COMMON RATING ERRORS

In evaluating performance, it is important to always compare actual performance to the performance standards as determined during the Performance Planning stage. To be fair and objective, a performance evaluation must be based on the employee’s job-related behavior, not on the employee’s personal traits or other factors not related to the job. It is also important to make sure the evaluation is submitted complete with all required signatures and supporting documentation.

Check out some common evaluation errors below:

1. **Using the evaluation as a corrective action tool:**
   a. Ratings should never be used to replace a meaningful and detailed performance discussion.
   b. The appraisal meeting should not be a disciplinary session. Inappropriate behavior must be dealt with when first observed.
   c. Discipline and discussion of performance goals/responsibilities don’t work well together. Corrective action should have been addressed earlier.
   d. The evaluation is a time to discuss strengths and weaknesses, perhaps assessing how an employee has done in correcting past behavior. However, it isn’t the place to raise new disciplinary actions...

2. **Excessive leniency**
   a. giving a good evaluation hoping a poorly performing employee will “grow into” it
   b. “easy” - giving all employees higher ratings than warranted

3. **Excessive severity:** “tough” - giving all employees lower ratings than warranted

4. **Opportunity bias**: the employee is given credit or faulted for factors beyond his/her control
   employee did not meet goals because there was a budget shortfall that caused resources to be unavailable
   employee happened to be in the right place at the right time and had an opportunity to look really good

5. **Halo” effect**: letting a single strength of an employee determine the overall rating

6. **“Pitchfork” effect**: letting a single weakness of an employee determine the overall rating

7. **Recency bias”: Basing the evaluation on the last few weeks rather than the entire evaluation period

8. **Rating the job rather than the individual**: Some jobs seem to be more critical to the operation than others. For instance, a researcher who brings in millions of dollars might be critical to the operation. However, that does not mean that the researcher’s performance is automatically Model

9. **Length of service bias**: Length of service is not a factor in evaluating performance. A person may have lots of institutional knowledge but that fact in and of itself does not equate with Model performance. Employees neither get “credit” for longevity nor are employees penalized for being relatively new to William & Mary.