Personnel Performance Evaluation of a Catholic College in Central Philippines

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Abstract - This paper is a brief report on assessment of personnel performance evaluation system that provides data-driven suggestions for improvement. It sought to determine whether the current system adheres with or observes generally accepted principles using the Personnel Evaluation Standards (PES). It also determined the issues and concerns from the perspectives of the personnel themselves and got their recommendations as to how the system can be improved. Results reveal that the personnel evaluation system is adherent to the generally accepted principles in personnel performance evaluation. However, there is a need to address deficiencies which can be done through the development of an evaluation manual. It is important that the school must consider the participation of all sectors in the process. In such a way the sense of ownership can be developed. Limitations in the current personnel evaluation systems must be kept in mind as future improvements and changes are made. Results can be used as guide in the design of a new approach to personnel evaluation for the institution. Moreover, it also describes an experience of evaluation that could be useful to investigators elsewhere.

Keywords: performance evaluation, personnel performance, personnel evaluation standards

INTRODUCTION

A research or educational institution can only be as good as the faculty that it attracts, and the dedication with which this faculty teaches and inspires students . Following this premise, La Consolacion College Bacolod (LCCB), maintains a set of standards to ensure that quality education is carried on, not only in terms of curriculum but as well as in its delivery. The school recognizes that individual performance, attitudes and development are vital to the success of its operations (La Consolacion College Bacolod, 2007).   It has to establish a mechanism of determining performance of the faculty as well as its non-teaching personnel through its evaluation or appraisal methodologies (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007).

It is a widely accepted fact that evaluations are an important method of maintaining reliability, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, efficiency, safety, ease of use and probity (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). At the classroom level, teacher performance evaluation systems provide the faculty with feedback on how to improve delivery of instruction. A   p e r f o r m a n c e evaluation program is important to employees' professional development, to meeting the institution's goals or objectives and, ultimately, to contributing to the institution's bottom line (Lawrence, 2004).On the institutional level, schools have to address the need for a system for evaluating professional support personnel as well as reviewing past and present evaluations systems (Stronge & Helm, 1991).

The employee performance evaluation system has long been recognized as an important component of LCC Bacolod's thrust to continually develop its human resource. In fact, no employer, a nonprofit organization, a government institution or a private or public company, should be free from having a formal personnel evaluation system (Lawrence, 2004). It is through which that the personnel from the ranks of the non-teaching staff to the administrators are encouraged to perform better in pursuit of the institutional goals. The evaluations guide the administration in knowing the strengths and weaknesses of its personnel; and knowing how to utilize them to the best of their capacities making them productive members of the community -- the results of these personnel evaluation mechanisms are utilized to determine performance of the personnel, in most cases, they are utilized to aid the administration in making personnel decisions, these decisions affect whether the personnel shall be promoted, retained in service, reassigned or dismissed (Guerra-López, 2008).With regard to promotion in rank and in position or designation, personnel shall be promoted only after careful review of performance and accomplishment (La Consolacion College Bacolod, 2007).

More recently in LCC Bacolod, the concern with regard to the effectiveness of the evaluation methodologies and the implementation standards have been raised in various assemblies and meetings especially among the ranks of the faculty as the results are being increasingly utilized to provide performance recognition, service merit as basis for salary increase, teaching assignments or load and employment status. The administration too hopes to utilize the results of the evaluation not just in making personnel decisions but in many other purposes, among them is to encourage work productivity.

The development of ways to evaluate personnel performance in LCCB began in the 1980s when the College sought for accreditation of its programs. Until the present however, evaluation procedures and implementation standards still evolves and needs refinement. The instrumentations used were developed by its Planning Development and Research Center and has undergone a few changes as proposed by offices managing the evaluation in consultation with the personnel. Reports and utilization of results relied on the middle level administrators as personnel decisions relied solely upon their recommendations.

In 2004, LCC Bacolod established an office that would centralize the management of its personnel evaluation and develop policies that would demand for greater employee productivity – the Human Resource Development Office. Since its establishment, there have been attempts to look into the effectiveness of the personnel evaluation practices but never was there a formal evaluation conducted. To this date, no existing manual was made to guide the implementation of the personnel performance evaluations.

Generally, performance evaluation systems are developed to improve communication about work between employee and supervisor. When used properly, the system will accomplish this goal (Performance Management Branch, Personnel Cabinet Government Services Center, 2001).The importance of personnel evaluation program among conglomerates, institutions or simply organizations is at the core of the call for increased accountability, thus, there is a constant need to continually examine and see how it fits with the institutional purposes of evaluation. An assessment of practices of evaluation is therefore necessary to determine a program's effectiveness in promoting faculty and personnel development and

productivity. Hence, this study was conducted, to respond to the need to strengthen the personnel evaluation mechanisms of the school.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study sought to assess the employee performance evaluation system of La Consolacion College Bacolod in terms of Personnel Evaluation Standards on (a) propriety, (b) utility, (c) feasibility and (d) accuracy. It sought to explore how the current practices observe these standards from the observations and judgment of the school personnel from the administration, to the faculty and the non-teaching staff. The study likewise attempted to find out whether there is a significant difference in the observations and judgment of the personnel on the implementation of the performance evaluation system.

FRAMEWORK

This study evaluated the current personnel evaluation practices of the school based on the personnel evaluation standards used by the University of Iowa. It took into primary consideration the perspectives of the school administration and personnel – the key players in the process.

The study surveyed the school personnel's observation and judgment on whether or not - or to what extent appropriate standards are observed in the course of its implementation – as well as their perception on the effectiveness of utilization of results to meet its purposes. The results of this study formed the basis for improving the personnel evaluation program of the school.
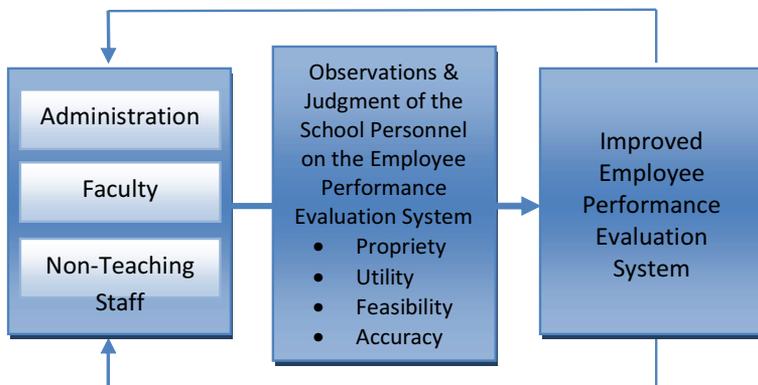
Figure 1: Schematic diagram of the framework of the study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used mixed methods utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The design used is descriptive evaluative. Methodological triangulation was employed to verify and match results of the following data-gathering methods: survey (quantitative), focus group discussions (qualitative) and review of documents used in the implementation of the personnel performance evaluation. It was conducted among the personnel of La Consolacion College Bacolod, a member of the Association of Schools of the Augustinian Sisters, owned by the Augustinian Sisters of the Our Lady of Consolation.

Data Gathering, Instruments and Analyses

The first problem on the extent of the school personnel's agreement that principles of sound evaluation standards in terms of propriety, utility, feasibility and accuracy are met along the

implementation of its employee performance evaluation system, a researcher-made Survey Questionnaire was utilized. The items in the questionnaire included the Personnel Evaluation Standards. Random sampling was used to determine respondents. Sample sizes were determined for each group of respondents: the school administration, faculty and non-teaching personnel.

Table1. Distribution of respondents of the study

PERSONNEL GROUP	Population	Sample	Percentage
NTP	58	29	28
Teachers	113	57	56
Administrators	32	16	16
TOTAL PERSONNEL	203	102	100

A pilot run was conducted before the survey was administered to the respondents of this study in order to determine any ambiguities in the wording of the survey questions. The survey was tried out to 20 respondents and ten individuals with Master's and Doctoral Degree who also represented a variety of involvement levels in the evaluation system. The process did not discern any ambiguities in the wording of the questions themselves. The face and content of the self-made instrument was validated by a jury of experts and got a mean rating of 4.56 which indicate that the mean was excellent and is therefore considered valid.

The respondents were asked to rate each item according to the degree of which they are practiced or observed. The results were then treated utilizing mean, then t-test was utilized to determine the significance of the difference of results generated from the non-teaching personnel, faculty and administrators.

To dig deeper into understanding the issues and concerns along the implementation of the program as well as the recommendations of the participants, focus groups were conducted wherein random representatives from various sectors were selected. The responses were coded, categorized, and tabulated using qualitative content analysis. The statements were categorized according to the various areas as used in the quantitative survey.

RESULTS

Quantitative Survey Findings

The number of questionnaires retrieved was 113 out of 115. Three incomplete surveys were discarded. Consequently, 110 cases were considered for analysis. Among the respondents were 32 Non-Teaching Personnel, 60 Teachers and 18 administrators. The 20 standard measures were assessed in the same order as they appear in the data gathering instrument.

Figure 1. Mean data of ratings by the different sector according to specific items of the survey.
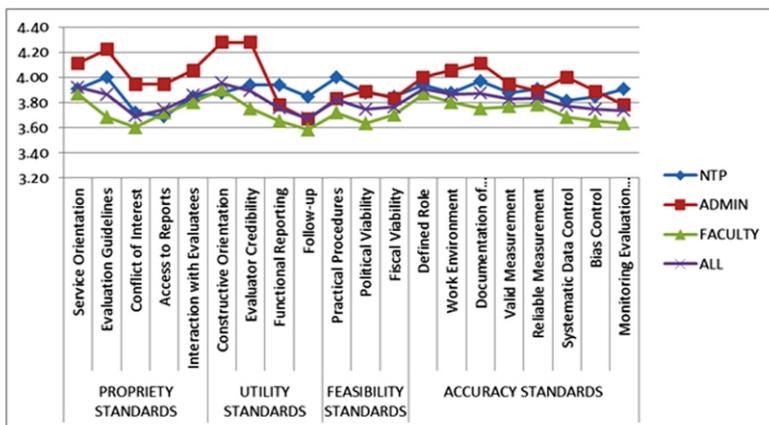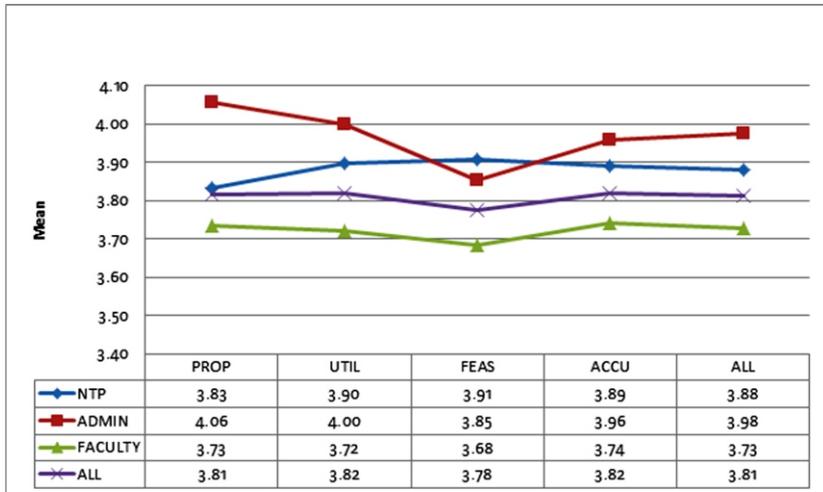
Figure 2. Ratings by the different sectors according to general areas of the survey.

	PROP	UTIL	FEAS	ACCU	ALL
NTP	3.83	3.90	3.91	3.89	3.88
ADMIN	4.06	4.00	3.85	3.96	3.98
FACULTY	3.73	3.72	3.68	3.74	3.73
ALL	3.81	3.82	3.78	3.82	3.81

From the results exhibited above, the study also tried to determine the significance of the differences in results. The statistical treatment revealed that there is no significant difference in the results of the survey across the three different groups of respondents.

Qualitative Method Findings

The data from the focus group discussions were coded, categorized, and tabulated using qualitative content analysis. The statements were categorized according to the various areas as used in the quantitative survey and are based on the principles of employee performance evaluation system (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 2011).

Propriety Standards

Service Orientation. The study reveals that the respondents were cognizant that the employee performance evaluation system is a helpful means to guide administrators in making personnel decisions however; there is a need to continually develop the program and address the prevailing issues. The NTP also commented that there is a need to thoroughly explain the objectives and mechanisms of the evaluation system.

Formal Evaluation Guidelines. The respondents believe that there is a need to conduct thorough orientation on how to evaluate personnel performance so as to set a common standard and to avoid any form of bias. The administration supports this concern saying that as of the moment there is no clearly stated mechanism on how the evaluations are being distributed.

Access to Performance Evaluation Results. The faculty are concerned with the confidentiality of results. Proper orientation to staff and student assistants handling the evaluation sheets be conducted.

Interaction with the Evaluatees. The faculty, likewise, are concerned about how the results are being reported. They said that sometimes, it becomes very embarrassing for them when even those comments that are too personal are included in the group report. Although individuals are not being singled out, the report must only contain constructive feedback so as not to degrade the morale of the teachers. They also said that sometimes, performance evaluations are used by administrators to threaten teachers.

Utility Standards

Constructive Orientation.   The NTP suggests that there should be constructive feedback mechanism between the immediate head and the staff where strengths most especially weaknesses are discussed/explained even without showing the quantitative ratings before finalizing the evaluation. This will also give the opportunity to the one being evaluated to be clarified. The administrators on the other hand revealed that there were instances when the one administering evaluations among students for teachers do not explain thoroughly and provide orientation for "constructive orientation" they just distribute the papers to the students.

Evaluator Credibility. The faculty is having an impression that those who conduct the evaluation are not properly trained, there were times that the accomplished teacher's evaluation sheets were left open for others to see. The NTP too thinks that the one who should be administering the evaluation should be the Guidance Office. They said they have more confidence with the Guidance Office and they want that they are provided with an orientation before making them fill-out the evaluation sheets. At the moment, the evaluations are being administered by selected NTP.

Functional Reporting. All sectors have concerns on this area. The administrators say that the results of the evaluation are not given on time, so the administrators cannot make use of them in assigning teacher's load. Likewise they cited that, there should be rigid implementation of policy regarding poor performance. On the other hand, the teachers say that results are not properly managed.

The NTP are also skeptical of the results because sometimes they don't make sense. They added that the evaluation reports are not given on time.

Follow-up. The administrators are concerned that follow-up is very important to help the evaluatee in understanding the results. They said that while others conduct one-on-one conference with their teachers, there are administrators who do not feedback the evaluation results to their subordinates. The NTP too said that it is important that the evaluatee knows the areas to improve on and what are the possible consequences if they do not improve the following year.

Feasibility Standards

Political Viability. The common concern in political viability is that, there should be a collaborative process in the planning, implementing and evaluating the performance evaluation system. The administrators think that they are not involved in the process of creating the evaluation program and that there was no total collective effort to create the system. The NTP too thinks that they are not involved in the process.

Accuracy Standards

Defined Roles. The administration says that the kind of evaluation tool administered to them is very general but they think that it should be varied designed according to expected outcomes. The tendency is that the evaluators are forced to rate based on single impressions and not from a comprehensive knowledge on how the evaluatee performs against the outcomes expected of him/ her. They added that the person who administers the evaluation only provides orientation as

to whom to evaluate but not on the tool and the contexts upon which to evaluate. The NTP echoes the same sentiment and they think that the evaluation should comprise different components or areas of your work but should give more merit on work performance.

Work Environment. The NTP are concerned that people who should evaluate are those who are directly in working relationship with the evaluatee and those who have knowledge of the contexts of work and expected performance outcomes.

Valid Measurement. The administrators think that the tool used to evaluate administrators is too broad. It is not really in a sense a work performance evaluation (the items are not based on performance outcomes) but more on character evaluation. The tendency is to evaluate based on personal perceptions on the person's character. They added that certain areas/ items in the evaluation tool are very difficult to gauge like "Faith", "Compassion", "Ability to evangelize".

The teachers on the other hand say that the tools used to evaluate instruction are really outcomes based, however, there seems to be some inconsistencies in the distribution of points. Qualitative responses do not have value, so a teacher can still be outstanding despite the negative feedbacks (which often times are very serious) written in the comments section. They added that there are instances when teachers' evaluations are not fairly distributed and the one who administers the evaluation does the evaluation even when the respondents do not meet the required number/ population.

Reliable Measurement. The teachers think that there is ambiguity in the distribution of points for teachers with varying loads (lecture and non-lecture). They added that there has to be a formula which gives more consideration to more difficult subjects. The NTP echoed similar issue saying that there was no consistent distribution of evaluation points and the sectors who evaluate

Systematic Data Control. The NTP said that they have doubts with the accuracy of the results since there is only one person who is assigned to encode the data, so there is no counter-checking mechanism – a means to find and correct errors.

Bias Control. The NTP claims that, one cannot avoid being biased with the current evaluation tool being used because it does not really indicate performance outcomes but more of general perception of evaluates character or personality which can easily be influenced by your personal impressions of a person. Although the others might see their rating as objective but actually there is a high possibility of being subjective because the work performance is being overshadowed by personal biases against the one being evaluated. They added that the current tool provides a room for favoritism.) In the past it used to be just the head who evaluates, it's only recently that there are several individuals who evaluate (including the self).

Monitoring Evaluation Systems. The administrators claim that the evaluation tool has never gone revision and has been used for so many years. It has never undergone a thorough evaluation.

DISCUSSION

Taking collectively the 20 areas under the four standards of evaluation systems, the findings showed how the personnel relate to and think about the evaluation systems used at their institution. The results demonstrate a strong belief that the school should look into specific areas along the implementation and ensure that it addresses the personnel's needs, help performance improvement, yield justifiable personnel decisions, and eventually effectively provide high quality service/ education. Furthermore, the data revealed that current personnel evaluation practices have some barriers and limitations. They have shortcomings with regard to defining, designing, collecting, analyzing and reporting - there is still a need for a sound personnel performance evaluation. These personnel evaluation systems and the philosophical basis on which the organization established such systems were neither greatly informed nor influenced by recent developments in large-scale personnel evaluation programs (Loup, Garland, & Rugutt, 1996) .

The mean scores of the four basic principles of sound evaluation show that the personnel at LCC Bacolod agree that the personnel evaluation standards are met along the implementation of their employee performance evaluation system. However, the fact that the rating did not reach the level of 'strongly agree' means that there are areas that needed to be thought upon. Similarly for selected manufacturing firms in Sri Lanka, Opatha (2003) suggests a strong need of improving for evaluator training as well as in the review and renewal of the evaluation system.

Propriety standards require that evaluations be conducted legally, ethically and with due regard for the

welfare of the evaluatees and clients of the evaluations (the school). In the case of LCC Bacolod, although evaluation system has already become part of the organizational culture of the school, there are quite some loopholes. This is due to the fact that there are no clear-cut guidelines on the mechanisms and policies on the administration of the performance evaluation system. The study has found out that the personnel are most concerned that the present evaluation system may have issues with regard to formal evaluation guidelines, conflicting interests, access to reports and interactions with evaluatees.

The present practice has no defined guideline as to "who will evaluate who" and whether or not the evaluator is familiar with the nature of work, expected outcomes and performance of the evaluatee is also not clear. The tool being used is very generic and not contextualized on the nature of work or assignment. The instrumentation used is not based on specific performance outcomes as described in the job specifications of the assignment or designation but contains items that are too broad. Policy bases of the institution's evaluation systems are somewhat deficient in the areas of establishing performance standards (Loup, Garland, & Rugutt, 1996) . It neglects other aspects related to actual work accomplishments, thus, yield an incomplete and less beneficial result. It is important for schools to explicitly state the purpose of their evaluation system to reflect their institution's purposes, needs and context (Black 2011). Black adds that schools should also examine, identify, and define their criteria and develop clear levels of performance to measure it.

The lack of formal guidelines does not put stringent policies that ensure results are confidential and accessible only to individuals with legitimate need to

review and use the reports. Also, teachers are worried about student assistants assigned the Human Resource Development Office having access to their evaluation data.

The personnel, most especially in the faculty sector have also raised concerns on the manner of presentation and reporting of evaluation results. There were times when the qualitative reports (comments from the students) were presented in an assembly of faculty members and were not edited. It contained even the most personal feedback and although it did not single out teachers, the "below-the-belt" attacks have caused more demoralization among the faculty instead of encouraging or motivating them to do their jobs better.

Utility wise, the employee performance evaluation system of the school also has major grey areas. While the administrators expressed a high level of agreement when it comes to constructive orientation and evaluator credibility the ranks of NTP and Faculty share a slightly lower rating. The respondents maintain that there is deficiency in constructive feedback mechanism between the immediate head and staff where performance issues are discussed and clarified where the immediate head and the staff can meet at a common agreement on how to address the perceived performance issues.

Similarly, five organizations were studied in Sri Lanka and summary of evaluation indicates that the degrees of systematic utilization of employee personnel evaluation system are moderate in three institutions and low in two others (Opatha, 2003).

The people who are tasked to administer evaluation are also being questioned by the faculty. They maintain that the people assigned to administer evaluations must provide thorough orientation and must understand the

value of their jobs.   Because the administration of evaluations are assigned to any personnel, sometimes the data are not being taken care properly or sometimes proper orientation is not performed prior to the distribution of evaluation sheets. The ones who conduct the evaluation do not guide the evaluators in understanding fully the items/criteria upon which the faculty is to be evaluated and its corresponding implications.

Slightly lower ratings than the previous items were given to functional reporting and follow-up. The results of the performance evaluation are not delivered on time. Consequently, administrators cannot make use of the data to assign teachers load.   The faculty too has concerns that results are not properly managed and reported. Added to that is the fact that follow-up is not done. So there is no chance for the personnel to verify the reports they have received nor were they guided in the understanding of results.   Thus, making the evaluation of personnel divisive and counterproductive (Stufflebeam, 1991).

On feasibility, the personnel only raised comments on political viability. A common concern is that they were not involved in the process of planning, designing and implementing the personnel performance evaluation system.   The personnel revealed that there was no collective effort focused on developing a sound performance evaluation system.

More issues are identified along the observance of accuracy standards.   On defined roles, valid and reliable measurement, the personnel believe that the present evaluation tool is more skewed towards character or personality evaluation and are vey generic. The present system has a common tool/ instrument used to evaluate the personnel according to their sector and not specific to their designations where measures

are anchored on the nature of their assignments, performance objectives and the needed qualifications for the position the evaluatee assumes. While they agree that the evaluation should comprise various components, but a bigger merit should be given to work accomplishments. The personnel have added that the tendency is to evaluate on the basis of personal perceptions on the evaluatee's character and how he or she relates with peers but not in terms of what he/she has actually accomplished as far as targets are concerned. The respondents also cited that there are areas in the evaluation that are very difficult to gauge such as "faith", "compassion" and "ability to evangelize".

Inconsistencies in the distribution of points were also put forth. Like the points between qualitative and quantitative responses. The respondents revealed that there were instances when one can get a very high quantitative evaluation and yet have really serious comments in the qualitative portion of the report. Yet only the quantitative aspect bears merit. A major challenge therefore for the school is how to establish a clear, coherent and consistent construct for organizational performance anchored on a framework for the application of multi-dimensional weighted performance measurement systems (Rogers & Wright, 1998) .

There were also instances when the number of respondents to the evaluation was not considered. Like in cases when they administer faculty evaluations even when the number of students in class does not comprise 50% which is the required number of respondents.

Data control also has some issues. The fact that there is only one staff that retrieves and encodes the data is reason enough to suspect that it could be prone to errors. The personnel have also raised cases when

the results leaked. Sometimes, it also happens that the evaluatee is the last person to now of his/her evaluation results.

On bias control, all the representatives of various sectors agree that one cannot avoid being biased with the current tool used for evaluation because it is not designed to evaluate actual performance but more on the general perception on the evaluatee's character and personality. Although it is of course given that there is always some degree for bias; however the current instrumentation used for evaluation lacks a balanced and holistic perspective of the work of the one being evaluated.

Overall, the respondents see that there is a need to look into the present employee performance evaluation system. General implication of the findings suggests that the performance evaluation needs to be reviewed to assess whether the present practices are complimentary to its purposes and objectives. Organizations should review Personnel Evaluation Standards to develop appropriate evaluation systems (Black, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Considering the results of this study we may conclude that personnel evaluation systems in La Consolacion College Bacolod is adherent to the guiding principles in personnel performance evaluation which are the propriety, utility, feasibility and accuracy standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need to address deficiencies which can be done through the development of an evaluation manual.

Ambiguity along the process may be due to lack of formal guidelines or evaluation manuals that promote the fundamental principles in personnel evaluation. It is also important that the school must consider the participation of all sectors in the process. In such a way the sense of ownership is being developed.

The manual should be able to lay down clearly the purposes and objectives of the employee performance evaluation system. It should have a constructive orientation, so that they help the school develop human resources and encourage and assist those evaluated to provide excellent service.

A set of standards and criteria for evaluation must also be provided. These standards and criteria must ensure that evaluations yield a holistic assessment of employee performance; must be consistent, equitable and in accordance with pertinent laws and ethical codes.

The areas of evaluation must be clarified to ensure that conflicts of interests and biases are avoided so as not to compromise the evaluation process and results. As such, it must clarify that only those in direct working relationship with the evaluatee, having the full knowledge of the nature of work and the contexts in which the evaluatee works, can participate in the evaluation.

The guidelines that will be stipulated in the manual should identify the steps and procedures as to the conduct of the evaluation and must ensure that the evaluations are conducted fairly and legally; provide a clear cut policy on access to evaluation results, credibility of the evaluator, defined roles, defined work environment, documentation of procedures, valid and reliable measurements, systematic data and bias control.

The guidelines must likewise provide mechanisms on how results are communicated and utilized. It must also put into policy the proper management of results and to make sure that the policies ensure fair treatment and motivates the personnel to perform better. The results must be communicated in such a way that it is constructive and not demoralizing.

The evaluation system should recognize, document, and uniformly and equitably reward those activities that are vital to the academic mission. If evaluation is to be optimizing personnel's potential contributions, it should be able to assess all aspects of the academic system.

Personnel evaluation system can provide an overview of personnel's performance that is essential for their professional career. But not all systems are perfect. Academic institutions should be continuously exploring ways to improve their evaluation systems.

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