Keeping them mean without treating them mean:

Strategies for successfully retaining quality student volunteers

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Program Profile

• University wide peer mentoring since 2000
• 400-500 mentors each year
• Assist around 1500 new incoming annually
What motivates volunteers to keep coming back?
What works?

- Student centric outlook
- Relevant responsive strategies
- Recognition, recognition, recognition
- Program buy-in
What doesn’t work?

• Staff centric decision making process
• Paying mentors (not in the long term)
• Mushroom approach (keep them in the dark and feed them ….)
• Inconsistent messages
• Programs not focused on volunteers
How to tell the difference

• Understand your context
• Seek feedback (surveys, focus groups)
• Listen to your volunteers
• Follow your gut instinct