Giving Effective Feedback

Purpose: We all know that feedback helps to shape successful behaviors and it provides opportunities for career growth and development. And yet, many people struggle with giving effective feedback. This guide will help you to improve your ability to give feedback.

Directions: Use these six tips to help you to provide clear, specific feedback.

Tip 1

Focus on the faculty or staff member's development. Assess which skills the individual needs to develop that will *add* to his/her success and that can be used in the future.

Tip 2

Give feedback often. Make it a regular part of your one-on-one meetings with each faculty or staff member.

Tip 3

Gather information to prepare for the conversation. Look for examples that will help you to describe:

- The **specific context** ("when" and "where"). Provide background about a specific situation.
- The **behavior you observed**. Only mention actions that you have observed without judging intent. Speak from your first-hand observations only. Use "I" language.
- The **impact of the behavior**. Consider the effect the behavior has had on you, others, the project, or work environment. Describe the impact in terms of relationships affected, deadlines missed, etc.
- The **preferred behavior**. Know what behavior you would like to see. Guide the individual to describe what that behavior is in his/her own words.

Tip 4

Listen with openness. Approach the meeting with the assumption that you do not have all the facts. This is your opportunity to hear the individual's perspective. Be open to changing your mind.

Tip 5

Ask questions, then be quiet! Ensure that you clearly understand the situation from the other's point of view. Ask open-ended questions that establish a supportive atmosphere:

- How do you see the situation?
- What do you think went well, and what could have gone better?

Explore together ways to change certain behavior. If the behavior had a positive impact, explore how to build on it. Suggest specific next steps.

Tip 6

End on a positive note. Ask how you can support your faculty or staff member's goals and progress. Plan to meet again in a few weeks to see how things are going.

Examples

Ineffective Feedback: "You were too negative during the meeting yesterday!"

Effective Feedback:

"During yesterday's meeting, it was important to focus on finding solutions to the problems we discussed." **(Specific context)**

"I noticed you had many things to say about the origins of the problems and who was to blame for them." **(Behavior)**

"Several times during the meeting, I had to stop the conversation to ask you to shift your focus away from negative comments about the problems, the organization, or failed strategies of the past. I thought you kept the conversation focused on what didn't work rather than on solutions. Other team members did not have a chance to offer viable solutions, and they were visibly frustrated." **(Impact)**

"What is your perspective?" **(Open-ended question)**