Tips for Evaluating the 2020 Performance of Employees

This past performance year, 2020, has been like no other. Employees had to switch to physically-distanced safety protocols and/or to working remotely. This change required swift adaptability, and in some cases, new skills, new equipment and new procedures with no advance notice or time for planning.

In addition to the work environment, employees may have faced significant challenges in their personal lives, e.g., school closures and parenting, taking care of loved ones, loss of close connections and relationships, loss of loved ones, economic suffering, and diminished health and well-being.

The flexibility, teamwork, and adaptability staff are demonstrating during this time are keeping teaching, operations, research, and administrative priorities moving forward across GSU. With several unprecedented weeks behind us, the timing of these conversations offers meaningful opportunity to highlight staff contributions and express gratitude.

We have compiled some best practices and approaches to the performance evaluations for 2020:

❖ **Supervisor Self Reflection**
  o Assess your own leadership accomplishments this past year. If you followed the basic principles for effective performance management, you are better prepared for 2020 performance evaluations.
  o If you were challenged to provide employees with concrete goals, adequate direction and on-going monitoring and feedback during the past year, focus on communicating how to meet your expectations and the University’s needs in the coming year. It may be important to afford more room for flexibility than you may have in the past depending on how clearly you feel you set expectations for your staff.
  o Take time to consider how these recent changes will shape conversations, feedback, and goal setting.

❖ **Process Review**
  o Review Performance Management process and Top Tips for Conducting Successful Performance Evaluations on Georgia State’s website.
  o The general principles for appraising the performance of onsite employees, as well as facilitating face-to-face evaluations, are the same for remote work and virtual evaluations.

❖ **Information Gathering**
  o Focus and work on balancing civility and compassion with clear and specific feedback. It may be important to afford more room for flexibility than you may have in the past. However, it is important to recognize each individual circumstance and ask specific questions to determine if this is new or repeated performance by the employee.
  o Review past evaluations and how each employee was rated in each category in the past.
  o Were the performance challenges this year new and due to a situation related to the new working environment?
  o The impact of COVID-19 is not limited to our professional lives. Making room in these conversations to understand what staff are experiencing is especially important.
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❖ Self-Evaluation
  o Encourage employees to complete a self-evaluation before completing your review. Successful performance is most often the result of an effective partnership and transparency between employee and supervisor.
  o Highly effective supervisors assume responsibility for coaching their employees to achieve excellence. Highly motivated employees assume responsibility for their successful performance. An annual self-evaluation provides employees with the opportunity to offer insights into their goals and accomplishments, as well as their challenges and needs. Self-evaluations provide an opportunity to confirm and/or adjust the expectations that you established pre-COVID-19.

❖ Completing the Evaluation
  o Be consistent in your approach
  o Focus on the role vs. the person
  o Avoid comparing employees. Rather evaluate employees against your parameters for each of the University System of Georgia’s (USG) ten core competencies for successful performance.
  o Three (3) of USG’s ten core competencies: Customer Service, Communication and Interpersonal Relations/ Teamwork help mitigate challenges to successful performance, including the unique challenges presented by the past year.
  o Focus on ‘output’ and accomplishments vs. ‘input’ and tasks. This year has required creativity and flexibility on everyone’s part. Consider the position’s duties and responsibilities. For some roles, a position’s ability to work traditional work hours, i.e., the Attendance and Punctuality core competency, may be less important than the core competencies of Job Knowledge, Productivity, and Accuracy and Quality.

Hopefully, you found that most of your team members rose to the challenge of 2020 and even exceeded expectations. If so, remember to recognize and thank them for their hard work.

Questions?
You may still have questions or concerns about how to provide a fair, accurate and productive appraisal of an employee’s performance. If so, please contact your College/ Division Human Resource Officer and/or Employee Relations at employeerelations@gsu.edu or 404-413-3356.

On behalf of Georgia State, thank you for your leadership this past year, as well as for guiding our workforce to greater success in 2021.