Manager’s Quick-Reference Guide to

*Cheers for Peers!*

A Peer-to-Peer Recognition Program

Fall 2016
Staff Awards and Recognition Committee (SARC)
The Program At-A-Glance

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How Does Cheers for Peers Work?

This program is straightforward for employees to use and emphasizes intrinsic recognition to both giver and receiver. This program does not replace the formal BRAVO Awards – it complements it.

The foundation of the Cheers for Peers program is a notepad filled with carbonless paper cards on which the employee will write an accolade to another employee.

The giver delivers the original copy (the top copy) to the receiver by hand or, if not possible, sends it by interdepartmental mail, and then drops the copy into a collection box.

These boxes are placed in high-traffic locations throughout the College at all campuses. Notepads are stationed at each collection box, as well as other high-traffic locations such as admin front desks etc. Extra notepads are available for teams should more be needed.

The receiver may choose to post their cards prominently in their workspace or perhaps collect them in a photobook.

In addition to the intrinsic sense of being recognized, the program also offers extrinsic reward. Each time an employee gives another employee a card, both giver and receiver receive points that are banked in a central database.

Once a certain number of points have accumulated, the employee can redeem those points for a tangible reward!

How Will This Program Be Administered?

Cheers Champions – a group of employees across all campuses – will be responsible for one collection box and an assigned zone. In addition to being a local “point person” for the program, once a month each Cheers Champion will collect the copies from their assigned collection box and review them for validity (see below).

Any cards that are deemed invalid will be forwarded to the Staff Awards and Recognition Committee (SARC) Co-Chairs who will provide feedback to the sender.

The criteria for a valid card are (as approved by SARC):

1. Date is legible
2. Sender’s full name and department are complete and legible
3. Receiver’s full name and department are complete and legible
4. At least one College value is checked
5. Accolade is legible and refers to a specific action or actions that support one of the College’s core values, not just a general behaviour (see examples)

All valid cards are tabulated and points entered by the Cheers Champion into a master database that will populate each giver’s and receiver’s personal “HUB ticker”, which will track points ultimately redeemable for a reward.

Once tabulation is complete, the Cheers Champion identifies the manager of each recipient, bundles the cards by manager, and sends each bundle out via interdepartmental mail to the appropriate manager.

Note: the approximate workload for a Cheers Champion is 3 hours per month. Cheers Champions need to receive advance support from their supervisor prior to taking on this role in the program.

**Examples of a Well-Written Card**

It’s especially important that you as a Manager write your cards with attention to a specific action or behavior. Otherwise, your card may be considered invalid, and it also sends a message to your team members that vaguely written cards are acceptable.

Here are three examples of cards that are written too vaguely, and how they can be improved.

A good example for someone in your department:

#1 - Too general:
You are always there for me and the team when times are busy. You put others first and it means so much to feel supported. Thank you!

Here is the same accolade, written with more specificity.
Cheers for always checking in to see if I need help when I am getting ready for my presentations, like you did with my workshop last Tuesday. It was very helpful – you have a gift for easing others.

A good example for faculty:

#2 – Too general:
You’re a great instructor and you inspire me to be better at my job.

Here is the same accolade, written with more specificity.
Cheers for how you saw a teachable moment last week with your student. You have this amazing ability to model high standards for your students’ learning yet at the same time, be such an approachable instructor. I look up to you in this way!

A good example for someone outside your department:

#3 - Too general:
I don’t know how you find the time to do everything that you do with your core work and your committees, but I sure admire you for it!

Here is the same accolade, written with more specificity.
Cheers for how you and your subcommittee developed a great communication plan which has already translated into great new posters, microsite development, and event promotions. How you find the time to do this, in addition to the core work of your job, I will never know. My hat is off to you.

Your Role as a Manager

So what can you, as Manager, do to encourage peer-to-peer recognition? Here are some recommendations to consider, keeping in mind that we want you to participate by sending and receiving cards to all employees, not just your own teams.

In addition, always remember that this is not a top-down program – it is by all employees, for all employees!

✓ Send an e-mail to your staff.

Prior to the official rollout of the Cheers for Peers Program, send out an e-mail that encourages your employees to learn about Cheers for Peers and to participate. The Managers Support Task Force has crafted a draft e-mail here that you can copy and paste – please edit as you wish.

Note: Kindly copy Debbie Sullivan (desullivan@rrc.ca) and Jacqueline Wood (jawood@rrc.ca) to let SARC know that your team has been reached!

Dear Team:

As you might have heard, the College has a brand new recognition program for employees called Cheers for Peers that will be launching in mere days.

This is an easy-to-use program that allows us to recognize colleagues on a day-by-day basis through a handwritten notecard that has a carbonless copy. You give the card to the person you’re thanking, and a copy of the card goes to their supervisor, which extends the recognition moment.
Not only does this program do a great job of fostering recognition, the program also gives you **points** for both giving and receiving a card. The points lead to rewards, many of which are homegrown products, services or special experiences made at RRC!

All campus areas will be given notepads, and you’ll also find them at each collection box. For some employees, access to the Cheers notepads will be harder if you’re not on an actual campus. If this is the case, you can download a PDF of the blank notecard.

This program is not “top down”, but rather **from all employees, to all employees**. It was developed by the Staff Awards and Recognition Committee, based on extensive research, and is modelled after programs currently in place across North America. You can be proud that RRC is making a great stride in our recognition and engagement work - the excitement is building!

**Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the program by viewing a short intro video and web page-** click here. This is also where you will find the PDF of the card, and examples of how to write a “valid” card.

There is a local Cheers Champion assigned to every campus or building. **In our case, the Cheers Champ is __________.** This person is our local program rep who can answer any questions you might have. Our Champ is also a key promoter of the program who will be making sure that our team is actively writing those cards!

If you still have questions about the Cheers for Peers program, the best people to contact will be the SARC Co-Chairs Jacqueline Wood (jawood@rrc.ca) and Debbie Sullivan (desullivan@rrc.ca). They represent the group of 25 SARC members who have worked so hard over the past two years to get this program up and running.

*I am looking forward to using the program - I hope you are too. Who deserves a Cheers from you? :)*

Cheers!

*For now,*

*Your Name*

- ✓ **Attend an upcoming Manager Info Session.**

A series of noon-hour sessions will be offered in-person and via live streaming in Fall 2016.

These quick sessions will be an opportunity to find out more about the program and how to navigate it as a Manager, to learn how other Managers are planning on using the program, and to hear any questions or concerns that others may have so that you’re prepared and ready to model the program effectively with your staff.
✓ Introduce the College’s new core values to your staff as soon as they are posted.

Review and discuss Red River’s new core values, which have just been updated by President’s Council and were shared by the Board of Governors this summer. Cheers for Peers is a great way to orient your team to the values by showcasing them in a program that recognizes their actions and behaviours!

✓ Explain what the cards will - and will not be - used for with your staff.

Find ways in your regular communication with staff to share that the recognition cards will not be used for performance support or in performance reviews. Emphasize it is not a “competition”, but a way to provide a fellow employee with genuine, positive, meaningful, and timely feedback on how his/her actions demonstrate a particular value or values.

✓ Decide how you will participate in the program - and share this with your employees.

Best practice research on peer recognition programs emphasizes that it’s important for you to share your own participation approach with your team in advance where possible. What exactly does this mean?

- Do you want to initially be deliberate by writing a card per week to someone on the team? Or do you prefer to be more spontaneous and write a card when the moment presents itself?

- Sometimes, employees may harbour an expectation about how frequently they should get a card from their supervisor. You don't always know what those expectations are. Letting staff know how frequent your involvement will be can be helpful in managing expectation ahead of time.

- As well, it can be helpful for employees to hear that you will be writing cards for genuine actions but that sometimes, good deeds can still go missed.

- And, if you do plan to give each team member a card over a set period of time, it is okay to tell them your plan - this doesn’t diminish the authenticity of your approach – rather, it conveys a sense of “procedural justice” – you’re letting your team know - in advance - that you’re being transparent about how you are getting involved.

✓ When you receive the copies of the cards, you can do one of two things:

A. Acknowledge the card with your team member or at a team meeting. This is beneficial for two reasons:
• This allows the moment of recognition to become extended.

• It increases the cumulative effect of recognition on the positive culture at our College.

B. If you do not have time to acknowledge the card, that’s perfectly okay. (The program will NOT communicate to employees that this is an expectation of managers.)

Either way, feel free to deposit copies in the recycle bin afterwards— you are not expected to keep the copies or file them in a personnel file –the recipient has the original.

✓ Supporting employees with limited access to computers or notepads

A tracking system on the HUB ticker shows each employee their point total on their computer. However, some employees do not have regular access to an office computer.

The good news is that everyone can log in from a computer at home, or in the RRC libraries and learning commons, using their regular employee credentials, to see their point total at any time.

In occasional circumstances, such as with the Recycling Team or other employees/associates of the College, individuals may request a manager to assist in providing updated point totals from time to time. In these specific circumstances, a Cheers Champion or SARC Co-Chair can run a report that provides point totals for those employees and the Manager may be asked to assist in sharing this information with employees on an individual basis (not publicly viewable to the team as a whole.)

In other occasional circumstances, the Cheers notepads may be difficult to access— in particular, this would apply to those employees at regional campuses who do not perform their regular work directly on campus. In these rare circumstances, the employee can access a PDF version of the Cheers for Peers card here which can be printed (2 copies) and filled in via handwriting (both copies).

In these instances, the card can be forwarded to the Cheers Champion assigned to that Campus either via regular mail, or electronically as a scanned document.

If an employee facing these circumstances has any questions, please direct them to the SARC Co-Chairs or assigned Cheers Champion.

101 Effective Words to Use in Recognition

(Adapted from http://www.globoforce.com/gfblog/2013/101-effective-words-to-use-in-recognition/)
Let’s start with **three core words** you may want to consider including – these will help get the ball rolling!

1. **You** – It’s the most powerful word in the English language.
2. **Name** – Refer to your recipient’s name and try placing it within the note, rather than at the start or end. It makes the note more personal.
3. **Because** – When you use the word because, you end up giving an explanation, and the Cheers For Peers rules requires that you write the note for a specific action or behavior. The word “because prompts” this step very nicely.

Here are 101 more words:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Words that speak to Effort</th>
<th>Words that speak to Quality</th>
<th>Words that speak to Attitude</th>
<th>Words that speak to Leadership</th>
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<td>Flexible</td>
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The Staff Awards and Recognition Committee

The Staff Awards and Recognition Committee (SARC) is proud to be bringing forward *Cheers for Peers* to Red River College employees as we advance our mandate to “foster a culture of recognition” at RRC.

Over the past two years, this hardworking group of 24 employees from across Red River College has:

- Researched best practices in other leading organizations
- Researched management and motivational theories related to recognition programs
- Sponsored a Staff Survey in January 2015 to gauge appetite for a new Peer Recognition Program
- Consulted widely with stakeholder groups including: Human Resources, Executive Committee, College Council, Academic Leaders Research Forum, Regional Managers Group, Labour Management Group, and College-Wide consultations at EDC and NDC
- Consulted with service and product providers throughout the College to develop a menu of “home grown” rewards
- Worked with ITS to develop an internal tracking system for points
- Recruited Cheers Champions across campuses
- Developed a Manager Support Task Force, Cheers Champion Task Force, Rewards Task Force and Communications and Marketing Task Force to prepare the program for Summer 2016 launch

SARC is composed of the following members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Department</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jacqueline Wood (Co-Chair)</td>
<td>Staff Learning and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Debbie Sullivan (Co-Chair)</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Lisa Carriere</td>
<td>Aboriginal Student Support and Community Relations</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Darlene Funk</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Jason McMaster</td>
<td>Environmental Health and Safety Services</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Mary-Ann Shukla</td>
<td>Steinbach Campus Manager</td>
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<td>Leslie Ternowetsky</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Debra Wutke</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Margaret Riffell</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Lindsay Storey-Illiffe</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Tanis McCallum</td>
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For more information about the development of Cheers for Peers, or to answer any questions you may have about the program, feel free to contact the Co-Chairs or any one of the members listed above.

![Quote](image)