A MANAGER’S GUIDE FOR HAVING A REORGANIZATION DISCUSSION

It is never easy to tell employees that restructuring or budget cuts or other changing business needs require reorganization. These hard-to-hold conversations can be done with dignity and compassion when supervisors plan for them and make every effort to provide employees with relevant, useful information about this difficult change in circumstances. This document provides ideas for preparing and having these conversations.

The Human Resources Services Center provides consulting services to assist managers and supervisors with best practices in applying University policies to meet strategic needs.

BEFORE THE MEETING

Consult with Human Resources to review policies related to reductions in force.

Changes in employment can be the cause of an enormous amount of stress for employees. Delivering this news can be stressful as well. Advance preparation will help lessen your own anxiety. Acknowledging your own discomfort is an important first step. The conversation will be less stressful if you:

- Write down the key points of what you want to say. This will ensure that you provide all the information the employees need at this time and that you have not failed to address any important items.
- Prepare written documents before the meeting.
- Develop a specific transition plan for employees indicating duties and expectations.
- Develop a plan for making the announcement to affected employee’s colleagues.
- Prepare to discuss the specific reason for the reorganization in a manner that is easily understood by your department/division.
- Decide where and when the meeting will occur.
- Plan enough time for the employees to ask any questions they may have.

AT THE MEETING

Meet with the affected employees personally to discuss the restructuring. A Representative from Human Resources will be present to assist you with the notification meeting. An employee should never receive this type of information by e-mail or memo.

Having the discussion early in the day is best. It is also better to give the news earlier in the week. Employees should have time to process the information and ask questions before the weekend. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so. Do not make a guess.
Get right to the issue at hand. Make the employees feel comfortable, but avoid small talk such as “how are you?” and other niceties. Be empathetic and understanding without being apologetic. Convey the business reasons for the decision.

Avoid offering false hopes about the decision being reversed.

Discuss what will be expected of the employees in their new roles.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE COUNSELING/CONSULTATION

Impact Solutions (EAP) offers free, voluntary and confidential services to help employees address a range of personal and work-related concerns, such as stress associated with change and transitions, and job and career difficulties. Employees can call Impact Solutions 24/7/365 at 800-227-6007 to arrange an appointment.