



Calibration – Participant Ground Rules

- **Approach the calibration conversation as a management team.** This isn't a competition to see who has the best employees or worst employees or who is the best or worst supervisor. The goal is to get on the same page about how you describe strong performers and weak performers so that you can be consistent as a supervisory team. Employees will notice if you each are setting different standards, which weakens your success as a team.
- **Don't expect perfection.** You are not going to be able to address every possible variation, and not everyone will agree on everything. The team should strive for consensus on what's important and what's necessary. You may not get absolute agreement all the time, but it is important to get consistent alignment.
- **Focus on *fairness*, not *happiness*.** Giving an undeserved high rating may make that employee happy, but it won't make the other three employees happy who often have to do that person's work. The better path toward happy and productive employees is through being fair.
- **Think before speaking.** Listen actively so that you can understand the perspectives of your colleagues. Speak about what you know, not what you've heard. Any anecdotal evidence provided by a supervisor must be supported by evidence.
- **Keep it current.** Limit discussion only to the needs of the current cycle and to the employee performance during this cycle. This isn't the time to keep going over things employees did in previous years or how we used to do things – What are the business needs *this year*? What did the employee achieve *this year*?
- **Give (and receive) healthy pushback.** It is okay to challenge your colleagues about their expectation levels and their interpretations of employee performance. Your colleagues can add some objectivity to your decision-making may help you see things that you couldn't see yourself because you are too close to the issue. Keep an open mind.
- **Be open and honest.** If you think an expectation is too high or too low, or someone's performance has or hasn't exceeded expectations, or some expectations or ratings are being handled inconsistently, or there are priorities that aren't being addressed, then say something.
- **Maintain confidentiality.** Information about specific employee performance can be shared with the supervisory team so that expectations and ratings can be applied consistently and fairly. Some employees may not be comfortable having their information shared with anyone outside their direct management chain. Supervisors should share only what is necessary. All participants are required to maintain confidentiality of this information. It is not to be shared outside of the calibration discussions. What's said in the room, stays in the room.
- **More than a ratings exercise.** Fully applying calibration provides greater focus and clarity on strategic business needs and also provides insight for attending to talent management, career development, and succession planning. Because the objective of performance planning is to make the university a more efficient and effective organization, you should pursue calibration as more than simple compliance exercise; pursue calibration as an opportunity to strengthen your organization to better serve the university and the citizens of North Carolina.