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FROM THE EDITOR

Dean Brianik, Founder/Editor-in-Chief

PREPARING PEER REVIEW PROMOTIONS APPLICATIONS:

WHEN YOUR BOSS IS AN OBSTACLE

It's that time again. Now that the Administration has announced 30 opportunities, it's time to kick you application efforts into high gear. All the effort you spent in documenting your accomplishments in your re-appointment goes into the second phase: namely organizing your information for the Peer Review Committee.

A supportive supervisor is a very valued partner in the Peer Review Process. A supportive boss will find ways to document your accomplishments and let you know what your strengths are in terms of how well you do your job and what you contribute toward meeting NJCU's goals and objectives. If you have a boss in your corner, he or she is literally worth their weight in gold.

UNFORTUNATELY, some of us are not that blessed. This creates a special set of circumstances and barriers to overcome.

University procedures state you are entitled to support from your director when applying for the Professional Staff Peer Review promotion. According to NJCU's Procedures for a Performance-Based Promotion, (Number 4) "The immediate supervisor shall include as part of his/her evaluation/recommendation a written statement as to how the applicant's performance meets each of the four criteria for promotion."

However, some supervisors have been known to (A) simply say that they support committee's decision and say nothing else or (B) refuse to offer any support at all.

A problem boss may seem like insurmountable, but it's not. Actually, you have two valuable tools at your disposal.

THE FIRST IS YOURSELF, specifically the reputation you've built on campus. Chances are, you've worked with people outside your department on University committees or projects. These people, whether they're colleagues, supervisors in other departments, or even administrators, know the high calibre of work you produce.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THE SECOND TOOL IS YOUR BOSS, specifically his or her reputation. The longer you work here, the more your reputation grows: The same holds true for your boss. If you find him or her difficult to work with, it's quite possible others on campus feel the same way as you and have had similar problems. The fact that you've worked under a difficult supervisor, and stayed despite all the grief, speaks volumes about the depth of your commitment to NJCU.

These are your tools. So, how do you go about using them?

- First, create a "brag book" which includes thank you letters from colleagues, students, faculty members, or administrators. You can also put in congratulatory messages from your supervisor when you've done well on specific projects. E-mails are especially wonderful.
- Ask your colleagues for support. Let them know you are applying for a Peer Review Promotion and ask for a letter of support. If they know of your specific areas of expertise, ask them to talk about that. Many times, someone may want to give you a reference, but doesn't know what to say or how to start.

- Be sure to thank everyone who's written recommendations for you. Also, if possible, ask the people who sent you unsolicited compliments (remember the "brag book") if you have their permission to use what they said in your Peer Review application. They will appreciate your professionalism.

ORGANIZING YOUR PRESENTATION:

I'm a paper person. I love having something tangible in my hands that I can place into piles and move them around as need be. You may be an "e-person" who prefers having everything filed away on your electronic equipment. Whatever you choose, organizing your information is crucial.

Personally, you can break down the categories into

1. A. What you do. (The full range of your job duties-take it from your official description)
B. How well you do it (your level of excellence).
2. A. How what you do advances NJCU's goals and objectives.
B Your level of excellence in this regard (including leaderships held on campus).
3. A. Ways you've advanced your career (a Master's and continuing education courses)
B Leadership roles you've undertaken in Professional Societies or community activities
4. How your work brings credit to NJCU, your profession, the community and yourself.

FOR FIRST TIMERS:

- Give the committee a quick introduction to yourself, In essence, briefly "tell them what you're going to tell them"
- If you claim credit for something, have evidence to back it up. You can place all the supporting documents at the end of each section. This is especially important if you have a boss who's prone to downplaying whatever you claim as an accomplishment.
- Once you've shown how your work qualifies for a promotion (including all the support from your campus colleagues), then include the required evaluations.
- If you've improved yourself in accordance with what your director said in prior evaluations, be sure to note that. Include any acknowledgements you might have received from the boss to show these prior concerns have been rectified.

FOR REPEAT APPLICANTS

If you first you don't succeed, try again. What may not have worked last year might be enough to earn you that promotion this year. It all depends on how many promotions are available and how many other apply. Most importantly, there will be at least one set of new eyes on the committee.

Consider placing your boss's reviews in the middle of the application package. Lead with a summary of what you've accomplished since the last time you applied. Be sure to list testimonials and "thank you's" that you've received

Next, put in your evaluations and follow up with your prior application packet. This way, veteran members can concentrate on your new accomplishments while newcomers can see your entire profile. Be sure to place as many references as possible in the front section of your application.

Everyone, at some point, has a miserable supervisor. But that person should not prevent you from applying for a promotion that is rightfully yours to earn. Both you and that boss have reputations on campus. Tap into that support you've earned from campus colleagues over the years to outweigh whatever negative things your supervisor says about you. Remember, the fault lies not with you.

"Ask your colleagues for support. Let them know you are applying for a Peer Review Promotion and ask for a letter of support."

"If you first you don't succeed, try again."

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

SECURITY MANAGEMENT: September, 2017

Managers who try to make union membership an ‘us or them’ situation and use social media to pressure on workers are committing an unfair labor practice, according to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). What’s more, the decision from the NLRB is the first decision of its kind, according to Security Management, the magazine of the American Society for Industrial Security.

The case grew out of an organizing drive in California in 2015. A construction workers union was trying to organize a local company to get votes in favor of a union. One employee had to go to his home country to take care of an ill family member and was given permission to take time off. However, before leaving, the employee signed an authorization card saying he’d like to join the union.

As it turned out, the employee’s mother became well, so he did not need to make the trip home. The employee determined he didn’t need to go home and texted his boss about returning to work. The boss, according to NLRB documents, responded by texting the employee where his loyalties lay, with the union or with the company. The employee texted back to the boss, saying he had been to the company office earlier in the day, but missed him. Two days later, the employee learned his boss gave HIS JOB to someone else.

The Board supported the worker saying the employee only wanted to know when he could return to work. The boss’s text “by juxtaposing working with [the company] with working with the union... strongly suggested that the two were incompatible.” The NLRB also rejected the company’s contention that only in-person interrogations were violations of Federal Labor Law, saying “that violations could stem from coercive writings or phone calls.”

The moral of this is that joining a union is your decision and that management has no right to try and coerce you otherwise, whether it’s in person, by phone, or through social media.

CONSUMERS FACE HURDLES IN EQUIFAX LAWSUITS

The Record: September 23, 2017

The Equifax data breach may now be yesterday’s headlines but the repercussions are far from over. As of late September, the firm was preparing to deal with at least 70 lawsuits, alleging damages on behalf of the 143-million Americans who were caught up in the problem. That figure works out to be nearly half of the U.S.’s population.

If you’re thinking of joining one of the class action lawsuits against Equifax, you need to take a long, hard look at your options. Generally, the *Record* article says, plaintiffs need to show that they suffered economic harm as a result of the breach in order to receive compensation. This would include either evidence of unauthorized activity on your accounts (examples of identity theft). You would have to limit these activities to anything that was not wiped off your record after you reported it to your credit card company. Otherwise, Equifax could argue that the matter was resolved even though you were initially inconvenienced, but there was no long-term damage.

Another way of arguing damages, according to the report, would be that the Equifax breach cost you money that you had to spend for monitoring your credit history and securing those records. Unlike unauthorized uses, these costs could occur for a long time, especially as identity thieves think enough time has passed where they can start using the compromised information.

In other words, stay tuned, and keep an eye on your credit records and all other items financial.

IN THE NEWS

Giving credit where credit is due, the Trump Administration is coming down on the side of whistle blowers at the federal level who uncover and report fiscal irregularities. Currently, whistleblower protections under the Dodd-Frank Act only cover employees who report financial wrongdoing to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Presently, the Supreme Court is hearing a case involving what happens when someone reports financial wrongdoing to company management. Dodd-Frank protects employees from retaliations such as being fired, demoted, or harassed if they report the wrongdoings directly to the Feds. The case in question before the Supreme Court would extend that protection to whistleblowers who reported the financial problems to the company management, but not to the SEC. Business groups opposed that extension, but the Trump Administration is arguing in favor of it.

What this means, is in the future, reporting financial shenanigans to your manager may protect you from harassment or retaliation if the Supreme Court rules in favor of extending Dodd-Frank whistleblower protections.

SOURCE: *The Record: November 29, 2017*