

Tips for Successful Communication

With College Student Employees

Student engagement is defined as, (a) the way students are intellectually, emotionally, and behaviorally connected with their college, and (b) how their academic environment can spark the attention, participation, and passion students devote toward their college, enhancing their experience (Kuh 2009).

Studies suggest that academic **support from school staff** towards students builds social environments that promote:

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| feelings of competence | reduced behavioral disruptions | increased social engagement | better academic performance |
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DEFINE YOUR DEPARTMENT’S OR OFFICE’S MISSION AND GOALS

Do your student employees know how they contribute to the mission and goals of the department?

- Explain how their job duties impact the success of the department.
- Highlight their role in achieving the departmental goals.
- Show them the big picture.



BE CLEAR ABOUT YOUR EXPECTATIONS

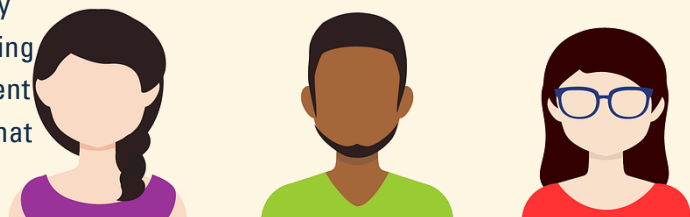


- Identify what the specific job duties are by putting them in writing and giving student employees a chance to confirm they understand.
- Specify the consequences for non-performance of job duties.
- Review interoffice policies and practices such as communicating tardiness or absences.
- Specify the consequences for non-performance of policies and practices.

OFFER TRAINING ON BASIC JOB SKILLS

Student employees may come to the job with excellent computer or technical skills, but they may not have experience in formal work settings.

Supervisors should help shape positive workplace behaviors by spending time **emphasizing basic workplace habits** such as arriving on time, arranging for time off, and following unit and department work rules. Communicate these expectations from **day one** so that they know what is expected of them.



BE FLEXIBLE

Student employees are learning to manage their time appropriately but know that school is their first priority while on campus. Students who have **supervisor support are more likely to work harder** and be flexible in return.

- Understand that student schedules change from semester to semester based on course availability so work to accommodate their classes.
- Consider the additional stressors (i.e. exams, being away from home for the first time) placed on student employees that can impact their student-work/life balance.



PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND PUT IT IN WRITING



One-on-one time with students can help in clarifying expectations so consider **reviewing the job description and meeting daily or weekly**.

When supervisors take the time to communicate, students are more likely to perform successfully. This generation thrives on feedback so consider providing meaningful feedback on job performance.

GET THEIR INPUT

As a university employer we have the opportunity to welcome a diverse student pool each year. It is important to understand how to communicate with this evolving demographic, so consider asking:

- **What do you want to gain from this work experience?**
- **Do you want to learn transferrable skills?**
- **Do you want coaching or mentoring?**



Asking these questions from day one will allow you to gain the most out of each student employee.

Content adapted from 8 simple rules for Managing Student Workers, [University Business](#).