



## Starting a campus ministry at your congregation

Within the United States alone, we have about 5,300 higher learning institutions. 19.9 million individuals attend those institutions. WELS Campus Ministry strives to provide resources and support to congregations that serve college students during a critical transition point in their life. We're here to help you determine the best way to serve the colleges in your area with the gospel. There is huge potential for growth, and we need your help.

**The first step?** Find out how many WELS/ELS students are enrolled at your local college or university using your congregation's WELS Cloud account. Instructions on how to access that list can be found in the [WELS Campus Ministry Toolkit](#). Having issues accessing the list? Contact WELS Campus Ministry at [cm@wels.net](mailto:cm@wels.net).

Check out some of the scenarios we've included below. Find the one that applies to you and view the suggested action items you can take as a congregation to kick start a campus ministry program.

### **My church is in a college town with 5 or more WELS/ELS students enrolled at the school.**

This is the perfect opportunity to start a full campus ministry program! If funding is needed, contact the WELS Campus Ministry committee to see how they might be able to support your efforts.

#### *Action Items:*

- Explore the possibility of becoming an official student organization at the college/university. Work with the students to put together a board to staff the student organization. Benefits of being an official student organization include:
  - Permission to be on campus
  - Access to school facilities
  - University funding for student orgs
  - Free promotion from the college (Including student activity fairs)
  - Faculty advisor
- Consider having a specific Bible Study for college students. It could be held on campus or somewhere close by. If that's not possible, make sure you can provide transportation to students without vehicles.
- Host events specifically for college students.
- Host social events on campus that students can invite their friends to—it's a great way to open to the door to a future Bible study or Sunday worship invitation
- Consider opening your church fellowship hall to students to study and hang out. Provide a place where students can find you and where you can host various ministry or social activities.
- Put together a texting/e-mail list or a social media group with all the students. Send our periodic reminders about different events, Bible studies, or even resources they can use in their personal lives to stay connected to their faith.
- Organize a student-led volunteer group. These volunteer opportunities could be at the church or out in the community.
- Organize a short-term mission trip for the students to go on during their winter, spring, or summer breaks through [WELS Mission Journeys](#).

### **My church is in a college town with 1-5 WELS/ELS students enrolled at the school.**

With a small group of WELS/ELS students, having congregation members and the pastor open their homes and their lives to students is very important. The numbers may not allow for weekly get-togethers with just college students; however, involving them in every part of your congregation's ministry would serve them well.

#### *Action Items:*

- Open your homes to this small group of students for a home-cooked meal and casual fellowship. This small gesture can go a long way in making a student feel welcomed and valued.
- If your congregation already has small group Bible studies, invite the college students into the various groups.
- Organize *periodic* social events just for college students. These more informal gatherings give WELS students the opportunity to invite their friends to a fun activity where they can share their faith.

### **My church is in a college town, but no WELS/ELS students are enrolled at the school.**

This is going to require some creative thinking and different approaches for establishing relationships with college students. Getting the word out about our Savior and your congregation are beneficial for this type of situation.

#### *Action Items:*

- Utilize the members of your congregation who are connected with or work for the college.
- Work with school administrators to see if there's a way to offer care packages for students during exam time. Include information about your congregation and ministry.
- Provide training to church members in friendship evangelism and how they can be looking for opportunities to share their faith with college students during everyday exchanges.
- Advertise your congregation on social media; target the college age demographic (18-22) with specific messaging in your area.
- Identify members in you congregation who might own a business or work for a company that hires part-time employees who are attending college.

### **Good ideas for ANY Campus Ministry program:**

- Involve students in your church's current ministry. Ask students to usher, use their musical talents in worship, volunteer at outreach events, greet at church, etc.
- Dedicate time specifically for college students. This effort could be lay member or pastor led. Consider putting together a working group/committee that can be responsible for campus ministry at your church. Include college students who are already active in the campus ministry.
- Take time to learn about the school – what programs are offered, where most students come from, if a lot of students live on campus or in off-campus housing, etc.
- Build a relationship with students. There's a good chance that most of your time will be spent hanging out with students, and that's okay.
- Offer career coaching by successful professionals in your congregation

## Resources available to you to help you get started:

- Attend the WELS Campus Ministry Conference
  - Anyone involved in or interested in campus ministry are welcome to attend the Campus Ministry Conference in Waukesha, Wis. It is held every other year in May, usually the third Monday-Tuesday of the month. Funds are available to help cover travel costs so that more people can participate. Visit [wels.net/campus-ministry](http://wels.net/campus-ministry) for more information on the next conference.
- Support and visits from the WELS Campus Ministry Committee
  - The WELS Campus Ministry Committee can offer valuable experience and counseling to assist you as you begin or enhance a campus ministry program. Connect with the WELS Campus Ministry Committee at [cm@wels.net](mailto:cm@wels.net).
- Funding from WELS Campus Ministry
  - Funds can be requested from the Campus Ministry Committee to help kickstart an entire campus ministry program or support specific outreach initiatives. Contact Campus Ministry Committee Chairman, Pastor Scott Wolfram, for more information at [pastorwolfram@gmail.com](mailto:pastorwolfram@gmail.com).