

2026

Human Resources Thanks for BEING YOU Program Toolkit



Contents

Thanks for BEING YOU – A Peer-to-Peer Recognition Program.....	2
Thanks for BEING YOU – Peer-to-Peer Recognition Timeline	3
Thanks for BEING YOU – Peer-to-Peer Recognition Toolkit	4



Thanks for BEING YOU Program

The “Thanks for BEING YOU” peer-to-peer recognition program cultivates a culture of appreciation, connection, and engagement across Boston University. By empowering employees to acknowledge each other’s contributions in real time, the program strengthens relationships, boosts morale, and reinforces positive behaviors aligned with BU’s core values. Its inclusive and accessible design ensures that every employee can participate, regardless of role or level.

This program makes it possible for recognition to become frequent, meaningful, and easy to implement across all departments and hybrid teams. It enhances employee satisfaction, promotes a sense of belonging, and supports a collaborative, motivated workplace.

How It Works (Year-Round):

- Thank-you cards are available in shared spaces (e.g., dept. kitchen/conference room) and online for remote members. Each recognition should also be sent via email to HR at applause@bu.edu, for tracking and annual review.
- Departments maintain a physical or digital “Wall of Thanks” to showcase recognitions and foster a visible culture of gratitude.
- Cards are collected quarterly by department leaders and highlighted during all-staff meetings to generate awareness of the program. A random drawing can be held to encourage participation.
- **Peer Recognition Champions of the Year:**
 - Once a year, HR reviews all submissions and announces three (3) individuals whose recognition most consistently reflects BU’s values and foster community.
 - Champions are celebrated with non-monetary experiences, including lunch with senior leadership, a spotlight in BU communications, a certificate of appreciation, or a Day of Service with a Boston-area nonprofit. This experience reflects Boston University’s longstanding commitment to civic engagement and shared humanity. It provides a meaningful, value-driven reward that deepens connection to the local community and amplifies the impact of appreciation.

Selection Criteria:

The selection committee’s approach to reviewing the champions will center around identifying those who embody BU’s values and make a meaningful difference.

- **Consistency:** Staff members recognized across multiple months and by multiple peers (shows sustained impact).
- **Values Alignment:** Submissions specifically reference BU’s core values (community, collaboration, respect, excellence, etc.).
- **Peer Narratives:** Stories highlight genuine connection, inclusion, and positive impact, not just generic praise.
- **Fairness:** Take department size into account and exclude supervisor-originated recognitions to keep the focus on peer appreciation.



Thanks for BEING YOU – Peer-to-Peer Recognition Timeline

Program Launch:

- HR will launch the Thanks for BEING YOU recognition program during the first week of February.
- Departments leaders are encouraged to promote the program within their units.

Recognition Submission Period:

- In 2026, submissions will be accepted from Monday, February 9 through Monday, November 30, 2026, and winners will be announced mid-December.
 - In future years, the submission window will run from December 1 of the prior year through November 30.

Review Period:

- In 2026, HR will conduct a review of submitted recognitions between November 30 and mid-December 2026.
 - In future years, the review window will fall during the first two weeks of December, and champions will be announced on the third Monday of December.

Announcement:

- HR will announce three (3) Peer Recognition Champions in mid-December via the HR website after notifying the winners.
- Winners will also be featured in the spring BUHR newsletter and announced through *BU Today*.
- Winners will attend a celebratory lunch in January of the following year.



Thanks for BEING YOU – Peer-to-Peer Recognition Toolkit

Core Components:

- Complete a handwritten or digital [“Thanks for BEING YOU” card](#) that can be shared publicly or privately.
- Departments should create a visible space such as a bulletin board in the kitchen or conference room, a digital screen, or a designated area within the office to showcase peer recognition. This helps reinforce a culture of appreciation, sustain momentum, and encourages others to participate. It can also be highlighted in newsletters.
- Leaders can use informal gatherings or virtual shout-outs (i.e., All Staff Meetings) to celebrate peer recognition.

How-To Guides:

1. Distribute Recognition Tools:
 - Department leaders ensure employees know how to submit recognitions
2. Set Up Recognition Displays:
 - Designate a visible space in the department.
 - Update displays monthly to keep them fresh.
3. Host Quarterly Recognition Moments:
 - Incorporate into all-staff meetings or host dedicated sessions.
 - Highlight stories that reflect BU’s values.
4. Track and Highlight Submissions:
 - HR collects submissions, maintains a log, and identifies trends.
5. Encourage Ongoing Participation:
 - Department leaders regularly remind employees to recognize peers.

Best Practices:

- Be intentional and inclusive.
- Encourage participation at all staff levels.
- Foster genuine relationships for meaningful recognition.
- Use both in-person and virtual formats for hybrid teams.