

Campus Ministry Workshop Synopsis

We are grateful for the continuing continental connection with the UUA's Young Adult and Campus Ministry (YA/CM) Offices, and the services and resources we can access. A CM Training was held in Toronto Oct 31 – Nov 1, 2003. We were supported in excellent dialogue amongst 14 participants from across Canada, representing all four regions, all keen on learning more about supporting U*U Campus Ministry in their communities. The following is from my notes taken that weekend. I hope it prompts further discussion and further exploration of the resources listed at the end. We began with "What is Campus Ministry", moved to the "Components of Campus Ministry," exploring each of those in more depth, then moved to ways of getting started.

This is my synopsis of the group's discussion only.

What is Campus Ministry?

It can offer a way for students on campus to:

- Make contact with other UU or like-minded Youth and Young Adults, often new to town, as they look for connections to their faith through their post-secondary experience
- Create spiritual space for others and ourselves
- Create a space to carry on with relevant, meaningful social justice work
- Maintain and re-connect to UUism through a new group, in a new place with a feeling of "familiar community"
- Experience continuity and connection following YRUU's intensity
- Connect with interfaith connections on campus
- Be in a safe space to buffer an often overwhelming sense of fragility and change during the transition that comes with CAMPUS life
- Find space to discuss issues of the day with like minded people
- Have a voice of liberal religious values, perspectives and presence on often conservative university campuses
- Continue on a path of personal growth throughout discussion
- Access an alternate time and space to traditional Sunday morning church (through afternoon, early or late evening gathering or worship)

What are the components of effective Campus Ministry

SPIRITUALITY – COMMUNITY - SOCIAL JUSTICE

Although sometimes a challenge to meet the spiritual needs of a new campus group, when you do make the effort to include and nurture this component of spirituality, community is strengthened and social action will happen more cohesively and more meaningfully!

It is most important to have a balance between the 3 components!

- We need to serve all these or risk losing group members... cliques can be the death of a campus group.
- It is better not to break up the group if focus grows to one area (ie primarily social action) just be sure to touch on other areas.

- As a leader or facilitator, you must be aware of potential of alienation within group and cliques that may happen as a result of one area taking over.
- As leader or facilitator, you'll need to be willing to broaden and expand the group, even if this does not speak to the component that resonates most with you.

Leadership

The CM "leader" is the person who makes sure **something** happens. They set the schedule in progress. They book the room. They inform the CM group members of changes. They are the "point person" however they let community govern itself. Decisions are made by the community! A covenant is developed and reviewed regularly. The leader is the facilitator and holder of institutional memory and connection for the group. If the leader is a student, it should be one who is really committed to the group, if no permanent paid staff person (UU Chaplain or minister/staff from nearby congregation) can take on this role. Often when a student minister or intern takes on this role, it is only for a year and the CM connection is "lost" once person leaves. When someone not part of the campus community takes on leadership role you may run the risk of it becoming "their" group rather than a campus group. Leadership and support can vary and will reflect your particular community and its needs. Several outside supports from the church community can bolster the young adult or student leadership.

How to start?

Be aware of best times on campus ~ there is about a 3 week window of opportunity at start of a semester. Prep work needs to be done beforehand! You may want to contact another liberal denomination's Chaplain on campus (United Church) to help as you get connected, get started and learn the ropes!

One MODEL to try for a Campus Ministry Group

First, distinguish a day/time to meet and then KEEP IT.

1. Discussion over dinner (or other shared meal)
2. Spiritual Practice
3. Community Event (even as watching a favourite TV show together)

Promotion of your Campus Ministry Group

Reach out at the beginning of the year with:

- Flyers
- Posters
- Side walk sales → rent a table
- Club days
- Parades
- Fall fairs
- Go to Chaplain on Campus
- Campus Radio

- Campus TV
 - Get on list of student groups
 - Go to church
 - Check CONNECTUU online
 - Connect with multifaith groups
 - Use BRIDGE connections
 - Organize around issues where you can be seen ie UNISEX Washrooms
 - Sponsor speakers and access student speakers' bureaus
 - Sidewalk chalking to advertise!
 - Press releasesà host a forum using CUC press releases on current social issues like drugs, same sex marriage, etc.
 - Condomsà add a sticker on package with UU principles!
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Really important piece you may not know!

GET ON www.connectuu.com You can then access all kinds of information. Plus, Mind The Gap and other YA CM Grant applications cannot be completed unless you're connected to "CONNECTUU". So get connected all you Canadian young adults!

Resources

For young adult worship resources check out www.uua.org/worshipweb

The Campus Organizers Handbook can be accessed at campus@uua.org or www.uuyan.org

The UU Young Adult Resource Compilation can be accessed at <http://my.uuyan.org/archive/worship.htm>

An updated and categorized list of all YA CM resources is available at <http://www.uua.org/ya-cm/resources/resourcebiblio.html>