

2026 CONFERENCE IN NEWPORT BEACH: NOV. 9-11

The conference planning is well underway thanks to the leadership of **Romy Riddick** and **Ramona Agrela**. Please plan to attend November 9-11 at the Hyatt Regency in beautiful Newport Beach, CA. This will be our first conference on the west coast since our inception 16 years ago. The agenda structure will remain similar to years past with a midday start on Monday and a midday end on Wednesday. In between those times you will be part of great content/speakers, valuable networking, and some time for renewal and fun.



2026 BOARD MEMBERS

Below are the names of the 2026 board members and the Committee (Co-) Chairs. Additional information about the board is available on the website.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Eugene Whitlock

Chair
University of California-Berkeley

Helena Rodriguez

Vice Chair
University of Arizona

Cheryl Reardon

Past Chair
Co-Chair, Partnerships Committee
University of Iowa

Jeff Herring

Treasurer
Chair, Finance Committee
University of Utah

Diana Dutton

Secretary
McGill University

BOARD MEMBERS

Manuel Cuevas-Trisán

Harvard University

Shari Mickey-Boggs

Co-Chair, CHRO Academy
University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign

Melissa Curry

Co-Chair, CHRO Academy
University of Florida

Ramona Agrela

Co-Chair, Annual Conference Committee
University of California-Irvine

Romy Riddick

Co-Chair, Annual Conference Committee
Princeton University

Christine Lovely

Co-Chair, Learning Partners
University of California-Los Angeles

Ken Horstman

Co-Chair, Learning Partners
University of Minnesota

Patrick Sheehan

University of Wisconsin

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Recognitions & Transitions	2
Sponsor Updates	2
Member Dues.....	2



2026 CHRO ACADEMY AT DELOITTE UNIVERSITY

The 2026 cohort has been selected. From a very competitive pool, 15 leaders will be convening in Dallas in July. Huge thanks to all of the nominators. **Shari Mickey-Boggs** and **Melissa Curry** are leading this overall effort, and **Manuel Cuevas-Trisan** is leading the content creation. We are grateful to Deloitte for providing access to the incredible Deloitte University facilities and working closely with the committee on content to ensure a professional and engaging Academy. We are also grateful to Caldwell for joining us for their engaging discussion on the search process.

RECOGNITIONS & TRANSITIONS



Cheryl Reardon recently attended the Pensions and Investments conference to moderate a panel, and to receive The University of Iowa's Eddy award (first place!) for their **Iowa Retirement Modernization Initiative**.

With a strategic goal of enhancing retirement readiness, the University embarked on a comprehensive multi-year analysis to modernize its retirement plans, engaging CAPTRUST as a 3(21) fiduciary on the core array and as 3(38) on the customized default investment.

The retirement benefits team, partnering with the University's Retirement Fund Investment Committee (RFIC), carefully examined current offerings to streamline investments. RFIC recognized excellence requires continuous improvement, not preserving the status quo. Together with their advisor, they created a low-cost, customized default strategy adjusting risk/return throughout an employee's career while offering optional lifetime income.

The Iowa modernization strategy was based on four key pillars: streamlined core lineup, sophisticated investor access, enhanced default strategy, and significant cost reduction.

Our members continue to give back in significant ways, including serving in **board leadership roles for CUPA-HR**:

Josh Mackey (Indiana) is currently board Chair

Kelli Shuman (Carnegie Mellon) is currently Treasurer, and was recently selected as Chair-Elect for 2026-27

Eugene Whitlock (UC-Berkely) was recently selected as Treasurer for 2026-27

Michelle Piekutowski (NYU) was recently named to the **Wall Street Journal's CPO Council** which includes 'People Leaders From The World's Most Influential Companies'.

Michelle is the lone representative from higher education among a very impressive group of CPOs from many other sectors.

Michelle Piekutowski, (NYU) **John Whelen** (Yale), and **Patrick Sheehan** (Wisconsin) are serving on the Workday Advisory Board representing higher education. Michelle has been instrumental in keeping higher education representation on the advisory board.

Sabrina Minor and **Ramona Agrela** were featured in SHRM's Winter edition of *People+Podcast*. In the article, *HR on Campus*, they shared some of the challenges and opportunities that are unique to higher education. We are proud that SHRM recognizes the highly complex and strategic roles of higher education CHROs.

Amanda Bailey left her previous AAU CHRO role, and recently completed an interim role as CHRO for Oregon State. We are excited to announce that as of April 1 she is now the CHRO for **Case Western**, and returns to the ARU-HRI. **Carolyn Gregory**, a strong contributor to our ARU-HRI organization and a friend to many, is beginning a well-deserved retirement from Case Western.

Congratulations to **Felicity O'Herron** who has recently retired from the **University of Colorado System**. We welcome **Tony Gherardini** as the new system CHRO.

EMERITUS MEMBER

The ARU-HR Board has approved **Laurita Thomas** for the distinguished status of **Emeritus Member** of the organization. This honor is bestowed in recognition of her exceptional and enduring contributions to the ARU-HR Institute over a span of fifteen years. As a founding member, Laurita demonstrated exemplary leadership and commitment in her role as a board member. Following her retirement from the University of Michigan, she continued to advance the mission of the Institute, serving with distinction as President for seven years. Laurita will continue her participation with us through Learning Partner events, and hopefully will join us in November at the Annual Conference.



SPONSOR UPDATES

Segal had several presentations at the CUPA-HR Spring conference. In one of those presentations they partnered with a large public university client on the topic *Driving Institutional Performance Through Operational Alignment*. They pointed out that most institutions don't struggle because of strategy; they struggle because of fragmentation. The presenters explained that Segal partnered with leadership to uncover what was truly getting in the way. In just 100 days, and through 400+ stakeholder interviews, they moved beyond assumptions to pinpoint where duplication, inefficiency, and risk were slowing services down. Using a structured lens across an organizational model, processes, technology, and culture, they built a clear, sequenced roadmap to help the institution streamline operations, improve service quality, and create a more sustainable path forward.

TIAA TMRW Conference was held in April. About 15 of our members attended. TIAA provided a special session for ARU-HRI members, including the option of virtual participation for those who did not attend the conference. Our topic, *Who Takes Care of the CHRO*, was professionally facilitated by TIAA, and generated a lively discussion with all of those who participated. There is hope to continue this discussion throughout the year.

Caldwell is preparing a presentation on the search process as part of the ARU-HRI *CHRO Academy* to be held in Dallas in July. A similar presentation was included in the 2024 Academy. The previous presentation was highly valued by the participants so the Committee has asked Caldwell to participate in this year's Academy.

MEMBER DUES

Our organization has a fiscal year, **July 1 – June 30**. Annual dues notices are sent in May (from CUPA-HR), and we appreciate your prompt payment. Good news! The **\$3,050** dues are not increasing for FY27. Remember, your conference registration is included in your dues.