

Survival Tip #1: Usage of University Property
10-20-05

This is the first in what I envision as a series of survival tips for you to review, ponder, and use as you see fit. The purpose of my suggestions is to help you improve your own situation and your chances of maintaining or achieving "exceeds standards" ratings in your performance evaluations as well as your everyday dealings with those you work with. Today's subject is proper usage of University property.

Sometimes we forget that from the moment we enter the campus until we leave, we are on state property, working in public buildings, and for the most part using University equipment and supplies to achieve our daily tasks (I say "for the most part" because I know many of us use personal tools, pens, planners, etc., on occasion, even though strictly speaking, we shouldn't do so). And just as there are restrictions on how the facilities may be used, so are there restrictions on what we may and may not do with every item of state property we come into contact with. This ranges from telephones to computers to photocopy machines to paperclips. Granted, I doubt anyone runs inventory on paperclips and post-it note pads every year, but the same principle which governs larger objects and facilities applies to the minutiae purchased by state funds. Even utilities such as water and electricity fall under such policies. In order to save state funds--including your own taxpayer dollars (it makes common sense, too, doesn't it?)--each of us should be mindful of using all state property for one purpose only: that of performing our responsibilities to the University and the public as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The reverse to think about also is not misusing personal property when on the clock for the University: personal cell phones used for personal business come to mind as a primary abuse of University time and a source of conflict with managers. The possible situations and correct personal policy should be obvious: if an emergency arises, use the phone, but take personal, vacation, CTO, or other appropriate release time if you need to neglect your duties for a significant amount of time after notifying your supervisor.

Efficient and professional usage of University property, etc. is one of the qualities many supervisors look at when evaluating our work, and we would each be wise to capitalize on it by developing and following smart work habits as I've suggested. I hope this may serve as a useful reminder of habits we can use to enhance our individual situations, and as a tool to step up to the next level during evaluations.