Supervising Best Practices:
Managing Performance Issues and Providing Feedback

Successful Student Supervisors Will:

- **Provide quality training.** Give the student all the “materials” they need to succeed. Training should be provided on a continuous basis.
- **Set clear expectations.** For many students this will be their first experience working in a professional setting, do not assume that they “should know.”
- **Share the goals of the office.** Work will be more meaningful when the student understands purpose of their work and how they fit into the success of the office.
- **Teach through example.** Model the work habits that you would expect from the student.
- **Give feedback and appreciation.** Address performance issues quickly, and give recognition for good work.
- **Be a mentor.** Help the students connect their student position to their academic and future career goals.
- **Be flexible.** Students are students first and employees second. Treat the student employee as you would like to treated in a similar situation.

Tips for Addressing Performance Issues

1. **State the purpose of the feedback.** Be specific and to the point so the student has a clear understanding of the issue.

   “I need to discuss your punctuality and arriving for your scheduled shift on time.”

2. **Describe specifically what has been observed; avoid vague statements like “you always.”** Be able to describe in detail events that you have observed.

   “Last week you were fifteen minutes late for your Monday and Wednesday shifts.”

3. **Outline the consequences of their actions.** Describe how this affects you, others, and/or the office.

   “Due to your tardiness the office was left without anyone to cover the front desk. I had to fill in and was late to an advising appointment with a student.”

4. **Give the student a chance to respond.** If the student does not immediately reply, ask an open-ended question to get a response. Remember, there could be a simple explanation or a larger issue that should be addressed.

   “Tell me what your thoughts are about the issue”
5. **Offer suggestions to solve the problem, summarize action items, and express your support to the student employee.**

“If you are staying up all night completing homework, perhaps you should speak to your academic advisor about your course load. I can also send you some great articles about time management that have helped me. It is very important that going forward you arrive on time for your scheduled shift for the department to run smoothly. How can I support you to help you fix this issue?”

**If the problem continues** clarify the steps for what happens if the problem is not resolved:

- Address the issue in writing and let the student know that in order to stay employed with the department the problem cannot continue.
- After the first written warning, if the issue is still not resolved have another meeting with the student let them know that this is their last warning before termination. Provide this in writing, as well.
- Further guidance can be given from your HR Client Partner.

Supervisors provide students with ways to support themselves while in school, mentor them, and help them succeed; however, work must be completed and there may be times were the student and job site are not a good match.