

connecting

A practical help for launching college ministry



by Curt Harlow & Dr. Kent McCorkle

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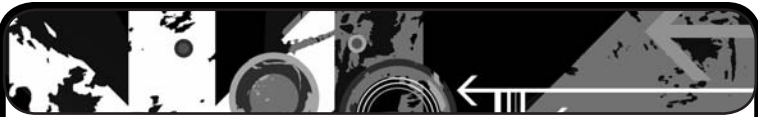
A practical help for launching campus ministry

Connecting with the University

So you want to reach college students. You realize the strategic nature of campus ministry. You understand that college ministry protects the investment churches have made in youth. You recognize that by impacting tomorrow's leaders at this critical stage of life, you are impacting the destiny of nations. Or perhaps you just think twenty-somethings are fun to hang around with. Regardless of the reason, welcome aboard!

Now where to begin?

The university is a big place. Most campuses are like self-contained cities, each with their own government, police force, public works, housing, food services, and sports teams, not to mention their own unique set of rules and regulations. Navigating the bureaucratic waters can be confusing at first, but learning from others can make the journey easier!



Topics Covered

Connecting with the University

- I. Chartering your group with the college
 - a. Benefits of registering as an official campus organization
 - b. How to charter your group step-by-step
 - c. Public vs. private universities
 - d. Chartering at two year schools
 - e. A note on university funding
 - f. From the frontlines

- II. After chartering - Interaction with the University
 - a. Tips for making the university love you
 - b. Tips for making the university loathe you

- III. Legal issues on Campus

Connecting with Students

- IV. Five Strategies to Get You Going
 - a. Strategy One: Prayer - Praying on Campus
 - b. Strategy Two: Relationship - Informal Relational Activities
 - c. Strategy Three: Cross-Cultural - International Student Friendship Ministry.
 - d. Strategy Four: Cell - Small Groups
 - e. Strategy Five: The Gathering - Large Group Gathering

- V. Principles for Effective Campus Ministries

- VI. After You're Up & Running
 - a. Do's & don'ts
 - b. We asked pioneers...
 - c. The first year (a timeline)

Connecting with Other Leaders

- VII. Links

I. Chartering Your Group

Question Uno: Do you want to register your group as an official campus organization?

Benefits to registering can vary widely from campus to campus, but here are some possibilities:

First, the tangible:

- ✓ Permission to be on campus
- ✓ Access to school facilities (e.g. reserve rooms on campus, setup a table on the concourse, possibly even office space)
- ✓ Free promotion from the university (e.g. listed in publications and on Web site)
- ✓ Access to university funding for student organizations
- ✓ Opportunity to connect with students through university-sponsored events (e.g. freshmen orientation)
- ✓ Use of the university name and/or logo
- ✓ Parking permits
- ✓ E-mail accounts
- ✓ Host your organization's Web site on the university's servers

Less tangible, but still important:

- Gain legitimacy in the eyes of students and their parents
- Submit to authority (working within the university system makes them happy)

A small number of groups, generally on private universities, have chosen not to register as an official campus organization. While chartering helps you to be taken seriously by the university and gives you easier access to students, there are a couple reasons you may decide against it.

- ✓ Free from university requirements (e.g. no required meetings, no faculty advisor)
- ✓ Free from university regulations (e.g. no membership stipulations)

Question Dos: How do I charter my group on campus?

If you're still reading this, then you've probably decided it's worth your time to register your group as an official campus organization. The process varies from campus to campus, but here are a few steps you'll generally need to complete. The Student Activities office can tell you the specific steps for your campus.

Basic steps to registering:

1. Get an application from Student Activities
2. Obtain signatures of 3-10 interested students
3. Create a constitution
4. Find a faculty advisor



Note: Many campuses require that this process be done at the beginning of the year, but some allow groups to be chartered at any time. Check with the Student Activities office to determine the guidelines for your campus.

1. Contact the Student Activities office for an official application and information on what is required. This office may go by different names such as Student Life, Student Programming, or Student Affairs.
2. Submit application along with the signatures of interested students. Generally, campuses require somewhere between 3-10 full-time students.
 - You will also need student "officers." The specific number and positions will vary, but you generally need at least a president and secretary-treasurer. At some campuses these positions are merely signatories, at others they act as university liaisons, must attend mandatory meetings, etc.
3. Write a constitution
 - See the next page for a sample constitution. Additional examples from both private & public campuses are available at <http://www.chialpha.com> under Resources.

Constitution of Sacramento Christian Fellowship

A Chi Alpha Campus Ministry

California State University-Sacramento

Article I. Name of Organization:

The name of this organization is Sacramento Christian Fellowship. We are affiliated with Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, a national campus ministry organization.

Article II. Statement of Purpose:

Our purpose is to bring students into relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and to be a community of students who share relationship with God and with each other.

Article III. Eligibility for Membership:

Sacramento Christian Fellowship is open to all students, faculty, staff, and members of the community who wish to join with us for worship or fellowship. While Sacramento Christian Fellowship is open to all, one must be a student in order to be a voting member.

Article IV. Officers:

Sacramento Christian Fellowship has a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer who are empowered to act as our representatives to Student Activities, Associated Students (ASI) and the university public at large. In addition, various students take active roles in leading Bible studies, helping plan and execute social events, and spearheading outreaches. These roles generally have a one-year term.

Article V. Rules of Order:

As Sacramento Christian Fellowship is a Christian organization, we most often conduct Christian worship meetings or Bible Studies (as contrasted with business meetings.) Therefore, we usually do not use a formalized Rules of Order, but we gladly adopt Robert's Rules of Order as our standard when needed.

Article VI. Procedure to Amend Constitution:

Our Constitution will be amended based on consensus vote (by active members as determined by attendance), in response to valid, demonstrated internal need to amend, or based on our ongoing networking or affiliation with external organizations such as, but not limited to, ASI, California State University-Sacramento, etc.



4. Obtain a faculty advisor
 - Depending on your campus, the position can be anything from a passive advisor to a heavily involved leader, required at all meetings. Their basic role is to act as your official advocate with the university. They may also be required to sign off on requests such as room reservations, parking permits, etc. (On some campuses the advisor may be a staff member instead of faculty.)
5. Re-charter your organization annually.

When selecting your faculty advisor, choose one who shares the same core values as your group and who has the time to be involved as necessary to avoid bottlenecks in regards to paperwork and meetings. There is nothing more frustrating to both the faculty advisor and the group than when this relationship isn't functioning smoothly.

Note: At some schools when registering a new organization you will have up to a one-year grace period to recruit a required minimum number of students.

**Wise as a serpent,
harmless as a dove
is key on
private universities.**

Public vs. Private Universities

While public universities have to allow you on campus if you follow their policy, you have no legal right to be on a private university. However, most are motivated to be tolerant and open-minded so the smart leader will keep that in mind when contacting them.

If the university is unwilling to give you permission to charter, possibly because they argue there are already several other evangelical Christian organizations on campus, then highlight your distinctiveness. You might try the following line of reasoning:

Christianity is a global movement, but the expressions you find overseas are different from what you find in America. In fact, most overseas Christians will be Pentecostal and we will be the only Pentecostal group on campus. Thus, we will appeal to international students.

Chartering at Two Year Schools

The process to register your group at a community or junior college is generally the same as that at four-year schools; you will need to complete an application, find interested students, submit a constitution, and acquire a faculty advisor. Contact the Student Activities office for specifics in regards to your campus.

A Note on University Funding

Funding for student organizations is very competitive, but not impossible to obtain. You may be able to acquire funds for bringing in guest speakers, travel to conferences, advertising, community-service activities, etc., by having your officers attend requisite meetings. However, be sure to read the fine print in regards to any stipulations on receiving university monies. For example, speakers may only be allowed to cover certain topics or you must allow any interested student to attend the event, which could be a little awkward if the event is leadership training.

Also, make sure you know the policy on receiving offerings during on-campus meetings. Some universities require that all monies collected be held by the student government association and then requested from them for use.

From the Frontlines

While the chartering process varies from campus to campus, here are some examples of how it began for three start-up ministries.

From Glen Davis, Stanford University:

“Our university (a private school) had an office for religious life. I interviewed with the school chaplain, and he authorized us to begin taking steps to form a student group. From that point we were given access to religious information about incoming freshmen and we began communicating with them and building community. We had a two-year grace period before we had to have a functional

community established (with officers, a constitution and regular meetings).”

From Mike Godzwa, American University:

“American University has two ways in which to become officially recognized. We first became recognized as chaplains as a part of the spiritual life center on campus. That involved meeting with the university chaplain and signing a standard ministerial agreement. The second way we became recognized was as a club through student activities. It is entirely student-oriented and gives us access to the student activity funds that are required every year. This amounts to about \$3,500 every year. The requirements were forming a constitution, having 15 students sign as those requesting the club, a faculty or staff advisor, and two student officers.”

II. After Chartering: Interaction with the University

Once you’ve successfully navigated the bureaucratic waters and chartered your group, there are several things you can do to ensure a long and healthy relationship with the university. You want this group to thrive for years to come, so building a good foundation now is essential.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

How to make the university love you

- Be a team player—Participate in university-sponsored activities when appropriate.
 - Example: Community-service projects, homecoming events,

student-government elections and meetings (especially if required!).

- Sit down with university officials and key personnel such as the head of student activities and director of resident life. You may even consider trying to get a meeting with the athletic director or university president. Bringing a few students along will help put a face to your group and show their interest in what you're doing. Begin now to build long-term relationships and trust, while offering your help.
- Serve the university—Ask not what your university can do for you, but what you can do for your university.
 - Example: Freshmen move-in, international student airport pick-up, volunteer crisis counseling.
- Be positive—Often Christian organizations are known for what they are against rather than what they are for. Discover what part of the university's mission you can wholeheartedly support and actively pursue that area. Build your group in such a way that if you ever left the campus the university president would grieve that you were no longer there.
- Follow guidelines—There are always certain campuses or groups who are sticklers for the rules. In regards to university policy, it's better to follow the letter of the law rather than the spirit. (e.g. where to hang posters, meeting times, use of facilities).
- Be a blessing—You want to be known as a servant, never a burden.

University officials

A good relationship with key university personnel can open doors to important avenues for ministry such as dormitories, Greek organizations, athletic teams, and much more.

Things to avoid or be careful of

- Build credibility and trust with the campus before speaking to challenges and issues facing students. Successful groups often spend their first two or three semesters on campus focused on building relationships with students, staff and faculty. As important as administrators are, don't forget the secretaries and maintenance personnel. It's usually the secretaries who know where the forms are and where they need to go, and being known to the guy with the big key ring is always a good thing!
- Miscommunication with the international student office—Sometimes this office has been burned by other groups pursuing their own agendas rather than that of the university. Let them know that your first priority is to serve the international student community and if your events will have any religious content then state it upfront. If they feel you are not being sensitive to their

University offices

Many of these are run or dominated by students which mean the rules may change from year to year. Stay on top of who's in charge and what's going on!

cultures and beliefs, this will not only hurt your group, but the Kingdom of God at large. Demonstrate your heart for internationals and help those working with you to understand the sensitivity of the situation.

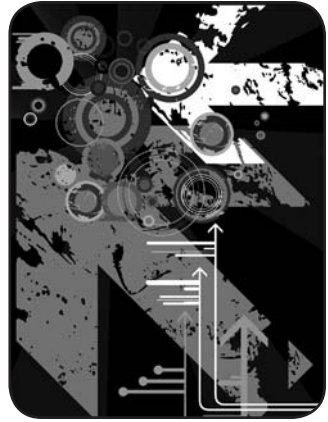
➤ For ethical guidelines concerning international students, consult the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors' Web site at <http://www.nafsa.org>.

- Only contacting university officials when you need something –Genuinely get to know them, build relationships and find ways to serve the overall mission of the university.

Important Bridges to Build

If you want your group to be known on campus, it's worth your time connecting with different offices. Depending on your campus, some of these will be run by a full-time administrator, while others may be student-led.

- **Housing & Residence Life**—Just being an official student organization is no guarantee of access to dorms. In this day and age, universities are highly sensitive to security issues, and rightly so. You may need special permission from the head of HRL and even individual resident assistants (RAs) before being allowed into the dorms. If you have students living in the dorms, having them interact with the RA on behalf of your organization is almost always better than someone from the outside approaching them.



- **International Education/Foreign Student Services**—Serving the international student population through airport pick-ups, tours of the city, taking students shopping, giving out used furniture & bicycles, or conversational English partners can quickly endear you to the administration.
 - Don't overlook groups dedicated to a particular ethnicity such as the Chinese Student Association, Korean Student Association, etc.
- **Student Government Association**—SGA is often in charge of funding for student organizations, as well as organizing concerts, speakers, food drives, and other on-campus events. If you want to advertise your special events to the campus, and potentially even get funding for it, then make friends with these people.
- **Office of Religious Life**—Some campuses have a completely separate office that handles all religious organizations. Participating in ORL activities is a great way to understand what other world-views are popular on campus.

III. Legal Issues on Campus

While most universities value tolerance, at the same time their anti-discrimination policies can cause problems for Christian organizations. For example, one issue you might face is speech codes.

Have you been restricted by the school in communicating your views?

Example: Your school has policies prohibiting speech that is “offensive” or “intimidating” or “disparaging” on the basis of religion, sexual orientation, or punishing students for stating “discriminatory” views in class or in assignments, etc.

Fact: You have the right to express your faith and other views on campus subject to reasonable time, place and manner guidelines. You have the right to express your views in writing, orally, or in some other symbolic or demonstrative form. The rules for Christians cannot be different in term or application than others.

For more information on this and other issues facing Christian organizations, such as mandatory diversity training, student fees, free speech zones, and non-discrimination statements, visit the Alliance Defense Fund Web site at <http://www.alliancedefensefund.org>.

Connecting with Students

Almost anyone can start an outreach to the college campus. Whether you're a full-time missionary, part of a church near campus, or a student yourself, reaching college students is not only possible, but very doable!

Every campus is different, as is every group of students and every leader. Because of this, there is no one right way to start a campus ministry. A student-led group at a community college may look very different from a church-based group at a major university, or a group led by a full-time campus missionary at a private university. Every group has to start some-

where, but the first step is to actually start!

But how do you start? Though the campus may seem like a foreign country with thousands of citizens, every invasion begins with someone! The first step is to ask yourself two questions:

1. How much time do I have to invest in this on a weekly basis?
2. Who can I recruit to help?

Depending on your answers, you will want to plan an approach that is viable and has the best chance of success. Better to start small and grow than have unrealistically big plans that wind up shriveling and dying with little fruit. The models below will give you some idea of how you might start.

Below are five different blueprints you can adapt to get things off the ground. While not a set of step-by-step instructions, they will hopefully give you ideas on where to begin connecting with students.

IV. Five Strategies to Get You Going

While anyone can start an outreach to college students, the way your group begins will be unique to your situation. The strategies presented below are in roughly increasing order of time and effort required. Again, they are not step-by-step instructions, rather they are provided to give you some ideas on how you might start. Is it only you and a friend? The prayer strategy might be best. Got a full team and a dozen students raring to go? Perhaps the gathering strategy is for you.

1. Strategy one: Prayer-Praying on campus

While prayer is foundational to all of the strategies, this strategy is solely about prayer. Many successful, long-term campus outreaches began as grassroots movements with just a few people who believed God wanted to do something on their campus. You can begin this model by simply prayer

walking the campus in twos or starting a prayer group at your local church. As you pray, you are discovering God’s heart for the campus and asking what He wants to do there. The more you pray, the more you will become aware of the need and trust Him to reveal the next step of His plan.

Ideas you can start with:

- Get teams of two prayer walking the campus weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or whatever works best.
- Form an off-campus prayer group that regularly prays for the college and its students.
- Have dedicated prayer times within your Sunday morning service for the campus.
- Include the college within the church’s missions and evangelism strategy, providing both covering and funding.

2. Strategy two: Relationship - Informal relational activities

All ministry starts with relationship. The relationship strategy creates avenues for building meaningful relationships with students through informal social gatherings. It might be a monthly meal for students at a local church or a Q&A gathering at a coffeehouse that allows students to share concerns they have about life and God. While the options for expression are endless, they all seek to build non-threatening environments where authentic relationships with both Christians and pre-Christians can happen in a healthy way.

Ideas you can start with:

- Find a “point person” to oversee this new ministry thrust.
- Open the idea of adopting students to your church family (sharing a meal, celebrating birthdays, inviting them over for holidays, etc.).
 - Host a Q&A at a coffeehouse.
 - Host a concert at a coffeehouse or informal worship time in someone’s home.
 - Host a meal for students once a month.

The relationship strategy is about organic gatherings.

3. Strategy three: Cross-Culture - International Student Friendship Ministry

One of the most effective ways of reaching the world at large is by reaching out to the future leaders already on our doorstep. The cross-cultural strategy creates a relational network with international students and finds ways to invest in the lives of those from other nations. There is always a big need among these visitors to our country as they seek to adjust to American culture. Connecting with these students is an amazing way to fuel a missional heartbeat that is both local and global.

Ideas you can start with:

- Volunteer with the International Student Office (assist with airport pick-ups or other projects)
- Participate in cultural holidays and volunteer if possible (Chinese NewYear, Diawli)
- Start an English conversation group or find conversation partners for each student
- Organize a friendship partner program
- Conduct a small group for international students to explore the Bible and basic Christian beliefs
- Recruit families to help students adjust to American culture (take them grocery shopping, learn to navigate the city, etc)
- Introduce students to American holidays (host a Thanksgiving feast or Christmas dinner with gifts and carols)
- Facilitate a multi-week “Discover America” series of trips and events

Visit <http://www.onemorefriend.org> for more ideas and resources.

4. Strategy four: Cell - Small Groups

Students often have an incredible openness to learning what it means to both know and follow Christ in smaller settings. The cell strategy endeavors to provide such a place by starting a small group of 4-5 that meets regularly on or off campus. Meaningful relationships can be

developed within the context of such a group, and pre-Christians find it a safe setting to belong and learn. The development and multiplication of these groups can lead to a large-group gathering in the future.

Ideas you can start with:

- Recruit a “point person” to act as leader and coach (could be a student, church member, or XA alum)
- Form a small group of 4-5 students (Bible study, free market, Q&A, interest-based, etc.)
- Introduce small-group leaders to Fusion training, InterVarsity Bible studies, or the Serendipity Bible

One great site for ideas and resources is <http://www.usfusion.org>.

5. Strategy five: The Gathering - Large group gathering

If you’ve got 15-20 dedicated people interested in starting a regular large-group gathering, then the gathering strategy may be for you. This gathering can meet on or off campus, and can be weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or whatever works best for your situation. Large-group gatherings are often good ways to gain recognition on campus, but do not foment the development of relationships by themselves like the cell or relationship blueprints.

Ideas you can start with:

- Find a space on campus to launch the large-group gathering
- Start casting vision to the core group
- Heavy promotional effort on campus
- Register as an official campus organization or club



V. Principles for Effective Campus Ministry

Once you decide on a blueprint, building your group correctly from the ground up is crucial. Failure to use the right strategies from the start can result in years of frustration and limited growth. However, by observing the most fruitful campus ministries and looking at research on effective ministry development it is clear that there are certain principles that characterize all effective groups. While style, leadership, temperament, and specific structure tend to vary widely, these characteristics cut across culture, geography, and even generations.

It's a common mistake to launch a large-group gathering before a good core of students has been established.

Engaging Worship: Fostering a great worship experience can be the most significant catalyst to growth. Worship must be interactive, engaging and inspiring. The model, volume level, or musical style does not seem to be as important as the level of participation and sense of spiritual impact. Focus on a sense of community and sincere expression over a “concert mode.” Find ways to actively connect the group with God and each other so they feel like participants instead of just attendees.

Deliberate Evangelism: Growing groups inject evangelism at the planning stage of everything they do. They share the gospel in creative ways that meet the questions and needs of nonbelievers, while still being aware of the needs of committed members. Natural seasons of evangelism like Christmas and Easter are always being used to maximize group awareness on campus. Without ongoing evangelism, growth will always be limited.

Problem-Solving Messages: If the main portion of the meeting is a sermon, then the actual impact of this time must be very practical and transforming for the group. Effective groups evaluate the sermons frequently and work hard to keep them at high standards. Both highbrow information dumps and spiritual hype wear thin quickly. Messages should have sound hermeneutics, sincere stories, specific applications and supernatural

expectations. If students' lives are changed by what they hear, then they will continue to listen to what is being said and be willing to bring their friends.

Intimate Community and Challenging Discipleship: Even in the largest of groups, no student should feel unnoticed or anonymous. Instead, effective groups promote intimate community through a system of small groups where individuals can find personal fellowship, practical help, and intensive spiritual interaction. As a whole, effective ministries are marked by the continual formation of loving relationships and devoted friendships among both old and new members. After high school, social groups tend to get scattered. For this reason, relationship is the No. 1 felt need of most early 20-somethings. Unfeigned, practical love is the most effective marketing your group can have.

Empowering Ownership: The most effective groups have a wide breath of involvement and work hard to encourage individuals to fulfill their unique calling. Students are more motivated and effective when they participate in ways that match their giftings. Avoid using only ideas from your staff or leaders. Any idea, even a lackluster one that is truly owned by a newer member, will yield better results than a great idea that is handed down from the top. When you do use an idea from the staff, be sure to get input on the idea from key influencers in the group before taking it full speed ahead. Also, be sure to provide clear expectations, deadlines and plenty of assistance to make the experience of participating a positive one. If you foster this ownership and serve those who work for the group, more students will pitch in to make the ministry happen.

Do What Works: This sounds obvious, but too often huge amounts of work go into ideas and events that are no longer producing results. Ministry forms and structures are never an end to themselves, but a means to an end. Effective groups realize that whatever isn't working (inconvenient meeting times, programs not meeting their target audience, etc.) should be changed or laid to rest. Groups that continually self-renew avoid traditionalistic ruts and remain effective. The counter to this is that groups must avoid trying to do too much. Events and projects almost always take more time and

energy than you expect. Prioritize your to-do list, determine what is within your specific vision, discuss and decide what needs to be done now, and be patient with ideas whose time have not yet come. Great groups are often not known for what they do as much as what they do not do. Focus on a few effective ideas and do them with great excellence.

Focus on Freshmen: While some groups rebuild every four years, effective groups reload every single year by continually targeting freshmen. If you focus on upperclassmen, you will find yourself re-pioneering your group every few years. But if you spend your time and energy on reaching freshmen, you will also do well with upperclassmen as those freshmen grow and are discipled.

In the end, each of these principles contributes to a passionate spirituality within your group. A group that lives its faith with a passionate fervor, commitment and enthusiasm will experience success with many a method, but those that lack in these areas will fail with the best methods.

For more information on this topic, check out “The ABC’s of Natural Church Development” by Christian A. Schwartz, available from ChurchSmart Resources.

VI. After You’re Up & Running

Whichever strategy you chose, once the group is planted the fun has only begun! Below are a few ideas on growing your group and a sample timeline with things to keep in mind during your first year on campus.

Dos & Don’ts

Do...

- give multiple opportunities for students to get involved.
- have relational time, everything cannot come from the front.

- collect visitor contact information.
- pass out flyers and tape a candy bar to them.
- get birthday info on visitor cards and send them a card on their birthday.
- give stuff away (cold water on hot days, hot water on cold days).
- get the school paper to write up a story about an event you're doing.
- find out what the president's pet service project is and partner with it.

Don't...

- sponsor identical Christian events as another organization.
- duplicate what other Christian ministries are doing ... meet a need that isn't being met .
- assume students know how to find you! Directions or a map are always a good idea.
- conflict with popular activities or TV shows. Give yourself the optimal chance to reach students!
- put a bad Web site online.

We Asked Pioneers...

1. **What one thing did you do your first year on campus that you'd definitely do again?**

"Be on campus as much as possible." — *Glen Davis; Stanford*

"I would definitely be consistent in taking the table out at least once a week so that you gain visibility and provide a place for students to know where you are, where they can hang out and eat lunch, etc. The table has become a huge connecting point where I can introduce students to each other and communicate more regularly about when we are hanging out, doing small groups, etc." — *Lindsay Fudenna; California State Polytechnic University, Pomona*

“Develop a good relationship with the administration. They are the doorkeepers to the students on private school campuses. We invested in those relationships, got involved in university projects and helped them see we wanted to be a positive influence in the community. Now, if we run into a problem, I have vice-presidents who advocate on our behalf!” — *Mike Godzwa; American University*

“We held a couple of large events on campus to attract students and invite them to our services as well as make contacts. We put on a Taco Fiasco and also a Coffee Give-Away. The first year, the program is important, but you have to put the people before the program.” — *Winston Bui; UCLA*

“Hand out espresso drinks and minister to people while they stand in line waiting. Then invite them to the on-campus weekly bible study.” — *Jeremy Anderson, Modesto Junior College & Merced College*

“Sign up to help foreign students learn English. As a tutor I have befriended and helped many students individually and their lives are better because of it.” — *Jim McKinney; University of California, Irvine*

2. What one thing did you do your first year on campus that you’d never do again?

“I didn’t focus enough on getting a prayer time started until toward the end of the first quarter. If I ever helped pioneer somewhere else, that would be one of my first priorities — to have a consistent prayer time with students, volunteers, or whoever will come to focus on prayer for the campus, our group, hearts for evangelism, favor on campus, divine opportunities, etc.” — *Lindsay Fudenna; California State Polytechnic University, Pomona*

“We planned an event for everyday of the first week and a potentially huge event that required renting buses for the first weekend. Thankfully the weekend event rained out and the bus company did not charge us, because, like every other event we planned that week no one showed up. Basically, we just didn’t know the campus very well. UNH does a great job of having big-name entertainers and huge events everyday of the first week of school. We would have been better off attending all of those and getting a feel for the campus, meeting students instead of diving in with our own agenda. We have learned our niche, and now plan a great event for the second weekend and do our initial connecting through the University planned connecting events.” – *Bryan Bessette; University of New Hampshire*

“Have a competitive mental game at our first outing. (Stanford students are too insecure their first few weeks on campus to handle something like that in front of their peers).” – *Glen Davis; Stanford*

“We missed some cut-off dates and lost probably a \$1,500 allotment in SGA funding.” – *Joel Schreiber; Penn State Behrend, Edinboro University & Mercyhurst College*

The First Year

Depending on when and how you begin, some of the following ideas may serve as a guide for what you can be focusing on throughout the year.

When	What
Summer	
Before school starts (late summer)	Leadership Retreat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with your leaders to plan the upcoming year, especially the beginning of fall semester Plan your fall kick-off event(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • find a location(s) • recruit help Contact incoming freshmen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • referrals from alumni, churches, family

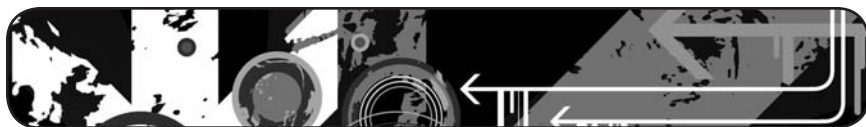
Fall Semester	
First week	Promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flyers & banners, sidewalk chalk, giveaways Kick-off Event(s) First large group gathering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collect visitor contact info
Second week	Follow-up with visitors & invite to small groups
Early in semester	Fall Retreat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A retreat early in the semester solidifies new members into the group.
	Discipleship/leadership class Promote SALT/Winter Retreat Begin planning summer mission trips
End of semester	Reserve on-campus meeting rooms for next semester Renew organizational charter with university (if necessary) SALT/Winter Retreat
Spring Semester	
Early in semester	Promote summer missions trips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize trip destinations • Submit applications • Begin support-raising
	Spring Retreat Spring break outreach/missions trip Discipleship/leadership class
End of semester	Review & evaluate the year with leadership - begin plans for next year Reserve on-campus meeting rooms for next semester/school year Renew organizational charter with university (if necessary)

Connecting with Other Leaders

Because college students are transitory by nature, the campus continually remains a moving target. Reaching students can be an overwhelming task! But connecting and sharing the burden with others who have the same goal you do suddenly makes it seem doable.

One great way to connect is by chartering your group with Chi Alpha. Chi Alpha, as the Assemblies of God's outreach to secular colleges and universities, is a nationwide network of leaders who can help you with this task. Chi Alpha offers numerous opportunities for leaders and students to connect and grow, including:

1. Reach the U Institute - Every June the best veteran campus ministry leaders from around the nation come together to share what they've learned. There are tracks for church staff, pioneers, veteran leaders, and students all tailored around increasing your effectiveness as a leader on campus.
2. Campus Ministers Conference - Join us every two years as Chi Alpha ministers come together to share ideas on what's working, encourage one another, and get top-notch training from some of the best leaders in the world.
3. SALTs - Between fall and spring semesters, Chi Alpha holds regional conferences where students and leaders from around your area gather together. SALTs are a great place to rub shoulders with other groups and catch a vision for what could happen on your campus.
4. District Chi Alpha Leader - If you want to know what's happening on a particular campus, in your city, or around the state, District Leaders are the place to start. Experienced Chi Alpha leaders, they can help you network with churches, students, and workers in your area, along with providing assistance and encouragement on getting started. The District Leader can be your best friend.



5. Area Directors - As veteran campus missionaries over multi-state regions, area directors are incredibly motivated to aid you. They exist to lend a hand in the planting and growth of new campus groups. Whatever your situation might be, church-based, student-led, or full-time missionary, area directors have the desire and knowhow to help you succeed.
6. Summer Missions Trips - Chi Alpha is the largest supplier of long-term missionaries in the Assemblies of God and annually sends thousands of students on short-term missions trips around the world. These trips are the real deal and will challenge your students, ensuring they will return home transformed by what they've experienced. If you want to rub shoulders with top-notch leaders while exposing your students to God's heartbeat for the world, this is the place.

In addition to the above, here are a few of the many other benefits that come from joining the Chi Alpha family:

- ✓ Recognition as a member of a national campus organization.
- ✓ Special grants, discounts and eligibility for free materials.
- ✓ Inclusion in the national Chi Alpha directory at www.chialpha.com. This is a great way for incoming students to discover your ministry.
- ✓ Preferred placement at retreats and conferences (see above).
- ✓ Student missions opportunities (see above).
- ✓ Nationally produced promotional material - From shirts to hats to coffee mugs, Chi Alpha produces some great gear you can order.

Of course the key to all of this is chartering with national Chi Alpha! To charter, you can either request a form by sending an e-mail to chialpha@ag.org or complete the process online at www.chialpha.com. We look forward to working with you to reach students for Jesus!

VII. Useful Links

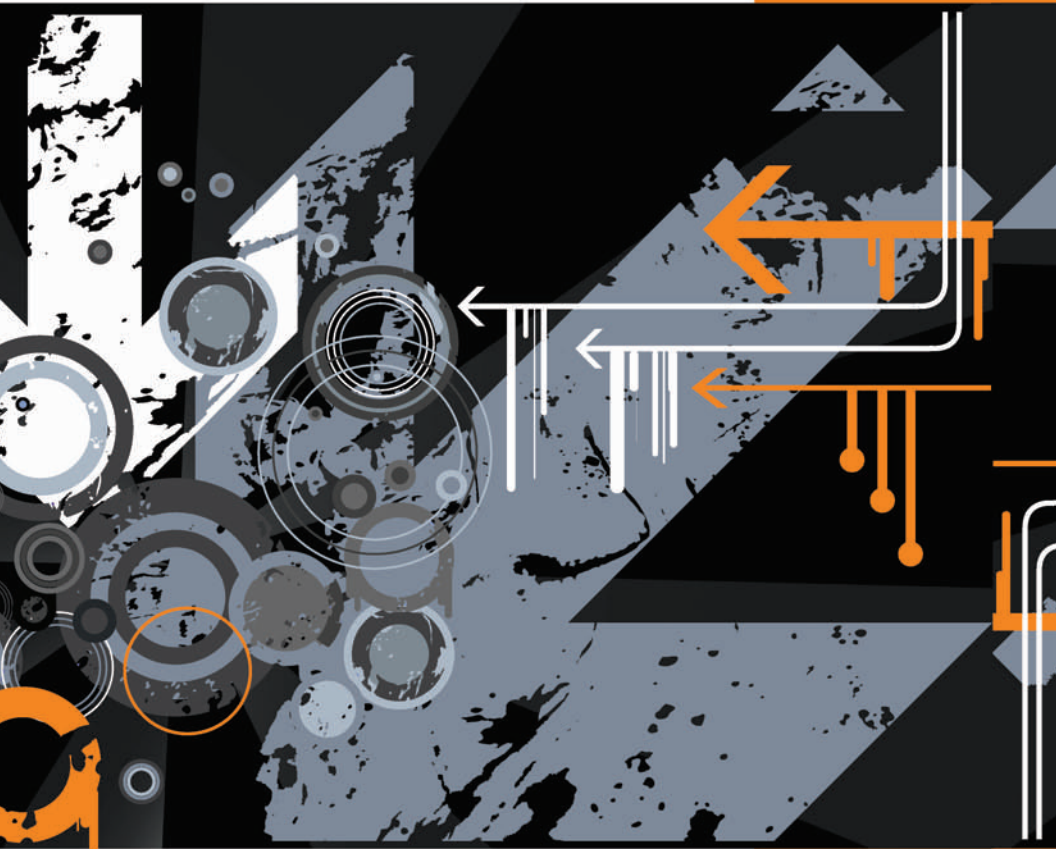
- <http://www.chialpha.com> - The national Chi Alpha Web site contains a complete directory of all affiliated groups & personnel, training materials & gear for sale, and much more. Go here to charter your group as part of the Chi Alpha network and get instantly connected with other leaders and students in your area!
- <http://www.chialpha.com/ism> - Chi Alpha's International Student Friendship Ministries' Web site contains information and resources on ministering to international students.
- <http://www.xamissions.com> - Check here for information on student missions opportunities with Chi Alpha around the world.
- <http://www.wcxa.com> - West Coast Chi Alpha is the author of this and other resources. Contact us if you're interested in starting college ministry on the West Coast!

VIII. Credits

Thanks to each of the following who shared their invaluable experience, input and help in this project.

- Stefanie Chappell - Potomac District Chi Alpha Director
- Glen Davis - Stanford University Chi Alpha
- Jerry Gibson - National Director, International Student Ministries
- Dr. Uwe Muench - UCLA Chi Alpha
- Brian Orme - West Coast Chi Alpha
- Tim Smith - CSU-Sacramento Chi Alpha

For additions, corrections or suggestions to this project, please submit them to the author at kent@kentmccorkle.com.



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