Managing and Motivating Student Employees

1. Hold high expectations of students.
   - Set your expectations upfront.
   - Although students' top priority at UST should be their studies, remember they are UST employees. It is important to hold them to realistic expectations allowing them to have a learning experience and contribute to department goals.

2. Capitalize on Teachable Moments.
   - For many students, their student employment experience is not only an opportunity to earn money for educational expenses, but it is also an important work experience for their future careers. Help them to recognize the value of these opportunities:
     - Gain experience in a professional work setting
     - Apply job experience toward future careers goals
     - Network with professionals who have similar interests

3. Trust your student employees with increasing responsibilities.
   - Learn their capabilities; challenge them with greater responsibilities.
   - Demonstrate by your words and actions that you trust their capabilities.

4. Give compliments freely when deserved.
   - Don’t give false praise, but when deserved don’t hold back on letting students know you appreciate their efforts.

5. Recognize the transitions they are facing.
   - First year students – First part-time job? First time away from home? First time living with someone?
   - Hold high expectations, managed with realistic reminders of transitions they are facing.

6. Never underestimate the value of “Fun”.
   - Integrate fun into work activities when possible.
   - Include students in department celebrations.
   - Participate in the National Student Employee Recognition Week (April).
   - Surprise students with small gifts (cards, movie passes, etc) on occasion. Refer to the Student Employee Recognition document for ideas. (Please remember that departmental funds may not be used to pay gifts, meals, gift certificates, or other items with an associated cost.)
7. **Tie job to career goals.**

   - While the job they do may not be directly related to the student’s career goals, point out to them that this can be a learning experience for their future employment.

8. **Clearly communicate areas for improvement without embarrassing the student.**

   - It is important that students understand when they have made an error, or if there is an area in which you expect stronger performance.
   - Talk to them about errors or performance concerns in private – not in front of peers or other department members.
   - Remind them of the things they do well and offer to help them in the areas where they need improvement. Keep communication lines open so that they are not afraid to tell you when they don't understand something.
   - Remember to maintain clear boundaries between friend and supervisor.

9. **When appropriate, accommodate needs for special absences.**

   - Special events for school, finals, projects and other school-related things may require that you accommodate students’ schedules. Keep in mind:
     - Require advance notice whenever possible.
     - Make it part of your policy to have students find a replacement if they need to be gone.
     - Recognize and reward good attendance.