# **Other Key Concepts**

## **Fact Finding**

Before issuing anything related to corrective actions or even coaching or mentoring, a supervisor should establish the facts. For example, what performance expectations are not being met? What happened at the event in question? What is the employee's perspective or reasoning? How do we know the employee knew about the expectations? How have you handled similar situations in the past?

The risk of taking only one side of a story or extrapolating from a minimum of established facts is that we can jump to the wrong conclusion – a conclusion that would have been different if we simply asked a few questions. Employees appreciate this effort and fairness and are more likely to respond to correction if a supervisor takes the time to ask their perspective.

Your HR Business partner can help you with your fact-finding questions and structure and is available to participate in the meetings with you. HR's participation in the meetings is strongly encouraged if the potential outcome of the fact-finding is a letter of reprimand or higher level discipline.

#### **Performance Issues versus Behavioral Issues**

Performance or work-related performance problems typically include problems directly affecting the actual work (or lack of work) including meeting deadlines, productivity, quality of work, quantity of work, accuracy, attention to detail, timeliness and other measurable things. Although behavioral issues usually contribute to work-performance problems, they can be identified separately and as a subset of work performance. In many cases, a behavioral issue can be corrected immediately by an employee if he or she chooses. HR lumps attendance, absenteeism and tardiness in with behavioral issues as long as the absences or tardiness are not otherwise protected by law. Work performance often takes time to improve and to measure. Because behavioral issues can be corrected much more quickly, HR does not recommend probation or a Perfomance Developmental Plan (PDP) for behavioral issues alone.

### Performance Development Plan (PDP)

The University of Idaho has traditionally used the PDP in connection with discipline. We may have lost some of the perspective that a PDP is really a tool to help an employee succeed – not something designed to complete our documentation requirements prior to further discipline. So, HR encourages the use of a PDP at any point in an employee's job cycle to help establish expectations, goals or a performance and support plan. PDPs can be done for a new employee, annually along with a performance evaluation or at any time that may be necessary, with or without corresponding corrective action.

Maximizing the employee's participation in the PDP process significantly increases the chances of success. As with performance evaluations, the supervisor gets the final word.

## **Corrective Action – Progressive or Not?**

We don't have to follow each of these steps in order. Circumstances occur when it makes sense to skip some steps or combine tools and resources in different ways. Another principle, often applied, is if the same or similar transgression occurs within a reasonable amount of time (typically 6-12 months), it probably does not make sense to issue the same or lesser action as before. It is probably time to step up the corrective action scale.

It is very important to work with your HR Business partner because he or she can help us maintain consistency across the University and comply with employment-related laws and regulations. We strongly recommend including your Business Partner in the discussion right from the verbal warning stage. Another role HR has is to help protect both you and the University by complying with applicable policies, regulations and often, multiple State and Federal laws governing how we treat our employees.