



POLICY STATEMENT

The University of St. Thomas recognizes the power of ideas and encourages the creativity of its employees. This policy establishes a formal mechanism to enable the University to recognize and reward staff and faculty whose documented ideas and/or suggestions, when implemented, result in tangible financial benefits to the University in the form of increased efficiencies, net savings, new net revenue, and/or significant but measurable improvements in the operations of the University.

GENERAL PROVISION

WE ARE UST – Bright Ideas Criteria

The purpose of the employee suggestion awards program is to encourage and reward eligible staff and faculty whose creative ideas or suggestions that, when implemented, result in increased efficiencies, net savings, new revenue, and/or significant improvements in the operations of the University. The terms “net savings or new revenue” shall mean the estimated permanent savings or permanent new revenue generated in the first fiscal year of full implementation of an employee suggestion.

In order for an idea or suggestion to be considered, the idea or proposal must be submitted in writing by one or more employees, and result in one or more of the following outcomes.

- (1) Net cost savings through the elimination or a reduction in University expenditures not later than the end of the ensuing fiscal year without adverse, material effect on quality or scope of service,
- (2) Generation of new net revenue
- (3) Elimination of unnecessary processes, operations, or services that result in actual cost savings,
- (4) Development of new tools, equipment, processes, or work methods that result in a significant savings to the University either in time or money, reduces waste, and/or
- (5) The elimination of waste, misuse of resources, or even fraud that results in actual cost savings.

Generally excluded from consideration are suggestions that propose a change in the University’s employee benefits or compensation programs, minor revisions to University forms, changes as a result of employee complaints and/or grievances, suggestions to outsource or restructure a unit or to enforce existing University policies and procedures or suggestions that relate to objectives or initiatives that are already in progress.

ELIGIBILITY

All regular full-time and part-time staff and faculty are eligible to participate in the program. Ineligible employees include temporary employees, adjunct faculty, Vice Presidents, Deans, and other members

of the President's Cabinet. Awards are given throughout the year to recognize employees whose creative ideas and suggestions help improve the operation and/or fiscal performance of the University.

AWARDS

The **We are UST – Bright Ideas** employee suggestion program provides a monetary award to an employee or group of employees whose ideas and suggestions meet one or more of the awards criteria listed in Section 1 above.

The amount of the monetary award ranges in size from a lump-sum payment of \$250 to \$1,000 depending on the tangible benefits of the employee's idea or suggestion to the University. Monetary awards are in addition to an employee's regular pay and are subject to all applicable income taxes. The award amount will be adjusted upward to cover awardees' personal income taxes.

All monetary awards are processed through the University's payroll system for proper income tax withholdings and reported on employees' W-2 forms at the end of the taxyear.

LIMITATIONS

The minimum estimated value of an employee's proposal shall be \$1,000 or more during the fiscal year. Any proposed suggestion or idea that does not meet this minimum threshold will not be considered. An employee shall not receive more than two monetary awards during a given fiscal year.

SUBMITTING A SUGGESTION

Employees shall use the **We are UST – Bright Ideas** suggestion form which provides general instructions for developing and submitting innovative ideas and suggestions. The expectation is that employees will research thoroughly their idea or suggestion, provide data that supports the proposal, and/or verify the proposed net savings, net revenue, or operations and service improvements. The proposal should also include an analysis of the estimated costs of implementation. Proposals are submitted to the Human Resources Department, who shall maintain a log of submitted proposals and forward them to the **We are UST – Bright Ideas** employee suggestion program awards committee

EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process is multi-faceted. It may include any or all of the following steps and/or actions.

- A. **Documentation Evaluation** by the Human Resources Department to review the submitted form for qualification, completeness, and potentially requesting additional information from the submitter.
- B. **Individual Evaluator** is an individual assigned to review suggestions and determine the feasibility of implementation. This person may be someone who is familiar with the current situation, a supervisor or manager in the area(s) impacted by the idea or suggestion, or who is responsible or involved in its implementation. The evaluator includes as part of their evaluation a feasibility analysis and the relative advantages of the proposal over current practices, a cost-benefit analysis (including cost to implement and estimated first year benefits), and a recommendation to adopt or not adopt, with reasons for the recommendation. The recommendation is submitted to Human Resources.
- C. **Subject Matter Experts** are individuals with a specific expertise related to the employee proposal

being evaluated. These individuals may be called upon by either the Individual Evaluator or the Committee to provide technical input and otherwise to assist with the evaluation of a particular proposal.

- D. **Savings Verification** by the Business Office to verify the projected net savings or the proposed new revenue source with the assistance of the individual evaluators and subject matter experts.
- E. **Employee Suggestion Awards Committee** is a group of five (5) employees appointed jointly by the Vice Presidents to review employee proposals, determine the feasibility of implementation, make recommendations regarding approval or disapproval, as well as recommend the amount or value of the **We are UST – Bright Ideas** award. The Committee reviews proposal(s) within thirty (30) days following receipt of the complete proposal, including all analyses. If duplicate suggestions are received, the one bearing the earliest date of receipt by the Human Resources Department shall be eligible for consideration. All others shall be ineligible. Similar suggestions may be eligible for consideration provided the subsequent proposal(s) adds to the cost savings or value of improved operations and services realized by the first suggestion.

COMMUNICATING FINAL DECISION

The **We are UST – Bright Ideas** employee suggestion awards committee will make the final decision to approve or disapprove an employee's proposal. Human Resources shall provide the employee written notification of the decision within 30 days following receipt of the Committee's recommendation. If approved, the written notification shall include the amount of the award. The employee's award is granted only after the Vice Presidents have made the final decision and communicated it in writing to Human Resources.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Human Resources Department oversees the recognition awards program, works closely with the Vice Presidents, Deans, or other managers, as appropriate, monitor program effectiveness, review the submitted forms for qualification, completeness and potentially requesting additional information from the submitter. Human Resources will serve as the focal point for employee communication on suggestions in process and assures consistent and uniform application of the program guidelines. The Human Resources Department is responsible for the timely processing of employee recognition awards.