University of Alabama

Financial Management Assessment

Final Report

February 2026

✦ Segal

Organization

Methodology

Findings

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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, job descriptions, and other relevant information.

Information-Gathering Meetings

One-on-one and focus group interviews with 146 members of the Finance & Operations team, Faculty, Staff, and Administrators, along with 5 in-depth desk audits

Online Survey

A 15-question online survey for all staff members and leaders involved with financial management to provide ideas, perspectives, feedback, and insights on the current and future state of finance across the university.

Best Practices Review

Analyzing detailed findings surfaced in the interviews and the survey, we applied our knowledge and experience to craft recommendations unique to the needs of UA and aligned to best practices.

This report includes:

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

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Assessment Findings
Strengths

There are various strengths and a positive momentum in advancing the Finance Team that UA can build on and leverage:

- While challenges were raised to the implementation and communication of the reorganization, many leaders and finance professionals believe that the new model will improve organizational alignment, processes, systems, and financial services

- Finance staff and leaders possess extensive knowledge and demonstrate a breadth of expertise in key financial areas such as budgeting, accounting, procurement, grants, tax, student accounts, and treasury functions

- Many employees have long tenure and deep familiarity with institutional processes, which enables operational stability and problem-solving capability

- Across interviews, finance units are described as responsive, service-minded, and focused on helping departments, students, and faculty navigate complex policies or technical requirements

- Finance teams demonstrate considerable resilience and continue to deliver critical services, even with perceived staffing shortages, system constraints, and overlapping change demands

- Leaders and managerial staff routinely step into tactical roles to keep work progressing, demonstrating adaptability and dedication

Assessment Findings
Strengths

There are various strengths and a positive momentum in advancing the Finance Team that UA can build on and leverage *continued*:

- The finance division has introduced e-procurement, robotic process automation, paperless workflows, an integrated travel platform (Concur), and financial system enhancements. These efforts demonstrate capacity for innovation and operational improvement

- Multiple customers of finance described positive working relationships with finance staff, particularly for grant support, budget analysis, purchasing assistance, and student account management

- Finance holds and maintains strong internal controls, audit compliance, contract oversight, and regulatory adherence suggesting robust financial stewardship and protection of the university from risk exposure

- Units such as procurement, tax, research accounting, student billing, and financial technology teams demonstrate deep discipline knowledge. These specialists are known for solving complex problems and maintaining high accuracy with sensitive transactions

- There is a genuine desire to improve standardization and transparency for the betterment of the unit and the University more broadly
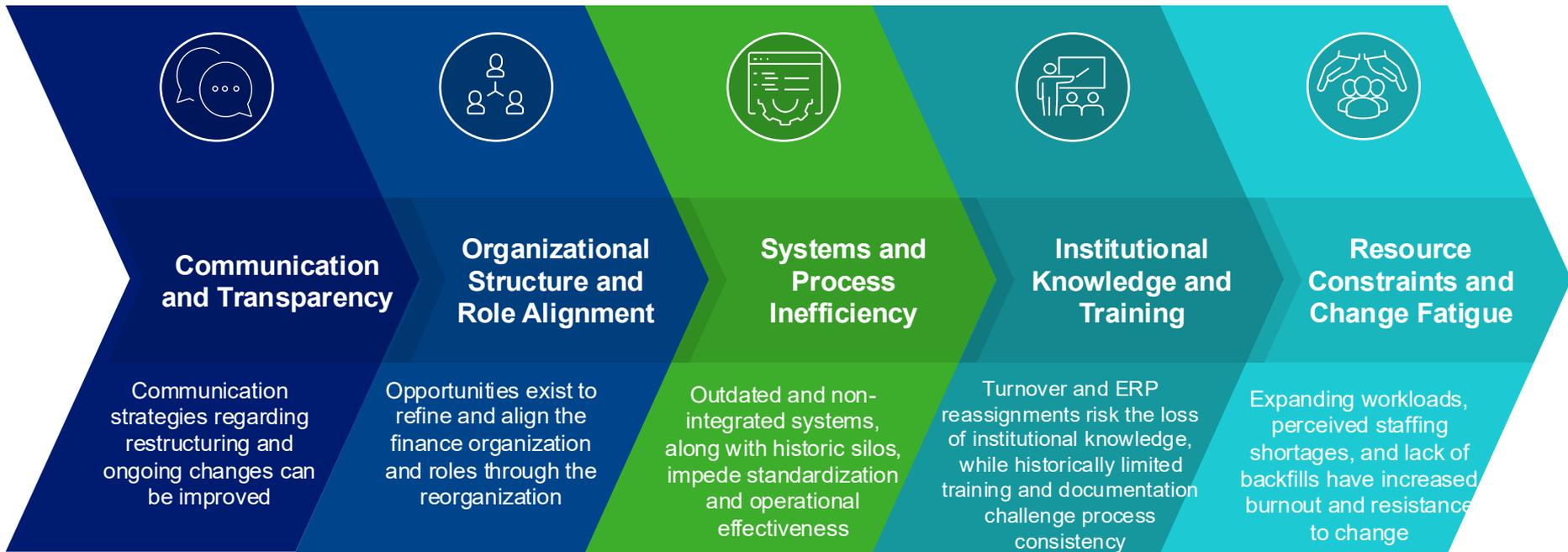
- Many teams report strong camaraderie, collegiality, and respect among colleagues. These positive local cultures reinforce retention and support collaborative problem-solving

Assessment Findings
Thematic Summary

The assessment revealed the following opportunities and challenges:

Communication and Transparency	Organizational Structure and Role Alignment	Systems and Process Inefficiency	Institutional Knowledge and Training	Resource Constraints and Change Fatigue
Communication strategies regarding restructuring and ongoing changes can be improved	Opportunities exist to refine and align the finance organization and roles through the reorganization	Outdated and non-integrated systems, along with historic silos, impede standardization and operational effectiveness	Turnover and ERP reassignments risk the loss of institutional knowledge, while historically limited training and documentation challenge process consistency	Expanding workloads, perceived staffing shortages, and lack of backfills have increased burnout and resistance to change

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Recommendations

Segal recommends that University of Alabama act in five key areas to address the opportunities and challenges identified in the financial management assessment. The following thematic recommendations are designed to strengthen communication, clarify organizational structure, modernize systems, safeguard institutional knowledge, and support staff well-being, positioning Finance for long-term success:

1	2	3	4	5
Communication and Transparency	**Organizational Structure and Role Alignment**	**Systems and Process Inefficiency**	**Institutional Knowledge and Training**	**Resource Constraints and Change Fatigue**
Prioritize open, consistent communication about changes and decisions	Review and refine the organizational structure to ensure accountability, effective reporting, and alignment with operational needs	Strengthen systems and streamline processes to support ERP readiness	Make training and documentation a core part of operations to safeguard expertise	Balance workloads and pace of change to protect staff well-being and sustain performance

Segal

Assessment Recommendations
Communication and Transparency

Prioritize open, consistent communication about changes and decisions

- Leverage consistent, regular, and varied communication strategies to strengthen engagement with finance team members at all levels, leaders, and other campus stakeholders across the University

- Develop and implement a comprehensive communications plan and change strategy to support the advancement of the organizational changes and ensure coordination with the communications and change management plan for the upcoming ERP implementation

- Engage finance team members, leaders, and other campus stakeholders continuously and substantively in future planning and decision-making processes regarding these changes

Assessment Recommendations
Organizational Structure and Role Alignment

Review and refine the organizational structure to ensure accountability, effective reporting, and alignment with operational needs

- In concert with and in alignment with the ERP implementation, establish a task force to guide and support ongoing decision making and change management activities regarding the realignment of the university's finance organizational structure and operational model under the new "Campus Financial Affairs" unit within the Office of Finance to promote identity, understanding, and adoption of the new structure/model across campus

- Charge the task force with developing a methodology and conducting a detailed analysis of reporting lines, role assignments, and functional responsibilities within each individual college or unit

- After the analysis is complete, redesign blended and misaligned roles to clarify priorities and reduce conflicting duties

- Further address resource gaps by replacing departing staff and realigning resources

Assessment Recommendations
Systems and Process Inefficiency

Strengthen systems and streamline processes to support ERP readiness

- Prioritize the successful implementation of the new ERP system (Workday) as the foundation for future modernization

- Standardize workflows and enforce institutional process governance during the interim time period before the ERP implementation is fully in place to leverage efficiencies where possible

- Improve documentation and knowledge management for process consistency

- Before moving to Workday, the University should document and review its core finance processes to ensure they are clearly defined, consistently understood, and aligned with current organizational roles following the recent reorganization

- Finalize future-state processes during the Workday implementation

- After Workday is live, process changes should be limited to refinements based on real-world usage, such as minor workflow adjustments, reporting improvements, and role tuning

Assessment Recommendations

Institutional Knowledge and Training

Make training and documentation a core part of operations to safeguard expertise

- Develop and maintain comprehensive, up-to-date documentation for all core finance processes, policies, and procedures

- Build structured onboarding and training programs for new and existing staff

- Make cross-training a core operational requirement

- Allocate dedicated time and resources for training and development at all levels of the finance organization

- Encourage knowledge sharing and collaboration across units

- Prepare staff for ERP transition and future-state processes

Assessment Recommendations
Resource Constraints and Change Fatigue

Balance workloads and pace of change to protect staff well-being and sustain performance

- To successfully navigate a large amount of change including a simultaneous ERP implementation and organizational restructuring, the University must actively manage change fatigue and resource constraints with targeted strategies and actions, including the following:

  – Monitor and balance staff workloads and the pace of change to protect staff well-being and sustain performance

  – Backfill critical roles and redistribute responsibilities to maintain operational continuity

  – Bring in temporary or specialized external support when internal capacity is constrained

  – Monitor employee well-being and adjust timelines or expectations based on feedback

  – Reinforce recognition, flexibility, and well-being throughout periods of change

  – Support staff through periods of high workload and change