



## STRATEGIES

### Strategies to Help Supervisors Develop Healthy Work-Relationship Student Employees:

#### 1. Be an Example

Model strong habits through efficient, dedicated work practices. Let your own approach to daily work be an example from which students can learn.

#### 2. Be Flexible

Understand that student employees are students first and employees second. Even though it is important to have high standards on the job, it is also important to be flexible to accommodate academic obligations.

#### 3. Communicate Expectations

Communicate the job standards and expectations to your student employees. One can't assume that these are self-evident to the students, even though they may seem obvious to you.

#### 4. Give Feedback Frequently

Provide consistent and appropriate feedback to your student employees. Student employees, like all employees, benefit from feedback in job performance, providing it is communicated with a positive spirit.

#### 5. Be Fair

Supervisors who are too lenient are not doing students any favors. Student jobs are "real jobs." Treat student employees, as you yourself would like to be treated in a given situation.

#### 6. Train, Train, Train

Take time to train your students in important work skills, attitude, and habits - such as perseverance, time management, phone skills, quality service practices, and handling difficult situations. This is the "common sense" from which success is made.

#### 7. Be a Team Player

As a team leader, develop and nurture the unique contributions of each team member. Take a global perspective.



### 8. Give Recognition

When you see a student “going the extra mile” or “persevering through difficult situations,” acknowledge this in front of other staff and peers. People need to feel appreciated.

### 9. Share the Vision

Have regular staff meetings with your student employees and inform them how their work fits into a larger purpose of the department and institution. Remember, purposeful work is meaningful work.

### 10. Be an Educator

To the degree that we each contribute to the lives of others, we are all educators. How can you contribute to the education of your student employees?

### Common Supervisor Problems

- Failure to use common supervisory skills, as in listening, communicating, etc
- Lack of responsiveness to administrative/clerical tasks
- Failure to define the job, establish goals, set expectations
- Failure to adequately train student employees on job tasks and skills
- Failure to be sensitive to the personal and academic needs of students
- Failure to help students develop habits and attitudes that reflect Positively on the institution
- Getting supervisors to see student employees as “real employees”
- Failure to provide ongoing feedback and evaluation
- Inefficient use of student employee’s time and talents

### Dealing with Difficult People

**Attackers** charge and need room and time to blow off steam. Get them into a private area, address them by name, and listen to their position. Don’t argue or get into a shouting match; ask them to calm down and present your response in a firm, calm way.

**Egotists** also come on strong, but unlike attackers, they often act like subject experts. Respect their knowledge and ask questions, but don’t allow them to “take over”.

**Sneaks** often use sarcasm. Your best defense is to expose them with direct questions about what bothers them. They often retreat if directly queried about what their sarcasm really means.



**Victims** act powerless and defeated, and often whine. Ask them for suggestions to improve the situation. Logically refute their negative comments with facts.

**Negatrons** are usually suspicious of those in authority and believe that their own opinion is the only legitimate one. Let negatrons use all their negative “ammunition” before focusing on real solutions.

**Super-agreeable people** want to be liked and offer to do whatever you want them to do. They over-commit themselves and often disappoint and frustrate others. Monitor what they volunteer to do to make sure they are not overworked. Disassociate actions from their sense of self-worth.

**Unresponsive people** are withdrawn and it is seemingly impossible to gain a positive commitment from them. Try using more open-ended, indirect questions and wait for them to respond. Resist the urge to finish sentences for them. Give them tasks that require reports at regular intervals.

### **Dealing with Conflicts & Complaints**

**Remain Calm Yourself** - Look at the situation as objectively and fairly as possible.

**Listen** - Let the other person vent. Listen carefully and be sure you get the details right, asking questions if necessary.

**Try to Sympathize** - Imagine how you would feel in the person’s position. Let them know that you understand why they are upset.

**Agree on a Course of Action** - Work with the other person to reach a solution or course of action that is agreeable to both of you.

**Follow-up** - If action is taken, follow up with the other person and confirm that the situation has been handled in a satisfactory manner.