The Art of Positive Termination

Being Proactive During a Reactive Situation

A part of the Education at Work Professional Development Series
Agenda!

- Key Words & Phrases
- Termination “To Do” List for Employers
- Warning Phases
- Termination Phase
Incorporate these words and phrases into your vocabulary when speaking with students. They’ll definitely grab their attention!

- **Choice, Chosen to**
  
  *You’ve chosen to come in late every day this last week.*

- **Consequence to actions**
  
  *Unfortunately, as a consequence to your actions, we’re going to reduce your hours.*
Key Words & Phrases

~ Goals
Let’s set some goals to help you work on this problem.

~ Job performance
I’d like to discuss with you your job performance these last few weeks.

~ Termination
I’m sorry, we’re going to have to terminate your employment with this office effective today.
You leave me no choice...

Since you continue to come in late after we’ve talked about this, you leave me no choice but to terminate your employment with the office.
WHY is termination crossing your mind?

1. Determine if reasons are personal or professional.
2. Involve appropriate office staff in decision making process.
3. Keep accurate and detailed notes.
4. Have proof! (Timesheets, work assignments, emails, phone messages, etc.)
Step 1: Verbal Warning

**definition** ~ Discussing with the student problems with his/her job performance.

Meeting should consist of supervisor and student employee only.
Step 1: Verbal Warning

- Explain purpose of meeting
- Give specific examples of performance problems. *Avoid accusations!*
- Compile solutions through goal setting
- Set deadline for improvement – ex. 1 week
- Remain calm, yet firm
Step 2: Written Warning

**Definition** ~ A formal correspondence detailing continued unsatisfactory job performance issues. Items should relate specifically to Verbal Warning.

Discuss issues with student; student signs off as understanding contents and potential ramifications.
Step 2: Written Warning

- Explain purpose of meeting
- Cite specific examples of continued performance problems.
- Explain consequences of performance problems.
- Set final deadline for improvement
- Remain calm, yet firm
As “the Donald” would say...

You’re Fired!
Step 3: Termination

definition ~ A formal meeting and letter of notification terminating the student employee.
Step 3: Termination

- Explain purpose
- Cite specifics, be direct
- Write letter: include termination date, cc: Director, Department Head, Office Manager
- Place in student’s permanent employment file
1. Is it better to terminate a student or just let their contract run out and not rehire them?

*If you’re experiencing problems with a student employee that is worthy of termination, you need to end their employment as soon as possible. Keeping them employed is doing a disservice to your office and the student will begin to think that what they’re doing is permissible.*
2. Where do I put the notes that I keep on a student?

You need to keep all of your correspondence, notes included, in their personnel file. To insure confidentiality, make sure that all of your personnel files are locked.

3. Can we terminate a student even if we’ve not given them a verbal or written warning yet?

Yes. If the student has violated office and/or College policy, they may be terminated at any time. Be sure to include a formal letter of termination.
4. What if my student employee suspects that s/he is going to be terminated and just doesn’t return to work?

   Still provide your official termination in writing and send a copy to the address you have on file for them. Be sure to also place a copy in their personnel file.

5. We’ve come to realize that a student who was recently terminated from our office stole money from our petty cash while employed here. What do we do?

   Contact Public Safety to report the crime as well as Student Affairs to have them handle the situation as a potential Honor Code violation.
5. A student that was terminated from our office is now seeking employment with someone else within our division. They’ve asked me for a reference. What do I tell them?

It’s in your best interest as an employer and a professional to not reveal any information to the other party, regardless of your relationship with them. It’s legal and ethical for you to provide employment dates and job duties only. Anything said above and beyond that, without the student’s consent, may make you liable. Be careful with what you say.
6. If I have to be careful with what I say to a potential employer, then how can I subtly “warn” them of this student’s behaviors?

*It’s professional to say that the student wasn’t a good fit for your office and its demands. By leaving it at that, the potential employer may get the hint and discontinue the conversation. You have to remember that the way the student acted in your office doesn’t mean that the same behavior will continue with another employer.*