

Section 5. Development, Training & Performance Feedback

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Summary

This section reviews all phases of development, training and performance feedback processes.

Below are the main headings:

- 5.1 Professional Development
- 5.2 Training Opportunities
- 5.3 Tuition Waiver
- 5.4 New Employees (also see Employment in Section 4)
- 5.5 Performance Planning and Review
- 5.6 Performance Problems
- 5.7 Violations of Policy / Prohibited Conduct

The College encourages staff to increase their knowledge and skills through its orientation of new employees, on-campus staff training and development opportunities, attendance at professional conferences, and participation in other educational opportunities. The College's Performance Management Process establishes a process to provide ongoing feedback on performance, to set goals, and to plan for professional development and attendance in workshops and development programs.

5.1 Professional Development

Participation in outside conferences and workshops can enhance employee knowledge and skills in areas directly related to employee's jobs. Staff must have the appropriate departmental approval to attend conferences or workshops during work time. Most departments have a budget line for costs associated with attendance at conferences, job-related courses or workshops.

5.2 Training Opportunities

Human Resources offers a variety of training and development programs on campus for staff. These include new employee orientations, leadership and supervisory development programs, change management programs, team development and planning, conflict resolution, special programs for non-supervisory staff, and individual coaching. These programs are usually announced by Human Resources to staff through the College Bulletin, email, flyers, and/or the HR website. Some programs may involve nominations by heads of departments or functions.

5.3 Tuition Waiver

Eligible employees can also receive tuition waiver to cover all or part of the cost of many classes offered to registered Saint Mary's College students. For more information see "Tuition Waiver" in the Benefits section, or check the HR website.

5.4 New Employees (also see Employment in Section 4)

The first days, weeks and months with the College or in a new position are an important period of learning. The employee learns about the department, job responsibilities, and Saint Mary's unique history and tradition as the premier Catholic, Lasallian and Liberal Arts College.

5.4.1 The First Days on the Job

During the first days on the job, it is useful for the supervisor to

- Make sure that the employee completes an I9 and W4 in HR, required before the employee can get an employee ID number and an email account.
- Determine if the new employee has the tools and equipment for the job, including, as appropriate, a telephone extension, a computer, necessary software, a parking permit, access to GaelExpress and the Saint Mary's College website, and an email account.
- Confirm that the new employee has scheduled, and attends, both New Employee Orientation, the Benefits Orientation, Campus of Difference and any other required training .

- Review the duties and responsibilities of the position with the new employee, including discussion of the job description and essential functions of the position as well as institutional information that may not be covered in the job description.

5.4.2 Department Orientation

Each supervisor or department head is responsible for the specific departmental orientation and training of new employees. This orientation can set the stage for a positive introduction for the employee to the College and his/her job. The following are areas that are helpful for a supervisor to cover during the departmental orientation of a new employee:

- Introduce the new employee to department staff and to key contacts across the campus.
- Walk around campus to show the employee the locations of places to eat on campus, the library, the Soda Center, administrative buildings, the athletics buildings, and other buildings that the new employee will be visiting early in employment.
- Review College safety rules, departmental work rules, and policies and procedures.

5.4.3 College Orientation

Human Resources conducts orientation sessions, generally quarterly, for new hires to welcome them to the College. These sessions include talks on the mission and traditions of the College, a review of policies, and information on services available to employees. New employees are strongly urged to attend these informative sessions early in their employment. HR can also conduct individual College orientations.

5.4.4 Benefits Orientation

Human Resources also conducts separate benefits orientations, generally monthly, for new employees or employees newly eligible for benefits. HR can also provide individual benefits orientations. For more information, see Section IX, Benefits.

5.5 Performance Planning and Review

Saint Mary's College has established a Performance Management Process to structure a series of dialogues between employees and their supervisors on performance expectations, progress and accomplishments. The Performance Management process promotes a shared responsibility between supervisors and employees for performance planning and assessment, frequent two-way communication, and opportunities for professional development and continuous learning. The process is ongoing throughout the year.

The stages, procedures, and forms for this process are described and available on the Human Resources website under Performance Management, in materials available in the HR office, in training sessions from HR, and in email communications from HR. Key components of the process are as follows:

5.5.1 Initial Review

The Performance Management Process is designed to begin with the initial review for new employees or employees new to a position. It is typically completed by the supervisor and the employee after two (2) to six (6) months on the job. This review is designed to clarify the employee's responsibilities and objectives, give feedback on the employee's performance, and provide the structure for identifying the new employee's professional development plan. The Performance Review form documents this process. Using Saint Mary's online performance review system, the employee and manager complete the review form, and both of them sign the form electronically. The completed review is available to the employee, the supervisor, and Human Resources via the online system and becomes a part of the employee's personnel file. For more information on Saint Mary's College online performance review tool, please go to [Human Resources GAELPerform](#) (web-based reviews) page.

5.5.2 Performance Feedback

It is expected that coaching by the supervisor and mutual feedback between the supervisor and employee occur throughout the year; this can include reviewing expectations and progress, giving performance feedback, and holding discussions on professional development. Positive feedback and constructive feedback are especially important when adjustments need to be made.

Ideally, feedback is given close to the time when the instance takes place. Supervisors should seek multiple ways to recognize accomplishments, from a simple thank you to department recognition.

5.5.3 Mid-year Progress Review

This mid-year review, normally done in December–January of each year, is designed to structure a dialogue between the employee and supervisor regarding expectations, progress, course correction, and mid-year feedback. Human Resources can provide guidance for these reviews. Supervisors wishing to conduct mid-year reviews using the online performance management system should contact the Human Resources Department. Some lead time is required to set up the process using the online system. As an alternative, supervisors may decide to conduct a mid-year review using the paper and pencil method. The completed form does not need to be forwarded to Human Resources. This type of Progress Review can be conducted more frequently if the supervisor, department or employee desires.

5.5.4 End of Year Performance Review

All employees and their supervisors should complete the annual End of Year Performance Review in May-June of each academic year. This year-end review documents the employee's accomplishments for the year, provides ratings for qualitative areas, provides an overall rating for the past year, sets down goals (or begins this process) for the upcoming year, and specifies the professional development agreed upon for the next rating period. Areas of strength and areas for development should be specific. This review is designed to be a collaborative process between the employee and the supervisor.

Once electronically signed by the employee and her/his supervisor, the next level of management signs it, and the completed End of Year Review becomes part of the employee's personnel file. Employees, supervisors, and Human Resources can access the completed review at any time via the online performance review system. The Human Resources staff is available to provide guidance about the process and assistance in dealing with performance issues.

5.5.5 Development Plan

Formal professional Development Plans can be created at any time in the year, although they are often developed in conjunction with the End of Year Review. Reasons why a Development Plan may be helpful include an employee's taking on new assignments, changes in employee job responsibilities or when the employee is seeking to advance in his/her career. Development Plans can be created in the online performance review system.

5.5.6 Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) must be reviewed and approved in advance by Human Resources when the overall rating on the performance review is "Needs Improvement" or below. A PIP can also be created if there are areas marked "Needs Improvement" even though the overall rating may be "Achieves Expectations." While often done at the time of the annual review, the PIP can be used any time performance is deficient. The supervisor should initiate this plan with the employee. The plan should clarify the improvement needed, actions to take, and a timeline for completion. Its goal is to help the employee meet the expectations of her/his position. Both employee and supervisor should keep a copy. Supervisors must consult with appropriate staff in Human Resources when developing a Performance Improvement Plan.

When salary increases are provided to staff employees, an employee who receives an overall rating of "Needs Improvement" will not be eligible for an increase. When the supervisor documents the employee performance rating as "Achieves Expectations" or better, the employee may be eligible for a non-retroactive increase.

5.6 Performance Problems and Corrective Action

5.6.1 Our Core Values and Guiding Principles

In our Lasallian tradition we acknowledge the core value of respect for all persons. In that spirit, we honor and respect the dignity of all individuals by means of a process to hold each of our community members accountable to performance and conduct expectations. While recognizing that at times a staff member may fall short of meeting standards, it is the intent of this policy to

support success in reaching expectations and, when standards are not met, to clarify the range of appropriate corrective actions the College may choose to take.

Employment with the College is “at will,” which means it is subject to termination by either the College or the staff member at any time, for any reason. There are no contractual relationships between the College and a staff member, and letters, benefit or policy statements, performance appraisals, employee handbooks or other employee communications should not be interpreted as such. No one has the authority to enter into any oral or written employment contract without the signed explicit written approval of an officer of the College, and no written employment contract will be valid without the signature of the President of the College or designee. To monitor this at-will relationship, and to support the success of staff members, the College may use a variety of guidelines to clarify expectations and track performance.

5.6.2 Employee Responsibility

It is the duty and the responsibility of every employee to be aware of and abide by College policies and procedures. It is also the responsibility of the employee to perform his/her duties to the best of his/her ability and to the standards as set forth in his/her job description or as otherwise established. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of all learning opportunities available and request additional instruction when needed.

5.6.3 Responsibilities of Supervisors, Managers and Directors

The immediate supervisor, manager or director must approach an employee’s performance in an objective manner. If the employee’s performance of assigned tasks is the issue, the supervisor, manager or director should generally look to see that proper instructions, appropriate orientation and training have been given and that the employee is aware of the job expectations. Not only single incidents, but also patterns of poor performance should be of concern, as these are indicative of overall performance.

If misconduct is the issue, the supervisor, manager or director should take steps to make sure that the employee has been made aware of the College’s policies and procedures regarding the violation. If appropriate instruction or information was not communicated, a plan for such communication should be immediately developed and reviewed with the employee. Supervisors

should consider appropriate development opportunities, available through HR or external to campus, to support employee success.

5.6.4 Performance Issues

Sometimes coaching and performance reviews do not result in the necessary changes in an employee's performance or behavior. When this occurs, supervisors should seek the guidance of one of the Directors in the Human Resources Department or the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources to determine the best way to proceed. Human Resources can provide information and resource material on the steps involved in corrective action.

In most cases, if you have a performance issue your supervisor will work with you to provide the appropriate performance counseling and corrective action so that you have the opportunity to improve. The type of performance counseling and corrective action used would depend on considerations such as:

- Nature and severity of the issue
- Timing and frequency of previous issues
- Any prior corrective action steps taken
- The employee's response to feedback
- The employee's overall performance

Because facts and circumstances can vary widely, and are sometimes unique to a particular situation, the action that's taken in one situation shouldn't be construed as setting a precedent for any other situations.

5.6.5 Corrective Action

When the opportunity for engaging in corrective action is available, it generally can include a series of steps, such as the following:

5.6.5.1 Early Counseling/Coaching

Supervisors should provide early coaching and constructive feedback to employees when performance tasks or behavior becomes a concern. This feedback is usually verbal and specific.

The supervisor should listen to the employee, and seek to understand the employee’s reasons for why s/he is not performing satisfactorily. Assistance from the supervisor, further coaching, additional help, re-prioritizing tasks, or additional training may be some of the remedies required.

If the employee is not satisfactorily responding to these early coaching suggestions, or if a pattern of poor performance continues, the Supervisor should document the concerns and submit them to Human Resources to be included in the employee personnel file.

5.6.5.2 Performance Counseling

In most cases, if your performance, behavior or attendance doesn’t meet specified requirements, your supervisor will meet with you to discuss the issue. Formal Counseling documenting a need for improvement can be:

- Verbal only
- By written memo to the employee with a copy kept in the employee personnel file (this “memo” can be an email that is printed and inserted into the file)

Performance Counseling communications will discuss the specific areas of performance, behavior or attendance that don’t meet the requirements or expectations of the employee’s assigned job duties. In addition, the employee’s supervisor may work with the employee to develop a performance improvement plan (PIP) and timeframe for improving the employee’s performance. Supervisors and managers must review a PIP with Human Resources for approval in advance of implementation.

5.6.5.3 Warning

If performance, behavior or attendance shows no signs of improvement or keeps declining after counseling—or if something happens to cause the escalation of the performance counseling and corrective action process—your supervisor may document the situation in a written warning.

The warning may include a PIP (reviewed and approved in advance by Human Resources) and usually contains:

- An explanation of the issue

- A definition of the expected level of performance or the improved behaviors or attendance needed
- An improvement timeframe, and
- A warning that if the issue continues, it can lead to termination of employment

The written warning memo will become a part of the employee's personnel file.

5.6.5.4 Final Notice

Some situations may require corrective action just short of termination. In a situation like this, the employee may receive a final notice advising that if the situation occurs again at any time during employment, employment will be terminated immediately. This notice is typically a written memo, which will become a part of the employee's official personnel file.

5.6.5.5 Termination

If the employee performance, behavior or attendance as outlined in the counseling or warning doesn't improve, employment may be terminated.

Employment can also be terminated if the situation documented in a notice reoccurs, or if the problem involves a breach of policy, and/or prohibited conduct, or if the employee's performance or conduct is such that continued employment is no longer in the best interest of the College. For examples of this kind of conduct and more information about situations appropriate for immediate termination, see the policy on "Prohibited Conduct."

Since employment is "at-will", Saint Mary's may simply choose to end the employment relationship without attempting any of the above mentioned counseling or corrective action procedures. Saint Mary's may escalate the process or use an part of it that it feels is appropriate... corrective action, consistent with the employee's at will status.

5.7 Violations of Policy / Prohibited Conduct

When violations of Saint Mary's policies or prohibited conduct is suspected or has occurred, the appropriate level of supervisor must promptly review the situation with the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources or her/his designee so that the matter can be investigated, and

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appropriate action determined. Appropriate action may consist of disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.