Division of Student Services
Assessment White Paper – Student Employee Rubric
2012-2013

Executive Summary

In anticipation of the University's re-accreditation through the Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), the Division of Student Services began identifying areas within its operation that were amenable to student learning outcomes assessment. Given that many of the departments within the Division primarily offer short-term, as-needed services, their ability to impact the learning of student patrons is limited by time. Helping departments such as the Registrar, Admissions Processing, Financial Aid and Scholarships, University Police, Parking Services, and the University Bookstore identify ways in which they contribute to student learning was more challenging. However, each of these departments employs students as part of their operation. Therefore, these departments determined to focus their student learning outcomes on student employees and how their employment could teach them valuable work skills that could be transferred to future employment settings.

In addition to providing students with transferable employment skills, administrators within these departments also recognized the benefit of providing students with meaningful evaluations. Prior to this assessment project, these departments had not established any intentional or systematic employee evaluation for students working within their departments. The act of providing such evaluations also provided students with a real-world work experience and prepared them for future employment.

To guide professionals and administrators in conducting the evaluations, the Division created a rubric with twenty-four dimensions grouped into six categories.

Work Ethic	**Effective Communication**
1. Demonstrates Initiative 2. Reliable (Consistent Results) 3. Focused (Time on Task) 4. Committed to Unit Goals	5. Active Listening 6. Articulate 7. Sensitive to Audience/Setting 8. Medium-specific Mastery
Problem Solving	**Customer Service**
9. Understands Problem 10. Knowledgeable about Solutions 11. Resourceful 12. Critical Thinking	13. Welcoming & Friendly 14. Provides Timely Response 15. Anticipates Needs 16. Demonstrates Genuine Interest
Teamwork	**Ethical Conduct**
17. Responsive to Supervisor 18. Responsive to Co-workers 19. Shares/Receives Feedback 20. Seeks/Offers Help	21. Follows Rules & Procedures 22. Maintains Confidentiality 23. Inclusive of Others 24. Honest & Good Faith Effort

Results from the first administration of the evaluations were encouraging. Seventy-seven evaluations were conducted with five students receiving two separate evaluations in fall and spring semester. The other 67 students received one evaluation at some point during the fall or spring semester. The aggregate result for this group of student employees indicates that with few exceptions, their performance met or exceeded employer expectations for each of the six categories evaluated.

Assessment Procedures

During the 2011-2012 school year, department directors within the Division of Student Services identified behaviors they believed were essential for student employees to exhibit and demonstrate as part of their employment. Throughout the year, the Director of Policy, Planning, Assessment & Accountability worked with the directors to define descriptions for the behaviors that corresponded to a four-point scale of performance proficiency. The scale points were defined as follows:

1 = Developing	2 = Proficient	3 = Advanced	4 = Exemplary
"Half the time" or "Rarely" (performance ≤ 3/6 or 50 percent)	"More often than not" or "Sometimes" (4/6 or 66.6 percent)	"Usually" or "Often" (5/6 or 83.3 percent)	"With Rare Exceptions" or "Consistently" (6/6 or 95+ percent)

Points on the scale were distinguished by how frequently the desired behaviors were observed by supervisors. For example, a student that consistently demonstrated initiative in their work would score a four on that particular dimension. The following description is provided to illustrate what was meant by exemplary initiative:

"(1) Accepts assignments willingly & looks for additional assignments to contribute efforts; (2) Proactively seeks to contribute & assist without being asked; (3) Self-assesses performance and carries out a plan with the intent to improve; (4) Employs creativity to exceed the minimum expectations on work assignments."

The rubric was created as an electronic interface through Campus Labs so employee supervisors could directly enter scores into an electronic database that would automatically aggregate scores for the entire division. Supervisors retained the discretion about when and how often they would evaluate their employees and received encouragement to score employees at the beginning of their employment and towards the end of the school year. Some departments experienced employee turnover before students could be evaluated twice or added employees after the initial round of evaluations was conducted in the fall. As with any new initiative, departments struggled to find the time and attention to devote to the project and, in some cases, follow through at the end of the year was lacking. This limited the value of the assessment because the primary intent was to demonstrate growth within student employment experiences. Despite few students receiving two evaluations for the purpose of showing growth, the data is still useful in that it provides at least one measure of how well student employees are performing with respect to the desired behaviors. For example, the Division now has an idea of which behaviors are perceived to need work according to the observations of supervisors. This data can inform which topics are emphasized at student employee trainings.

Summary of Results

The following table provides the mean scores for all twenty-four dimensions of the rubric. The mean scores are listed from highest to lowest.

Table 1 – Dimension Mean Scores Listed from Highest to Lowest

Dimension	Mean
Maintains Confidentiality	3.29
Gives Honest & Good Faith Effort	3.21
Inclusive of Others	3.17
Sensitive to Audience	3.16
Demonstrates Genuine Interest	3.12
Responsive to Co-Workers	3.07
Follows Rules & Procedures	3.07
Critical Thinking	3.06
Medium-Specific Mastery	3.05

Responsive to Supervisor	3.05
Welcoming & Friendly	3.04
Reliable	3.01
Demonstrate Initiative	3.00
Active Listening	3.00
Anticipates Needs	2.99
Provides Timely Response	2.96
Committed to Unit Goals	2.93
Seeks/Offers Help	2.93
Articulate	2.87
Accurately Understands Problems	2.86
Knowledgeable about Solutions	2.82
Shares/Receives Feedback	2.74
Resourceful	2.66
Focused	2.64

On most of the dimensions, proficient-level performance (at least 2.00) was viewed as acceptable, and the mean scores indicate that not one dimension averaged less than 2.00. However, those dimensions that were categorized as part of Ethical Behavior and Customer Service required advanced-level performance (3.00 or higher). These two categories were viewed as priorities for the Division as part of its retention effort to provide high-quality customer service.

The dimensions of Ethical Behavior were characterized by acceptable performance. Each of the four dimensions had mean scores higher than 3.00. The dimensions associated with Quality Customer Service did not all garner mean scores above 3.00 and, therefore, were not entirely acceptable based on the Division's expectations. For instance, student employees' abilities to *anticipate patrons' needs* (2.99) and *provide a timely response* (2.96) were just below the targeted level.

Additionally, the six dimensions receiving the lowest mean scores provide insight into areas that, on average, need to be improved. Two of those dimensions, *resourcefulness* and being *knowledgeable about solutions*, are indicative of what student employees know about existing resources on campus. These perceived deficiencies in knowledge can be corrected through training and access to information. The propensity of students to share and receive feedback is also one area that can be addressed by training for both subordinates and supervisors.

An area of strength among the student employees evaluated is ethical behavior. All four dimensions of ethical behavior were included in top quartile of dimensions. It is reasonable to infer that student employees understand the importance of conducting themselves in a manner that is consistent with established rules and procedures. Moreover, given the imperative to guard student information with strict confidentiality, particularly in the maintenance of student records, supervisors have observed students meeting their expectations.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Student employee focus is an area that needs improvement. Focus was defined as the ability of students to avoid distractions and give sufficient attention to their work tasks. In an era of mobile devices and social media, student employees often succumb to distractions. It may be wise to apply filters to computers at student work stations to prevent them from spending inordinate amounts of time on *Facebook*, *Pintrest*, and other networking sites. Another strategy may be to more closely monitor productivity and create incentives that reward high levels of productivity. The processing staff in admissions has established productivity targets, and other departments may be wise to do the same.

Much of the work student employees do is front line service. When they are approached by students, parents or community members, the primary request is for relevant and useful information. Therefore, it is important that student employees know how to find that information quickly. The Division would be well served to create an online resource, such as a handbook, that enables students to access information about common requests. Additionally, teaching students how to navigate the University's website may also prove to be helpful. Approaching employee training in this manner may also encourage web updates leading to better self-service options.