Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

**Recruitment**

Networks should always be on the lookout for new volunteers. Think about the following questions before actively seeking additional volunteers:

- What do you need a volunteer to do? A volunteer should not be recruited unless there is a specific, useful job for that person.
- What duties will they perform and for how long?
- How many volunteers are needed?
- What personal qualifications, skills, and abilities are needed for the various volunteer roles?
- Is there a plan for orientation, training, evaluation, and recognition?
- What are the benefits to the volunteers?

Below are some tips for recruiting new volunteers:

- Ask! Alumni are more willing to volunteer for a project if they are personally asked by someone who is involved.
- Have a volunteer sign-up sheet at each event.
- Regularly promote that new volunteers are needed.
- Plan events/meetings with the goal of recruiting new volunteers.
- Assign each board member or current volunteer the task of recruiting at least one new volunteer each year.
- Welcome and recognize first-time attendees at all events.
- Keep an ongoing list of potential volunteers and add to it by soliciting new names from other alumni and CMU community members. Examples: past event attendees, new graduates, alumni new to given area, former student leaders.

**Retention**

Make recognition, acknowledgement, and stewardship a part of your network's operation to show your volunteers how much you appreciate them and keep them involved. Below are some suggestions for retaining volunteers:

- Say Thank You!
- Create a pleasant environment.
- Provide thorough explanation, orientation, and training.
- Be concise when assigning a task.
- Give feedback on progress.
- Honor work preferences and make assignments based on skills and interests.
- Ask volunteers for opinions, advice, and feedback.
- Sponsor a volunteer recognition event.
- Create a volunteer of the month or year award.