



Board Members' Guide

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UKirk Campus Ministries vary in governance structure from congregation-based ministries to independent 501©3 organizations, with many variations in-between. Although their voices are vital, a campus ministry's primary constituency—collegiate students—is typically not equipped to provide long-term oversight, management, or financial support and accountability for the ministry. Therefore, many UKirk Campus Ministries are governed by a board of directors. This Quicksheet offers a variety of reflections on ways to recruit, equip and empower a board of directors to support and sustain successful campus ministry.

Identifying, Recruiting and Preparing Board Leadership

Most organizations set bylaws or governing documents to guide their organization and formalize a leadership structure. These structures are vital to offering some stability and scaffolding upon which to build the organization. Campus ministries, perhaps more than other ministries, experience leadership change with striking regularity and these kinds of governing documents are essential to ensure consistent expectations and organizational functions. During my six-year tenure in campus ministry, well over 75% of the 20+ ministries on campus experienced a change in professional/pastoral staff, leaving it to the leadership structures of those ministries to identify and recruit new leadership. In short, a well-functioning board is as vital to the ministry as the campus minister himself/herself.

So how do you begin to identify and recruit board members? Typically, board members come from three sources: supporting congregations, university alumni (often Presbyterian), and advocates of campus ministry (often with some university connection). Often campus ministries begin by recruiting pastors of supporting congregations, which can be a helpful starting point when building a ministry because of their broad networks. However, they are often pulled in multiple directions by their congregation, so building your base beyond clergy can ensure a broader reach of advocates. Some boards allow supporting congregations to “appoint” a board member to the board. But you may find that being able to identify and recruit your own board member from a supporting congregation ensures better buy-in. Additionally, bylaws that specify seats for alumni can be vital to building and maintaining a fundraising base. Having multiple alumni seats for different generations can further aid in this effort (i.e., a young alumni and a seasoned alumni rep). Finally, in my experience, board members like to build relationships with the students engaged in the ministry, and therefore, ensuring at least one student representative is helpful. That student representative may rotate onto the board on a different cycle than other board members to fit the academic calendar.

Sometimes it can feel like just “filling a spot” on the board is a grand accomplishment, but building a vital working board requires a recognition of the skills and gifts required to best support the ministry. I found that having a board member with skills in networking, fundraising, and finance was helpful. Equally helpful but often overlooked was also having a board member with graphic design experience and a couple of good cooks (for in-kind meal donations). If you are asking supporting congregations or pastors for board member recommendations, be specific about what kinds of skills would be most helpful. Not only does this strengthen your board but it ensures that the new board members will have a purpose and feel valued.

Regardless of skill sets, setting clear expectations at the outset was helpful in garnering buy-in and commitment. We developed a one-page job description (see attached for an example) that articulated what the ministry was about and what was expected of a board member. The description was developed at a board meeting and then fine-tuned by the campus minister and board chair. We also were clear about length of service and meeting times and dates because the logistics of participating is vital to a functioning board.

Preparing Board Members to Serve

Once a board member has agreed to serve, it is vital that they have sufficient information to add voice to the board. I developed a “Guide for New Board Members” that I provided in hard copy and electronically after they agreed to serve. This guide included¹:

- A welcome letter from the campus minister
- Current board roster (with contact information and listed by class)
- Board meeting schedule including locations (we rotated among supporting churches)
- Job description
- Campus minister bio (including my contact information)
- Bylaws
- An outline of the structure of the ministry (undergraduates, graduate students, how we fit in the make-up on the ministries on campus, how we fit within the Presbytery)
- A list of the supporting congregations
- Fundraising goals, timeline, and a current copy of the operating budget
- A history of the ministry
- Glossary with some “acronyms” to know
- A copy of the previous year’s annual report

While this was perhaps exhaustive, most board members will not see the daily inner-workings of the ministry in the same way that they would as members of their own congregation. So, anything you can do to educate and inform them of the value and organizational structure enables them to make informed decisions and offer meaningful input.

Beyond understanding the administrative and financial structure of the board, the best way to get board members excited about the ministry is to have them see it at work. Consider ways that they can be involved that are both helpful to the ministry but also enable them to build meaningful connections with students. In my service at Duke, this took a variety of forms. We had a weekly dinner before worship every Sunday evening and board members signed up to provide a meal once per semester. They were encouraged to stay and eat with the students and were always welcome to stay for worship. We had one student representative to the board who attended all board meetings, but once per year (typically in the spring semester), the whole student leadership team of 8-10 students met with the whole board for some broader visioning and strategic planning on a Saturday morning. Finally, we tried to bring students to worship at each of our supporting churches, not necessarily to *lead* worship (although we did when we were asked), but to simply be among the congregations. Beyond building relationships with students directly, board members agreed to be the campus minister’s prayer partner for one month each year. During that month, the campus minister and board member met one-on-one at least once, often for lunch, conversation, and prayer. While these meetings were informal, they built rapport with individual board members and offered a time to listen for how their gifts could best be used.

Finally, most board members are more than willing to help if provided with adequate resources to do so. When board members were asked to present to the Session or mission committee seeking financial support, I provided recent financials, student testimonials, pictures, and ways their gift would impact the ministry in a ready-to-share document, so they felt equipped to advocate for the ministry. When possible, I attended meetings with them. Similarly, board members were happy to help with fundraising, but I did everything I could to make it easy. One

¹ Sample copies of this document (with financial info redacted) available upon request.

fall board meeting each year was devoted to our individual fundraising appeal. Prior to the meeting, board members reviewed the list of names and addresses against their church directories and added any new names. As campus minister, I prepared all fundraising materials: stamps, mailing labels for our mailing list, pre-printed return address labels, our appeal letter, a donor card, a return donor envelope (with mailing label). Board members then helped to stamp, sticker, and stuff the appeal. As they did, they pulled any letters for individuals whom they knew personally and agreed to put a brief note on the letter before it was sealed and mailed. This built connection across congregations, engendered buy-in from the board, and often even caught errors in advance. Once, a board member recognized an appeal letter to a member of their church who had recently died and was able to pull them from the list in advance of mailing. Our response rate among letters that received a personal note from board members was much higher than those that had no personalization.

Thanking Your Board

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, thank your board members frequently for small actions and large ones. At the end of every meal, we offered a verbal thank you from the students gathered. When possible, I had students sign thank you notes as well. As board members rolled off the board, we offered a small token of gratitude—often campus ministry swag. Giving board members meaningful work and ways to be involved ensures buy-in but thanking board members for their service aids in feeling valued and appreciated.

Building and leading a board is not for the faint of heart, but a functioning board can build financial stability, create advocates beyond the campus minister, and ensure the continuation of the ministry in and through times of transition.

Office of Christian Formation: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/formation/>

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Duke PCM+
Presbyterian PC(USA) and UCC Campus Ministry at Duke
A UKirk-Affiliated Ministry

Duke PCM+ Mission Statement

The Presbyterian Campus Ministries at Duke, Inc. is supported by 10 local PCUSA churches, one local UCC congregation, New Hope Presbytery and the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic. Our mission is to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the reformed tradition of the PCUSA and UCC denominations.

- To fulfill this mission, we are called to:
- Love God with all our hearts, souls, minds, strength;
- Invite students to lives of deeper discipleship in Jesus Christ;
- Gather students together for fellowship, worship, study, reflection, service and fun;
- Provide pastoral care for students, faculty and staff at Duke University;
- Foster leadership and talent for the Church and the world; and
- Engage students in ministries of service to the Church, Durham and the world

Duke PCM+ Focal Points. The ministry seeks to serve the Presbyterian and UCC undergraduate and graduate students in an open-minded, open-hearted, Christ-centered community. To do so, we focus on four primary areas:

- **CONNECT**
Building relationships among students, especially around outreach to incoming freshmen
- **REFLECT**
Creating space for intentional theological and spiritual reflection around issues of vocation, faith, and life
- **WORSHIP**
Gathering as a worshipping community to hear the Word of God, pray, and turn our hearts toward God
- **SERVE**
Serving our neighbors through engagement with the broader community in Durham and beyond

Role of the Board

Advocacy. The Board will advocate for PCM in the following ways:

- Share the story of campus ministry regularly with church members and broader community
- Submit church newsletter articles twice a year
- Report at least annually to financial decision makers (e.g., the Session) about campus ministry
- Seek ways to include college students in local congregation's ministry (e.g., campus ministry day; invitations to existing events)
- Contribute to outreach of supporting churches not presently represented on the board
- Create mentoring relationships between young adults and college students and youth

Fundraising. The Board will assist with fundraising in the following ways:

- Donate annually
- Identify future Board members (2-year terms)
- Identify potential donors—Duke alums/employees in local congregations, etc.
- Write personal notes on appeals and thank you letters
- Help brainstorm new opportunities for fundraising

Support. The Board will offer support to Duke Campus ministry in the following ways:

- Pray regularly for the students and campus minister, including intentional spiritual support of campus minister one month each year
- Make connections for the campus minister when resources are needed
- Serve on personnel, intern, or nominating committee for the board
- Assist with providing or finding volunteers to assist with Sunday evening dinners and make goody bags for students for exam periods