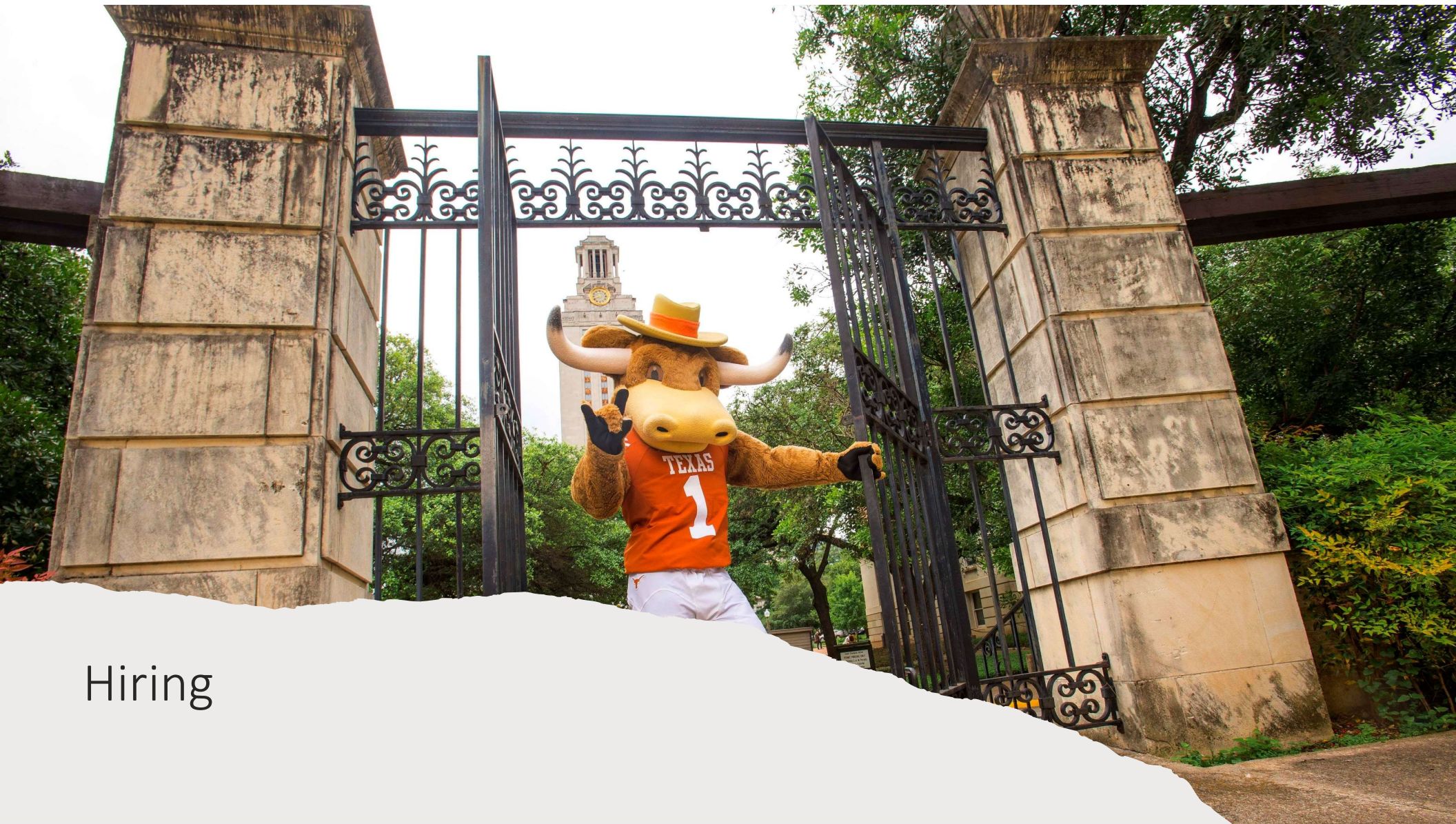
Overview

- Overview of our Office
- Our Hiring Process
- Our Training Plan
- Our Professional Development and Succession Planning
- Q & A

“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.” – John F. Kennedy

- Move from a legacy system to a new system ([Student Financial Planning – SFP](#))
- Changes in the FAFSA with the FAFSA Simplification Act
- Implementation of a new Scholarship System - [LASSO](#)

- Since 2021, we have added 26 new positions in the office.
- A new organizational chart.
- Since 2020, we have worked either fully remote, or in a flex hybrid model.



Hiring

“I am convinced that nothing we do is more important than hiring and developing people. At the end of the day, you bet on people, not on strategies.” – Lawrence Bossidy, former CEO of Honeywell International



The Importance of a well-developed job description



Thinking about the “minimum” and “preferred” qualifications for the position



Selecting a diverse committee of peers and supervisors



Developing interview questions that assist in finding the “perfect” candidate that meets your expectations set in the job description



Reduce barriers for candidates by critically thinking through what you “need” to find that perfect candidate



Don’t make the selection in a vacuum – utilize your committee and trust their input

The Job Description & Qualification Requirements

- Ensure that the job description reflects the actual work that will be done.
- Establish realistic qualifications for the position.



Selecting a Hiring Committee & Consistent Interview Question

- Empower your team to assist with selecting a new staff member
- Ensure that the committee assists with developing the interview questions
 - Questions should be designed to identify the person that meets the job description.
 - Quantity of questions should be carefully timed out so that all questions can be asked of each candidate during the allotted interview time.
 - Ask the candidates if there is anything they were prepared to share, but you did not ask during the interview.
 - Allow the candidate time to ask questions.





Reducing Barriers and Personal Bias

- Some requirements may be a barrier for some underrepresented groups based on gender, ethnicity, or if they are an applicant who came from a low socioeconomic background.
- A diverse committee of 3-5 members help neutralize personal biases.
- Require that the committee member “rate” the applicant at the end of the interview.



Training



Importance of Training Development

- Student Financial Trainer Coordinator III,
- University of Texas at Austin, Office of Scholarship & Financial Aid
- 15 years experience in financial aid

Training Benefits

- New employees are aware of the departmental goals, expectations, and requirements.
- Availability of tools needed to perform their jobs and helping them understand how they fit into the larger organization.
- New employees feel welcomed.





Customized Training

Customized Training for each new employee:

- Training is flexible, task-oriented and ongoing by accommodate each new hire's preferred learning method by offering both visual and reading training material.
- Customized training shows how an employee learns best, providing incentives for getting them up to speed, and offering continual learning opportunities to enhance career growth.

Did You Know?

- A poor onboarding process can hurt employee morale, engagement and confidence, leading to missed revenue targets.





Increased Consistency

- An effective training program delivers consistency.
- Consistency is important because is:
- Reduces uncertainty
- Builds trust
- Improves efficiency
- Establishes the institutions vision, goals, and strategies to achieve those goals.

Onboarding Training Overview

•New employees receives system training:

- Mainframe Commands tutorial
- WIKI
- FAST
- JIRA
- Provide- FSA Basics Training Overview provide pre-recorded trainings
- Register-NASFAA 4 core exams and review NASFAA Study Guides



Enhance Reputation

- A strong training program is a great way to improve your institutions brand and reputation.
- Employees want to have access to ongoing training and development opportunities.





Benefits of Training Development

- Retains Employees
- Develops Future Leaders
- Empowers Employees
- Boosts Workplace Engagement
- Builds Workplace Relationships

Knowledge Check

- Check new employee's understanding, post-training, by assigning assessments about the training they received.
- Using learning reinforcement boosts retention and helps to uncover if employees feel comfortable with what they learned or if they need more training.





New Hire Feedback

- Solicit feedback from onboarded and trained new hires to refine and improve our hiring process.
- As OFSA grows and evolves, so should your new-hire training plan.
- As a result, our retention rates have proven to be successful.



Professional Development & Succession Planning

Developing Future Leaders

- Provide opportunities for staff to learn different aspects within the office
- Time Management
- Assign Special Projects
- Utilize Professional Development Tools
 - Courses or Modules provided by HR
 - LinkedIn Learning





Professional Development Plans

- Develop professional development plans for established and seasoned staff members
- Shows that Leadership is invested in their career development
- Have them involved in the process of developing their own individual plans



Development Opportunities - Beyond the Walls of Financial Aid

- Encourage staff to join committees across campus
- Staff can create a financial aid newsletter for electronic distribution across campus
- Have Financial Aid Symposiums and present topics of interest for campus colleagues



Development Opportunities - State Associations

- Encourage staff to volunteer for committees
- Take leadership roles within committees
- Submit presentation proposals

Other Development Opportunities

- Recognize and cultivate supervisors and office leaders
 - NASFAA Leadership Conference
 - College Board's Enrollment Leadership Academy





Developing Financial Aid Professionals for the Future

- Give them the tools and training to have a career in financial aid
- Benefits of investing in the training and development of financial aid careers
 - Remain in the Financial Aid Office
 - Our office reaps the benefits of their professional development and we create a succession pipeline for promoting within the office
 - Remain on the Campus
 - We have provided them the skills to be an advocate for financial aid in other areas within an institution
 - Remain in the Financial Aid Industry
 - If they choose a career in financial aid, they are equipped to become a director SOMEWHERE



Questions?

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Thank you!

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