

Getting Started

Most supervisors regularly chat with their student employees. But, we realize not every supervisor feels comfortable having Rowan GROW® conversations that focus on what students are learning on the job and in class. This Supervisor Resource Guide is meant to help supervisors in holding meaningful conversations.

Students learn a lot from working on campus. They learn to do things like cook, clean, and provide customer service. But they also learn how to manage time, how to work as a part of a team, and how to handle disagreements or unhappy customers. We call these transferable skills because they transfer from one place (work) to other places (classes, student organizations).

Rowan GROW® helps students get important practice in talking about what they are learning in their campus job. We want them to think about transferable skills and how those might help them in other parts of their lives.

Your role as a supervisor for the Rowan GROW® conversation is actually pretty simple – you get to listen and support what your students are learning, and if you have ideas of what you think they are getting out of work that they don't think of, throw those into the conversation.

Student employees spend a lot of time in the workplace. Your role as a student supervisor means you are one of the caring adults that your students see nearly every day, and you serve as a great support for them. Rowan GROW® conversations are just another way for you to show that support.

As a start, try choosing one of these three skills to focus on for your conversation:

1. Time management
2. Working as a part of a team
3. Handling conflict or unhappy customers

Then, ask these three questions:

1. What have you learned about [time management/working as a part of a team/handling conflict] through your job here?
2. How do you think what you have learned about [time management/working as a part of a team/handling conflict] can help you in your classes?
3. How do you think what you have learned about [time management/working as a part of a team/handling conflict] can help you once you get done with college and start working full-time?

After some practice, you will be more comfortable asking the general Rowan GROW® questions, and that's great! By having these conversations, you are showing your students that you care, and that you want them to learn. Thank you for all you do to support our students!

Supervisor Reflection

What should students know and be able to do after working in your office? (Tasks, skills, competencies)

When you think about the students you supervise, answer this question... “By May, I hope the students I supervise are able to....” (do more, do better, know more, know better)

Would you consider your student employment opportunity a high-impact activity? If yes, what components make it high-impact? If no, what changes could be made to make it a high-impact activity?

What additional questions could you ask your student employees to help them connect their work experience as a high-impact learning activity?

- How is this job fitting in with your academics?
- What are you learning here at work that is helping you in school?
- What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?
- Can you give me a couple examples of things you are learning here at work that you will use in your chosen profession?

Ideas for enhancing student learning in their work environment:

- Hold meetings (individual or group) with student employees to foster conversations about the connections they are making with their academics and work.
- Incorporate language of student learning into job announcements and position descriptions.
- Create and use interview questions that encourage student to make connections between the world of work and academics.
- Add discussions of learning outcomes to new student worker training checklists.
- Utilize goal setting.

NACE Definitions of Career Readiness & Competencies

Career readiness is the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace. These competencies are:

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving: Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.

Oral/Written Communications: Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.

Teamwork/Collaboration: Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict.

Digital Technology: Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals. The individual demonstrates effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.

Leadership: Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. The individual is able to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.

Professionalism/Work Ethic: Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of nonverbal communication on professional work image. The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes.

Career Management: Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth. The individual is able to navigate and explore job options, understands and can take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understands how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace.

Global/Intercultural Fluency: Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. The individual demonstrates openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals' differences.

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Definitions adapted from the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

The eight outcomes of student employment listed above can be used in your conversations with students. You can use the outcomes to help prompt students when they are thinking about what they've learned in their job and how it connects to what they've learned in the classroom and vice versa.

Additional Questions

These additional questions may be useful in subsequent Rowan GROW® conversations. These additional questions are for:

- student employees who are beyond their first year of employment in your department
- student employees with whom you have had more than two Rowan GROW® conversations
- student employees in their junior or senior(+) years

NOTE: The four core Rowan GROW® questions should be asked in every work-academic connection conversation. Any other questions that you may ask should be asked in addition to the four core questions:

1. **How is this job fitting in with your academics?**
2. **What are you learning here that's helping you in school?**
3. **What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?**
4. **Can you give me a couple of examples of things you've learned here that you think you'll use in your chosen profession?**

Employment and Leadership Competencies:

Outcomes of student employment and key career & leadership competencies are aligned. Questions below highlight key career & leadership competencies.

- What have you learned here [in this job] about working with diverse populations [or any other employment outcome] that you think might be helpful in your academic courses? (NACE Competency: Global/Intercultural Fluency)
- What have you learned from your studies and classes so far about working with diverse populations that you find helpful in this job? (NACE Competency: Global/Intercultural Fluency)
- When have you used conflict negotiation skills [or any other employment outcome] at work and in class? (NACE Competency: Teamwork/Collaboration)
- What have you learned about communicating effectively with your supervisor that also is effective with faculty? (NACE Competency: Oral/Written Communications)
- What types of problems have you solved at work and how will you use that in your courses? [Note: supervisors may need to provide examples or prompts]

as this question is general] (NACE Competency: Critical Thinking/Problem Solving)

- How has working as a team member here at work helped you with group projects in your classes? (NACE Competency: Teamwork/Collaboration)

Learning about oneself from employment:

- What are your strengths and how have you used them at work and in class?
- Think of one of your Top 5 Strengths – how do you see this strength helping you at work? In classes? (NACE Competency: Leadership)
- When you think about your classes, what types of academic tasks do you enjoy most? How about here at work, what types of tasks do you enjoy most?
- How do you think your Strengths tie into the types of tasks you enjoy most?
- How has working here helped you with group projects? (NACE Competency: Teamwork/Collaboration)
- Are there aspects of this job that have helped you discover things you might want (or not want) in a career? (NACE Competency: Career Management)

Preparing for the world of full-time employment:

What is one thing you've learned here about workplace culture and expectations that you think will help you in a full-time position? (NACE Competency: Career Management)

Facilitation Tips

Utilizing facilitation skills can help your Rowan GROW® conversations flow better and be productive. Key facilitation skills are outlined below:

Open-ended questions: Asking questions in such a way that they can't be answered by yes, no, or a one-word answer. The Rowan GROW® questions are already phrased as open-ended, but make sure that any other questions you ask are open-ended as well.

Open-ended question: "What are you learning here that's helping you in school?"

Not an open-ended question: "Have you learned anything here that's helping you in school?"

Paraphrasing: Paraphrasing means summing up what the other person says, in your own words. It's a good way to show that you understood what the person is saying, and can also help you make connections to other points. In your Rowan GROW® conversations, paraphrasing can bring relevance back to the conversation or reiterate the connections students' have made about their learning.

"So it sounds like you are learning time management skills here at work and you've used these skills to ensure you are getting your homework and other tasks complete every week."

"Let's go over what we have talked about so far."

Follow-up probes: Follow-up probes are questions you might add to help the student think more deeply. Probes are very helpful if the student doesn't seem to be able to think of an answer to one of the questions.

They can be very simple: "What's an example of that?"

"How so?"

"Tell me more."

Or more specific: "Tell me about a way you've improved your time management skills."

"As a part of this position you are developing customer service skills. Tell me how you've improved your customer service skills."

Keep in Mind:

Students and supervisors benefit from reflection before the conversation.

- Sending out the questions before the conversation gives students an opportunity to think about their answers before you meet, leading to deeper and more authentic reflection.
- Reflecting on what students are learning as a result of working for you can help you prompt students about their learning during the conversation. You are the air traffic controller, not the pilot.
- It can often be difficult to give students the space to reflect on their learning. During these conversations you are providing direction for reflection, but the student is responsible for driving the conversation. Your job isn't to provide the correct answer, but give students the space to reflect and make connections. Make peace with silence.
- Give students the opportunity to reflect. Don't immediately ask and answer the question.
- It's not unusual for someone to need 15-30 seconds to think of an answer to a question. Make sure to wrap up the conversation.
- Remind students why you had the Rowan GROW® conversation and that you will continue to talk about learning in the workplace. Frequent reminders create an environment where learning is a key aspect of the student employment experience.

Acknowledgement

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- 1. How is this job fitting in with your academics?**
- 2. What are you learning here at work that is helping you in school?**
- 3. What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?**
- 4. Can you give me a couple examples of things you are learning here at work that you will use in your chosen profession?**

Sample Conversation Outline

- Determine whether a small group meeting or individual meetings work best for your student employees.
- Send your student employees a message (e-mail or whatever format is most commonly used in your area) a week before your meeting with the following information (see the sample invitation message on this page):
 - An explanation of why you are having these conversations
 - The list of questions you'll be discussing
 - Instructions to think about these questions and have answers prepared for the meeting
- Approach these questions as if you are having a conversation. Feel free to ask the questions in any order and let the conversation flow naturally. You may find it useful to brainstorm with other supervisors on the key things you expect students to learn from jobs in your area.
- If your student employees are having a hard time answering these questions, feel free to share your ideas or observations on what they are learning on the job.
- You may find it useful to take notes during the conversation to refer to in the next conversation.
- Wrap up the conversations by reminding your student employees that you will be meeting again for a similar conversation.
- We have provided a list of campus resources on our website (<http://go.rowan.edu/grow>) in case a student employee indicates that they need extra help.

Sample Invitation Message

Hello,

I just wanted to send out a quick reminder about our meeting next week and give you a little more information about our conversation. We participate in a program from the Division of Student Affairs called Rowan GROW® that is designed to help you make meaningful connections between what you're learning in the classroom and what you're learning on the job. Making these connections contributes to your overall academic and social success.

Below is the list of questions that we will discuss during our conversation. Please take a few moments to look over these questions and think about your answers prior to our meeting.

- How is this job fitting in with your academics?
- What are you learning here that's helping you in school?
- What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?
- Can you give me a couple of examples of things you've learned here that you think you'll use in your chosen profession?

See you next week!

Sincerely,



DIVISION OF
STUDENT AFFAIRS