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Procedure Owners: VP for Financial Affairs, Director of Human Resources

## **Guidelines for the Individual Meritorious Recognition and Employee Suggestion Program**

### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of the Athens State University Individual Meritorious Recognition and Employee Suggestion Program is to recognize employees for contributions to specific University/Department initiatives or special projects, and/or ideas for creative solutions and suggestions that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the University's operations. Recognition for meritorious service would focus on single efforts of employee performance that meet or exceed expectations as defined by the University Vision, Mission, Goals, and College Specific Goals and Objectives. This program allows for individuals who provide outstanding service, implement a substantive new idea, or meaningfully contribute to or design an organizational initiative that reflects above and beyond what it is expected to be recognized and rewarded for these singular efforts or ideas.

### **II. Eligibility**

To be eligible for an Individual Meritorious Recognition or Employee Suggestion Award, employees must:

- Be a permanent faculty or staff member (full or part-time);
- Be employed in their current position for at least one year;
- Meet expectations in all areas of work.

### **III. Criteria and Process for Nomination**

#### **Individual Meritorious Recognition**

The achievements of an employee nominated for the Individual Meritorious Recognition for contributions to University/Department for specific initiatives or special projects should reflect:

- Exemplary single efforts of performance that relate to meeting the University Vision, Mission, Goals, and College and/or Department Specific Goals and Objectives;
- Demonstrable performance that has resulted in direct measures of improvement in one or more of the following areas: Financial, Operational Efficiency/Improvement, Customer Service, Strategic and Organizational Development; and
- All areas of work are meeting expectations (no individual area of work is not meeting or is below expectations as it relates to meeting the University Vision, Mission, and Goals, and the College and/or Department specific Goals and Objectives).



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Persons nominating an individual should complete the nomination form, and submit it along with supporting documentation (such as documentation of the efforts or accomplishments) and letters of support from the nominee's colleagues/coworkers to the Office of Human Resources. Nominations and supporting materials will be accepted on an ongoing basis. Nominations should be submitted no later than April 30<sup>th</sup> and should be based on projects accomplished in the prior 12 months.

Nominations must clearly focus on one special project or initiative. General work and good efforts are not criteria for qualification. Nominations for faculty related to excellence in teaching and/or excellence in research, scholarly or creative works will not normally be considered for a special project award since there is an existing Athens State Foundation award for these two areas. If someone other than the supervisor nominates an individual for meritorious recognition, the person making the nomination should obtain verification from the supervisor that the nominee is doing good work in all areas of their job. An individual can only nominate one person per year for a meritorious award.

#### **Employee Suggestion Program**

Generally speaking, suggestions must be specific, unique, and constructive, and most often should be related to functions of the area or department in which the employee works. To be considered for adoption, a suggestion should:

- Increase productivity and/or efficiency;
- Lead to improved and safer working conditions;
- Reduce costs; or Increase in revenue.

Written suggestion statements should include three elements:

- A statement of the problem or area for improvement;
- The specific proposed solution for the problem or area; and
- The possible benefits, including cost savings or revenue when applicable.

Suggestions and supporting materials will be accepted on an ongoing basis using the standard suggestion form. Suggestions should be submitted directly to the supervisor of the department for which the suggestion applies. The supervisor will be responsible for evaluating the suggestion. The evaluation should include documentation, if applicable, of projected or recognized efficiency and/or cost savings. If the suggestion is implemented, the supervisor will submit an approved suggestion form to the Office of Human Resources. An employee would normally submit no more than two suggestions per year.

#### **IV. Selection Process**

##### **Individual Meritorious Recognition**



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Selections for Individual Meritorious Recognition will be made by the Meritorious Recognition Award Selection Committee, comprised of the following members:

- Presiding Officer of the Staff Senate;
- Presiding Officer of the Faculty Senate;
- Director of Human Resources;
- Director of the Career Services;
- Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs;
- Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management;
- Assistant Vice President for Development;
- Department Chair for Human Resources Management;
- Assistant Vice President for Financial Affairs/Business Manager.

If any members of the committee are nominated, the President will appoint a replacement to the committee for that year's selection process.

The intent of the award is to recognize all employees who meet the criteria and not only those individuals whose achievements are considered superior. The Selection Committee will review the nominations for Meritorious Recognition Awards and supporting documentation for all nominees and identify all recommendations that meet the criteria for recognition. Once these individuals are identified, the committee will compile a list of recommended awardees. The list compiled by the Selection Committee should not be ranked. It is appropriate for the committee to categorize their recommendations in categories; for example, good, excellent or superior. The materials for all of the nominees along with the Committee's recommendations will be forwarded to the Special Assistant to the President who will facilitate adding the portfolios of the nominees to the agenda for discussion and final decision at a scheduled Cabinet meeting. Final recommendations will be made by the Committee no later than April 15, and final approval by the Cabinet and President no later than June 30th. The awards will be publicly recognized at an appropriate University function.

#### **Employee Suggestion Program**

The Employee Suggestion Program is administered through the Office of Human Resources. As discussed previously, suggestion forms will be submitted directly to the supervisor or department head who will evaluate the suggestion. If the suggestion is implemented, the approved form will be forwarded to the Office of Human Resources who will ensure that the forms are accompanied by documentation that supports the suggestion and includes measurable cost or efficiency savings, if applicable. Approved suggestions will be forwarded to the President for approval.

#### **V. Awards/Award Recognition**



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Individual Meritorious Recognition and Employee Suggestion awards can be monetary or non-monetary. Upon final approval of the awardees, the Vice President for Financial Affairs, in collaboration with the President and Cabinet, will make a determination of the type and amount of the award.

#### Monetary Awards

One time treatment/award ranging from \$25 to up to 2% of base (in lieu of monetary award, non-monetary recognition may be elected and appropriate).

#### Non-Monetary Awards\*\*

These award types may consist of a one-time treatment/award of citation, goods or services. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Point Program (accumulated points that can be exchanged for desired products or services from online service provider menu)
- Time off with Pay
- Certificate of Recognition
- Recognition Trophy
- Training fund appropriation
- Time off for Personal Projects (i.e. research, community service)
- Time off for Professional Development (i.e. training)
- Retail Gift Cards, Gas Cards, American Express, MasterCard and Visa Prepaid
- Sam's Club Memberships
- AAA Memberships
- Movie tickets
- Oil Change Gift Certificates
- Turkey/Ham Gift Certificates
- Gym Memberships
- Fruit baskets
- Amusement Park tickets
- Entertainment vouchers (i.e. Performing Arts Center, Symphony)

\*\*These non-monetary awards may be "packaged" by offering 2 or more of the above types of recognition based on the level of award deemed appropriate.

#### Individual Meritorious Recognition

The President will publicly recognize and present each Individual Meritorious Recognition award.

#### Employee Suggestion Program

Employee Suggestion award recipients will be officially notified by the President's office of their award no later than April 30<sup>th</sup>.