



University of Connecticut

# Organizational Needs Assessment

**Report of Findings & Recommendations**

April 13, 2026

# Report Organization (Section 1)

**Background & Context**

**Assessment Findings**

**Assessment Recommendations**

# Background and Context

## *Methodology*

Segal conducted a comprehensive assessment that included the following components:

### Documentation Review

A comprehensive review of data and documentation provided, including organizational charts, strategic plans, and other relevant information



### Information-Gathering Meetings

One-on-one interviews and focus groups with approximately 350 stakeholders including University leaders, faculty, and staff



### Best Practices Review

Analyzing detailed findings surfaced in the interviews, we applied our knowledge and experience to craft recommendations unique to the needs of the University of Connecticut



### This report includes:

- A **comprehensive review** of common themes that emerged during the assessment, and
- Detailed **recommendations** to address assessment findings

# Organizational Assessment Process

## *Data Collection*

### **Data collection and outreach included the following:**

- Reviewed several publicly available documents as well as organizational charts and job templates
- Conducted over 80 small group interview sessions with approximately 325 registered participants
- Held three group feedback sessions for faculty, department heads, and associate deans with approximately 65 participants
- Held one-on-one meetings with approximately 30 university leaders
- Presented to Senior Leadership Team and Dean's Council
- Visited each regional campus and the School of Law
- Provided support to HR in preparing for informational sessions attended by over 150 employees

# Report Organization (Section 2)

**Background & Context**

**Assessment Findings**

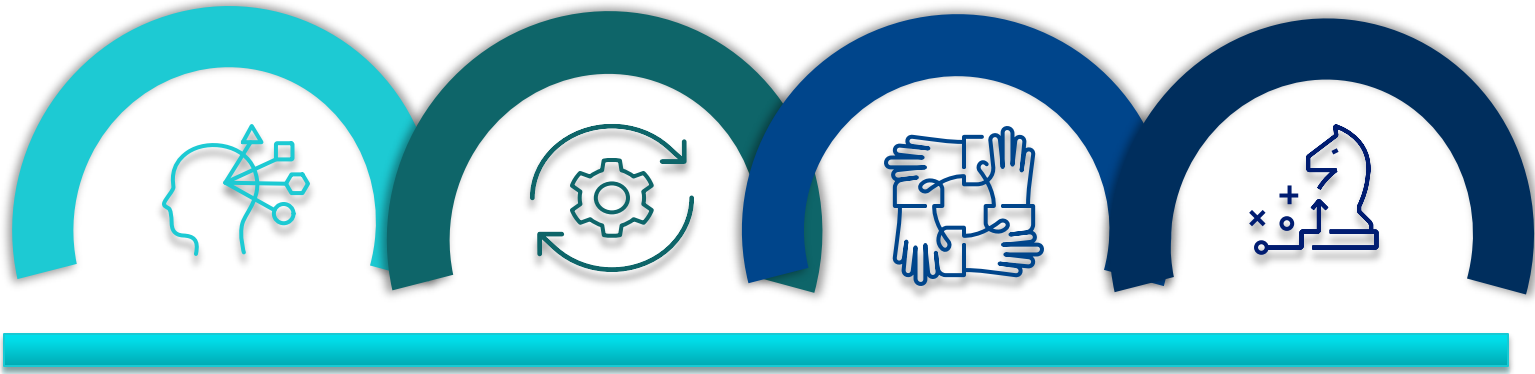
**Assessment Recommendations**



# Assessment Findings

## *Thematic Summary*

The assessment revealed the following opportunities and challenges:



### **Organizational Structure & Service Delivery Model**

Units operate largely in a decentralized way, which results in administrative inefficiencies and limited opportunities for leveraging economies of scale

### **Processes, Technology, & Systems**

Burdensome processes and disconnected systems are creating administrative burdens

### **Culture & Morale**

Low morale is prevalent across the institution, driven largely by ongoing uncertainty

### **Strategic Direction**

There is a need for clearer strategic direction and stronger alignment of organizational priorities

# Assessment Findings

## *Organizational Structure & Service Delivery Model*



**Units operate independently, which results in administrative inefficiencies and limited opportunities for leveraging economies of scale**

### **Lack of Role Specialization and Training**

- Staff often hold broad and multifaceted roles within units and departments, with one person often managing HR, finance, and payroll processing, administrative support, travel, purchasing, and marketing and communications tasks
  - Many of these staff members lack the specialized expertise needed for certain functional areas, placing an undue burden on staff who feel overwhelmed and increasing the risk of errors and inefficiencies
- Interviewees noted that they often receive limited training on the specialized tasks, systems, databases, and technologies required for their roles

### **Position Siloes**

- Staff within departments and units reported feeling siloed and disconnected from colleagues across the University, noting that institutional knowledge is often contained within individual units and not well shared
- Common position titles are often used across units and campuses, yet the associated responsibilities and expectations reportedly vary significantly

### **Reliance on Student Workers**

- Due to staffing constraints, many units rely on student workers to support their day-to-day operational needs
  - Since student roles are inherently temporary, turnover is frequent and is leading to continual loss of process knowledge when students depart

# Assessment Findings

## *Organizational Structure & Service Delivery Model (p.2)*



**Units operate independently, which results in administrative inefficiencies and limited opportunities for leveraging economies of scale**

### **Marketing & Communications**

- The highly decentralized marketing and communications function has led to several challenges including:
  - Underleveraging the UConn brand
  - Disjointed and disconnected messages to external audiences including alumni, donors, and other external stakeholders
  - Inconsistent messaging around key priorities
  - Uneven distribution of marketing and communication resources
  - Varying levels of marketing and communications competencies around the University
  - Limited career track for marketing and communications professionals

# Assessment Findings

## *Processes, Technology, & Systems*



### **Burdensome processes and disconnected systems are creating administrative burdens**

#### **Hiring & Classification**

- Hiring, reclassification, and onboarding were frequently cited as opportunities for improvement
  - Increased complexity in hiring has created additional workloads for staff who may not have expertise in recruitment or HR procedures
  - Position reclassification was frequently described as a frustrating process that experiences lengthy delays and required paperwork that seems to disincentivize use of the process
  - Onboarding experiences vary, with central units generally providing more robust onboarding than smaller departments, leading to inconsistencies in experiences

#### **Communication Channels**

- Communication across campus groups is fragmented, creating gaps in information flow
  - Interviewees report insufficient context behind major decisions from central leadership
- Departmental silos make it difficult for staff to build cross-campus networks and collaborate effectively

# Assessment Findings

## *Processes, Technology, & Systems (p.2)*



**Burdensome processes and disconnected systems are creating administrative burdens**  
*continued*

### **System Integration**

- Many University systems are not fully integrated with one another, causing inefficiencies, data errors, and delays in accessing reliable data

### **Shadow Systems**

- Some units rely on shadow systems due to incomplete or inaccurate data access for certain groups
  - Interviewees noted that real-time budget visibility is not available within Quali, which limits the ability to monitor financial or budget status and make timely decisions, requiring employees to maintain shadow systems to compensate for limitations in the University's official financial systems
  - Regional campus staff reportedly lack access to key student information systems, limiting their ability to manage student records effectively and often lead them to create manual or duplicative tracking systems

# Assessment Findings

## *Processes, Technology, & Systems (p. 3)*



**Burdensome processes and disconnected systems are creating administrative burdens**  
*continued*

### **Layers of Approval**

- Multiple layers of approval across several processes further contribute to inefficiencies and increase the administrative burden on staff

### **Inconsistent Standards**

- There is a lack of standardization surrounding processes, practices, guidelines, and forms across units and campuses
  - Departments, units, and campuses operate under varying practices which has created significant barriers to cross-unit collaboration and mobility
  - While centralized processes are preferred for consistency, some are perceived as too vague, which has prompted departments to create their own, often conflicting, version
  - Regional campuses report inconsistent practices as compared to the Storrs campus, often leading to confusion about which practice takes precedence

# Assessment Findings

## *Processes, Technology, & Systems (p.4)*



**Burdensome processes and disconnected systems are creating administrative burdens**  
*continued*

### **Inconsistent Standards** *(continued)*

- There is a lack of standardization surrounding processes, procedures, policies, guidelines, and forms across units and campuses *(continued)*
  - Most units do not maintain a central repository for policies, procedures, and guidelines, making it difficult to access consistent information
  - Interviewees reported a lack of training across several key areas, including:

| Area                                | Training Need  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Web Development</b>              | Department webpage management and accessibility compliance |
| <b>Travel Processes</b>             | Concur system usage and Travel Card procedures             |
| <b>Payroll &amp; HR Systems</b>     | Core-CT, PageUp. and related processes                     |
| <b>Purchasing &amp; Procurement</b> | HuskyBuy platform and PCard usage                          |
| <b>Staff Management Policies</b>    | Guidance for faculty overseeing staff                      |

# Assessment Findings

## *Culture & Morale*



**Low morale is prevalent across the institution, driven largely by ongoing uncertainty**

### **Low Morale**

- Staff have expressed numerous concerns about their workplace experience, noting challenges that may be impacting overall engagement and satisfaction
  - Staff consistently reported declining morale, citing increased workloads and limited resources
  - A deep-seeded fear of layoffs, staff reductions, and uncertainty about long-term employment were frequently mentioned, contributing to anxiety from staff
- Communication is widely perceived as insufficient and lacking transparency
- Faculty expressed concerns about morale and overall engagement
  - Interviewees share that increased bureaucratic complexity since the pandemic has made securing large grants more difficult and shifted additional administrative responsibilities onto faculty

### **Career Advancement**

- Staff consistently report limited opportunities for career advancement, contributing to frequent turnover in key positions and a loss of continuity within units
- As previously mentioned, the process for reclassifying roles and advancing within the organization is perceived as overly complex, requiring multiple layers of approval

# Assessment Findings

## *Culture & Morale (p. 2)*



**Low morale is prevalent across the institution, driven largely by ongoing uncertainty**  
*continued*

### **Resource Constraints**

- Many departments and units have been asked to reduce budgets, creating uncertainty across the institution
- Interviewees expressed concern about the financial outlook of the University, with both faculty and staff worried that vacant positions may remain unfilled
- Budget limitations have reduced departmental events and gatherings, negatively affecting community engagement and campus culture

# Assessment Findings

## *Strategic Direction*



**There is a need for clearer strategic direction and stronger alignment of organizational priorities**

### **Overall Strategic Direction**

- There is a lack of clarity around the University's strategic direction, which may be due to poor communication, limited visibility, or simply an inconsistent understanding across stakeholder groups
  - Some faculty and staff report that the current strategic plan is not easily accessible or publicly available, creating barriers to engagement and alignment with institutional goals

### **Navigating Federal Changes**

- Interviewees raised questions surrounding how the University will respond to evolving federal policies and the political climate, which are increasingly shaping the landscape of higher education, research funding, and institutional autonomy

### **Regional Campus Alignment**

- Regional campuses report feeling disconnected from the Storrs campus, with minimal coordination and limited access to centralized resources and systems
  - Due to the unique needs and structures of regional campuses, many central policies, procedures, and trainings are not fully applicable

# Report Organization (Section 3)

**Background & Context**

**Assessment Findings**

**Assessment Recommendations**



# Assessment Recommendations

## *Thematic Summary*

As highlighted throughout the findings, a central challenge for the University is the existence of a decentralized network of individuals performing multiple functions across HR, Finance, Marketing & Communications, Facilities, IT, and other administrative tasks. This fragmented structure has resulted in inefficient processes, inconsistent service quality, high error rates, limited subject matter expertise, prolonged turnaround times, poor data integrity, underutilized technology, and widespread employee burnout and low morale.

To address these issues, our recommendation is to deconstruct the current model and design a best-practice structure for each administrative discipline, ensuring appropriate levels of specialization, streamlined workflows, and improved operational performance.



# Assessment Recommendations

## *Thematic Summary*

1

### **Organizational Structure**

Redesign the organizational structure of key administrative disciplines

2

### **Processes, Technology, & Systems**

Reconfigure and redesign key processes, revise policies, and adapt technologies and systems to align to a new structure

3

### **Culture & Morale**

Initiate a University-wide cultural transformation initiative

4

### **Strategic Direction**

Refresh the strategic plan

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #1 Organizational Redesign*



### **Organizational Redesign**

Segal's primary organizational design recommendation is to **deconstruct the current business and administrative service delivery model**, which relies on individuals providing services across multiple administrative disciplines. The assessment findings surfaced a model in which it is common for a single individual to perform finance, HR, payroll, procurement, facilities, and general administrative support.

It is recommended that the University adopt a **new model in which each major discipline is structured to develop specialized expertise, unify processes, standardize systems and technologies, and achieve efficiencies and economies of scale**. This approach will reduce timelines, errors, and redundancy, improve service quality, and lower institutional risk.

Segal recommends that the deconstruction of the current model should include the following four phases:

1. HR & HR-related functions
2. Marketing & Communications
3. Finance & Finance-related functions
4. General Administrative Support

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #1 – Organizational Redesign (p. 2)*



### **Organizational Redesign – Redefine the HR Service Delivery Model**

- For HR and HR-related functions, the effort should be comprised of the following three components:
  1. Consider a new model which may include the migration of some unit-based HR transactions to a shared services environment
  2. Deploy HR Business Partners to provide both consultative and strategic support at the unit-level
  3. Further support a central HR function that is responsible for developing and delivering a wide range of strategic services to the University

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #1 – Organizational Redesign (p. 3)*



### **Organizational Redesign (*continued*)**

- Consider a model where unit-based HR transactions are migrated to a shared services environment
  - UConn should consider various options for the design and delivery of a shared services model (e.g., a single shared services unit or shared service clusters serving similar type of units, or other models)
  - In this model, the University would transition routine HR and payroll processing tasks from individual units to a shared services environment, with potential transactions to include but not limited to the following:
    - Job postings and job description development
    - Hiring tasks and activities
    - Personnel transactions and related compliance activities
    - I-9 verifications
    - Onboarding tasks and activities
    - Offer letter reviews
    - Payroll adjustments, retro, and supplemental pay
  - UConn should consider having units notify shared services of what they want to do through submitting a request, utilizing an electronic ticketing system

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #1 – Organizational Redesign (p. 4)*



### **Organizational Redesign (*continued*)**

- Efficiencies and reduced complexity would be gained due to:
  - Economies of scale through consolidation
  - Improved compliance due to subject matter expertise and focus on federal, state, and university compliance requirements
  - Subject matter expertise performing the transactions
  - High integration and knowledge of systems, tools, and technologies
  - Focused roles (e.g., HR-only tasks, eliminating distractions from other administrative duties)

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #1 – Organizational Redesign (p. 5)*



### **Organizational Redesign (*continued*)**

- It is also recommended that the University deploy HR Business Partners (HRBPs) to provide strategic support to academic and administrative units
  - Introduce HR Business Partners (HRBPs) to provide a wide range of strategic and consultative services to Deans, Department Heads, Vice Presidents, managers, supervisors, and employees across the University
  - Business Partners can provide value in the following ways:
    - Serves as a single point of contact for employees and reduces confusion about where to go
    - Positions HR within business units to align workforce strategies with institutional goals and support decision-making
    - Ensures uniform application of policies and practices across all units to reduce risk and maintain fairness
    - Integrates systems and tools to streamline processes while aligning closely with unit-specific objectives
    - Delivers a standardized, high-quality experience for employees and managers across the institution

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #1 – Organizational Redesign (p. 6)*



### **Organizational Redesign (*continued*)**

- Additionally, support central HR's function to continue developing and delivering a wide range of strategic services to the campus
- Central HR will:
  - Standardize policies to ensure consistency, fairness, and equity in employment practices
  - Develop a total rewards strategy guided by a comprehensive compensation framework
  - Create a learning and development function that identifies current and future skill gaps and develops a program for building institutional bench strength
  - Introduce a comprehensive retention and engagement strategy focused on employee well-being that is supported by a robust wellness program, culture building activities, etc.

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #1 – Organizational Redesign (p. 7)*



### **Organizational Redesign – Redesign the Marketing and Communications Model**

- Relative to the marketing and communications function, it is recommended that the University redesign the Marketing and Communications service model to create a more centralized, strategic, and efficient structure
- Create a Marketing and Communications organization with two primary organizational elements:
  - A central Marketing and Communications unit to set strategy, fulfill strategic communications priorities, manage brand standards, and oversee institution-wide initiatives -- the current function of University Communications
  - Embedded Marketing and Communications Professionals within academic and some administrative units to provide localized support, supplemented by dedicated centralized shared services teams divided by specialty (i.e. news/research writers, multimedia, marketing) to provide communications support and service across units, with both reporting to University Communications
  - As a part of this organization:
    - Create a matrixed reporting relationship to ensure collaboration, consistency, and accountability between central and shared service teams and embedded staff.
    - Equip central staff with skills in branding, messaging, and emerging platforms to close talent gaps
    - Foster a professional community by establishing forums or networks to connect communication professionals across the University, promoting knowledge-sharing and career growth
    - Create career pathways for advancement to attract and retain top talent in marketing and communication roles

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #1 – Organizational Redesign (p. 8)*



### **Organizational Redesign – Develop a Modernized Finance Service Delivery Model**

- Relative to the finance function, the University should design and develop a modernized Finance service delivery model with the following components:
  - A central Finance function that is responsible for developing and administering financial policies, procedures, and internal controls; notably, this function provides enterprise-level oversight, guidance, and compliance monitoring to ensure consistent application of financial standards across units
  - A Financial Shared Services Center to create a shared services environment that consolidates and streamlines unit-based financial transactions, including:
    - Travel reimbursements, procurement activities, post-award accounting, invoice processing, and other routine transactional tasks
  - By leveraging economies of scale, this will help to deliver faster, more accurate transaction processing while freeing up unit-level staff to focus on higher-value financial activities
  - Implement a centralized communications and case-management system, similar to the HR system, to intake requests, assign tasks, track progress, and improve visibility into service performance
    - Develop standardized knowledge-base resources, FAQs, training guides, and template materials to reduce repetitive inquiries
    - Enable data reporting and dashboards to monitor transaction volume, service levels, and compliance trends

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #1 – Organizational Redesign (p. 9)*



### **Organizational Redesign – Evaluate the Effectiveness of the new HR and Finance Service Delivery Models**

- Further evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the HR and Finance shared service delivery models
  - Consider the potential benefits of a unified shared services framework that supports both HR and Finance, including streamlined governance, improved resource allocation, and a more agile support model aligned with organizational priorities
- Explore opportunities to further integrate or consolidate these functions, with the goal of:
  - Creating additional economies of scale
  - Reducing operational redundancies
  - Enhancing service delivery and responsiveness
  - Improving data consistency and reporting capabilities
  - Leveraging technology platforms to support cross-functional workflows

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #1 – Organizational Redesign (p. 10)*



### **Organizational Redesign – General Administrative Support**

- Relative to administrative support, it is recommended that the University reimagine how general administrative support is structured and delivered across the University
- This function will serve as a support mechanism, addressing responsibilities that remain after the redesign of core functional areas such as Human Resources, Finance, and Marketing & Communications
  - Conduct an analysis of residual administrative tasks that are not absorbed by the new service delivery model for HR and Finance functions, identifying the scope and activities that fall under general administrative support
  - Clearly define the staffing model, organizational structure, roles, and responsibilities required to deliver high-quality administrative support
    - Ensure flexibility in the model’s design to accommodate the unique needs, priorities, and operational contexts of individual units, recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be effective
  - General administrative tasks could include, but are not limited to the following:
    - Academic and program support
    - Office and facilities coordination
    - Classroom scheduling
    - Student and visitor support (e.g., front-desk help)
    - Event management and coordination

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #1 – Organizational Redesign (p. 11)*



### **Organizational Redesign – Transformation Steps**

To support this transformation, we are recommending the following:

- Launch a cross-functional transformation teams to guide the redesign of the business and administrative service delivery model across the four functions consistent with best practice models:
  - Consider designing a model that reflects the core elements of leading-edge administrative functions
    - Centralized Centers of Excellence delivering high value strategic advice and services
    - Embedded Business Partners and liaisons closely aligned to the academic and administrative units
    - Common shared services functions focused on highly efficient / automated HR and Financial services
  - Define the roles, accountabilities, competencies, and skills needed to implement the new model
    - Identify resources needed to support both the centralized and decentralized units (including an appropriate assignment of distributed resources)
    - Define reporting relationships among centralized and decentralized staff
    - Ensure appropriate alignment and integration of roles with central administrative strategies and goals
    - Identify core functions and support for administrative roles across UConn
    - Determine what roles and areas will support strategic, consultative, and administrative services in the future model, and define specific tasks, responsibilities, workflows, and accountabilities

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #1 – Organizational Redesign (p. 12)*



### **Organizational Redesign – Transformation Steps *continued***

- Design and prioritize long-term strategic administrative service offerings delivered through newly constructed Centers of Excellence
- Develop a staffing and development plan to support the future model
  - Develop competency models that outlines expected skills, competencies, and accountabilities
  - Conduct a skill gap analysis of current administrative talent against role definitions and competency models
  - Consider focusing on communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and general knowledge
- Create intentional opportunities for BPs, liaisons, and central administrative functions to come together, share updates, and collaboratively address challenges to support the development of trust
- Evaluate and identify the appropriate resources for BP's (e.g., headcount of BP's/liaisons/central administrative staff, administrative support, systems, tools, etc.) to be successful
- Develop a marketing and branding strategy and campaign to market the new organizational redesign vision, mission, model, services, and roles

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #2 – Process Redesign*



### **Reconfigure and Redesign Key Processes**

#### **Processes, Technology, & Systems**

- Given the anticipated change in organizational structure, reconfigure and redesign key processes, revise policies, and adapt technologies and systems to align to a new structure
- Reconfigure the design and use of key processes, including but not limited to:
  - Onboarding across employee groups (e.g., staff, graduate assistants, student workers, employees on special payroll, adjunct faculty)
  - Web development, including department webpage management and accessibility compliance
  - Standard and special payroll hiring processes
  - Offer letter development and review
  - Position reclassification, including associated paperwork
  - Purchasing and procurement approval process (e.g., HuskyBuy and PCard)
  - Travel approval and reimbursement process, including Travel Card and Concur

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #2 – Process Redesign (p.2)*



### **Reconfigure and Redesign Key Processes *continued***

#### **Processes, Technology, & Systems (*continued*)**

- Review and revise outdated policies to ensure compliance and relevance
  - Complete an inventory of essential policies and practices, including common, undocumented practices that may be considered or applied as if they were formal policies
  - Conduct a thorough review of the content of core rules and regulations, and evaluate the documents for clarity, consistency, relevance to stated goals, quality, and effectiveness
  - Assess the quality and effectiveness of current policies/procedures/governing documents against best practices
  - Identify inconsistencies and gaps in policy enforcement and compliance, potential risks relative to policies and practices and their application, and policies and practices in need of revision and updating
  - Assess effectiveness of current communication, training, and education relative to policies and procedures, and identify future training needs
  - Identify and evaluate common, undocumented policies or practices that should either become formal policies or be discontinued
  - Identify internal and external historical or cultural factors impacting effective administration and enforcement of policies
  - Develop a robust change management strategy and ensure buy-in from key stakeholders

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #2 – Process Redesign (p.3)*



### **Reconfigure and Redesign Key Processes *continued***

#### **Processes, Technology, & Systems (*continued*)**

- Adapt existing technologies and administrative systems to support the new organizational structure, including the following steps:
  - Audit current systems, including inventory of existing technologies, identify gaps and redundancies
  - Define future state requirements and align system capabilities with the new structure
  - Engage stakeholders, especially partnering with IT and other functional leaders for input and feasibility
  - Develop integration and plan interoperability, data migration, and system alignment
  - Leverage advanced solutions, including exploring AI, automation and other tools for efficiency gains
  - Update policies and workflows to standardize processes and forms to match new structure
  - Provide training and change management that is role-specific and clear

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #3 – Cultural Transformation*



### **Cultural Transformation Initiative**

#### **Culture**

- Given the current cultural state and levels of morale across the institution, it is recommended that the University initiate a University-wide cultural transformation initiative
- Elevate levels of transparency across the University
  - As broadly and transparently as possible, share the Segal assessment with the campus community
  - Establish regular information sessions through town-halls and other forums where senior leaders can answer questions about key issues
  - Construct processes and structures for regularly seeking and collecting input from faculty and staff on a wide range of University issues
  - Develop strategies to engage the unions as partners in elevating levels of morale and culture
- Reinforce central HR as a strategic partner
  - Host HR listening sessions to rebuild trust and gather actionable feedback
  - Promote HR initiatives that support staff well-being, career development, and professional growth

# Assessment Recommendations

## *Recommendation #4 – Strategic Plan Refresh*



### Refresh the Strategic Plan

#### Strategic Plan

- Given that the current strategic plan was adopted in 2024 and intended to guide the institution through 2034, the University should consider revising the plan to ensure continued relevance and alignment with emerging priorities
  - Moreover, the significant changes that have occurred over the past year further underscore the need to revisit and update the strategic plan to ensure its continued relevance and alignment with current realities
  - In particular, the following areas should be addressed to ensure continued relevance and institutional alignment:
    - Reassess the University’s financial landscape by addressing the current state of the budget
    - Respond to evolving federal policies and administrative changes
    - Enhance alignment and integration across regional campuses
    - Strengthen research funding strategies

# Next Steps

Establish a **governance framework** including Project Sponsors, a Steering Committee and Design Teams to advance the recommendations

Charge each Design Team to **explore and assess alternative organizational and operational models** and develop a set of recommendations for a new model for UConn

**Populate the Design Teams** with a cross-functional group of unit-based and central providers of services and a representative group of end users and consumers

Commission **two Design Teams** to lead the exploration and development of new operating models

- Human Resources Design Team
- Marketing and Communications Design Team

**Empower the Design Teams** to meet regularly (likely every other week) for the next 4-6 months to complete their work