

## **My student workers are here, Now what?**

### **Training, Motivating, Supervising, and Recognizing Student Workers**

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Topics-after our session today you be able to

- Provide orientation to new student employees
- Design effective ongoing student employee training
- Supervise effectively
- Handle difficult situations
- Motivate student workers
- Help your student workers be successful in their future careers

## Student Employee Orientation

- Why provide orientation
  - Give students “need to know” information
  - Set up expectations
  - Start a process so all new students obtain the same information—nothing gets left out
  - Allow students to get to know you and possibly other staff and student workers
  - Give students the basics about what services your office provides
  - Get to know students and how they fit with the functions in your office

## Developing your orientation session

- Group or individual orientation depending on office needs
- Establish your outcomes for orientation—what do you need students to know after this session?
- Topic Ideas
  - Housekeeping: payroll paperwork and time sheets, computer/email access and expectations, using office equipment
  - Need to know items: severe weather policies, calling in sick, emergency contacts
  - Getting to know the staff and office mission and function: introductions, tour of facility

## More Orientation Ideas

- Set up expectations
  - What the student can expect from their supervisor and staff
  - What the supervisor and staff expect from student employees
  - Rules (dress, breaks, calling in sick, asking for time off)
- Make It Fun: icebreakers, teambuilding, snacks, themes, small prize upon completing training or training activity

## More Orientation Ideas

- What can students do right away to feel valuable? Job shadowing, repetitive tasks, projects?
- Develop an ongoing training checklist and introduce it at orientation. Some items might include short individual meeting with all staff or selected staff, phone training, obtaining key card access, etc.

## Orientation roadblocks



- It may be difficult to schedule group orientation with student schedules
- Too much information or a training that is too long can be counter-productive
- Use trial and error—you can always improve for next time!



## On-going Student Employee Training-Why?

- You probably won't be able to train students on everything they need to know in one orientation session
- Cross training can be effective for staffing fluctuations
- As you get to know students and their skills and interests better, they may be able to help you in different ways
- There may be new functions, policies, technology, or equipment they need to know about
- Professional development is for students too: computer training, diversity, customer service.

## Ongoing Training-How?

- Set goals: what do students need to learn to be an effective part of the team.
- Can simply be job shadowing or could be topical training sessions or even online training
- Students work well with daily duties checklists. Develop them for job functions—or have your current student workers develop them. Works well with cross-training

## On-going student employee training

- If you work in an office with returning student workers, utilize them for training if possible
- Students need different levels of training and guidance. Be flexible, check in, and ask what they need.

## Effective Supervision

- What are qualities or actions you want or need from your supervisor?

## Effective Supervision

- Communication: Meetings, e-mail, regular updates, checking in
- Immediate feedback is most effective
- Deliver sensitive feedback in private
- Provide challenge AND support
- Encourage students to feel like part of the team
- Show them that they won't be asked to do anything you wouldn't do

## Effective supervision

- Get to know the student as a person. Be an advocate and a mentor—that's one reason why it is so beneficial for students to work on campus
- Keep a file on each student and document the positive things they do and areas for improvement
- Remember their skills and interests. Is there a project or job function that fits? Are there resume-building duties or projects?

## More effective supervision

- Set up an evaluation process
- You can develop a form as a guide, but deliver the evaluation in a private meeting
- Allow students to provide feedback on their experience in your office as well

## Delegation

- Be clear about the assignment
- Be sure they have time and resources to do the work
- Monitor to make sure the job is underway and being done correctly
- Provide feedback
- Provide thanks for doing the job

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<http://jobs.cbc2.org/superhb.html>

## Suggestions on handling difficult situations

- Communication and documentation
- Think developmentally. What can the student learn from this for his or her future?
- Give the problem to the student to solve
- Consequences of ignoring problems
- Know about campus resources



## Problem Solving

- *Define the problem.*
- *Before you even talk to the employee, consider some possible, acceptable solutions.*
- *Meet with the employee.*
- *Present the problem to the employee in as clear a way as possible.*
- *Get the employee's input.*
- *Pick a mutually agreeable solution.*
- *Get a commitment from the employee.*

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## Letting someone go

- Have a policy for termination and tell all students at the beginning of employment
- There should be steps and consequences (verbal warning, written warning, etc.)
- Deliver the news privately and kindly
- Consult with your supervisor
- Know how you'll handle reference calls

## Motivating Student Workers

- Group question: what do you do to motivate and recognize student employees?



## Motivating Student Workers

- What motivates students?
  - Fun
  - Food
  - Feeling Their Work Is Important
- Tie their work in your office with their future career
- Create a team atmosphere
- Make them feel comfortable and at home
  - Work stations, place to put coats, back packs, a drawer that is their own

## Recognizing Student Workers

- Catch them doing something good.
- Certificates of appreciation or recognition party at the end of the year.
- Have a bulletin board with pictures of the students and names. Add “kudos” to the board.
- Have a process for giving returning or deserving students raises.
- Ask them for suggestions on office issues and recognize the student when a suggestion or solution is used.

## Writing letters of recommendation

- Ask for a resume and a position description/job opening for if for a specific job
- If you've kept a file, you'll have things to include
- Make it truthful and specific
- May want to make it a policy to write one for every student upon graduation
- Tips- <http://www.mnsu.edu/cdc/faculty-staff/recommendation.html>

## Providing references

- Again, ask for a resume and a position description/job opening for if for a specific job
- It is okay to say no if you wouldn't be able to provide a positive reference
- You can say to a caller that you aren't comfortable providing an answer to certain questions

## Legal and Ethical Issues in Providing References

- Prior to providing a reference, obtain consent from the person about whom the reference will be given. If you are unaware that the job applicant has named you as a reference, ask the prospective employer for verification that the individual has given consent for the reference.
- Discuss the type of reference that you will provide with the person who asks you to be a reference.
- If "to whom it may concern" reference letters are requested, document that this is the type of reference requested and that the student or job applicant takes responsibility for disseminating the letters to the proper persons.

## More legal and ethical issues

- Respond to the specific inquiry about the student or job applicant. Direct the response to the particular person who requested the information.
- Relate references to the specific position for which the person applied and to the work that the applicant will perform.
- Informal lunch discussions or "off the record" telephone conversations with prospective employers regarding a person's performance should be avoided. There is no such thing as "off the record."

## More legal and ethical issues

- Information given should be factual, based upon personal knowledge/ observation of the person through direct contact with the person or obtained from the person's personnel record or student record.
- Avoid giving personal opinions or feelings. If you make subjective statements or give opinions because they are requested, clearly identify them as opinions and not as fact. If you give an opinion explain the incident or circumstances on which you base the opinion.
- Don't guess or speculate-if someone asks you questions regarding personal characteristics about which you have no knowledge, state that you have no knowledge.

## More legal and ethical issues

- State in a reference letter, "This information is confidential, should be treated as such, and is provided at the request of (name of student or applicant), who has asked me to serve as a reference." Statements such as these give justification for the communication and leave no doubt that the information was not given to hurt a person's reputation.
- Do not include information that might indicate an individual's race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, citizenship status, sex (unless by the individual's name it is obvious), or marital status. Do not base an opinion of performance on stereotypes about an individuals.
- Document all information you release.

From NACEWEB tips for providing references  
<http://www.naceweb.org/public/reftips.htm>

## Thank you for your attention!

Questions?

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