Faculty and Staff Template: Career Development Discussion Tool

**Purpose:** Use this tool to make career development conversations productive and impactful.

**Directions:** Give this template to the faculty or staff member at least one week before his/her scheduled development conversation. Ask him/her to enter answers the questions in the white space on this template. Let the faculty or staff member know that his/her answers will help make the conversation productive.

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| **Section 1: Where am I now? (Performance)** |
| **Current performance**  Analyze your current performance against position description, goals/targets, and behaviors.  Ask yourself:   * Am I performing as well as I could? * If not, in what areas do I need to improve? * What constructive feedback have I received over the last 12 months or so, and how have I acted on it? What has been the result? |
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| **Development needs**   * What additional skills, knowledge, or expertise might you need to improve your performance? * What were the development needs identified at your last appraisal (if applicable), and how have you progressed in meeting them? * How have you implemented new knowledge, skills, and abilities from learning opportunities such as development or training programs, and what has been the result? * In what way have you demonstrated commitment to your self-development over the last year or so? |
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| **Contribution and achievements**   * What have you contributed to departmental or organizational objectives in the last 12 to 18 months? * What has been your biggest achievement(s) this year? |
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| **Strengths**  What have you done really well? What do you perceive to be your key skills/strengths? |
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| **Section 2: Where do I want to be? (Potential)** |
| **Environment**   * What type of environment do you like to work in? * How do you like to employ your skills? * What makes you feel satisfied and fulfilled at work? * What does a great day look like? |
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| **Key skills, knowledge, and behaviors**  Consider how your strengths could be more effectively used in your current role.   * What are your key strengths? Include professional expertise, as well as skills and behaviors. * What are some skills you may not be using currently, such as those in previous roles, outside interests, or languages? |
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| **Matching skills to development opportunities**   * What would you like to do *more* of or *less* of, in your work? * What would you most want to take with you to another position and what would you most like to leave behind? * What type of position or role might combine your strengths, desires, and career aspirations? |
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| **Section 3: How will I get there? (Opportunity)** |
| **Development gaps**  Identify the skills and knowledge gaps between where you are now and where you want to be. Think about what learning experiences could provide these skills and knowledge. |
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| **Helpers and hinderers**  Consider the factors that may affect your career, either positively or negatively. This will help to increase your awareness of these and decide which, if any, factor you can or want to change. Positive factors are generally referred to as “helpers,” and negative ones are known as “hinderers” or obstacles. These factors may be within you (internal), such as feelings, thoughts, and skills, or they may be in your environment (external), such as departmental or organizational priorities, home life, life events, and ability to travel. Always try to think about those factors you can influence rather than those you cannot. |
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| **Investment of effort**  Think about how you will commit time and effort to your development; this is important to consider as you will be the owner and driver of your development. (You could talk to other like-minded individuals and inquire about how they approached their development.) Decide your preference for career planning. Would you like to draw up a plan spanning several years, or do you prefer to think in stages, perhaps one year or one development need or career step at a time? |
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| **Network**  You should always try to have a network of people who will support your development. This may be a mixture of people with whom and from whom you can learn, create ideas, exchange best practices, gain exposure to new things, raise your visibility, etc. Identify which individuals to include in your network, and discuss them with your chair. |
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