

Approach: Conversation Starters for Supervisors of Student Staff Members

Suggested use: Thinking about what it means to be a professional after college often starts with a student's on-campus jobs. Consider meeting with students individually or as a staff on a regular basis, whether once per week or once per semester. Choose one or more of these questions to start a career-related conversation based on their part-time on-campus job.

- 1. How are things going for you this week/month/semester?**
 - *Benefit: This is intentionally vague to allow the student to define the conversation based on whatever is going on in the moment.*
- 2. What questions do you have about the job so far? What would you like to learn more about?**
 - *Benefit: You may be surprised to find out that the student is lacking some basic information. Or, you may be reassured to know that they feel confident with the training they have received.*
- 3. What do you think you do well in this job? What do you think you could do better?**
 - *Benefit: This is a good opportunity for the student to reflect on performance and take responsibility for improvement. Asking how you can help supports the student while encouraging him/her to develop skills related to asking for what they need.*
- 4. Has anything about this job surprised you?**
 - *Benefit: It's often helpful to have this information to inform training efforts next time.*
- 5. What is the most challenging part of your job? What strategies have you employed to overcome the challenge?**
 - *Benefit: It's often helpful to know about the areas a particular student finds challenging so the supervisor can be on the lookout for performance issues in that area.*
- 6. What classes are you taking this semester? What activities or sports?**
 - *Benefit: This question shows investment and is a lead in to question seven.*
- 7. How are you managing your time between classes, work, and activities?**
 - *Benefit: This is a great opportunity to encourage students to take inventory of their ability to balance. Strong time management skills mean better performance at work.*
- 8. What have you learned from working here? What skills have you developed/honed?**
 - *Benefit: This is a great opportunity to point out skills like time management, working with diverse groups of people, managing stress, customer service, and job-related competencies.*
- 9. What can I do to support you in your efforts to perform well, manage your time or stress well, or succeed academically?**
 - *Benefit: Supervisors have a stake in student success. When students feel supported, they are more likely to like their jobs, show up to work, and perform well.*
- 10. What suggestions do you have to help us do our work more effectively?**
 - *Benefit: Students have a unique perspective that may benefit your department's efforts to constantly improve.*