

Facilities Management

Employee Recognition Program

Approved August 2017, Amended [October 2018](#), Amended [December 2018](#), Amended [January 2020](#),
Amended [May 2025](#)



FACILITIES MANAGEMENT
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



SPARK Award – Program Proposal

Introduction

The Facilities Management Employee Recognition Committee has worked over a year to develop a program of sustainable daily recognition and appreciation for Facilities Management (FM) employees. At the heart, this program is designed to support a culture that upholds and aspires to the core values that define the department.

These core values are:

- We are **Caring**
- We are **Collaborative**
- We are **Experts**
- We are **Good Stewards**
- We are **Progressive**

Potential exists for several phases of the employee recognition program. The initial phase is the broadest portion, the “backbone” of FM employee recognition, which consists of the daily acknowledgement of outstanding employee efforts that tie into the core values. Research shows that a targeted, values-based specific approach such as this is critical to a successful implementation with

measurable results. The initial phase of this proposal is specifically geared to foster engagement and alignment with the department's core values.

Future phases will be developed to build out the framework of the employee recognition program by further developing higher level and more formal awards, while utilizing multiple approaches to recognition as outlined in the attached survey from the 'Trends in Employee Recognition', a 2015 report by the ITA Group (1). Quarterly and annual awards will be considered in future years of the program.

It is important to note the limits of any employee appreciation program. Per our University statutes, a program cannot be used to supplement or substitute for annual compensation adjustments or other base pay movements or impact performance evaluations.

As a stand-alone product, this program can achieve measurable success while employing as many approaches to engagement as are possible. Potential approaches include peer recognition, alignment with organizational goals, supervisor recognition of employees, and general wellness and quality of life initiatives.

Definition

A SPARK award is intended to be a specific and immediate recognition for an individual, full-time employee demonstrating our core values in exemplary fashion. Whether simple and special, or something grand and complex, this includes examples of exemplary behavior that are not normally part of an employee's routine responsibilities, as well as ordinary tasks done in extraordinary fashion. Awarding an individual consists of a few simple steps, and can be initiated by any supervisor to any qualifying employee.

- Timely verbal recognition from awarding supervisor
- Award of a specialized SPARK card as a physical representation of recognition
- A simple web form submission by the awarding supervisor
- Employee exchange of the specialized SPARK card for a gift card worth \$15.00
- Visible acknowledgement of the award winner on Facilities Management media in-house, which could be through the use of bulletin boards, the FM website, other electronic media, or a newsletter

Budget

The committee recommends an initial budget of **\$15,000**.

Order of 1,000 SPARK business cards will cost **\$212.65** (rounded to \$220.00)

Each gift card awarded through the SPARK award process will be worth \$15.00. The committee arrived at the investment total by weighing cost per gift card, number of employees, and potential awards per month based on projections. The committee determined that approximately 985 gift cards could be purchased with a budget of \$14,780 (after business card expense). With this figure of 985 gift cards, 82 employees could be given SPARK awards and gift cards each month for an entire year. Because this is a new recognition program, it is difficult to estimate exactly how many SPARK awards will be given each month but the committee is confident that a \$15,000 budget will be sufficient for the first year of the program implementation. The budget will be reviewed by a designated committee member monthly

There is no requirement to distribute all of the SPARK awards in any given year. Equally important as recognition of outstanding values-based performance by our employees is our fiduciary responsibility. To ensure integrity of the program, all gift cards will be held centrally by the Facilities Finance office and released and administered under the direction of the Assistant Director of Finance for Facilities Management.

Gift card investments with local vendors determined by committee input - \$15.00/card

- RamCash
- Safeway
- Wal-Mart
- McDonald's
- King Soopers

Marketing and Brand Development

The FM Employee Recognition Committee will roll out the SPARK award portion of the program using several mechanisms:

1. At a FM supervisor's meeting (time to be determined)
2. Via the FM Departmental meeting in 2017
3. Via email to Facilities Staff in 2017 (upon program approval)
4. Via the FM Newsletter

In addition, we will provide multiple entertaining training sessions on the subject for supervisors and all employees in 2017.

Best Practices

The goal of the employee recognition program is to increase morale and employee engagement through two identifiable approaches: peer recognition and alignment with organizational goals. Employee engagement is defined as *a workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organization's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organizational success, and are able at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being*. Industry has long valued the process of employee engagement to elevate corporate productivity. Increasing employee engagement is widely viewed as a strategic objective throughout many organizations, though higher education has been slow to adopt these strategies in the realms of teaching, service, and research.

The heart of the SPARK award is the effort to immediately (within two business days) recognize individuals through efforts described above. The uniqueness of this program is its specificity. By recognizing specific actions on the spot, and not through a prolonged approval process, the program can maximize the positive impact on a recognized employee. In turn, the supervisor giving the award on the spot will feel empowered to recognize outstanding behavior without needing to seek higher-level approval.

Logistics

- During the first year, committee members will review data and the effectiveness of the program on a routine monthly basis. To continue to improve the program, committee members will solicit feedback from FM staff.
- A committee member will staff the Pitkin Conference Room, every other Wednesday at 10:00 am - 11:00 am and 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm, to distribute gift cards to awardees.
- Program data will be available upon request.
- Gift cards will be stored in a discrete and secure area at all times.

SPARK Award Process

1. Recognize Qualifying Behavior in a Timely Fashion
 - a. An FM supervisor or manager perceives exemplary behavior that aligns with our core values.
 - b. Supervisor or manager thanks the employee by citing the behavior and presents the employee with a SPARK award card representing the award, within two business days of the qualifying action.
 - c. SPARK award cards will be numbered and distributed to supervisors. This will enable the committee to confirm that the presenting supervisor was issued the card at redemption.
 - d. The presenting supervisor will circle the core value(s) being recognized, sign and date the card and give it to the employee.
2. Awarding Supervisor Submits Web Form to the Employee Recognition Committee
 - a. The form is available via computer or mobile device.
 - b. The form lists all information about the behavior, employee, and date of award to the FM Employee Recognition Committee for tracking. It includes space for comments, and should take no longer than a minute or two to complete and submit*.
3. The employee redeems their SPARK award card for a gift card valued at \$15.00.
 - a. Gift cards are available from multiple vendors and can be chosen based on employee preference.
 - b. When the employee redeems the award card, if the presenting supervisor has not submitted a form, the employee will still receive their gift card. The committee member handling the redemption will email the presenting supervisor a reminder with the SPARK award form attached.
4. The committee recognizes employees through media (CSU Life advertisements, SOURCE articles, FM website, FM newsletter).

*The electronic format will allow the committee to provide recipient information and the dollar amount of redeemed SPARK cards to CSU Human Resources on a monthly basis. Forms will be archived monthly and will be available for review if needed. We will work with Human Resources to establish and document this process.

Sources

The Committee has based its recommendations on a combination of published research, CSU departmental precedent, e.g., CVMBS and VPR Employee 'SPOT' Recognition programs, collective experience, numerous meetings with FM shops and units to collect input, and University statutes. Please find the attached documents for further investigation.

1. *ITA Group. "Trends in Employee Recognition." Trends in Employee Recognition. ITA Group, May 2015. Web. Oct.-Nov. 2016*

Amendment - Approved and Adopted in October 2018

The Facilities Management (FM) Employee Recognition Committee recommends that our department expand its original considerations for the intended SPARK program recipients. The committee advocates for altering the original wording from a SPARK award is “for an individual, full-time employee” to “for individual, full-time and part-time non-student employees.” This designation is in the best interest of the department as it more fully recognizes and includes all non-student FM employees for their contribution to the university. Part time employees contribute to the cohesiveness of the FM community in similar ways as full time employees. For student recognition, the committee encourages supervisors to use the Student Employee of the Year award given by Student Employment Services (<http://www.ses.colostate.edu/>).

In the SPARK program, any supervisor can give an award to an employee. Supervisors do not always know if an employee is full time or part time, especially when giving awards to employees who do not work for them specifically. The amendment to the program language will not influence program funds in any significant way. However, the committee believes the clarified language will be less confusing and will set up a more inclusive, equitable work environment for employees.

Amendment – Approved and Adopted in December 2018

In the original SPARK program proposal, the Facilities Management (FM) Employee Recognition Committee agreed to “review data and the effectiveness of the program” and to “solicit feedback from FM staff” in its first year to continue to improve the SPARK program. The Committee has tracked the success of participation in the program, gift card preferences, and received ongoing input from FM employees regarding the SPARK program. From this information, the Committee recommends that the FM department expand its considerations for the SPARK gift card options.

The original wording from the Budget section of the SPARK program proposal states:

Gift card investments with local vendors determined by committee input - \$15.00/card

- RamCash
- Safeway
- Wal-Mart
- McDonald’s
- King Soopers

The Committee has determined a need for altering the original language around gift options to be less specific to vendor. The Committee proposes to replace the original language with the following text:

A minimum investment of five gift card options with local vendors at \$15.00/card will be determined by committee input, monthly usage in the twice a month SPARK card to gift card exchange, and through employee feedback.

The Committee believes this change in language is in the best interest of the department because the Committee gains more flexibility around gift card selection when specific vendors are not identified in the proposal. The ability to respond effectively to employee input is an illustration of how the department recognizes and values employees for their commitment to FM core values. It indicates that employees can provide honest feedback and the Committee will consider the feedback by selecting appropriate gift card options that are ultimately meaningful to FM employees. This exchange of comment and response builds the groundwork for further employee participation in the second year of the SPARK program and ensures its success into the future. The amendment to the program language will not influence program funds in any significant way.

Amendment – Approved and Adopted in January 2020

The FM Employee Recognition Committee (ERC) recommends an increase to the SPARK program gift card amount from the original \$15 to \$20 per card on January 1, 2020. The Committee Gift Card Purchaser will purchase \$5 gift cards to match the amount of \$15 cards left after final redemption in 2019, then will begin purchasing \$20 gift cards from that point forward.

In 2018, the ERC conducted a survey regarding the SPARK program. From the responses, it was suggested that the \$15 gift card was considered too small to be useful. An increase to \$20/card will help address these concerns and let employees know the committee is listening. Additionally, even with the increase in cost of goods over the last three years, \$20 will allow award winners more purchasing power.

In the original SPARK program proposal, the wording regarding a \$15 gift card is found in six locations. It is mentioned in the Definition, the Budget - twice, The Spark Award Process, and previous Amendments – twice. The Employee Recognition Committee would like to amend this language with the gift card amount of \$20 in each of the above-mentioned locations.

Amendment – Approved and Adopted in May 2025

Facilities Management has updated their core values to reflect and uphold the current goals and objectives of the department. As a result, the FM Employee Recognition Committee (ERC) would like to amend the core values listed in the Introduction of this program proposal. The new core values are as follows: Safety, Integrity, Courage, People-Centered Service, Innovation and Accountability.