

THE FIRST MONDAY REPORT

Thoughts on Fund Raising for Campus Ministry

Office of Lutheran Campus Ministry Advancement
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“Building Your Board”

“The seriousness with which a board member is recruited and selected is directly proportional to the seriousness with which a board member fulfills his or her role.”¹ Within the past month I have been involved in at least two major conversations about board development. The first was as a leader for one of the Stewardship Sessions sponsored by CampuSource. The second was at a conference for new staff sponsored by ELCA Campus Ministry. In both instances, and in several other workshops I have led, one of the key questions is, “How can I begin to build a board?”

There is a significant sense reality about this question. You can’t have a sustained ministry without a board or a steering committee. Sure, you might get the day to day tasks done, but there would be no one to take on the primary responsibilities of visioning, evaluating, hiring, providing for resources, setting policies, accounting, interpretation—and the list goes on. The reason why boards are required is to attend to the essential functions of linkage to ownership, explicit governing policies, and assurance of executive performance.²

The concern that arises so often relates to recruiting good board members. How do you begin, especially if you have just moved into a situation where the board is dysfunctional or non-existent. Here are a few ideas that may help you and other concerned leadership in this important task.

1. Think about why you need a board in the first place. The paragraph above lists a few reasons, but there are others and then need deeper explanation. You need to know why the board is important in your specific situation. What are the needs that the board addresses? What powers will they have? On whose behalf do they serve?³ What is the legal status of the board?
2. Draw up a job description for potential board members. Be as specific as you can about the duties and expectations of members. This will serve as an honest recruiting

¹ Robert Andringa and Ted Engstrom, *Nonprofit Board Answer Book* (NCNB Books: Washington DC) 1998. p. 117

² John Carver, *Boards the Make a Difference* (Bass Publishers: San Francisco) 1997.

³ For example, in some settings the synod(s) are the “members” of the board and they, in turn, appoint “directors” to function on their behalf. The “directors” are accountable to the synod(s) and have a derivative power, but not ultimate power.

tool, so that potential members will know what they are signing on to do if invited to serve. It will also serve as an evaluative tool at the time when the board does its annual evaluation. Job descriptions will change over time as the tasks of the board change. Keep this draft as a “process” document until your board is fully formed. This will allow necessary changes and give the sense to new members that they can influence the initial formation of the board. At the end of this article is a model job description that may be useful in developing your own document.

3. Consider how *you* would like to be invited to serve on a board. What information would you expect, what sensitivities? Who would you respond to best—the campus pastor, a current member, a peer, the bishop?
4. Begin with a committed few—even one person who fully understands the mission of campus ministry and is willing to provide leadership to make it happen. It’s much like the process of putting together a solid fundraising committee. The chair is the most important position, because they will set the standard of excellence, commitment, and vision expected of others. A good board chair, once in place, will be helpful in recruiting others, in part because of their leadership ability and, in part, because of who they are. Once you have a core group, you can expand to fill out the rest of the board based on skills, needs, and interests.
5. Put together a grid that will help you identify the skills and experience needed to have a well-rounded, competent board. For example, are you at a time when you need someone with expertise in fund raising, or facilities management, or marketing, or making inroads into the university? What about student members; what can they add to a board, what are their liabilities? Take board nomination seriously; don’t ask a worthy candidate to serve a week prior to the meeting. And don’t “settle” for someone who “might work out somehow.”
6. Develop a board member profile. This is a list of characteristics that persons must possess in order to be invited to serve on the board. Some suggest that this profile be applied to current members as a way of measuring their ability to continue. A profile list may contain:⁴

ALL MEMBERS HAVE THESE TRAITS

- Demonstrated interest before nomination
- Donor of record in last year
- Some experience in our area of service
- Board service supported by family
- Able to attend scheduled meetings and special events
- Known as a good group decision-maker

MEMBERS HAVE ONE OR MORE OF THESE TRAITS

- Recognized community leader
- Prior experience on nonprofit boards

⁴ List from *Nonprofit Board Answer Book*, p. 119

- Knowledge of nonprofit law
 - Knowledge of fundraising
 - Specialized knowledge of one mission/program area
 - Helps balance the board in terms of gender/age/ethnicity
 - Experience in marketing
 - Good mediator of group disagreements
 - Knowledge of land use and facilities management
 - Experience in dealing with local government
 - Has network of donor prospects
 - Leadership in other organizations important to us
7. Give yourself permission to “think outside the box” when it comes to board members. Check your bylaws. It may be that a certain number/percentage need to be card-carrying Lutherans. But you may also find some latitude to invite others who bring a unique perspective to your work. Consider:
- a faculty member with a certain skill or area of interest
 - a member of a social ministry agency
 - someone who has led a fundraising campaign successfully
 - a person with peace and justice concerns and connections
 - an artist or writer
 - someone who loves to volunteer
 - someone who knows group process
 - a financial consultant or investment banker
 - a construction engineer
 - a computer expert
8. Once board members are invited to serve, and they accept, plan for a time of orientation. Assemble a board book that will include: budget, minutes, mission statement, critical reports, information about the university community, financial reports and audits. Spend time at a meeting making sure that everyone is up to date and on the same page. Have a “dumb question” time when anyone can ask anything without appearing to be stupid.
9. Consider appointing a mentor for new board members. The mentor will be responsible for meeting the new person as they arrive, sitting with them at the meeting, and being available for questions prior to the next meeting.
10. Hold an annual board retreat. This can be a time for evaluation as well as a time for visioning.
11. Say thank you. If you and your board find a way to show appreciation for one another and the hard work that you all do together, that work will be seem worth it. Word will get out that it is rewarding to be on your campus board. People will feel valued and will encourage other good folks to consider your board once their own term is completed. Like satisfied customers, satisfied board members are your best recruiters.

LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY

Board of Directors

Job Description

Campus Ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America invites people in academic settings more deeply into Jesus Christ and the community that bears his name, so that they can discover and fulfill their vocation as disciples.

(Local mission statement may be used in addition to or in place of the above ELCA Campus Ministry statement)

As a representative of the church, you have been called to serve on the Board of Directors of Lutheran Campus Ministry at (location). As such, you will be primarily responsible for the work of:

- Linking the campus ministry to its constituencies,
- Developing and implementing policies and procedures, and
- Assuring the performance of staff.

In order for this work to happen in a timely and faithful fashion that carries out the mission of Lutheran Campus Ministry, it is expected that board members will:

- Understand the mission and goals of Lutheran Campus Ministry,
- Become knowledgeable with the life and culture of the university and the needs of young adults on campus,
- Provide vision and direction for the future of the ministry,
- Contribute financially to the ministry on an annual basis, as generously as possible,
- Secure, manage and allocate funds provided to the ministry by all sources,
- Maintain liaison with congregations, supporting synods, and the ELCA churchwide organization to interpret the ministry and seek feedback,
- Be knowledgeable of important deadlines and issue accurate reports,
- Attend regularly scheduled meetings of the board,
- Serve on special committees or task groups as assigned,
- Hire, direct and evaluate the work of professional staff,
- Attend programs of the ministry as appropriate or when invited,
- Oversee property management, including upkeep, insurance and expansion,
- Participate in a regular evaluation of the board, and
- Ensure that the ministry complies with all applicable local, state and federal laws.

I understand the expectations and implications described above and pledge to fulfill my obligations as a board member to the best of my ability, with God's help and guidance.

Board Member Signature

Date

Board President

Date

