

## Recognizing Student Employees

The act of recognizing student employees doesn't need to be grand, often it takes little time and will provide many benefits. The easiest form of recognition is simply using positive and encouraging words to recognize and reinforce desired behaviors.

### Points to Remember When Giving Recognition

- **Make it specific.** Don't just tell an student they did a good job; tell them how they did a good job. Not only will they appreciate the gesture, they will also know you pay attention to what they do. They will also know exactly what to do the next time in a similar situation.
- **In the moment.** As much as possible, be timely when giving recognition. If you catch people doing excellent work, acknowledge their efforts.
- **Talk about it.** Starting a conversation gives you an opportunity to tell the individual why what they did was so good. The message reinforces how what they did is important to the department.
- **No "sting in the tail."** Don't ruin the recognition by saying "Well done, but..." Praise and recognize now. Save performance improvement opportunities for later.
- **Put it on record.** This should be used in addition to delivering the message verbally, face to face and as soon as possible. These records will be an important part of your performance discussions with your student employee(s).
- **Be authentic, not automatic.** Never praise for the sake of praising. It's obvious to everyone, and you lessen the impact when you really do mean what you say.
- **Make it public.** This rule is excellent advice, but be a little careful. If your department isn't in the habit of giving recognition now, you should go gently and increase the amount of recognition steadily and consistently.
- **Pass praise on.** When someone else recognizes a person on your team, let them know.
- **Treat employees like snowflakes.** Every student responds differently to recognition. Many appreciate public praise. Others cringe if they're made the center of attention. Know your students and tailor your recognition so it produces the greatest impact for each individual.
- **Look for opportunities to praise people.** It is important to go looking for good work. In particular, think about:
  - **Who?** Praise for your team might come from many sources so keep your eyes and ears open.
  - **When and Where?** You should be constantly on the lookout for good work to recognize, but there may also be particular times when and places where the search is likely to be productive.

## Quick and Easy Ideas for Recognition

Here are several simple ideas that can be taken to give recognition and rewards:

- “Sticky” praise - Use sticky notes to say thanks
- “Bravo” bulletin board
- Appreciation certificate
- Acknowledge birthdays, work anniversaries, new babies and other significant life events
- Greet students by name when you pass by their desk or pass them in the hall
- Acknowledge individuals or teams at a staff meeting, management meeting, board meeting, or special event. This is often meaningful for the recipient and can be a source of inspiration for others
- A personal note can be very meaningful. Keep a pack of note cards in your desk for convenience. You could also send an e-mail to acknowledge work well done
- Keep a roll of Lifesavers handy to give to someone who has been a real “lifesaver” with a special project or request
- Encourage your team to give each other spontaneous recognition