

A Manager's Guide for Layoff Discussions

It is never easy to tell employees that restructuring or budget cuts require the elimination of positions; however, when supervisors make every effort to provide employees with relevant, useful information, the conversations can be done with dignity and compassion. This document provides ideas for preparing for layoff discussions.

Human Resource Services provides consulting services to assist managers and supervisors with the best practices in applying the university's policies to meet strategic needs.

BEFORE the Meeting

Consult with the Office of Human Resource Services' Employee Relations department to review policies related to layoff and request advice about delivering the news. The loss of employment can be the cause of stress for both the employee and the manager delivering the news. Advanced preparation will help lessen your own anxiety and ensure you are a more helpful resource for the impacted employee. Acknowledging your own discomfort is an important first step.

The conversation will be less stressful if you:

- Write down your key talking points. This will ensure that you provide all the information the employee needs at this time and that you have not failed to address any important items.
- Working with Employee Relations, prepare all necessary written documents before the meeting.
- Develop a specific transition plan for the employee indicating duties and expectations.
- Develop a plan for making an announcement to the affected employee's colleagues.
- Prepare to discuss the specific reason for layoff that is consistent with the reason as it is understood by your department/division and the reason provided in the notification letter.
- Decide where and when the meeting will occur. Hold the meeting in your office or some other private place where you will not be interrupted.
- Plan enough time for the employee to review any written documents and ask questions.

DURING the Meeting

Meet with the affected employee personally to discuss the impending layoff. An employee should never receive this information by e-mail or memo. If there are multiple people to be told, each person should be told individually.

Have the discussion early in the day. It is also better to give the news earlier in the week. The employee should have time to process the information and have access to support services before the weekend.

Get right to the issue at hand. Make the employee feel comfortable, but avoid small talk. Be empathetic and understanding without being apologetic. Convey the business reasons for the decision.

Provide the employee with a copy of the layoff notification letter and resource materials. Give the employee an opportunity to review the notice and ask questions. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so. Do not make a guess.

Avoid offering false hope about the decision being reversed if financial issues change or other employees leave.

Identify resources on issues such as unemployment compensation, benefits, and services available to the employee. Employees can view the layoff website or call their HRS Employee Relations satellite office to schedule an appointment to talk about options.

Discuss what will be expected of the employee before the official end date and develop a plan to announce the decision. The employee may wish to delay the announcement. Negotiate a plan that works for both parties.

Offer the employee another meeting to follow-up on the details and transition plan, or other issues.

AFTER the Meeting

Provide the employee the opportunity to ask questions that may have emerged since the notification meeting.

Provide encouragement about available resources and discuss any job seeking assistance that you or the department can provide. Remember: It's okay to recognize accomplishments of those leaving the institution. It's important that those who have been laid off continue to be acknowledged during the transition period between their layoff notice and the last day of employment.

Complete the Layoff Guidelines for UF Departments checklist to be retained in the department file.

On the employee's last day of work, schedule a brief meeting with the employee. Let the employee know in advance that the purpose of the meeting is to collect university property that the employee may have in their possession, and to ensure that you are providing as much assistance to the employee as you are able.

RESOURCES

Counseling/Consultation Resources

The Employee Assistance Program 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.

More information is available on the website at..... www.eap.ufl.edu

Employees can arrange an appointment by calling..... 392-5787

Employee Relations Satellite Offices:

Health Science Center.....392-3786
IFAS.....392-4777
PPD.....392-2333
E&G/Auxiliaries.....392-6615
Impacted Employees Layoff website:
www.hr.ufl.edu/emp_relations/layoff/default.asp#contact

Human Resource Services.....392-2477

Recruitment and Staffing.....392-2477
Benefits392-2477
Retirement.....392-2477