



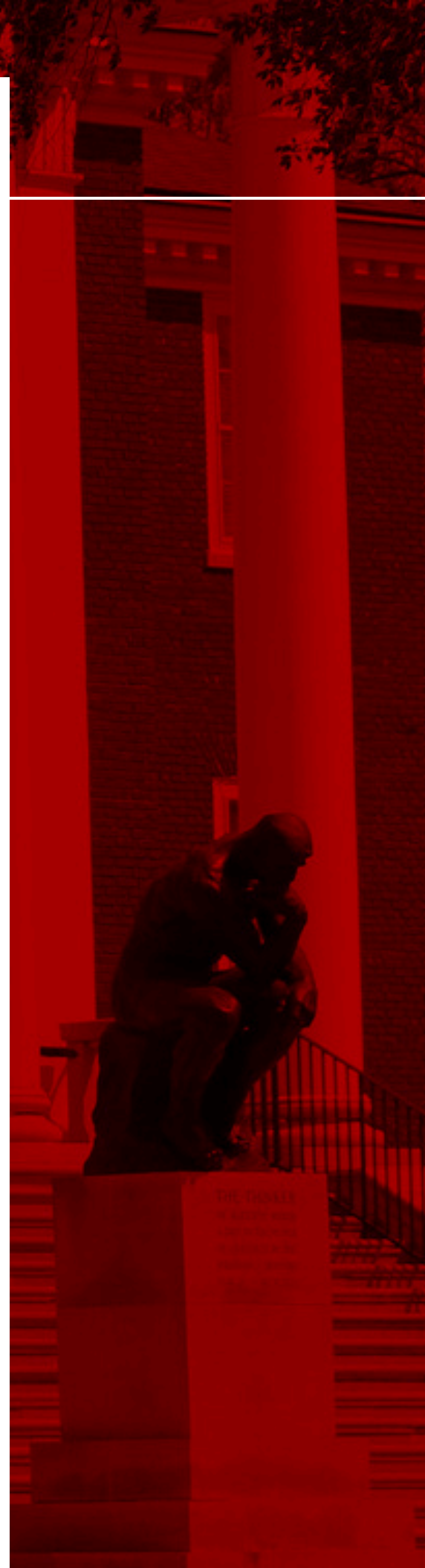
2024

**EMPLOYEE
SUCCESS
CENTER**

**Annual
Report**

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EMPLOYEE **SUCCESS** CENTER

MESSAGE FROM THE AVP



BRIAN BUFORD

Assistant Vice President for University Culture and Employee Success

Dear friends,

Four years ago when the Employee Success Center first opened, we were inspired by a clear and exciting vision that guided our efforts: to make the University of Louisville a great place to work. We had just completed the most comprehensive and inclusive strategic planning process in recent history and concluded that the best path forward to our goals as a university was to invest in the growth and development of our faculty and staff. What a great opportunity to do something meaningful and important.

Today, I am so proud of the growth of the center and the progress we are making toward that compelling vision. Here in our annual report, you will see exponential growth in the number of professional development opportunities that are available to employees, a nationally-recognized onboarding program, resources to support a culture of recognition and gratitude, robust employee resource groups, and career navigation tools to help employees continue to move forward. Every year since our beginning, we have added new programs and resources for our faculty and staff so that all learning styles and stages of their careers are included. Whether you are a supervisor trying to coach your staff, a mid-career staff member thinking of a job change, or a new professional looking for opportunities to develop your leadership skills, we are here to support your success.

I'm fortunate to work with wildly talented colleagues. My deepest gratitude to Danielle, Laura, Mallory and Meagan for their brilliance and dedication to the vision. I also deeply appreciate all the departments, leaders, and collaborators who give of their time to make the center successful. We are part of a community of care, as our Cardinal Principles describe, and we benefit from the strength of the talented people who work and study at UofL. If you have contributed time or energy to one of our events or learning opportunities, I want you to know how much we appreciate you.

ABOUT US

The Employee Success Center is at the heart of the university's commitment to promoting a culture of growth and excellence. Offering a range of customized services and programs, the center is devoted to advancing the professional development and well-being of our staff. We recognize our employees as our most valuable resource. Therefore, we offer comprehensive support throughout their tenure, starting from seamless onboarding to mentorship, professional development, leadership training and career guidance. Additionally, the center plays a crucial role in cultivating a culture of recognition and gratitude within our university. Through our extensive recognition initiatives, we honor the remarkable accomplishments of our employees, instilling a sense of pride and gratitude.

As we reflect on the past year, the Employee Success Center remains committed to driving the success of the university through our unwavering dedication to the success of our employees.

Our Mission

Empower employees to thrive and inspire a culture of engagement.

Our Vision

To make the University of Louisville a great place to work.



ONBOARDING



NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

Every week, the Employee Success Center hosts a full-day, in-person New Employee Orientation to welcome new faculty and staff. This inclusive and warm introduction sets a positive tone for newcomers, covering aspects such as university culture, campus tours, employment specifics, and benefits.

ONBOARDING NAVIGATORS

In 2023, our peer-mentoring initiative was incorporated into the Workday hiring process, resulting in a notable rise in the assignments of Onboarding Navigators for new hires. These navigators join new hires during orientation lunches, and play a crucial role in their onboarding experience.

67%

of new hires had an onboarding navigator

“

“I am new to Louisville and you all made me feel so welcomed. I am still so impressed with how organized everything was. I left orientation feeling confident and ready to start my new position. Thank you so much for your kindness.”

”

90%

experienced a positive onboarding navigator experience

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION



935

New hires



50

Orientation sessions



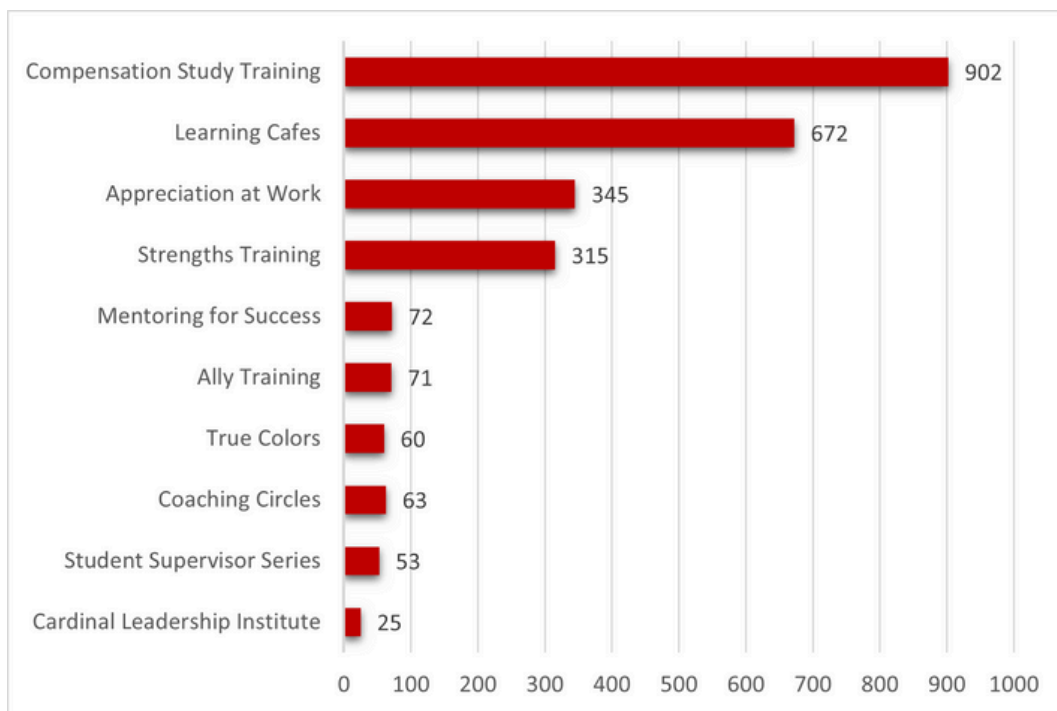
4.88 out of 5 average
rating of overall
experience



TRAININGS



PARTICIPATION BY THE NUMBERS



100+

TRAINING & WORKSHOP
SESSIONS

2,578

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

PROGRAMS & WORKSHOPS

Throughout the year, the Employee Success Center provides programs and training sessions for the ongoing professional development of employees.

LEARNING CAFES

Learning Cafes are online sessions and workshops that promote professional development and personal growth. Experienced moderators lead each session, which includes time for discussion and sharing, fostering a culture of open communication and mutual learning.

COACHING CIRCLES

Coaching Circles are groups of university faculty and staff who come together to explore specific topics, ask questions, and reflect on findings. They provide a supportive environment for every member to discover their own answers and celebrate each other's expertise.

MENTORING FOR SUCCESS

The Mentoring for Success Program offers flexible mentoring relationships to support employees in their personal and professional goals. The mentor and mentee customize the goals, direction, meeting frequency, and duration for a personalized and effective mentoring experience.

GALLUP STRENGTHS TRAININGS

Two team members are Gallup-certified Strengths Coaches. Their knowledge has been instrumental in providing Strengths training at departmental retreats, meetings, and professional development sessions across the university this year.

APPRECIATION AT WORK TRAININGS

Three team members are certified facilitators of The 5 Languages of Appreciation at Work. This year, numerous workshops were conducted on this subject to engage various groups across the campus.

STUDENT SUPERVISOR SERIES

This three-session series focuses on effective student supervision, career development needs of student employees, and improving supervisory skills through discussions and peer connections. Participants learn about supervision practices, generational workforce needs, and creating a supportive learning environment.

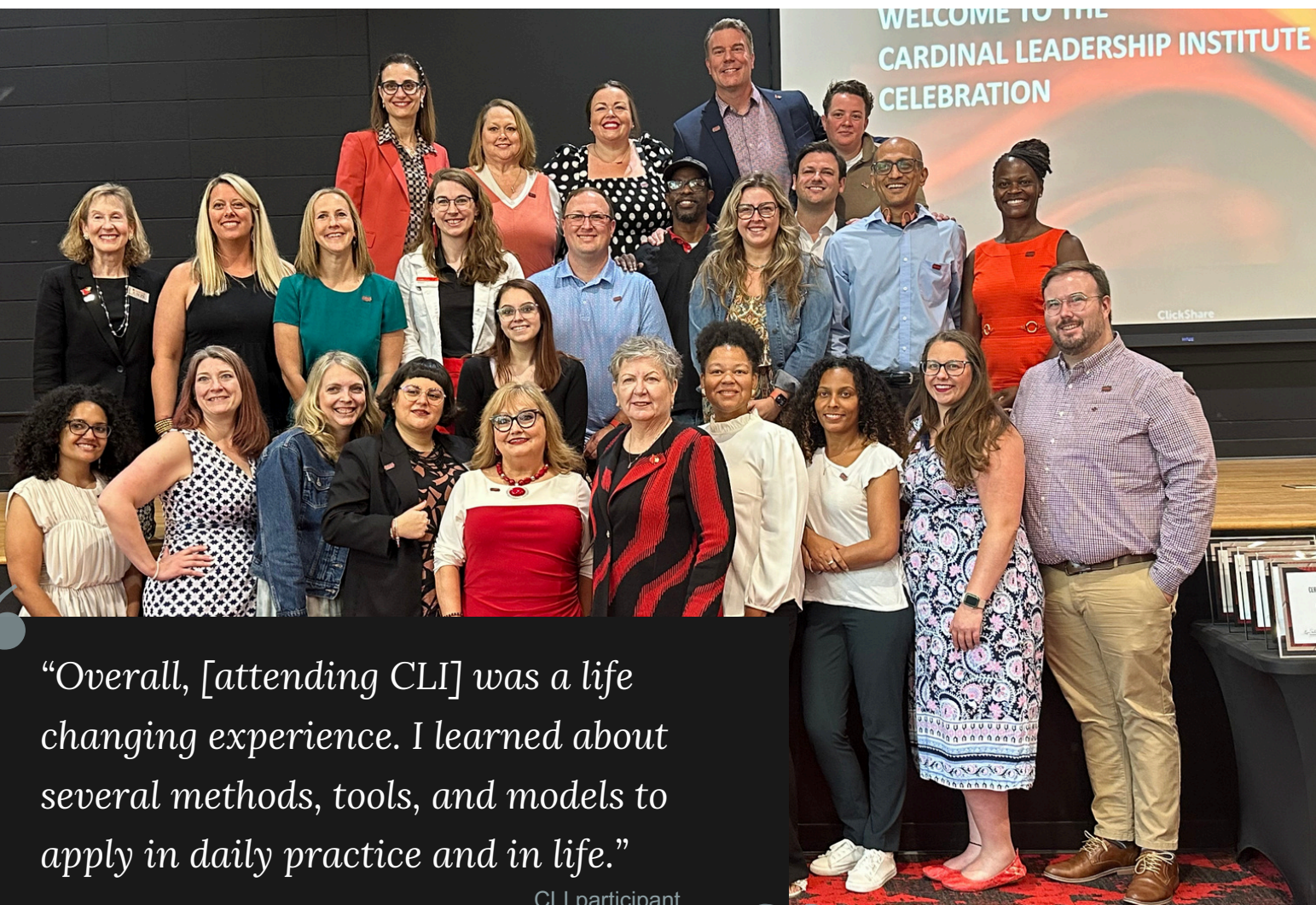
CARDINAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The Cardinal Leadership Institute (CLI) is a five-month program offered in partnership with the College of Education & Human Development. It provides graduates with a certificate in Organizational Leadership and Learning equivalent to three academic courses and offers opportunities for professional networking.



IMPACT ON UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

With a **cohort of 25 university leaders**, the impact of what they learned from the institute can be found directly to the individual and also the wider university community that they lead. One participant in the CLI program shared that they were motivated to volunteer for new leadership roles in a university employee resource group and explore career growth opportunities in leadership, thanks to the knowledge, skills, and confidence gained from the program.



“Overall, [attending CLI] was a life changing experience. I learned about several methods, tools, and models to apply in daily practice and in life.”

CLI participant



Pathways WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

PATHWAYS WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The 12th annual Pathways Women's Leadership Conference took place in May 2024. This conference, conducted virtually with a separate in-person networking event, united women and femme-identified individuals from all UofL campuses to delve into topics like self-advocacy, values, and personal growth.

311

Conference participants

125

Networking event attendees

87%

of attendees felt the conference advanced their knowledge and leadership potential.

CAREER

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

In January 2024, the Employee Success Center established a new role, the Career Pathways Specialist, to assist in the career growth of UofL employees. Since then, the Employee Success Center began offering a range of learning opportunities, resources, and personalized career coaching to guide employee's professional journey.

CAREER COACHING

Career coaching appointments are offered one day a week, starting in March 2024. Over approximately **17** weeks, **42** employees have participated in a career coaching session.

31% have requested follow-up coaching sessions.

95%

felt an enhanced sense of belonging

88%

found the experience helpful



“

“I felt empowered after our meeting. The career coach really listened to my needs and tailored her advice and assistance to my goals.”

“The session helped me look at [my] situation differently and gave me insight on other opportunities that I hadn't considered.”

RECOGNITION



"The chance to listen to the stories and memories of our staff service honorees at UofL was truly my favorite part of the event!"

SIGNATURE RECOGNITION EVENTS

Every year, we honor our employees at four distinct recognition events:

- Staff Service Recognition Reception
- Retiree Celebration Brunch
- Staff Service Recognition Reception
- Presidential Excellence Awards Reception

STUDENT CHAMPIONS

The Employee Success Center, in collaboration with the Office of the Provost, oversees the Student Champion awards. These awards are presented to faculty and staff members who have been nominated by students for making a significant impact on them during their university experience.

4

Signature Recognition
Events

35

Excellence Award
Winners

305

Staff Service Honorees

554

Student Champions



Presidential Excellence Awards

The Employee Success Center gathers nominations annually for faculty and staff who are making a great impact on their colleagues, their work, and the university community for the Presidential Excellence Awards.



CARDINAL PRINCIPLES CHAMPIONS

Recognizes faculty and staff for showcasing the Cardinal Principles at a distinguished level.

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AWARDS

Recognizes ten dedicated staff who inspire others with their outstanding commitment to UofL.

OUTSTANDING SUPERVISOR AWARD

Recognizes a supervisor annually for exceptional efforts in engaging and developing employees.

TEAM IMPACT AWARD

Honors the power of hardworking teams, one team is awarded annually.

DISTINGUISHED FACULTY AWARDS

Honors up to 15 faculty for exceptional commitment to service, teaching and research.

GEORGE J. HOWE DISTINGUISHED STAFF AWARD

Celebrates the exceptional contributions of one staff member who has made a significant difference in the lives of students.

Special Delivery with a CARDGram

Excerpt from UofLNews article by Savannah Hart | [View entire article](#)

A simple thank-you note can go a long way—all the way across campus. Laura McDaniels, an engagement specialist from the University of Louisville Employee Success Center, has been putting a creative spin on UofL’s ability to foster an encouraging and appreciative culture.

When the Employee Success Center began in 2020, McDaniels saw annual recognition methods and awards in place, but no way for employees to be recognized in a daily, on-the-spot manner. She began creating an easy tool, using Microsoft and four initial card designs, that could send personalized appreciation through email. Thus, the [CARDGram](#) was born.

“Research says that a highly rated reason people leave a job is because they didn’t feel appreciated,” said McDaniels, who also is a certified facilitator of Workplace Appreciation Languages. “Sometimes we get really bogged down with heavy workloads, and we just don’t think to take time to write an appreciative note. Having this tool makes it easier for our employees to find ways to support each other.”

Since the program started, almost 7,500 CARDGrams have been sent, whether by individuals or by schools within UofL who see the chance to encourage all students in their department. ([read more](#))

1,753

CARDGrams sent this year



ENGAGEMENT

Social Media

Since July 2023, our social media engagement on Facebook has surged by 55.1%. Additionally, this year we have notably enhanced our visibility on LinkedIn, a widely utilized platform among our employees. LinkedIn serves as a favored avenue for sharing work accomplishments and triumphs, with an engagement rate of 7,364 since July 1st.

EMPLOYEE SUCCESS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

We provide a monthly opt-in newsletter for employees that includes updates on upcoming events workshops or trainings, celebrations, recognition, career advice, and more. We have close to 900 subscribers.

564

Facebook followers

624

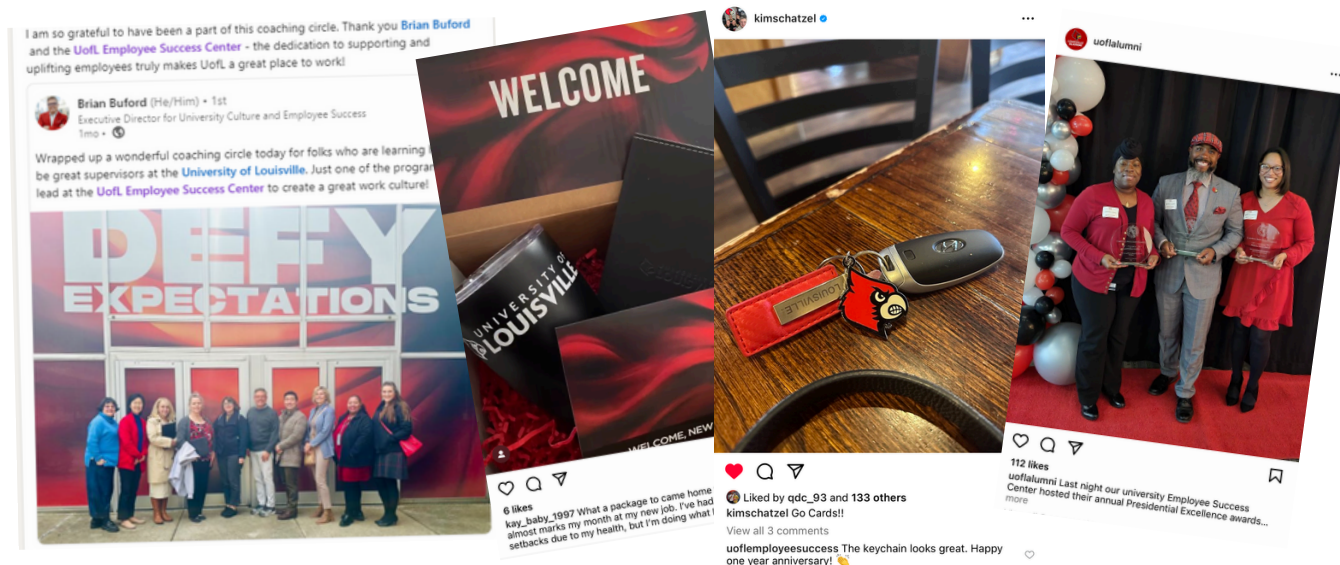
Instagram followers

498

LinkedIn followers

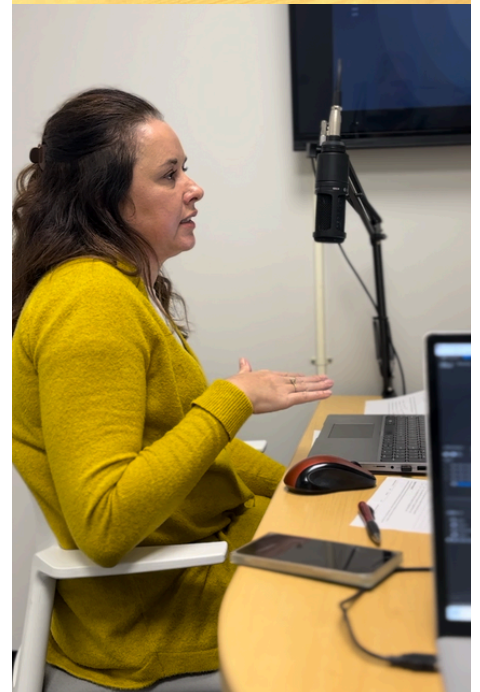
907

Mailing list subscriber



The Employee Success Podcast

Launched in 2022, the Employee Success Podcast is an innovative way to meet the learning needs of today's on-the-go employee. Through interviews, stories, and lessons featuring both UofL innovators and national leaders, the podcast brings the concepts of employee to listeners in fun, unexpected ways. Popular topics have included the Cardinal Principles, addressing burnout, supervising students, and introverts at work.



5 out of 5 rating on Apple Podcasts and Spotify

“Your work on the Employee Success Center podcast is nothing short of amazing! I appreciate the content you and your team have put out and I think it is a fantastic resource for employees.”

UofL employee



4,127

All-time plays

24

New episodes

142

Spotify followers

the employee
SUCCESS
podcast





EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

- Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander Faculty & Staff Association
- Black Faculty/Staff Association
- Hispanic Latino Faculty and Staff Association
- LGBTQ+ Faculty and Staff Association
- Parenting Network
- UofL Women's Network
- Young and Emerging Professionals (YEP)

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT GROUPS

- Caregiver Support Group
- Pathways to Parenthood
- Neurodiverse Support Group
- Parents of LGBT Children

Photo from ERG Appreciation event at UofL Men's Basketball game @ KFC Yum-Center.

CONNECTION

EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

The Employee Success Center supports seven employee resource groups (ERGs) to foster a positive work environment. ERGs promote inclusivity, community building, and open discussions among employees. Since 2020, the ESC has aided in establishing new ERGs.

IMPACT ON CULTURE AND ENGAGEMENT

ERGs have a significant impact on our employees in major ways.

- Host campus-wide events that recognize traditions like Juneteenth and AAPI Heritage month
- Provide leadership opportunities for employees and create a leadership pipeline
- Serve on high level campus-wide search committees
- Address diversity issues on campus

1,113

Overall participants



Photo from: LGBTQ+ Kentuckiana Pride Event



Photo from: AAPI Heritage Week Keynote Speaker Edward Lee

FIRESIDE CHATS

This year, live virtual Fireside Chats were hosted by the Employee Success Center in partnership with the office of the President. These sessions involve intimate discussions with university leaders, addressing visions, priorities, and strategic plans. Employees submit questions in advance, gaining firsthand insights into the institution's direction and initiatives from the leadership team.

2,890

Views

CONNECTING WITH HIGHER EDUCATION PEERS

Members of the Employee Success Center team presented topics and best practices at two national conferences this year to showcase the impactful work being done at the University of Louisville in terms of employee onboarding, engagement and development.

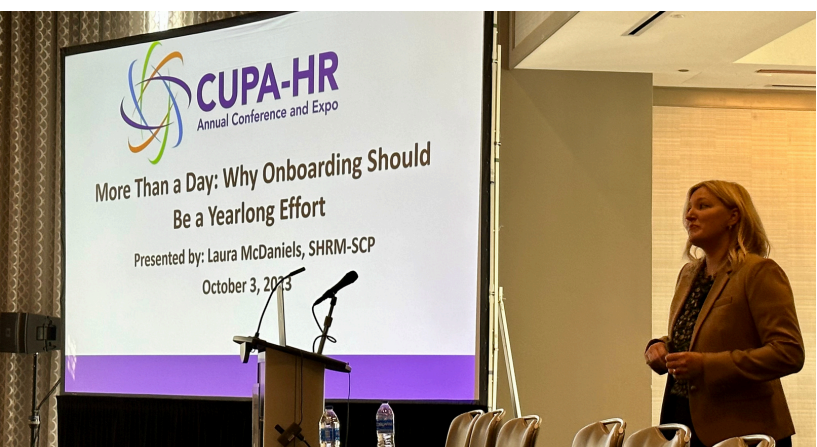
MORE THAN A DAY: WHY ONBOARDING SHOULD BE A YEARLONG EFFORT

Presented by Laura McDaniels at the **2023 National CUPA-HR Conference in New Orleans, LA** and at the **2024 Organizational Development Consortium at Wake Forest University**.

FOCUS ON SPECIALTY TOPICS: LEADERSHIP TRAINING, PODCASTING & MENTORING

- *Tuition Remission Remix: Creating a Space for Leaders to Grow*
- *Podcasting as a Learning & Development Tool*
- *UofL Mentoring for Success: Cultivating Personal and Professional Growth*

Presented by Brian Buford, Meagan West and Laura McDaniels and roundtable discussion with entire ESC team at the **2024 Organizational Development Consortium at Wake Forest University**.



OUR OVERALL **IMPACT**

Fulfilling our mission to empower employees to thrive and inspire a culture of engagement.

100+

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OPPORTUNITIES

2,578

OVERALL PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPANTS

894

EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED FOR
EXCELLENCE

1,753

CARDGRAMS SENT FOR ON THE SPOT
RECOGNITION

1,686

CONNECTION OPPORTUNITIES ON
SOCIAL MEDIA

935+

NEW HIRES ONBOARDED THROUGH THE
EMPLOYEE SUCCESS CENTER

1,100+

EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP
PARTICIPANTS

100+

EMPLOYEES CELEBRATED AT THEIR
RETIREMENT

EMPLOYEE **SUCCESS** CENTER

MEET THE TEAM

In 2024, the ESC expanded to include five full-time employees and one graduate assistant, each with unique skills and expertise.



Brian Buford

Assistant Vice President for University Culture and Employee Success

As the head of the Employee Success Center, Brian is the university-wide leader responsible for integrating the Cardinal Principles and ensuring that all departments align with the overall mission of the university by creating, building, and implementing an innovative approach to people, culture, and engagement. He has over 35 years of experience at the university in various roles in diversity, equity & inclusion and human resources. Brian is a Certified Gallup Strengths Coach.



Meagan West

Senior Training & Development Specialist

Meagan leads the training efforts and professional development programming in the Employee Success Center. She also services as an advisor for Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and employee support groups. She has a total of 15 years of experience at the university in student advising, training and development. Meagan is a Certified Gallup Strengths Coach, MBTI certified, and an Appreciation at Work Certified Facilitator.



Laura McDaniels

Senior Employee Experience & Engagement Specialist

Laura leads the employee experience efforts (onboarding, recognition, engagement) and communications of the Employee Success Center. She has 18 years of experience at the university in various roles within human resources. Laura is Senior Professional of Human Resources (SPHR) and SHRM-Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP) certified, as well as an Appreciation at Work Certified Facilitator.



Danielle Hampton

Events & Logistics Specialist

Danielle coordinates center events and logistics, as well as manages all the center's data and metrics. She has seven years at the university in admissions, advising and now employee success. She joined the center in 2022. Danielle is an Appreciation at Work Certified Facilitator.



Mallory Newby

Career Pathways Specialist

Mallory, a career coach for employees, provides various learning opportunities, resources, and personalized coaching to support employee professional growth. She has five years at the university as a career coach. Mallory joined the center in 2024. Mallory is MBTI and Strong Interest Inventory certified.