Performance Feedback/Performance Conference Best Practices

If you are conducting performance conferences:

- Set aside enough time to conduct the performance conference so meaningful dialogue can occur, in a “two-way” fashion.
- Work to include feedback that has been part of performance discussions all year long. The performance conference is not the time to “surprise” colleagues with feedback not previously discussed.
- Review performance in terms of how it aligns with Cooperative Extension’s purpose, vision and values.
- Give specific examples; include examples of what went well and how performance can be improved. People want to know how they are doing.
- Be sure to document performance accurately without letting emotions get in the way of constructive feedback.
- Focus the conference on the individual for whom it is intended; don’t compare with other colleagues.
- Evaluate performance consistently among and across colleagues within a work group or office.

If you are participating in an annual performance conference:

- Be aware of how you tend to react to feedback on your performance. If you have a tendency to reject it, or argue or defend against it, work to be open to what you might learn during the performance conference.
- Work to separate the message from the messenger if there is a possibility that the person conducting the performance conference might “trigger” a defensive response in you.
- Work to hear performance feedback as potentially valuable advice from a fresh perspective.
- Before you accept or reject what you are hearing about your performance, take some time to explore what you have heard in an effort to better understand the basis of the feedback.
- Be more intentional in the year ahead to ask for feedback in bite-size pieces if hearing feedback tends to overwhelm you.
- Remember, performance conferences are for your development. Be determined to learn whatever you can from the feedback you receive. Your growth as an Extension professional depends on it!