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I. Executive Summary

This report provides results of the final phase of the University of Iowa’s Employment Practices Review, which covered employment practices related to equitable treatment of employees in protected classes in academic and administrative units. For purposes of this review, administrative units included the Office of the President, the Office of the General Counsel, External Relations, Human Resources, Student Life, Finance and Operations, the Office of the Vice President for Research, and UI Health Care including the College of Medicine (UIHC).1 Academic units included the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health, Law, and Dentistry; the Graduate College; the Office of the Provost; and the University Libraries. Collectively, the reviewed units included 18,720 employees who were benefits-eligible and worked at least half-time.

We reviewed results of existing employee surveys and assessments that included questions about workplace climate and equitable treatment, and we interviewed one or more of the human resources employees in each unit. We also invited employees to contact us if they wanted to provide information and concerns regarding treatment of employees in protected classes. A small number of employees responded to this outreach and shared their concerns about possible retaliation and treatment they believed was based on age, gender, race, disability, and other protected characteristics.2 In our interviews with human resources personnel, we discussed the areas of concern identified by employees. We also inquired about specific challenges in the unit; complaints, issues, and concerns related to equitable treatment of employees; recruiting and onboarding practices; compensation practices; and performance management.

The information we collected from human resources, surveys and assessments, and employees indicated that the University has improved consistency in its handling of family and medical leave, recruiting, and disability accommodation, and University leadership is making efforts to recruit diverse employees. The information collected also pointed to areas of concern where we recommend the University consider changes.

First, with respect to recruiting and hiring, we recommend the University evaluate the policy and process of granting waivers to the formal employee search process to ensure waivers are granted consistent with the University’s goals to retain and attract a diverse workforce.

Second, many of the employees who participated in the review process said they feared retaliation from their supervisors if they complained. We recommend the University reinforce with additional training the policy prohibiting retaliation, so employees feel safe raising concerns with their supervisors and unit leadership.

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1 The Athletic Department was reviewed in previous phases.
2 The University sent the outreach e-mail to 18,720 employees (all benefits-eligible employees who worked at least half-time in the reviewed units). Of the employees who received the e-mail, 102 responded and were interviewed, and 57 of the employees who responded had concerns regarding equitable treatment of employees in protected classes.
Third, there is confusion regarding the factors considered in setting initial salaries and responsibility for ensuring compliance with University policies regarding compensation. It would be helpful for hiring managers, human resources, and the compensation and classification division to establish clear workflow, communication, and division of responsibilities for setting initial salaries.

Fourth, with respect to the human resources employees in each unit, we recommend increased emphasis on handling complaints and recognizing protected class concerns. The review indicated that some human resources employees need additional training in this area.

Our report describes the background related to this phase of the review and then provides our review and recommendations for administrative and academic units.
II. Background and Overview

On August 8, 2019, the University announced the final phase of its Employment Practices Review would include academic units, administrative units, and UIHC. The announcement specified the following steps for the review:

- Review results of university-administered surveys and assessments and identify areas of concern related to each unit.
- Review any concerns received from unit employees regarding practices related to equitable treatment.
- Interview human resources leads for each unit regarding areas of concern and unit-specific practices.
- Prepare a report with analysis and recommendations.

We completed each step as described below.

A. Review Survey Results

The University periodically requests feedback and information from employees through the Working at Iowa survey and a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Campus Climate survey. The University last administered its Working at Iowa survey to employees in 2018. The results are available at: https://hr.uiowa.edu/administrative-services/working-iowa. The 2018 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Campus Climate Survey results are available at: https://diversity.uiowa.edu/sites/diversity.uiowa.edu/files/faculty_and_staff_dei_report.pdf.

We reviewed these resources and considered the survey results when choosing topics for our interviews with human resources employees.

B. Review Employee Concerns

During this external review, benefits-eligible employees who worked at least half-time were invited to participate by sharing concerns regarding equitable treatment in the workplace.

On August 9, 2019, Cheryl Reardon, the University’s Chief Human Resources Officer and Associate Vice President, sent an e-mail message to 15,019 employees in administrative units, including UIHC employees, inviting them to contact us to report concerns regarding equitable treatment of employees. Reardon sent a similar message on September 9, 2019, to 3,701 employees within the University’s academic units. The e-mail message to administrative unit employees stated:

3 The University’s press release and reports from earlier phases of the review are available at: https://now.uiowa.edu/2019/08/ui-moves-next-stages-employment-practices-review.
Colleagues:

In 2017, the University of Iowa hired Fredrikson & Byron, P.A. to conduct an independent review of employment policies and practices. Your unit of employment is currently being reviewed. As part of that review, you are invited to report information, insights, or concerns you may have regarding equitable treatment of employees.

Please contact Fredrikson & Byron by calling 515-242-8948 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. before August 30, 2019 if you would like your input to be included in the review. You will need to provide your name and telephone number and specify that you are an employee of the University of Iowa. You will also need to provide your unit of employment. Anonymous reports will not be accepted for purposes of this review, but the report will not include identifying information.

Additional information regarding the Employment Practices Review is available at https://hr.uiowa.edu/practices-review. If you have questions about the process, please feel free to follow up with University Human Resources.

Cheryl H. Reardon
Chief Human Resources Officer &
Associate Vice President
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Employees who called were scheduled for a telephone interview. Interview times were available during weekdays and on weekday evenings and weekends if needed. During the interviews, callers were asked to share information regarding policies or practices concerning treatment of employees in protected classes. Callers were encouraged to utilize the University’s resources available at https://diversity.uiowa.edu if they wished to make a complaint or pursue resolution through the University.

As a result of this outreach, we interviewed 102 University of Iowa employees, a small number considering the 18,720 employees who received the e-mail. Of the 102 employees we interviewed, only 57 stated concerns of inequitable treatment based on protected class. Even when employees stated they did not have concerns about inequitable treatment based on protected class, we independently considered whether the information provided was within the scope of the review. Because these reports were anecdotal and contained only the employee’s individual perception of the situations related, they do not necessarily represent the experiences of other employees at the University. At the same time, such reports provide insight into areas of the University where inequitable treatment of employees may exist and practices can be improved. In all cases, callers provided valuable insight into the University’s employment practices.

C. Interview Human Resources Leaders for Each Employing Unit

After reviewing the information from the University’s surveys and assessments, and interviewing employees who responded to the request to report concerns, the external review
proceeded with interviews of human resources personnel responsible for each unit, the senior HR leaders. Senior HR leaders report to unit leadership and to the Associate Vice President for Human Resources. Their responsibilities include the following:

- Interpret and promote equitable application of human resource policies and procedures for the college/division. Ensure college/division and department policies, practices and programs meet legal/regulatory standards and are in conformance with University of Iowa policies, leads informal complaint investigations.

- Provide leadership on issues related to organizational culture and values that attract, retain, and motivate quality people (e.g. diversity, managing change, promoting development, civility, and work life balance).

A complete list of senior HR leader responsibilities is available at [https://hr.uiowa.edu/administrative-services/campus-hr-community/senior-hr-leader-roles-responsibilities](https://hr.uiowa.edu/administrative-services/campus-hr-community/senior-hr-leader-roles-responsibilities).

Each of these interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes. The interviews varied because the units themselves vary widely in number and type of employees, but in each interview, we asked about specific challenges in the unit; complaints, issues, and concerns related to protected class; recruiting and onboarding practices; compensation practices; and performance management. We also interviewed the Director and Associate Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (EOD) about the role of that office in handling complaints.
III. Review and Recommendations

A. Administrative Units

Administrative Units reviewed included the Office of the President, the Office of the General Counsel, External Relations, Human Resources, Student Life, Finance and Operations, the Office of the Vice President for Research, and UI Health Care including the College of Medicine (UIHC). We received calls from employees in most of these administrative units and we interviewed the senior HR leaders for each unit. The administrative units reviewed employed 15,019 benefits-eligible employees who worked at least half-time.

The results of our review and our recommendations are organized into five general categories: Recruiting and Hiring, Compensation, Performance Evaluations, Human Resources, and Equitable Treatment.

1. Recruiting and Hiring

   Each administrative unit of the University has unique challenges when it comes to recruiting. Units with few employees and low rates of employee turnover, like the Office of the President and the Office of the General Counsel, have limited opportunities to recruit new employees to diversify the workforce. Some units highly value previous experience within the University as a helpful, if not essential, qualification, further limiting the possibility of recruiting new and diverse employees. UIHC has difficulty attracting enough employees in the nursing and coding areas. To counteract these challenges, senior HR leaders encourage unit leadership to conduct a needs assessment before posting an open position to determine whether the qualifications and requirements in the job description can be modified to make the position accessible to a wider variety of candidates and increase the diversity of the candidate pool. Within UIHC, a human resources representative reviews the job description for every job posted.

   The 2018 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) survey indicated employees generally agree the University is making genuine efforts to recruit and retain women and underrepresented minorities, but two of the most commonly cited obstacles to diversity, according to the survey results, were hiring bias and a lack of effort to diversify the applicant pool. Accordingly, our HR interviews and conversations with employees often focused on the recruiting and hiring processes used by the University.

   Systemic changes in recruiting and hiring have occurred recently and are ongoing. A new online platform, Oracle Talent Acquisition Cloud (OTAC), was implemented to manage the advertising, application, recruitment, and selection processes in the administrative units and in UIHC. Additionally, each administrative unit now has a designated recruiter to proactively seek out applicants and build a diverse applicant pool for open positions and the University is piloting supervisor training that includes techniques for eliminating bias in hiring.

   Employees with experience using OTAC spoke positively about the increased centralization of the recruiting process, but some were concerned that the user interface for OTAC is not easily accessible for employees and applicants with limited English language skills. We recommend the University evaluate OTAC’s accessibility and determine whether additional assistance or system changes are necessary. If there is assistance available already, we
recommend the University undertake additional outreach to applicants and employees to make sure they are knowledgeable about these resources.

Several employees reported they were concerned the University often fills leadership positions without a formal external search. In some cases, employees agreed that selected internal candidates had the requisite skills or qualifications, but they still questioned the decision to exclude external candidates or even other current University employees. When a position is not open to external candidates or any internal candidate, the University may lose an opportunity to promote or hire an individual in a protected class.

There are good reasons for waiving the formal search process in certain situations. The open position might require a skill set that would be difficult to find outside the University or the position may be filled internally to retain the employee being promoted or to fill the position quickly for operational reasons. UIHC, for example, requests search waivers when a need is immediate and critical for patient care. The Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (EOD) must approve search waivers, but no EOD approval is required if the search is merely restricted to internal candidates, and EOD approval is no longer required for any step of the search process for staff positions if a formal external search is used.

In addition to search waivers and internal searches, there are other methods to fill positions or re-align job duties without an external search. An employee may maintain their current job classification but be assigned additional responsibilities (Career Advancement), a position may be moved from one job family to another (Career Shift), or an employee may move to a different level within a job family (Career Promotion). Information gathered indicated some units may be employing these methods instead of opening positions to external applicants. There may be good reasons for doing this, but employees questioned how the University justified exceptions for some and not for others, and some employees suspected that positions were awarded based on personal preferences and connections.

We recognize the University has unique obstacles when it sets out to do an external search and there are often valid reasons for approving a waiver so a position can be filled without a formal and external search. Even so, we recommend the University re-examine the criteria and approval process for waiving the formal search process to maximize the potential for all qualified internal and external candidates to be considered when positions are available.

With the implementation of OTAC to manage the recruiting and hiring process, the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity was removed from the approval path at certain stages of the process. Instead, EOD may review or audit search processes after they occur. This change has improved the efficiency of the process, but it is not clear how or whether EOD’s post-search findings have an impact on the recruiting and hiring process. We recommend EOD and Human Resources assess how to use EOD’s reviews to improve equitable treatment during the search process.

2. Compensation

Compensation, like all terms and conditions of employment, must be fair regardless of an employee’s gender, race, age, or other protected class membership. University of Iowa salary information is publicly reported, so employees have access to compensation data. During our
review, fewer than 10 employees reported concerns about compensation and those employees complained that they make less money than a co-worker with fewer responsibilities, less experience, or less education. Senior HR leaders noted it is difficult, with limited resources, to meet competing demands to offer salaries to attract new employees and to appropriately provide salary increases to existing employees.

We could not investigate or substantiate any employee’s concerns without sharing identifying information with the University but we did talk to senior HR leaders and the director of the compensation and classification division about the University’s policies and practices to promote equitable compensation.

The compensation and classification division works with EOD to review employee compensation on an annual basis with the goal of detecting andremedying instances of inequitable compensation. If disparities in pay are discovered among individuals with the same or similar jobs, the employing unit is notified and asked to justify the pay difference or correct the issue by increasing an employee’s compensation. The employing unit is required to report to the compensation and classification division the action taken to remedy the issue.

The compensation and classification division also reviews initial salary offers to check that initial salaries are within the median zone for the position according to market data. The division will reject salary offers that fall outside the advertised range for a position. Employing units are not allowed to offer an initial salary higher than the advertised range because the position may have attracted a larger, and perhaps more diverse, applicant pool if a different salary range had been initially advertised.

The reviews described above are conducted by individuals outside the employing unit. Senior HR leaders within the unit only become involved once a problem is detected. This allows an objective review of the employing unit’s compensation structure, but there is little communication between the employing units and the compensation and classification division regarding salaries and compensation structure. Additionally, there is a lack of clarity as to who is responsible for setting initial salaries.

Among the senior HR leaders, a minority believed it was the sole responsibility of the compensation and classification division to ensure initial salaries are equitable as compared to other employees in the unit. The compensation and classification division, however, indicated its only responsibility is to check that initial salaries are within market range and the range advertised. The compensation and classification division does not review all unit salaries and job duties to determine whether an initial salary offer is appropriate at the time of hire.

We recommend the University review and clarify the roles and responsibilities of hiring managers, human resources, and the compensation and classification division as they relate to initial salary offers and provide additional training for those roles if necessary.

4 In order to adequately investigate concerns from employees, we would need information regarding employee performance, job duties, education, and experience that is not publicly available and was not available to us as part of this review.
3. Performance Evaluations

Performance evaluations can be a critical tool for improving performance and developing careers, including for women and underrepresented minority employees. The University employs a uniform performance evaluation format for all employees and provides the opportunity for each employment unit to add a section tailored to its needs. A small number of employees said evaluations are inconsistently administered and supervisors are not accountable for providing meaningful feedback.

Our interviews with senior HR leaders confirmed that supervisors have discretion in the performance evaluation process, and it is difficult to catch situations where supervisors fail to provide meaningful feedback. The University does, however, monitor to make sure that supervisors complete the online evaluation process for each employee and the completion rates are impressive. For UIHC, evaluations were due in March 2019, and the completion rate was 99.68%. Performance evaluations for all other academic and administrative units were due on December 31, 2019, and the completion rate was 98.58%. The University is in the process of implementing additional training for supervisors that addresses the importance of performance evaluations and each supervisor’s responsibility to provide feedback and support career development.

4. Human Resources

The senior HR leader in each employing unit reports to unit leadership and to the Associate Vice President for Human Resources. This allows for centralization of many HR functions, including family and medical leave administration, and disability accommodation. Centralization makes administration more efficient and improves the likelihood that employees will be treated consistently without regard to protected class considerations.

The structure provides the advantages of a centralized human resources operation with specialized expertise while still allowing each employing unit to have a dedicated HR leader or team to respond to unit-specific needs. Generally, this works well. Several employees said senior HR leaders are supportive and the increased centralization is advantageous, especially regarding the family and medical leave process. Senior HR leaders reported that employees trust them to maintain confidentiality, and to involve EOD and University Human Resources when necessary. We did learn of some isolated situations where unit leaders have persisted in handling employee issues within the unit and without involvement from HR employees.

The structure depends on senior HR leaders being self-sufficient and effective ambassadors within their units. Based on our interviews, there is some room for improvement. For example, an employee reported she was advised by HR within her unit that reporting her issue would only make it worse. Our interviews indicated senior HR leaders may not necessarily see their role as including intake of employee complaints and may fail to recognize when a complaint includes concerns of unfair treatment based on protected class. Even if these situations are isolated, they are cause for concern.

We recommend senior HR leaders and other HR personnel within employing units assess how they can be more accessible to employees and increase their responsiveness to the workplace environment and employee concerns. Employees have other resources for making
complaints and resolving issues, but HR personnel in each unit need to uniformly embrace their responsibilities to recognize and respond to employee issues, concerns, and complaints, including with respect to equitable treatment of protected classes and retaliation.

5. **Equitable Treatment**

Fewer than 30 administrative unit employees reported concerns of unfair treatment based on membership in a protected class. When we interviewed senior HR leaders, they noted they rarely receive complaints of unfair treatment based on protected class. They told us such complaints tend to be related to culture and national origin, including concerns regarding different attitudes about personal space and boundaries.

Some employees reported concerns that the workplace is not inclusive or respectful of racial minorities and foreign-born employees. The concern most mentioned by employees, however, was different treatment based on age. Several employees were concerned that older employees with more experience have been treated differently when it comes to reorganizations, furloughs, time off from work, and work assignments. They also complained that employees who request time off because of young children are preferred over older employees who may need time off to care for a family member with health issues, and older employees are moved to less desirable hours or work assignments to force them to retire.

We received some concerns about sex-based treatment including that men in leadership roles are given more respectful treatment and are challenged less often than women in leadership roles. A woman in a leadership role said she felt isolated and labeled after being told by another employee that her race and gender would make it difficult for her at the University.

Employees also shared concerns regarding treatment of people with disabilities and other health conditions. Multiple employees believed their health condition or disability was the basis for more harsh discipline for tardiness or absenteeism. Employees also reported that mental illness is not recognized as a legitimate need for leave and accommodation on the same basis as physical illness. These concerns were supported by employees in HR who acknowledged that supervisors need more training on leave and accommodation issues, even though the application and approval process for leave and accommodations is centralized. Reports from employees indicated supervisors complained about the cost and increased workload caused by employees who took medical leave from work.

In connection with the above concerns, many employees stated they feared retaliation if they complained about unfair treatment. Employees expressed that they did not trust the University, their supervisors, or HR to protect them from retaliation. Senior HR leaders acknowledged that some employees see them as just part of the leadership in the department and may hesitate to reach out with issues.

Based on employee reports, fear of retaliation may have prevented some women from participating in this review and may prevent others from requesting disability accommodations or complaining of unfair employment practices. The individuals who called to discuss their concerns are a very small sample of employees, but the frequency of comments regarding retaliation is notable because fear of retaliation prevents reporting and the University cannot address unfair treatment unless it is reported. Indeed, most of the employees who contacted us
had not reported their concerns to the University, which means the University did not have an opportunity to investigate or respond. When we interviewed employees, we encouraged them to use the University’s resources to seek resolution of their concerns and we directed them to the information available at https://diversity.uiowa.edu.

The University has implemented policies prohibiting retaliation against employees who complain of inequitable treatment, but there is opportunity to fortify this message and assure employees they will be protected if they make complaints. We understand the University is implementing supervisor training that will include information to assist supervisors to recognize and prevent retaliation.
B. Academic Units

Academic Units reviewed included the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health, Law, and Dentistry; the Graduate College; the Office of the Provost; and the University Libraries. The College of Medicine was included with UI Health Care in the review of administrative units. As with the administrative units, we reviewed assessment data and interviewed employees who called in response to the outreach email. We also interviewed senior HR leaders and the faculty representative for each college. The Academic Units reviewed employ 3,701 benefits-eligible employees who work at least half-time. In response to the invitation to participate in this review, 42 employees contacted us, and 28 of those had concerns regarding treatment of employees in protected classes.

We reviewed and analyzed the information received from employees, human resources professionals, and faculty representatives to identify human resources opportunities and issues that are common to all the academic units. We organized the opportunities and issues identified into three general categories: Recruiting and Hiring; Equitable Treatment of Employees; and Disability Accommodation and Leave Management.

1. Recruiting and Hiring

Faculty and human resources leadership in the academic units uniformly expressed a commitment to increasing diversity in both faculty and staff positions. For staff positions, the University’s implementation of the OTAC system made recruitment simpler and more uniform across the academic units. A recruiting coordinator is assigned to each unit to assist with writing job descriptions, advertising, and initial screening of candidates. HR’s involvement at the initial stages of recruiting provides access to broader pools of candidates, more tailored job descriptions, and more uniform screening to ensure candidates are qualified before they are selected for interviews.

OTAC has not been implemented for faculty hiring and each academic unit uses a slightly different process. Obstacles to hiring more diverse faculty cited by leadership included the lack of racial and ethnic diversity among the general population in Iowa and competition for women and underrepresented minority candidates, particularly in certain academic disciplines.

Faculty members who responded to the e-mail outreach perceived other obstacles to hiring diverse candidates that leadership may not recognize. There were reports that, in some units, women and underrepresented minorities are not included on faculty hiring committees. Some perceived that faculty members favor candidates with backgrounds and interests like their own. While HR representatives serve on some faculty hiring committees, the practice is not uniform. There was a report of a faculty search committee member favoring a female candidate not on the merits, because the candidate’s gender would be an advantage when seeking grants and funding. Although this example is anecdotal, it demonstrates that, despite the University’s stated commitment to a fair hiring process, there may be faculty members on hiring committees who remain insensitive to what that means in practice.

In the 2018 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Campus Climate Survey, high percentages of employees surveyed in academic units reported they perceived bias in hiring practices. The lowest percentage of perceived bias reported was in the College of Public Health, where 64% of
respondents reported hiring bias. The highest percentage was in the College of Law, where 82% of respondents reported bias. Other units reporting included the College of Engineering (80%); College of Pharmacy (78%); Tippie College of Business (78%); College of Nursing (76%); University College (75%); College of Dentistry (74%); College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (72%); the Graduate College (71%); College of Education (70%); and University Libraries (70%). The specific reason for the perceived bias was more difficult to identify. However, in almost every academic unit, age was the most-cited reason for perceived discrimination.

Despite reports and survey results that raised concerns about perceived bias in the faculty hiring process, there is evidence the University remains committed to fair hiring practices that encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds to be considered and hired as faculty. For example, the Path to Distinction program is being piloted in several academic units and has received favorable reviews. This program provides opportunities during the recruiting process for faculty candidates to explore personal interests (such as affinity groups, religious organizations, schools, etc.) so they can better evaluate whether the University community is a good fit. The Provost’s office is exploring ways to become more engaged with search committees during the hiring process, rather than waiting until a decision to make an offer has already been made.

We recommend the University provide faculty hiring committees with uniform guidelines for the hiring process. Faculty hiring committees do not currently have the same structure as committees for staff hiring. We recommend uniform guidelines include requiring hiring committee members to complete EEO compliance and anti-bias training; HR representation on hiring committees; and representation of faculty from diverse backgrounds on hiring committees.

We also recommend the University evaluate the effectiveness of Path to Distinction and expand it if appropriate.

2. **Equitable Treatment of Employees**

Across almost every academic unit, there were complaints from non-faculty staff who responded to the e-mail outreach with reports of favoritism and poor treatment by supervisors, faculty, and/or administrators. Instructors and lecturers said faculty members are disrespectful and staff members complained of “bullying” behavior by faculty and administration.

Employees also raised concerns related to protected class. Female faculty reported being excluded by male faculty members. Family and medical leave and disability accommodation were also raised as issues. Employees reported working while on leave, criticism for taking leave, and difficulty obtaining accommodations. Older employees believed reorganizations had been designed to eliminate their positions or force them to quit.

Human resources and faculty leadership in the academic units uniformly report the processes and procedures for responding to employee complaints of inequitable treatment or discrimination are followed and are generally effective. Leadership also consistently recognized that retaliation is a concern whenever an employee complains, and they reported that enforcement of the anti-retaliation policy is effective in preventing retaliation.
Faculty and non-faculty employees who responded to the e-mail outreach reported fear of retaliation if they complained about inequitable treatment or discrimination. Such reports occurred in every academic unit from which employees responded to the outreach. Employees were less convinced than HR and faculty leadership that the University’s anti-retaliation policy is effective in the academic units. Most employees who responded were aware the University provides several avenues to complain about inequitable treatment or discrimination, including HR, EOD, or the Office of the Ombudsperson. Some employees reported they had used one or more of those avenues and experienced retaliation in response. Most of the alleged retaliation was subtle, such as a less favorable performance review, denial of a committee appointment, or bullying behavior. Other employees reported that they chose not to complain or to complain only informally, because they feared retaliation.

We recommend the University’s supervisor training put great emphasis on preventing retaliation to strengthen the effectiveness of the University’s policy prohibiting retaliating against employees who report unfair treatment. The training should define and provide examples of retaliation, explain how to recognize and report retaliation, and instruct supervisors on how to respond to suspected retaliation.

3. Disability Accommodation and Leave Management

Senior HR leaders and faculty leadership in the academic units consistently praised the University’s recent efforts to centralize disability accommodation and leave management. Not only has centralization removed work from unit HR employees, but it allows for more efficient and uniform treatment of accommodation and leave issues.

We received just one report that FSDS was unresponsive to an employee’s request for accommodation. Our interviews of HR leaders indicated that some supervisors remain uninformed about recognizing circumstances that present an accommodation or leave issue.

We recommend additional and specific training for supervisors on disability accommodation and leave issues. The University recently provided training on disability accommodation and leave issues in coordination with centralization of administration. Such training should continue with increased focus on recognition of circumstances that raise accommodation or leave issues and effectively managing employees with accommodations or the need for leave.