

TIPS FOR ENGAGING POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS

The volunteer opportunities at FirstU are diverse, such as: leadership, spirituality, social action, community building, involvement with children and youth, or music. Perhaps another way to reframe the phrase “volunteer recruitment” is to consider Frederick Buechner's idea of a calling, where a person's “deep gladness” meets the world's “deep hunger”. Rather than filling empty positions, the task at hand is more about matching people's passions and interests with roles and tasks within the congregation.

1. What are the potential volunteer's interests and passions? What brings them joy and fulfillment?
2. Share your joys and experiences as a volunteer with a potential volunteer. What has been fulfilling and enriching for you in your volunteer roles at FirstU?
3. Once a potential volunteer's interests and questions are known, introduce them to other volunteers and leaders involved with what the potential volunteer might like to be involved in.
4. Invite potential volunteers to meetings just to observe if they would like to get a sense of what the committee, group, or team might be about before signing on. Make them feel welcome by introducing them and inviting them to share their ideas.
5. Similar to #4, invite a potential volunteer to shadow you in your role before they sign on.
6. Be realistic about the “job description” and time commitment when explaining a role or task.
7. Volunteer to be their mentor or help them find a mentor.
8. When inviting someone to take on a role, let them know why you especially thought of them, why you thought they would be an especially good fit.
9. Remember that not everyone wants to attend meetings, but they may be prepared to take on a specific task. Have an alternate task suggestion ready for those who don't want to be on the team or working group. Or consider initially asking them to take on a specific task or project - team or working group involvement may come later.
10. Explain the importance of the role or task, how it makes a difference in the congregation or in the community.
11. A little self promotion doesn't hurt. Make your team or working group visible in the eyes of the congregation. Ensure there's clear, up-to-date information about your team or working group on the FirstU website. Share news of the good work you do and the joy you all have doing it.
12. Remember that every new member is not only a potential volunteer but also a potential friend. Take time to get to know them. It's also important to respect that not everyone wants or has the time to volunteer. And that's ok too.