

Collegiate Ministry FUNDRAISING 101

There was a time when Presbyterian collegiate ministries received most of their funding from the denomination. Campus pastors went about their work without much anxiety concerning where the money for ministry costs would come from. They focused on the missional work of sharing the grace of Jesus Christ with college students and engaging them in serious faith exploration.

That time has passed. In most campus ministry contexts, funding from denominational entities has declined or disappeared. This is stated not to demoralize you, but to raise awareness of the new world in which Presbyterian campus ministry exists. While the denomination has made a renewed commitment to campus ministry, major new funding through governing bodies is not forthcoming.¹

Campus ministers are now called upon to do something new, something that most of us were not trained for—find and secure funding for our ministries. This can be a frightening and unfamiliar addition to a job that already feels overwhelming. Perhaps we can think about this new challenge like the story of a young girl visiting her grandparents' house. As she walked up the stairs into a dark place that felt forbidding and scary, she turned to her grandparents and asked, "Can I turn out the dark?" What a great way to think about the daunting places in our lives—we can "turn out the dark"! Can we ask God to turn out the dark and illuminate what feels ambiguous and murky?

Do not be afraid—God will be with you (Isaiah 41:8-10).

Fundraising can be intimidating and perhaps even frightening. There is no magic to suddenly reverse the tide of diminishing funds. But be not afraid! There are ways to generate the revenue needed to continue to carry out the mission of being "a church that reaches, loves, and teaches college students to become lifelong followers of Jesus Christ." You can be successful raising revenue for your ministry in ways that fit your context. Fundraising can be an opportunity to recognize God's gifts and share God's love. We hope your ministry will grow and mature as you consider ways to "turn out the dark" and embrace the opportunities fundraising creates for more abundance, fuller relationships and a greater claim on your ministry.



STRATEGIC

Strategic Funding Plan

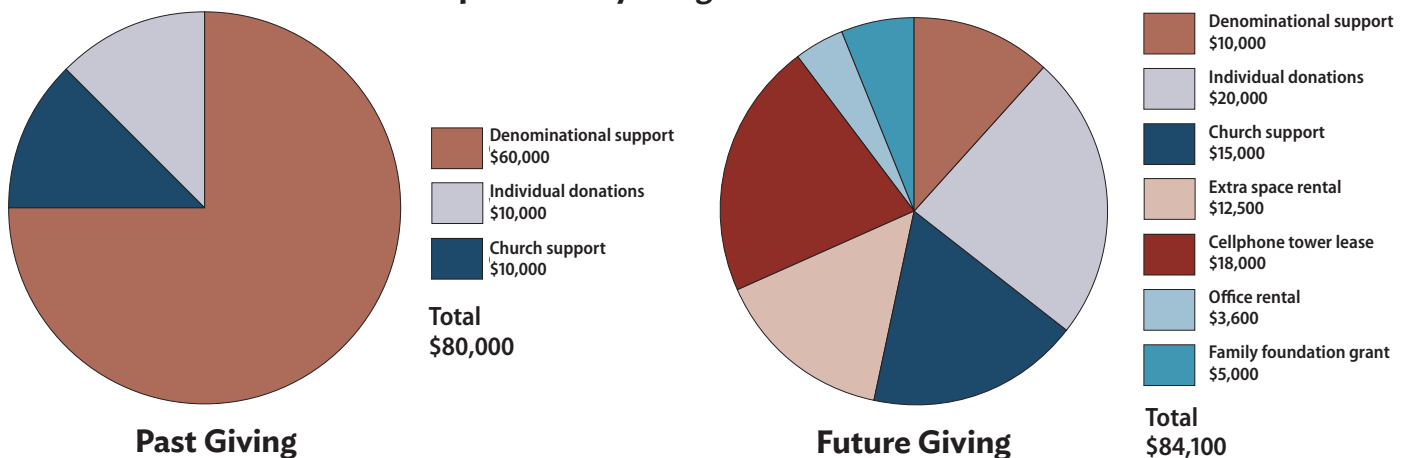
One of the first and most important steps is to look at the bigger financial picture: Campus ministries are facing a crisis in financial sustainability. Campus ministry is a long-term investment. While students come and go quickly, in order for a ministry to have a lasting impact and significant presence, it must consistently reach out and be engaged with students over an extended period of time. Focusing only on raising money for the current school year is short-sighted. To maintain a financially stable campus ministry, the ministry leaders, boards, and denominational bodies need to take a five- to ten-year approach to planning.

Start this planning by identifying what your resources are—the people, property, and passions—and what you will need to continue your ministry over the next five to ten years. Then get creative and consider a variety of options for meeting your ministry’s long-term funding needs.

Donations from individuals and churches are not the only sources of revenue available. Think about what resources you have and how you might leverage them to generate revenue. Do you have a building? Consider renting out space for weddings or other events or leasing space to another organization. Some ministries lease space to cafés or restaurants or develop student housing. Others earn income by allowing cellphone companies to put a tower on their property. Revenue sources such as lease income are often more stable and predictable than donations. Be sure to get advice from legal counsel about income or property tax implications that may result from such income or changes to your property use.

Even if you use creative approaches to increasing revenue for your ministry, you will likely have to increase direct-ask fundraising from individuals and organizations. This guide is designed to orient you to some proven principles and practices of successful fundraising.

Example Ministry Budget



PRINCIPLES

Primary principles of fundraising

After you have articulated why it is important to fund your campus ministry and have developed a five-year financial plan, it is time to begin raising funds. Start by reminding yourself of the following primary principles:

Fundraising is ministry. Fundraising is not just a means to an end. Fundraising is also a form of ministry. Henri Nouwen said, “Fundraising is as spiritual as giving a sermon, entering a time of prayer, visiting

“Fundraising is as spiritual as giving a sermon, entering a time of prayer, visiting the sick or feeding the hungry” (Henri Nouwen).

the sick, or feeding the hungry.”² God invites us all to give of ourselves and to give generously. People want to give to causes that they care about. When we ask them to give we participate in the coming together of God’s invitation and their discipleship as givers. But for that to happen, we have to ask.

Fundraising is not begging—it is sharing the vision. Nouwen writes, “Fundraising is proclaiming what we believe in a way that we offer people an opportunity to participate with us in our

vision and mission. Fundraising is precisely the opposite of begging. When we seek to raise funds we are not saying, ‘Please, could you help us out because lately it’s been hard.’ Rather, we are declaring, ‘We have a vision that is amazing and exciting. We are inviting you to invest yourself through the resources that God has given you—your energy, your prayers, and your money—in this work to which God has called us.’³ People like to give to organizations that are going somewhere rather than those that are desperate to stay open. They also want to know the real need and be able to make a difference. Don’t beg; instead, highlight your vision and needs.

Fundraising is first and foremost “friend-raising.” People give consistently and generously where they have a relationship, a personal connection. The vast majority of fundraising is simply cultivating relationships between your ministry and your supporters.

Let enough be good enough. While you may be putting more effort into fundraising than you have in the past, don’t let it consume your energy. Spend enough time on fundraising to sustain your ministry but don’t become obsessed by getting as many dollars as possible for the sake of the money itself.

GUIDELINES

Guidelines for successful fundraising

Like professional athletes who spend time each week practicing the basics of their sport, be sure to give adequate attention to the basic strategies listed below. It will pay off.

Develop a clear mission and strategic vision plan for what your ministry does and where it is going.

Develop a short and compelling “elevator speech” that makes your case for support. Share this case for support wherever you can—in writing, in person or via social media.

Move toward your board of directors or session members all being givers. Donors want to know if the people closest to the organizations are “all in.” Make it a goal of the organization to have 100 percent participation from all board members. The amount they give is much less important than having them all participate. Ask them to make a gift that is personally meaningful to them.

Invest in some kind of donor tracking system. Keep track of all donations and contacts with donors. Make sure that contact information is kept up to date. One sure way to turn off a donor is to misspell a name or send mail to the wrong person.

Don’t be afraid to invest some time and money into producing high-quality communication materials.

An old marketing slogan says, “It takes money to make money.” To some extent, this is true with fundraising as well. While no one wants to waste money on overly expensive publicity pieces, remember, most donors want to give to organizations that are healthy. Presenting your organization well in your donor materials helps inspire confidence and helps you make your case for support.

Always thank donors. If possible, do so with handwritten notes and/or personal phone calls or visits. Provide a receipt for every gift. Some donors judge future gifts by how quickly they receive a response to an initial “test” gift.

Manage the money well. Be sure to file all IRS and state paperwork. Have periodic reviews done on your financial records. Ensure that you have appropriate checks and balances in place to prevent fraud. Report back to your donors at least annually to explain what you have been doing. Show them summaries of your cash flow and an annual statement of your financial position.

FIVE WINS

Ideas You Can Start Today

The three C's: Community Congregational Connections.

Create or build upon a relationship with the congregation geographically nearest your campus. Note its unique location and opportunity. Seek financial support either directly from the church or through opportunities to network and fundraise within the congregation.

Get students involved. Student involvement in financial support increases their sense of ownership and partnership. It also builds toward their being supporters as alumni and teaches whole-life stewardship. One way to involve students is by inviting them to make a monthly commitment to forgo a luxury item once a week or once a month and then donate to the ministry the money they would have spent on the item. By giving up a coffee drink, restaurant meal or movie once a week, one student can contribute \$20 to \$60 per month.

The past is important. Connect with former students by researching computer files, old directories, and social networking systems to gather current information for alumni. In some situations, school alumni

departments will help you with this process. Once you have the information, develop a system of communication and support-building.

Perfect your handoff. Host an event as part of saying good-bye to graduating students. At this event, include a presentation about how the students can help others have a campus ministry experience in the future. Collect contact information, explain regular giving options (include online capability if possible), and hand out pledge cards. Follow up within a month of the gathering and then check in again at three and six months.

Don't forget parents! Parents like to know what their student is involved in and enjoy supporting ministries that are caring for their student at college. Ask students for their parents' mailing addresses. Send parents regular updates, newsletters, emails, and donation requests.

For further help

Visit ukirk.org for more information and resources, including excellent books, websites, webinars, database options, online giving options, and examples of other campus ministry materials.

There are people who are willing to help you! Find contact information for coaches, mentors, and peer support online.



1. “Collegiate Ministries Task Force Report,” the 2012 Collegiate Ministry Strategy of the PC(USA). ukirk.org/files/Collegiate_Ministries_Task_Force_Report.doc. Accessed 2013.
2. Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Spirituality of Fundraising* (Nashville, Tenn.: Upper Room Books, 2011), p. 21.
3. Nouwen, pp. 16–17.