



**T**hank you. Xie xie. Danke. Gracias.  
Grazie. Asante. Merci. Arigato.  
Spasibo. Gamsahamnida. Efcharistó.

There are many ways to express gratitude—through both our words and actions. When you feel grateful and take the time to express that gratitude through generosity, you are participating in the divine nature. Gratitude isn't just a nicety on our way toward achievement—it's embedded in the fabric of the universe and core to who we are as image bearers of God. Gratitude, or "reciprocal altruism," can be seen demonstrated throughout creation, by birds, fish, and primates, and the value of gratitude clearly extends to both the giver and receiver. The Christian faith challenges us to recognize each moment of our lives as a gift, even the tragic and difficult ones. We are called to live out of gratitude, abundance, and appreciation, even in the midst of challenges. Our historical faith and modern research affirm that gratitude—both the giving and receiving of it—serves as the best antidote to feelings of hopelessness, despair, and dissatisfaction.

As leaders, it is essential that we demonstrate a regular practice of gratitude and create a culture of value and recognition across the University. Research shows those who express gratitude are seen as more competent, and 81 percent of employees say they are willing to work harder for a grateful supervisor. Showing gratitude may be a good business practice, but it also offers the opportunity to show others they are seen, heard, and appreciated for who they are, helping them feel an authentic sense of belonging.

## ACT IN DECEMBER

### **1 Be specific when expressing gratitude.**

Vague thanks often comes off as inauthentic. When expressing gratitude, be sure to specify the details (who, what, when, where) of why you feel grateful. Focus your expression on the positive impacts others have and describe to them how those impacts have made things better.

### **2 Act on generous impulses right away.**

How many times have you had a generous idea, only to get caught up in the busyness of life and let it go by the wayside? Generous impulses are too easily postponed for things that feel more urgent or important, so don't give them the chance to get away. Whenever a generous thought or idea pops into your mind, act on it right away, and remember: an expression of gratitude—even if not quite as perfect as it could be—is better than none.

### **3 Consider the ways you receive and express appreciation.**

The authors of *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace* address the idea that different people receive thanks in different ways. Some of your employees might prefer to receive a handwritten note or an email filled with words of affirmation; others might prefer some quality time with you over lunch or a coffee break. Taking the time to notice how each of your team members prefers to give and receive appreciation will ensure you are expressing gratitude in a way that speaks personally to the recipient, magnifying the effect of your sentiments.