

Recognition Ideas

Recognition is an important way to express appreciation for the valuable work of student employees. Listed below are a variety of low or no cost ways supervisors and departments can recognize their student employees. The list is not exhaustive...be creative in expressing your appreciation and thanks to your students!

LOW COST

- **Treat Day** - full-time staff bring in treats or lunch for student employees.
- **Food** - reward students for a job well done with a treat of their choice.
- **Pictures** - post student employees' pictures and list what wonderful things they do for your department.
- **Coupon Booklets** – give students coupons for special items such as a free can of soda, movie night at the boss' house (everyone needs to redeem for this one), or a dozen home-baked goodies.
- **Notes to Home** - send a note to your students' family to let them know what the students do, how their work impacts your department, and how terrific they are.
- **Wear special name tags** that honor student employees (e.g., STUDENT EMPLOYEES ARE GREAT!! WE APPRECIATE OUR STUDENT EMPLOYEES)
- **"Best" certificates** - best telephone voice, best web-surfer, best smile, etc.
- **Friendship Plants** - take cuttings from a plant in the office and give to each student as a live "connection" to the office.
- **"Bright Idea" Award** - spray paint a light bulb gold, screw into a jar of play-dough and make a label around the jar naming who is receiving the "Bright Idea" award.
- Take your student employees to **lunch** or buy them pizza. (NOTE: University funds should not be used to pay for staff or student employee meals.)
- **"Gag" awards:** "hazardous duty" (cleaning coffee machine); longest drive, etc.
- **Good Egg Award** - buy plastic Easter Eggs, fill with goodies and give out with "Good Egg" certificates. List what the student did to deserve this award.
- **Handwritten thank you notes** sent to the student's school address.
- **Bake a cake** for student employees on their birthdays.
- **"Kudos" certificates** attached to a Kudos candy bar.
- **Surprise incentive** - put a reward somewhere in a project that requires persistence (filing) to surprise the student.

FREE

- **"Pat on the Back" Award** - Draw an outline of your hand on a piece of paper, photocopy enough copies for all students in your office, and write a note on each hand telling the students why they deserve a "Pat on the Back".

- **Change the department phone message** to recognize student employees.
- **Decorate an office bulletin board** or the office door in recognition of your students.
- **Verbally thank students** for their contribution to your department.
- **"You Rock" Award** - print "You Rock" on a rock and present it to a student when s/he does a good job. Encourage the student to present it to another member of the staff when someone else does a good job.
- **Nominate students for Student Employee of the Year.**
- Develop a **peer recognition program** (e.g. employee of the month/week - other students can give input or feedback) and place on a tag board or poster for public recognition.
- Ask students what motivates them and implement a **recognition program that is based on individual preferences.**
- **Ask students to share their expertise with other student employees** by offering a training session.
- Offer to **be a mentor** for student employees.
- Provide **flexible scheduling and a choice of projects** for student employees that have proven themselves in your department.
- **Acknowledge personal achievements** in a group.
- Provide **letters of recommendation** for students who do well in your department.
- **Send a free e-card** to recognize your student employees.

(This list was compiled by student employment administrators nationwide. See <http://www.nsea.info/index.html>)