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Tips for a Successful Calibration Process

- **Communicate School/Unit Goals.** Goals for each area should be communicated thoroughly and in advance so employees understand how their daily work contributes to the success of the school/unit, and so that employees understand the measures on which they will be evaluated.
- **Include your HR Professional.** Having a neutral third party adds balance to the meeting and provides an important objective viewpoint, which can lead to the identification and possible elimination of biases.
- **Educate managers.** Managers need to understand what calibration is, why it is necessary, how it works, and what their roles are.
- **Don't hide the process from employees.** A calibration process seen as secretive could discourage employees. Be open about the process, but maintain confidentiality outside of the calibration meeting.
- **Don't expect perfection.** The calibration process is imperfect because the people using it are imperfect. Each calibration meeting should have checks and balances built in so that leaders are held accountable for their evaluation decisions.
- **Get the right people involved.** Make sure that the reviewer can adequately represent the employees being discussed by articulating what those employees have accomplished. The reviewer must be able to respond appropriately to questions or challenges from the group. If questions arise, make sure the manager is available to clarify them.
- **Set appropriate ground rules for meetings.** Participants must feel open to share and receive feedback. They must also feel comfortable asking their peers for advice if they need help in determining or communicating a rating.
- **Leverage the information gathered during the process.** The power of calibration goes beyond performance ratings. These discussions yield important insight into the university's talent pipeline and overall development needs.