



EAB

Addressing Enrollment Staffing Challenges

with Northern Arizona University

Adult Learner Recruitment

Today's Presenters



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A public research university based in Flagstaff, Arizona, with a total enrollment of about 30,000 students

NAU Graduate College

- Provides institutional oversight for over 130 graduate programs
- 4,500 registered graduate students
- 20 statewide campuses and online options, allowing for greater flexibility





Education's Trusted Partner to Help Schools and Students Thrive



Your Imperatives Determine Ours

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

Prepare Your Institution for the Future

Executive guidance rooted in research to support your strategic priorities

MARKETING AND ENROLLMENT

Achieve Your Enrollment and Growth Goals

Tailored partnerships powered by a recruitment ecosystem with unrivaled reach to enroll your future classes

STUDENT SUCCESS

Build a Student-Centric Campus

Technology trusted by 850 schools to retain, graduate, and empower more students

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Advance DEI on Campus and in Your Community

Technology, research, and bold initiatives to strengthen your DEI strategy and eliminate equity gaps

DATA AND ANALYTICS

Embrace Digital Transformation

Data and analytics solutions built for higher education to guide decisions and accelerate innovation

We partner with **2,500+** institutions to accelerate progress and enable lasting change.

95%+ of our partners return to us year after year because of results we achieve, together.



Understanding the Staffing Crisis

SECTION

1

Pandemic Forces Give Higher Ed Whiplash



Talent Shortages Force Shift From Cost-Containment to Asset Management

Labor as Our Biggest Cost Center

Focused on surviving early-pandemic revenue losses

"How can we encourage early retirement?"

"Where can we be more efficient?"

**2020:
Pandemic Scarcity**

-11%

Workers in Higher Ed¹

**2022:
The Great Resignation**

"How can we attract talent?"

"How do we retain our people?"

Labor as a Strategic Asset

Growing your institution in an era of labor shortage, inflation, and competition

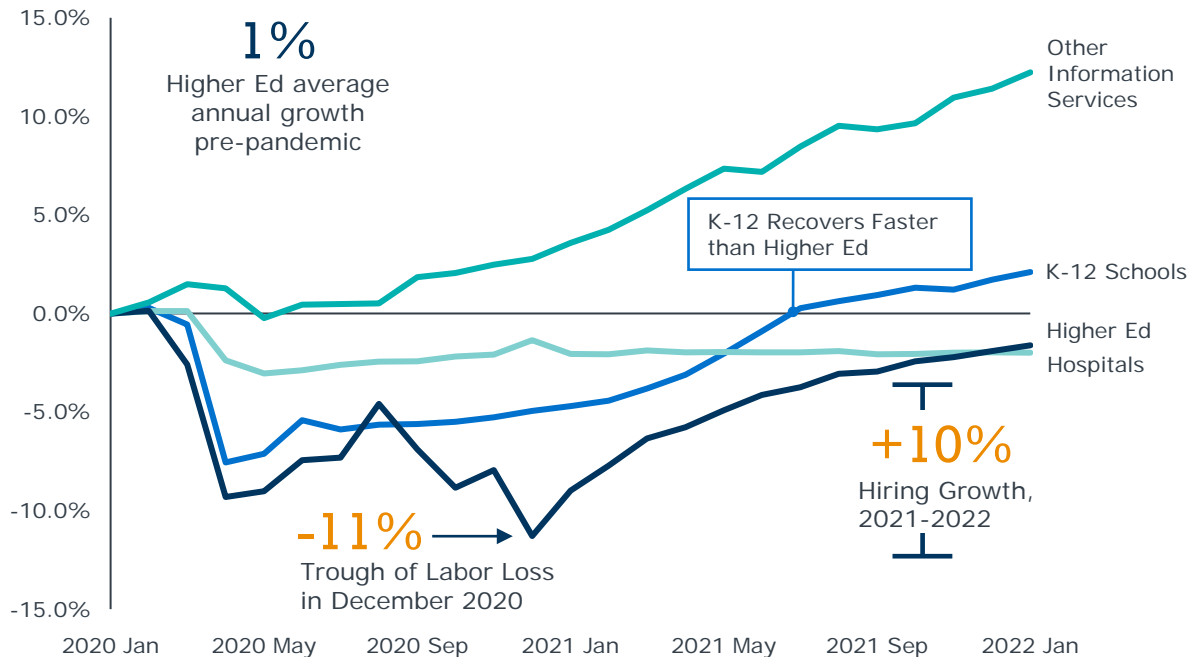
1) Estimated loss of workers in the college and university industry from January 2020-January 2021 (lowest employment level during pandemic)

Higher Ed Experiences Growing Pains



Historically High Hiring Growth Stresses Higher Ed HR

Percent change in total employees from January 2020, seasonally adjusted



Accounting for Your Vanishing Workforce

Five Key Factors at Play



Remote work has created a **national marketplace** for labor



The number of working-age people in the United States is **shrinking**



Projected deficit of 6 million workers nationally by 2028



Employees developed a taste for **flexible work** during the pandemic



Higher ed **lags industry** on compensation and flexible work

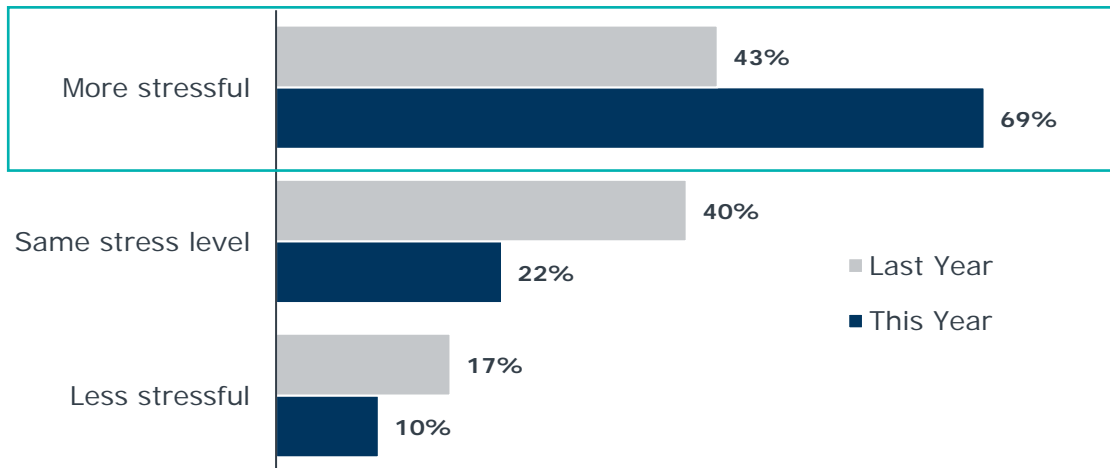


Downward spiral of worsening admissions work conditions and staff resignations

Grad Enrollment Leaders Report Heightened Stress

Q: How stressful is your current work situation compared with last year and pre-COVID-19?

Results from EAB and NAGAP flash poll, January 2022



Half of Grad Enrollment Leaders Considering Leaving



Q: At this time, are you considering leaving your current position?

Results from EAB and NAGAP flash poll, January 2022

46%

Reported they are open to or considering leaving their current position

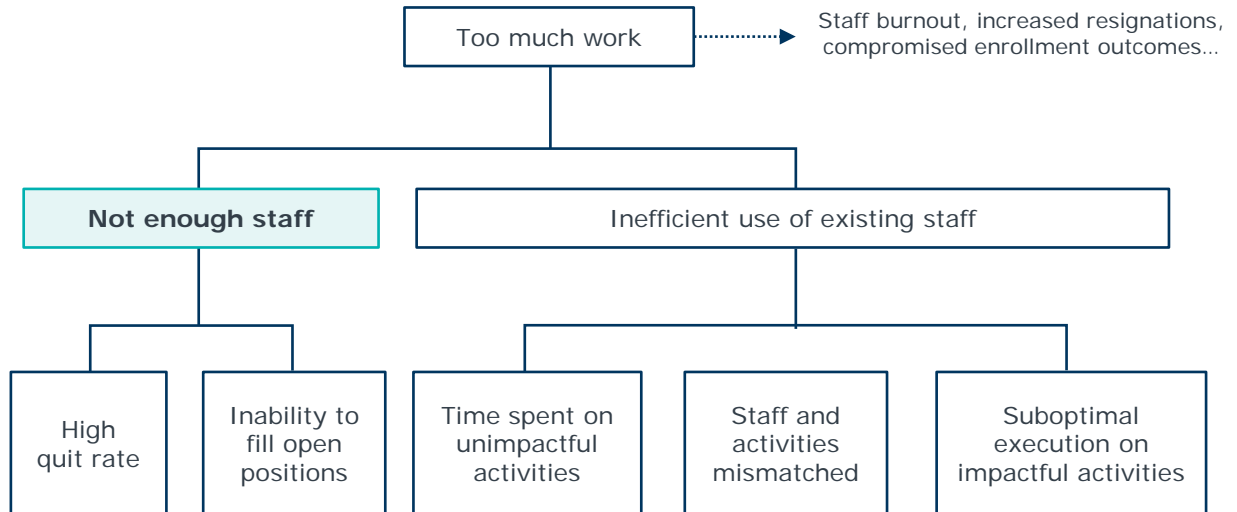


	Percentage
No, not at this time	54%
Yes , for a position at a different college/university	15%
Yes , for a position outside higher education	14%
Yes , for another position at my institution	6%
Yes , considering all options	5%
Not currently looking, but open to leaving	3%
Considering retiring	3%

A Root-Cause Perspective

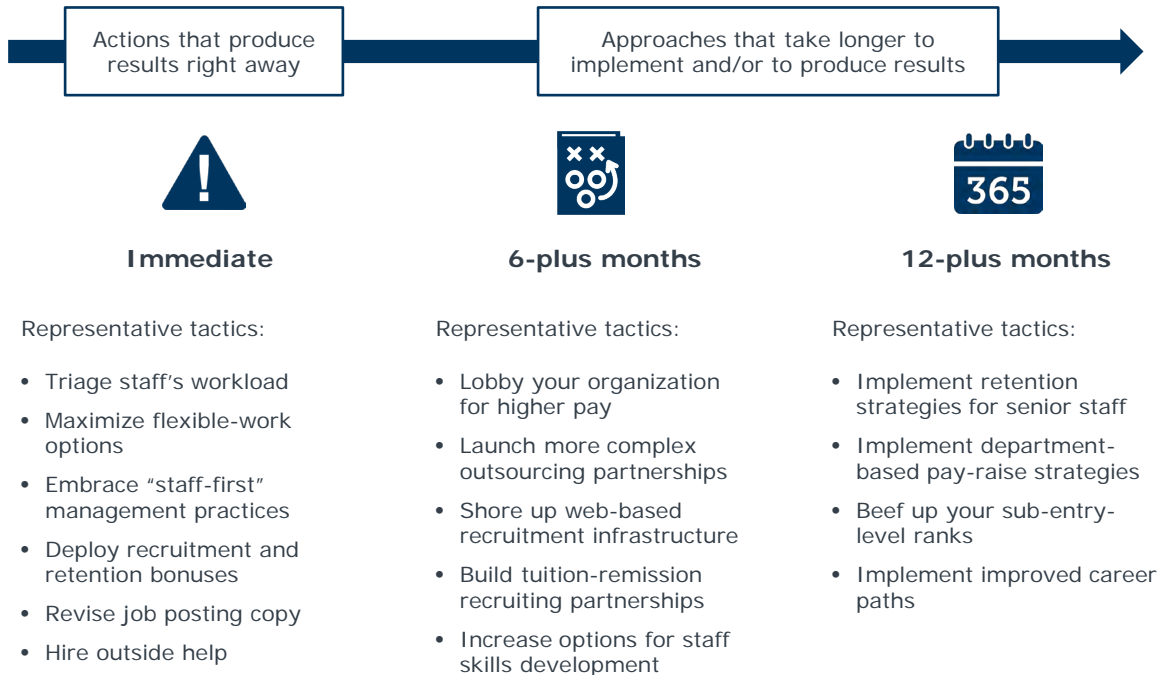
Identifying Areas of Focus for Potential Solutions

Staffing Shortfalls in Context



A Staged Approach

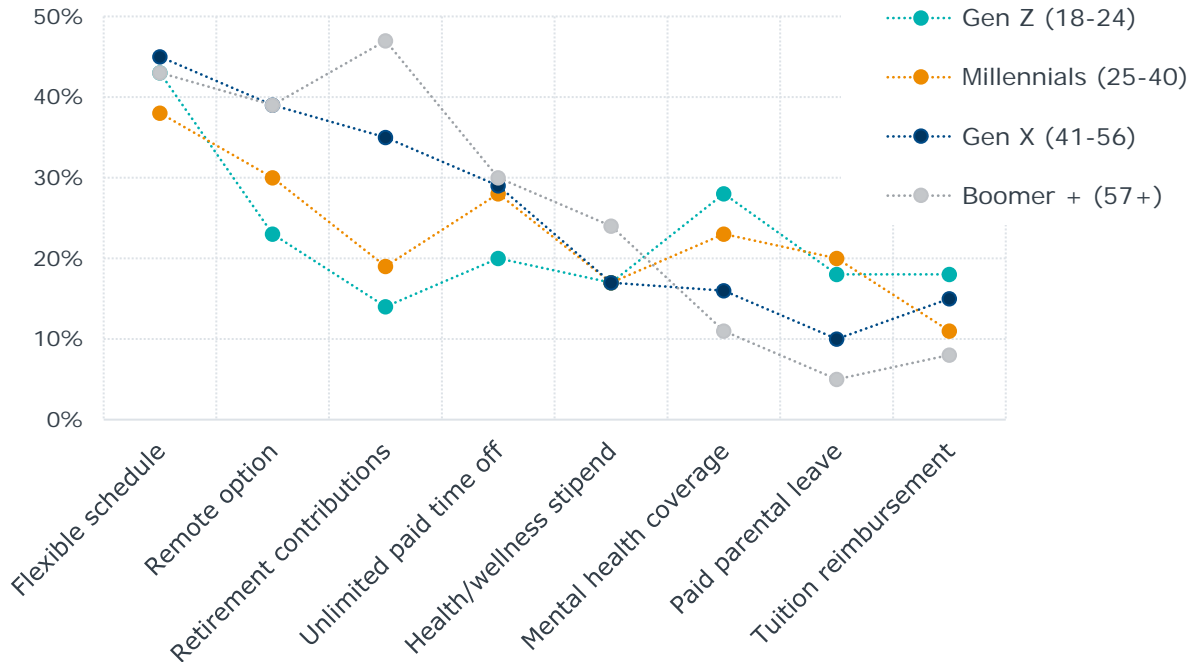
Considering Lead Times for Implementation and Impact



Understanding What Staff Want

Which Benefits Matter Most to Prospective Employees?

% of Surveyed Individuals Identifying Benefit as Having the “Most Influence”





3 Strategies for Solving Workforce Challenges

How Northern Arizona University Improved Staff
Satisfaction and Retention

SECTION

2

- 1 **Maximize flexible work options**
- 2 Ensure appropriate compensation
- 3 Create an engaging work environment

A Fundamental Disconnect



Employers and Employees Are Misaligned on Remote Work

Percentage of Surveyed Employers and Employees, by Remote-Work Preference¹

	Full-time on site	Hybrid	Full-time remote
What employers say	38%	45%	16%
What employees want	26%	30%	44%



11%

of university presidents say
>50% of staff will be permitted to work
remotely at least 2 days per week

1) Not specific to higher education.

An Inherently In-Person Function?

Offering Meaningful Flexible Work Opportunities for Flexible Work?

Three Ways to Make More Options Available Within Admissions Teams and Beyond

Mostly in person  Mostly remote

Adjust balance between in-person and flexible recruitment **modalities**



All roles have a sizable in-person component

vs.



In-person work concentrated in dedicated roles

Consolidate in-person responsibilities into **dedicated roles**



Mostly in-person



Mostly remote

Maximize match with personal **preferences**

A Flexible-First Perspective

A Constraint-Based Approach That Accepts Flexibility as Default

Staff Allowed to Choose Where They Work, Except as Below



Calendar-based constraints

Staff in certain roles must work from the office at certain times of year (e.g., advising, orientation)



Role-based constraints

There is no way for the essential work that some roles entail to be done remotely



Task-based constraints

Some activities, such as leading campus tours, only can be performed in person, on campus



Personal preference

Some staff prefer to perform, in person, work that could be just as easily done remotely

Same logic can be applied to aspects of flexible work not related to location (e.g., scheduling)



Implications and Campus Perspective

From Northern Arizona University

Creating Flexible Work Policies to Meet Staff Needs



- ▶ Early adopters of a hybrid first approach



- ▶ Introduction of the three-day weekend, regularly giving staff summer Fridays off through **True Blue Fridays**



- ▶ Additional days of PTO around winter holidays and for community service

1

Maximize flexible work options

2

Ensure appropriate compensation

3

Create an engaging work environment

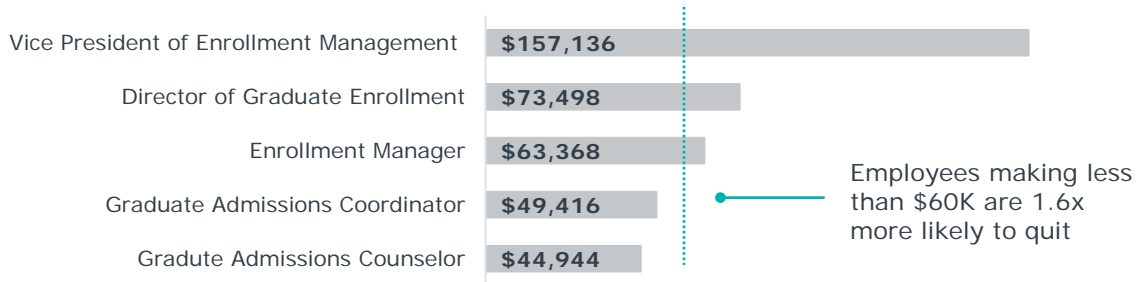
A Pay Problem for Enrollment and Admissions



Low Compensation Creates Flight Risk

Typical Salaries Put Many Roles in or near the Danger Zone

A "hardship threshold" of \$60,000



Industry Throwing Dollars at Prospective Hires

% of Organizations Taking Specific Measures to Combat Recruitment Problems

50%

Offering pay higher than market rate

42%

Offering retention bonuses

29%

Beating or matching counter-offers received by potential hires

Source: "The Truth About What Employees Want," Mercer, 2021; "Real-time insights survey: Inflation is hitting Americans hard —how are employers responding?," Mercer, 2022; [Salary.com](#); [ZipRecruiter.com](#); EAB research and analysis.

Lobby Your Institution for Higher Pay

Information to Share with Your Organization's Paymasters



- ✓ Number of graduate admissions positions **unfilled** for 3+ months
- ✓ Current **quit rate** versus historical
- ✓ Number of **failed searches** in past 12 months
- ✓ **Negative impact** on enrollment processes/outcomes
- ✓ **Market context** on the staffing crisis
- ✓ **Recruitment/retention enhancements** you've made
- ✓ **Cost cuts** you've made to help fund positions
- ✓ How much **revenue** your staff bring in
- ✓ Insights from exit interviews with **departing staff**
- ✓ Feedback from **failed hires**
- ✓ **Compensation** benchmarks
- ✓ What your institution pays for comparable **non-graduate admissions roles**
- ✓ What **industry** pays individuals with comparable backgrounds

e.g., program coordinator,
graduate advising

A Revenue-Based Argument

Highlight the Dollars Your Team Brings In

Scripting



“Even if you were to assume that our admissions counselors only influence 20% of enrolling students’ decision to pick our school, that would still mean that every one of our counselors locks in **\$486,000** in revenue for the institution in each enrollment cycle. And that doesn’t count the large additional amount of nontuition revenue those students generate.”

Run the numbers for your institution

Average amount of tuition revenue each of your counselors secures for your institution every enrollment cycle

$$\left(\begin{array}{l} \# \text{ of enrolled} \\ \text{students per} \\ \text{counselor} \end{array} \right) \times \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{Average net tuition} \\ \text{revenue per student} \\ \text{per semester} \end{array} \right) \times \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{Average number of} \\ \text{semesters a student} \\ \text{spends at your institution} \end{array} \right) \times \left(\begin{array}{l} 20\% \end{array} \right)$$

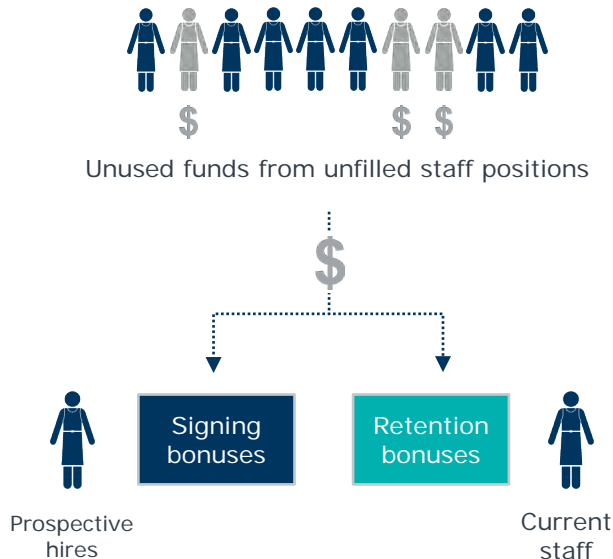


Percentage of student decisions influenced by counselors

A Role for Nonrecurring Payments

A Flexible Tool for Temporary Relief

Example: Lapsed Salary Turned into Bonuses



* *A note on lapsed-salary funds*
Policies regarding allowable uses of lapsed salary differ by institution, with some HR teams being more restrictive than others



Implications and Campus Perspective

From Northern Arizona University

Increasing Compensation to Stay Competitive



Raising Salaries by 2025

- ▶ Keeping up with increasing cost of living in Flagstaff
- ▶ Stay competitive with other institutions and private companies



Issuing a One-Time Bonus

- ▶ Making staff feel appreciated
- ▶ Giving institution flexibility to provide additional money when funds are more liquid

- 1 Maximize flexible work options
- 2 Ensure appropriate compensation
- 3 **Create an engaging work environment**

What Makes Staff Want to Stay?

Three Pillars of Staff Morale Over Which Managers Have Direct Control



Ensure Effective Communication

Three Keys to Optimal Performance



Careful listening

- Check in with your staff regularly
- Ask about their goals and how your team can improve
- Let your staff do most of the talking and make it your aim to understand them as deeply as possible



Acknowledging staff accomplishments

- Celebrate team and individual achievements
- Highlight noteworthy and interesting successes, especially generalizable innovations worthy of emulation
- Give credit where credit is due



Contextualization

- Show your staff how their efforts promote the team's goals
- Situate their work in the context of admissions as a profession.



Implications and Campus Perspective

From Northern Arizona University



Giving Staff Members a Voice

- ▶ Creating a university graduate committee to allow NAU staff from across the institution to voice their questions and concerns



Providing Trainings and Workshops

- ▶ Ensuring all staff have a good base understanding of processes by hosting training sessions and workshops



Offering Child-Care Options

- ▶ Considering expanding our child-care facility so staff and faculty can benefit from this amenity as well, allowing them to be focused and engaged

Three Takeaways from Today's Session

1

Seize the initiative

Much of the responsibility for staffing has traditionally fallen outside of the admissions team; involving yourself more directly in staff recruitment and retention efforts can expedite much-needed change.

2

Embrace a staff-first perspective

Channeling your team members' point of view can suggest innovations that might not otherwise have occurred to you—ones that can have benefits beyond staff recruitment and retention.

3

Blank-slate your admissions approach

We are in a time of unprecedented and likely permanent change; rethinking your admissions approach from scratch can help ensure you remain in step with radically altered market conditions.

Q&A



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