

CONNECTION

chi alpha

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 4 SPRING 2012

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The forgotten campus?

NICOLE RHEAUME

“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me” (Isaiah 49:15-16, NIV).

At times it may seem like community colleges are the forgotten campuses, mostly because it is difficult to establish a lasting Chi Alpha ministry there; however, I believe that God's heart of compassion demonstrated in Isaiah is exactly how He feels about all the students at these community colleges. He hasn't forgotten—the walls of these campuses are ever before Him, and He is working to establish His Kingdom on each and every one of them.

In the midst of pioneering Chi Alpha at Purdue University in 2007, Linda Seiler (director of Purdue Chi Alpha in West Lafayette, Indiana) and her staff team shared God's compassion for the students at Lafayette Ivy Tech, a community college about 20 minutes from Purdue. They did not want to forget about that campus, but they had no idea how to begin.

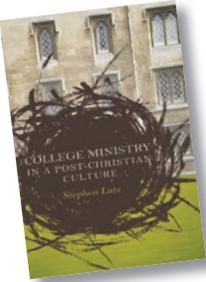
By spring of 2008, staff tried to get a group started, but it never formed beyond two students who were associated with Purdue Chi

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CHI ALPHA CONNECTION

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DIRECTOR'S DESK

THE CHURCH'S ADVANTAGE

In proximity to most of our Assemblies of God churches are 990 public community colleges and 685 private two-year schools. These community educational environments host hundreds and thousands of students each semester. The traditional and nontraditional students who attend are among us in our neighborhoods, apartment complexes, parks, grocery stores, banks, eating establishments, rec centers and retail stores. They have not gone away to college or moved away. They remain, live, eat, work, play, and sleep in the community where our churches are located.

Imagine if our churches would step outside of the church facility and step on the community college campus near them and begin an outreach or provide service to these colleges. Many community colleges are understaffed and under resourced. For this very reason, they welcome involvement and assistance from the community, including religious organizations and churches, and these organizations can change that!

The church has an advantage with its resources, programs, staff, and lay leaders. They could easily sponsor a free meal with a message during the club or lunch hour or even pizza and a Bible study before or after the evening classes. Get creative and sponsor activities around seasons and holidays. Your church could provide music venues, game night, or a gathering place for students to hang out and study, or meet at a coffee bistro or burger place. As you get started, go to the students. Don't expect them to come to you or the church.

Starting ministry on a community college would not require a significant time commitment and will produce results. As students learn that your church sponsors these activities, many will find their way into your church in time. As a church, you will already have activities in place without added expense or time that will serve their fellowship and spiritual needs in time.

If your church gets a presence on the community college or meets with students where they gather, your church will become more visible in your community. If you serve a community college, they will welcome you. They will call on you in times of need or crisis where they believe the church or minister can help a student, parent or family. Introduce yourself and make yourself available to serve them.

Remember, community college students' class schedules are demanding and they are on a school calendar not a church calendar. Also the majority of students work part-time or full-time and quite a number hold two part-time jobs. While it may seem impossible to reach community colleges and commuter students because many work and meet their friends elsewhere, you will be surprised how much can be accomplished, and the significant impact with minimal effort.

Many students will go on to a four-year college or university and while they remain in your community, you have an opportunity to see lives changed and not only be a part of what God is doing locally but, ultimately, far beyond your community as they go off to a 4-year college or move due to work.

Dennis Gaylor is the national director of Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, USA.

The forgotten campus?

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Alpha. Linda and her team learned that establishing a new group was more than having warm bodies; there must first be a solid foundation of prayer and students who are committed to the vision. They began to pray regularly that God would raise up a core group of Ivy Tech students who would be faithful to Jesus and share His vision to reach the campus.

In the fall of 2010, God connected Purdue Chi Alpha with Tim Becker, an Ivy Tech student who attended one of the local Assembly of God churches. Tim got involved with Purdue Chi Alpha and demonstrated great faithfulness. Josh Boman (then Purdue associate staff, now director at Ball State University) asked Tim if he'd be willing to help pioneer Chi Alpha at Ivy Tech, and Tim was thrilled to do it. Josh took Tim and Paul Hull (a student who was giving back a year) with him to invest in the Ivy Tech campus one day per week. They prayer walked, witnessed, and tried to connect with students over the lunch hour. They met one girl, Elise, while witnessing, and found out she had actually been praying to meet a group of Christians on campus. Though initially there was not much visible fruit, the seeds of prayer and evangelism that were sown at that time are the reason we are seeing the fruit we are today.

At the end of that school year, Josh and Paul moved on to other Kingdom assignments, and Linda asked me to oversee the outreach to Ivy Tech. We maintained our relationship with Elise and continued to pray for Ivy Tech that summer, believing that God would send us more students to join Elise and Tim in establishing a Chi Alpha community on campus. By the time classes started last fall, God answered our prayers by connecting us with eight Ivy Tech students from the local Assembly of God churches, and we were able to begin a weekly Bible study.

This semester, the students have taken initiative in not only building community but also reaching out to non-Christians on campus. Two of our Ivy Tech student leaders attended our Great Lakes Area SALT conference, where God radically changed their lives. They sensed God calling them to be more missional in their classes and that they were to challenge the rest of the Ivy Tech group to do that as well. As a result, we have had more visitors this semester. In addition to our Thursday Bible study, the students started a lunch table on Wednesdays as a place to meet new people and invite friends from class to hang out, and they have also started to gather for spontaneous fellowship on weekends. That's a healthy sign of community.

With students taking more ownership, my role has shifted from leading the group to equipping students to lead. The students are now in the process of establishing the Ivy Tech Chi Alpha group as an officially recognized student organization, the first of its kind on Ivy Tech's campus.

As I mentioned earlier, we are certainly not experts in how to reach out to the community colleges. This is our first effort, and we have learned some things the hard way in addition to gleaning from others who have gone before us. We are grateful to God for His specific answers to prayer and are excited to see Him establish a Chi Alpha community at Ivy Tech that will remain until Jesus returns.



Nicole has served as associate Chi Alpha staff at Purdue University since August of 2008 and is currently completing her CMIT program, also at Purdue. She enjoys playing golf, being outside, wearing flip-flops and smiling—I just love smiling, smiling is my favorite!

OUTREACH STRATEGY PURDUE VS. IVY TECH

by Nicole Rheaume

Our strategy to reach students at Ivy Tech looks different than our Purdue strategy.

Purdue: Witness using surveys or asking people if they need prayer for anything.

Ivy Tech: Most people don't want to talk to you if they don't know you. Instead, have the students be intentional about making friends in their classes or meet people in the student lounge area and invite them to a small group meeting.

Purdue: Have most corporate meetings in the evening because students have classes all day.

Ivy Tech: Students have no desire to stay on campus once their classes are over. Meeting around 4pm works well because students are finished with their afternoon classes and night classes have not yet begun.

Purdue: Traditional Chi Alpha worship service

Ivy Tech: Small group Bible study

The close proximity to Purdue Chi Alpha enables:

1. Purdue associate staff to resource and train the Ivy Tech students;
2. Ivy Tech students to attend Purdue's large worship gatherings.



CHI ALPHA AT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SADLELL BRADLEY

Community colleges are nonresidential 2-year government-supported colleges that offer associate degrees for people living in a particular area.

Community is used two ways in the dictionary:
1. A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common;
2. A feeling of fellowship with others as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals; a similarity or identity; joint ownership or liability;

When I started serving at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, I discovered an emphasis on modeling both types of community. This made Chi Alpha a great fit as Community is a Chi Alpha core value. Cincinnati State constantly has events to build community, fellowship, practical learning, and fun for its students. Our Chi Alpha advisor, Marcia Caulton, is the Assistant Director of Student Activities. They do everything from bringing in mechanical bulls, to Mardi Gras celebrations, to open forums on drug and alcohol abuse.

Chi Alpha Cincinnati has been blessed to quickly become part of the community at Cincinnati State. This quarter, we have been asked to design and paint a mural for the school's nursery. One of the ways we contribute to and serve the community is by offering and participating in forums that benefit the campus community and allow us to proclaim our Christ-centered viewpoint on a variety of issues relevant to students. The Lord gave us the idea of R.A.W. Forums (Relationships Are Work). We have covered dating and marriage, relationships with parents, and how drug and alcohol abuse affects relationships in open discussions at the center of campus.

Before assuming that every college is like Cincinnati State, some of our students recommended that anyone starting a Chi Alpha group at a community college do the same due diligence as is required when launching at a 4-year university. Go there to sit and observe

the atmosphere and flow of the school when students are there. We did tabling everyday for 6 months when we first started. Take a tour, investigate the demographics, do prayer mapping, etc. In an urban setting, don't presume to know how to relate to or minister to students in that community. This ministry requires thick skin, you may hear stories and experiences with which you're unfamiliar.

Their admonishment was to be open-minded because there are also some major differences between the culture and needs of older, non-traditional students who often work and have families; and teens who are transitioning into the university as full-time students. Ryan Forney, Cincinnati State Chi Alpha president and second-year culinary student said, "When I go to visit my sister at the University of Cincinnati and I ask the students there, 'What do you do?' their answer is, 'I'm a full-time student;' whereas here, we have jobs and children. Going to school is just another thing added onto the list."

There are many Christ followers on our campus. Since they are commuters and usually have allegiance to their own churches, our Chi Alpha group is a place for them to connect with like-minded people who want discipleship and to better the campus. XA may not be considered a home away from home in the same way as for those who are away from their family and church at a university. This at times affects attendance, prioritization of the ministry, and establishing financial structures within Chi Alpha. In essence, the urban

community college could be considered the same as a foreign mission field where there is often giving without expectation of return.

There is usually a very specific skill or degree program being sought. Cincinnati State specializes in several programs like the culinary arts, which are not offered at universities in our area. Dominick Shauntee, a computer science major, has studied both at the university and the community college but began taking courses at Cincinnati State because, "The courses are tremendously cheaper than the university and you can just transfer back and save a lot of money." In this recession, Cincinnati State's enrollment grew by a few thousand.

Economic issues are pervasive with many low- to lower-middle-income students causing a constant rotation of people in and out of the school each quarter. Some students can only attend as long as their finances allow and they are working one semester and at school the next. Others are digging holes of debt as they use student loans to finance both their education and living expenses. Still others abuse the student loan system, only attending classes each term for as long as they must to receive a check with no intention of obtaining a degree.

At Cincinnati State, many face tremendous financial pressures. Some have various addictions, relationship and family issues, are from harsh neighborhoods, broken homes with absentee parents, etc. and they need the love and care of a Spirit-filled community of believers with whom they can embark on the healing journey.

What does this mean for your Chi Alpha group?

At a community college, you may not have students in your group for four years—you may not have them for four months or even four weeks. There may be a constant rotation, but they consider themselves Chi Alpha family and sometimes have deep needs. In the Gospels, Jesus specialized in making a tremendous impact in brief, personal and timely encounters with people whose lives would never be the same after meeting Him. Serving in a community college will pull on your ability to flow in the Spirit and join in the greater works to which Christ has called us (John 14:11-12).

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19, NIV).



Sadell Bradley pastors Chi Alpha Cincinnati, the University of Cincinnati, and Cincinnati State Technical and Community College. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Sadell has served in full-time ministry for 20 years. She and her husband (Sherman) have two daughters (Whitney and Shaniqua) and one grandson (Jaxon).

my journey

**by Shawn Moreland, Director
Ozarks Technical Community College**

In the fall of 2004, I pioneered the Chi Alpha ministry at Ozarks Technical Community College following a year of military service in the Army National Guard in Operation Enduring Freedom. We began with prayer walks and corporate prayer once per week on campus. You can't underestimate the power of prayer and seeking God and His plan first.

Just being on campus, having conversations, and setting up an information table at some campus events, enabled us to connect with a handful of students. Out of these prayer times with our core group of students, key outreach events were planned. These outreaches were service-oriented and random acts of kindness. After our first year, one of our student leaders suggested we have a lunch for students each week. It made sense and yet the financial aspect could be challenging.

We thought that if it had a community feel, more students that were lost would attend and we would develop relationships with them rather than just having a Bible study for Christians. It's been amazing to enjoy the journey and the fruits of our labor of love. Since 2005, the weekly lunches near the main commons hub of our campus have averaged 100 students every week without advertising.

I believe that this community-style lunch could be the most effective entry point for students of all backgrounds. Christians love it that we have this for them to serve and share, and the students who aren't sure where they are in their spiritual life often share how much they feel loved and appreciate our lunch and the invitations to other events.

HERE ARE SOME KEY ELEMENTS TO MAKING THE MOST OF A COMMUNITY LUNCH OUTREACH EACH WEEK:

1. Schedule an hour.
2. Have a sign-in as they come in the room and begin a conversation with new students.
3. Give each student a devotional on a relevant topic like forgiveness, stress, friendship, peace, love, etc.
4. Have fliers about small group, service opportunities, and other ways to invite them to the next level of experiencing our community of faith and friendship.
5. Make announcements every 15-20 minutes.
6. Have students share what God has done in their lives and also have special music or poetry reading.
7. Have a half-hour small group Bible study right after lunch to make it easy for students to come.

Unified Diversity

by Christian Anderson,
Skagit Valley Community College

In many ways, the Christian call to community and a life that is in transition are antithetical. Part of Christian community is that it is an anchor and a reference point in a person's faith. This anchor isn't just good for students, they long for it. They desire somewhere to belong.

This is a way that Chi Alpha's presence on a community college campus can be a shining witness. It can be the buoy in the constantly changing tides of the commuter student's experience. Consistency is our appeal and our strength. "Oh, you still meet at 12:30 on Tuesday's right, in the same room, right?" "Do you still have that Bible study going?" "That campus pastor is always on campus!" Our witness is enhanced and our ability to be a consistent presence becomes attractive.

A transitory environment is not the only hindrance to forming a community at a commuter school. This generation has no idea what it means to be friends or belong to a community. Often they equate their belonging to the way they contribute to a group or agree with what a certain clique stands for.

I was sitting with the atheist group and having a great conversation about marriage. I commented about how my wife has clearly higher standards for cleanliness in our house. In agreement with my experience, someone asked the rest of group, "Why is it that girls and guys are so different?" Immediately, multiple people with a darkened tone snapped in reply, "Gender is just a social construction." "There is no difference between men and women." The subtext was clear: If you want to hang out with us, then you believe this.

We not only need to create a community with consistency, but we need to instruct students in how to belong. They need to know God affirms their individuality while calling them to be part of a unity. We need to model and proclaim the Body described as the unified diversity of 1 Corinthians 12. As Chi Alpha, we have a challenge to not only establish a community, but to radically be a community of Christ.

Why the community college?

by Geoff Mumley,
WHATCOM
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

WHY CAMPUS MINISTRY ON A COMMUNITY COLLEGE?

Imagine a whole campus of just freshman and sophomores. Now mix in international students who compete with American students in academic programs. Then throw in a growing demographic of high school students who want to spend their last two years of high school earning college credit to be two years ahead once they transfer to a four-year university. And just for kicks, toss in a batch of older students getting re-educated after semi-retirement, layoffs, or a newly empty nest. This is community college campus ministry, and with the spiking cost of tuition at four-year schools, particularly when matched with a down economy, this is fast becoming the primary way to do college.

WHAT MINISTRY STRATEGIES WORK?

1. Be an obvious and accessible presence on campus. Students aren't usually on campus very long, so strategize around class times as much as possible. If you can offer events, small groups, or outreaches at multiple times during the day, multiple days a week, students are more likely to participate.
2. Be social. Because most students who attend community college grew up in the area, you're competing with established friend groups and social habits. Getting students to befriend each other without the natural socialization of living together in a dorm is half the battle, so open the year with lots of fun and life sharing.
3. Partner with the larger four-year Chi Alpha groups nearby. Attending the larger group's weekly worship services, retreats, or some of the educational opportunities can be a great way to introduce community college students to the Chi Alpha group at the school where they will likely transfer after getting an associate degree.

HOW CAN YOU PRAY FOR THE CHALLENGES WE FACE?

1. Pray for a solid leadership hand-off. A healthy community college experience is only 2-3 years at most, so raising up new leaders is crucial because we cycle through them so fast.
2. Pray for true community. With virtually zero dorm life, most students commute to campus, stay long enough for class, and take off, which means building relationships and small group community takes extra effort and creativity.
3. Pray for personal maturity. Extended adolescence is a real challenge at a community college because many students still live with their parents, don't have jobs, or still run with their high school or summer camp friend groups. These factors can really get in the way of mature independence, personal ownership of their faith, or aggressive progress through their education.



UNC CRACKS DOWN ON RELIGIOUS GROUP

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that a Christian club called "Make Up Your Own Mind" isn't religious, and . . . it must allow students from other belief systems to become members and leaders.

<http://www.thecollegefix.com/>
SEARCH: make up your own mind



COLLEGE STUDENTS CREATE DRINKING/TAXI APPS

The first app a group of University of Alabama students created, called Red Cup, helped people find the cheapest drink specials at local bars.

<http://www.newsherald.com/>
SEARCH: student drinking app



SMALL CAMPUS BIG INFLUENCE

by Tim Kern, campus pastor at Carroll College

Eleven years ago, we left the University of Montana Western where we served as associate staff to pioneer Chi Alpha at Carroll College, a private Catholic Liberal Arts college in Helena, Montana. Coming from a campus of 1,200 students, it wasn't difficult for my wife, Melissa, and me to see the potential when we stepped foot on campus. In the years before us, campus pastors from bigger universities toured Carroll College and after the tour, couldn't see themselves there, but the more we walked the campus and talked to students, the more we saw the potential.

Things weren't all roses at first and Chi Alpha was banned from ministering on campus before we even moved to Helena. Because we knew God had called us, we pressed on, moved to Helena and bought a house as close to campus as we could. It wasn't until the second semester of our first year that we gained access to the campus by chartering a club through the student senate. God has increased our favor on campus every year to the point that this year, we have over 250 students on our club e-mail list, over 100 students actively involved in Chi Alpha and 23 student leaders. This semester, our weekly worship service averaged close to 70 students and God gives us favor with athletes who meet weekly on campus with over 30 student athletes involved. On a campus of 1,400, we have influence.

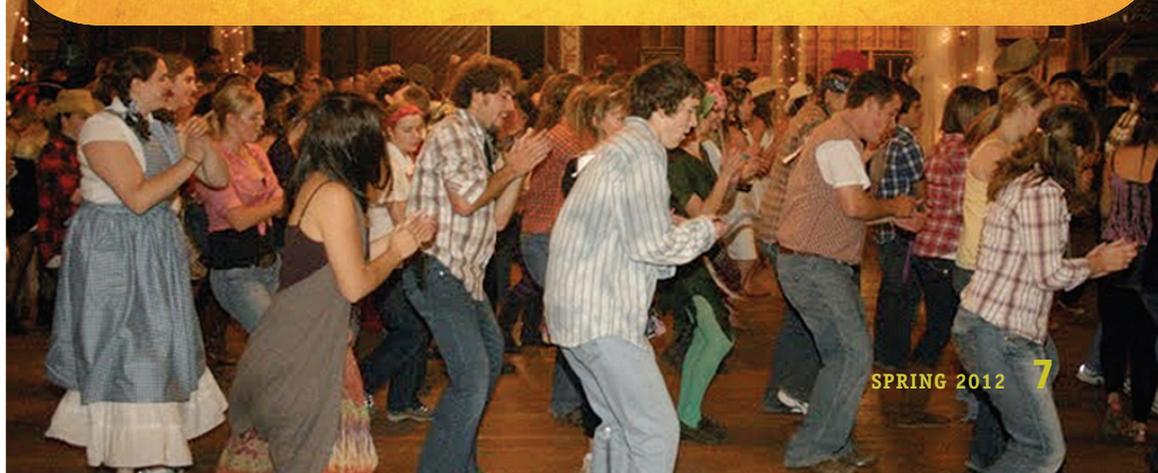
Every year we host most of the welcome week events for the campus, which is a blessing to the student activities director and also gives us access to all the fresh-

men who are setting foot on campus. We are allowed to give every freshman a "goodie bag" about our club and our events are listed on the campus Web site for welcome week. Carroll College's Admissions office contacts us annually to host an event for 100 prospective students and their hosts at our Chi Alpha Coffee House across the street from campus. God has increased our influence.

This year the college asked us to host the homecoming dance and over 400 students attended our Homecoming Barn Dance. During the dance, one of our student leaders (a Carroll star football player) shared about Christ during the judging of our swing dance competition. We also host an annual Super Bowl Party in the campus center and, with over 300 attending, it has become one of the biggest on-campus events that is hosted by any club.

All this would not be possible had God not given us eyes for the small campus. In Montana, there are three small campuses where Chi Alpha is virtually the only ministry on campus. On each of these campuses, we have incredible favor and influence. Because of the trust that has been established and because these small campuses see Chi Alpha as an asset to building community and student retention, God has given us an open door of access to every part of campus life.

If there is a small campus in your state or area, don't overlook the potential to be the only witness on campus and the big influence God can give you and Chi Alpha on these small but ripe mission fields.



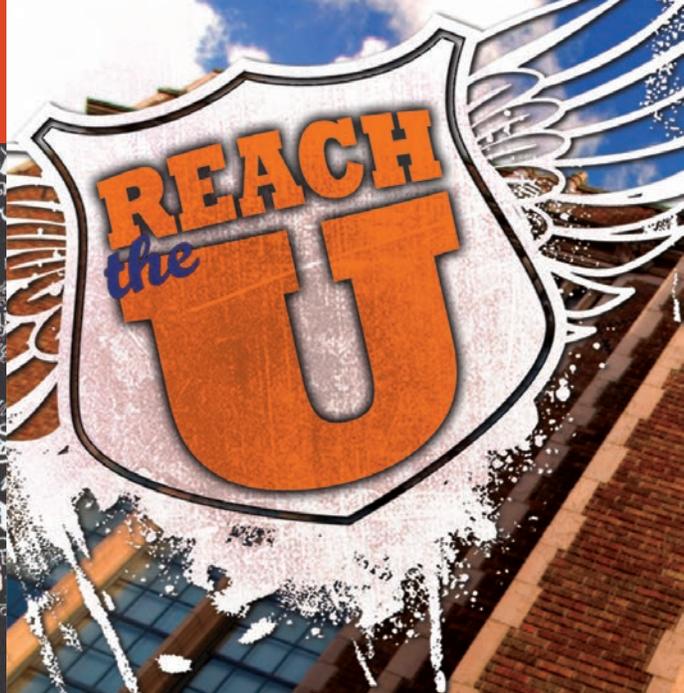
Upcoming events

PRESS ON
Philip. 3:12-14

20 years

ALL NATIONS
Student Conference

May 24-29, 2012
LAKE MAURER RETREAT CENTER
Excelsior Springs, Missouri



June 10-16, 2012
CENTRAL BIBLE COLLEGE
Springfield, Missouri

Go to ChiAlpha.com for more information.

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