

The Office of Young Adult and Campus Ministry

Campus Organizer's Handbook 2008

A guide for students, ministers, and lay leaders organizing
Unitarian Universalist Campus Ministries



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONS

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Welcome

Greetings!

This handbook is focused on giving students and adult advisors fundamental steps and ideas for organizing campus ministry with institutional connections. College campuses are rich and vibrant places of intergenerational activity that offer many blessings for our Unitarian Universalist churches and congregations. Historically our faith has strong connections with the university community, complementing the critical thinking and questioning of students on a liberal religious search for truth and meaning.

There are many models of campus ministry in Unitarian Universalism, from lay led to paid staff, large university and small college, near and far from a local congregation, to other models with various character and scope of ministry. “Ministry” in campus ministry is the work of not only ministers, lay campus chaplains, and other religious professionals, but students and lay members of the church who provide pastoral care and community building and who help facilitate the spiritual growth of the community’s members.

We encourage you to connect with your district young adult and campus ministry committee or staff person for information on current events, opportunities, and other local groups you may form relationships with. Be sure to register your campus ministry group or event at www.ConnectUU.com.

Lastly, we thank Joseph Santos-Lyons, former Director of Campus Ministry and Field Organizing, who wrote the first edition of the *Campus Organizer’s Handbook* in 2003. As always, please contact our office with questions or requests for additional resources!

Sincerely,

The Staff of the Office of Young Adult and Campus Ministry

Yourself as a Leader: Step Up, Step Back

Leaders need to take time to prepare themselves, to organize not only the materials and other physical aspects of the program, but to mentally and spiritually ground yourself in the work you want to do. Engaging in UU Campus Ministry places you in the position of religious professional, whether you are paid or not. Your role as the leader of a UU group will give you special powers that need to be reflected upon. Consider the following questions:

- q Why do I want a UU Campus Ministry?
- q Who am I in relation to the likely participants?
- q What ethical boundaries should I be concerned with?
- q How do I want to be a leader?

One of the best mantras for a UU Campus Minister is “Step Up, Step Back”. A strong UU group will need your leadership regularly, but there will be times when members of your group will have the time and vision to lead. You want to create space for others to take on leading activities for the group, but you also want to keep the programs consistent and regular. Beware of expecting too much of volunteer student leadership, or too little. Learn how to step up and step back.

Institutional Support: Congregational Connection

If possible, campus ministry groups should have institutional connections with a local UU congregation. When there is no congregation nearby, connect your group with the District UUA Office. Being officially recognized by your college or university is also helpful. Here are some basic steps to build these connections.

1. **Make a list of people** you can think of who would be involved in campus ministry. Think broadly. Ask for help from friends in the church and at school. Assign the role you think each person will play, for example: student member, student leader, lay minister for campus ministry, church staff support, congregational player, interfaith ally, etc.

2. **Write down at least three reasons** why a Unitarian Universalist community on campus is important to you and/or the group gathered.
3. **Phone each of the following people** and discuss broadly (1) Who you are, (2) Why campus ministry is important to you, and (3) What advice they may have for you or how they might support your work.
 - a. Minister at a local UU Congregation
 - b. Director of Religious Education at a local UU Congregation
 - c. Campus Chaplain or Director of Spiritual Life

Institutional Support Looks Like:

- Referrals of students who drop by the congregation to you
- Referrals of interested adult volunteers
- Visibility in the congregational newsletter, Sunday program and Social Hall bulletin boards
- Check-in/check-up phone calls and emails from congregation staff
- Consideration in the congregational budget

When starting or reviving a campus ministry, email an introduction and update to the following people. Include what history you know of the group, relationship with a congregation, relationship with the university, and what your upcoming plans are for the group.

- Minister and Director of Religious Education at the nearest UU congregation(s).
- District Staff – Many districts have paid staff support for campus ministry; let them know what you are doing.
- Campus Chaplain or Director of Spiritual Life

Getting Started

First Meeting of the Year – Creating the Vision

The goal is to bring a group of students and congregation members together to begin building the foundation for the campus ministry. You are facilitating the development of a core group, people who see themselves as participants in campus ministry and people who are allies within the college or church institution such as professors and university or church staff. The hope here is for your core group to come to a loose consensus on the values and ideas for campus ministry.

Items to bring to the first meeting:

- Telephone
- Information about local congregations
- Butcher paper and easel
- Large markers, 3 colors
- Reserved room

1. Contact the people you have been able to identify thus far and set a time, date, and location at least two weeks in advance for a first meeting. Plan for a 1-2 hour meeting, in a public location such as the church or a room on campus, and as a way to avoid date-setting frustrations, pre-select 3 or 4 dates and times that work best for you upfront. Be sure to reserve the space in advance through the appropriate church or school office.
2. Facilitate or ask someone to facilitate the first meeting. Also identify someone else (it can be you) to take good written notes and to help write during the first meeting.
3. Build an agenda before hand, include: Introductions, Brainstorm on why you seek Campus Ministry, Brainstorm on What activities we want to do, Discussion and decision making on what next events will happen for campus ministry and who will be responsible for them.

Sample Congregational Announcement

“[Your name] is working with [local congregation] to start a campus ministry at [college or university]. Campus ministry is a program designed to provide a spiritual group for students on campus and connect them with the ministry of [local congregation]. We are seeking names and contact information of interested students as well as adults who would be willing to volunteer with the campus ministry. Please contact [your name, phone number, and email]. Our next meeting will be [information here].”

Sample Student Outreach Call

Hello is _____ there?

Hi my name is [your name] with the [your church or university] and I'm working to organize a Unitarian Universalist campus ministry at [your church or university]. Do you have a few minutes to talk?

I got your name from [who, how, email, friend, etc] and they said you would be someone to talk to or may be interested in campus ministry. I'm helping get something started because [why campus ministry is important to you here], would be interested in getting involved with a student UU campus group?

Great, our next meeting will be [date, time, location], and can I get your contact information so we can stay in touch? Would you like to be on our email list? [get full name, address, zip code, alternate phone numbers, email].

Thanks so much for your time and I looking forward to seeing you this year!

(Other questions you might ask include what are you studying, where are you living – on campus, off campus, did you move here from somewhere, what church have you been involved in, etc.)

Selected Reasons to do Campus Ministry

Be a part of an intergenerational community
Explore questions of life with other liberal religious people
Meet new people and be challenged by new ideas
Work for social justice together
Stay connected to Unitarian Universalism
Get involved with the local UU Church

Getting Started Questions

1. Why do you want to do campus ministry?
2. What do you want your campus ministry to be? (involve students in this dialogue)
3. How will your congregation benefit?
4. How will students benefit?
5. What colleges will you serve?
6. What congregations are supporting the campus ministry? Are there lead and support congregations?
7. Where will you meet? Will you rotate meetings between college and congregation?
8. Who is your lead organizer? Who will support your lead organizer?
9. When will your meetings be? How can you make them consistent and regular?

Going Public: Using ConnectUU.com

To be recognized by the UUA:

- q Register your group at www.ConnectUU.com

To be recognized by your local Congregation:

- q Send a letter to the Board of Trustees

To be recognized by the college/university:

- q Check with the Student Activities Office or Student Government Office. Don't let official recognition stand in the way of starting a UU group.

ConnectUU.com serves as the primary database for all UU campus groups and events. Register yourself and your group at ConnectUU.com so that others may find you. List your upcoming events as well!

Weekly Meetings and Other Events

UU groups are most successful when they meet weekly or every other week, fitting with the cycle of the college student. Pick a day, time and location and stick with it as best as you can. Most groups meet at the local congregation or a place of worship during the weekday for 90 minutes in the evening. Using a place of worship is good because it creates the right kind of atmosphere for the group. Sundays already have morning worship and have mass transit concerns.

Build your email list, and let it grow. Not everyone on your list will attend meetings or events regularly, but they are still important, still benefit from receiving your messages, and may help spread the word about the group.

Plan your activities out in advance. Here are some ideas:

Annual:

- Bring a guest speaker to campus using the UU Billings Fund for Campus Outreach (grants of up to \$2000)
- Fall Welcome for Students and Congregation with free pizza, drinks and a short worship with the minister
- Discussion with a local minister
- Overnight retreat for campus students and friends

School Term:

- Tabling at the student activities, student orientation or other student fair
- Postering and brochure-dropping blitz on campus
- Bring a friend to UU campus group event to learn about one another's spiritual journeys

Monthly:

- Potluck
- Worship
- After Sunday Service Lunch
- Social Service Project
- Coordinators/Organizers Check In Meeting

Bi-Weekly & Weekly:

- Regular Campus Group Meeting Time
- Campus Group Check In

Outreach: Tabling and Beyond

Tabling is the #1 activity for outreach. UU groups that fail to table each year do not survive for long. Tabling is best done during large student fairs, often at the beginning of the school term, where you can display your colors, information and have a sign up list for folks to be added to your email list. Check out the UUCM Online Manual at UUA.org for a tabling checklist and sample raps for talking to interested students.

Other outreach tools include: posters, brochures, chalking, student paper advertising, t-shirts, interfaith newsletters, visiting other student groups and bring-a-friend activities.

Spiritual Development: Build on This

The essence of a vibrant spiritual community is to support members in their spiritual development guided by our Unitarian Universalist Principles & Purposes. The worships, spiritual discussions, and personal understandings about Unitarian Universalism need to be the backbone of a UU group. Social fellowship and social justice are also important components and flow naturally from an association of UUs and our collective search for truth and meaning.

Ask religious professionals and members from the local UU congregation to be guest speakers on topics that address spiritual development issues. You do not need to have this be the focus each week, but alternating each week is highly recommended.

Resources: Trainings, Materials, & Networks

Trainings: Check www.ConnectUU.com for dates and locations.

- Regional Campus Ministry Trainings – There are generally 4-6 organized for the fall, hosted at a local UU congregation. With around 20 participants, these trainings are set up seminar style and led by a YACM Trainer-Consultant.
- YACM Professionals Seminar – A 6 week teleconference seminar for volunteer and paid leaders of YACM Groups facilitated by the YACM Office.
- District or CUC Leadership Schools/District or CUC Meetings – These may be a source for leadership development, talk with your District or CUC Staff.

Materials: Order online at www.UUA.org.

- Posters – 11 by 17 in Color with space to put your info, dates/locations
- Brochures – General FAQ Brochures about UU Campus Ministry
- YACM Resource Catalogue – A listing of nearly 100 resources
- YACM Information Packet – Annually updated 50+ page compilation of writings, readings and resources for successful ministry

Networks: Join email lists at <http://lists.UUA.org/>

- Cm-l@lists.UUA.org is the primary continental announcement email list for UUs in Campus Ministry.
- YACM-Professionals@lists.UUA.org paid or volunteer staff working with UU young adult or campus ministry groups.
- Yaya-Announce@DRUUMM.org is for young adults of Color interested in community building and anti-racism.
- YaYAWWhiteAllies@lists.UUA.org is for youth and young adults who identify as White and are interested in anti-racist community building and action.

Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression

There is an ongoing commitment throughout the Unitarian Universalist Association to address the realities of oppression and work as a community for justice. This work draws on the experience and resources of the UUA, which has extensive support for gender, sexual orientation, accessibility, and racial/cultural/ethnic justice-issues. Anti-racism work is a priority in our community and is led with an understanding of the intersections of oppressions. Unitarian Universalists are predominately White and of European Descent; as an Association of Congregations, the UUA has dedicated itself to anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural community building through the 1997 Resolution entitled Journey Towards Wholeness and subsequent resolutions. There are several ongoing opportunities for UU groups to engage in this work:

- DRUUMM: A UU People of Color Organization at www.DRUUMM.org hosts several events for Young Adults of Color.
- Groundwork, an Anti-Racism Trainer-Organizer Program, is a collective of youth and young adult UUs who provide trainings on understanding and dismantling racism. Contact the program at 617-948-4273 or groundwork@uua.org.
- UU Allies for Racial Equity is a UU white allies organization. Visit their site at www.uuallies.org for more info.
- There are many other resources available from the UUA on anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multicultural competencies. See www.UUA.org for more.

Regional Campus Ministry Trainings

Overview: The Regional conference is a half-weekend event designed to bring together core leaders from area UU campus groups in order to strengthen skills, connections and visions for campus ministry! The conference is set up as a seminar where everyone participates together in small groups and as a community. Facilitators are trained and coordinated by the UUA's Campus Ministry Office, and work collaboratively with a local coordinator who is responsible for the host/local logistics. Visit the Events section of UUA.org or [ConnectUU](#) for upcoming dates.

Small Group Visioning: What is the mission and purpose of your campus ministry? What is your vision that you are trying to achieve?

Small Group Organizing: What outreach have you been working on? What are some of the obstacles you are facing?

Articulating (Y)our Faith: This interactive role-play lets you discuss the message of Unitarian Universalism. After a short historical teaching about our UU Principles & Purposes, you get to explain to one another who we are and what we believe as Unitarian Universalist.

Congregational Connections: Strategies for working with UU Congregations to build and provide long-term sustainability for your campus group.

Regional Leadership Development: The Facilitators will be calling for up to 5 participants from the conference to step forward to serve on the planning committee for the next Regional Campus Ministry Conference to be staff, coordinators and considered for the UUA Campus Ministry train-the-trainers program. We will also be discussing the development of District Campus/Young Adult Ministry Committees to sustain and grow this work in your local area.

Quick Reference: 10 Campus Organizing Tips

1. Good worship and food are two main things we hear UU campus ministry students want
2. Don't get hung up on only using e-mail
3. Each individual worship may not resonate with all people in your campus ministry, but hopefully with a rotation of worship styles and themes all people will resonate with at least some of the worship
4. Arrive early for meetings and events to set up the physical space
5. Successful UU campus ministry involves spirituality, community and social justice
6. Generally speaking, 70% of your campus ministry will be involved solely at the local level, 20% may connect with regional or district young adult events and 10% may find opportunities in continental young adult events.
7. Be intentional and mindful about the transitions of your members and leadership, celebrating change and setting forth clear expectation and terms of office for leaders.
8. Ask adult lay chaplains and lay assistants for campus ministry to be mindful of their influence and control over the students, to encourage a collaborative relationship at all times. However, be aware that during times when students are deeply anxious over school work, finals and at beginning and end of year times, adult leadership for campus ministry is essential and sustaining.
9. Keep it simple; don't worry about planning the perfect event, but focus on building relationships between the people in your campus ministry. Consistency and a sustainable leadership team are equally important to the super dynamic and passionate programming.
10. Ask for help as much as you can, from your congregation, from ministers, from your Regional Organizing Consultants. If you're stuck, talk through what you are doing with someone else, it just might help give you perspective, new ideas, and affirm the work that you are doing!

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