1. The Rationales for a Collegiate Ministry Initiative

Why are we considering a collegiate ministry initiative for our church?
What are the motivations behind this? How did the idea come about here, now? Is our church truly called to do this form of mission outreach? If so, why?

- What resources are currently available for a collegiate ministry initiative?
- What biblical teachings seem central to this initiative?
- What’s the difference between older youth ministry, young adult ministry and a true collegiate ministry?
- How do we respond to the statement, “Plant sequoias” as it relates to a ministry to, with, by and for students?
- What are 5 reasons to do this ministry initiative?
- What are 5 reasons not to do this ministry initiative?
- How would the congregation respond to this question, “Do God already on campus or are we “talking God” to the campus?”
- How do we understand the vocations of teaching and learning within a Protestant Reformed theological context?
- Who can help us understand the challenges we will face? Be as specific as possible.
- How have the purposes and potential outcomes of this initiative been written down and circulated in the church?
- How does the initiative relate to the fulfillment of baptismal covenant found in the Book of Order WJ 2.035 “... on behalf of the Church universal, ... to nourish the baptized person in the Christian life.”
- How does this congregation include higher education ministry/campus ministry in its vision statement?
- What is our reaction to this statement: “A student’s primary vocation is to be a student?”
- How do you respond to the statement “collegiate ministry is like a new church development project starting each fall?”

2. The Context of the Collegiate Ministry Initiative

This Collegiate Ministry Initiative will have an effect on both the college/university and the church. What are the social, political, cultural and religious climates of both institutions? Looking at these two settings helps to understand the contexts in which this ministry will occur.

- What are the demographics and other descriptive characteristics of the school?
- What is the “religious climate” on the campus?
- What are the obstacles we will encounter and how will we address them?
- What other Christian groups are serving the campus now? Which of them can we work with?
- What is the congregation’s current outreach ministry to the new and academic communities?
- What do we have to do to obtain an on-campus presence?

YES or NO?

We are a church that reaches, loves and teaches college students so that they may be life-long followers of Jesus Christ?

We are not, at this time, a church that reaches, loves and teaches college students so that they may be life-long followers of Jesus Christ?

This assessment tool was the first step in our process to reaching, loving and teaching college students so that they may be life-long followers of Jesus Christ. Your next step could be writing your next steps could be more prayer and discernment. Whatever your next steps are, one of them needs to be contacting your national office (information below). We are a connectional church and would love to connect with you! There are many possibilities for moving forward in collegiate ministry; let your national staff help you determine what direction to go and what opportunities and programs to take advantage of to help get your congregation moving in that direction. Or if you and your church are just needing a little encouragement along the journey, whatever your needs are, we look forward to hearing from you.

The ultimate question you will be seeking to answer is:

“Are we a church that reaches, loves and teaches college students so that they may be life-long followers of Jesus Christ?”

The intention of this congregational readiness assessment survey is to provide you with a rational approach to answering that question in part by helping you make how prepared your congregation is to engage in collegiate ministry. You will hopefully discover if your congregation... .

- Sends a call to the campus and to students
- Is building an inventory of resources needed for a ministry with students, faculty and staff at a nearby college or university
- Is making sure this ministry relates to the church’s goals and objectives AND that the ministry stays true to the Gospel of Jesus Christ

For the sake of the congregation, its pastoral staff, members, and other ministry partners, it would be better for this instrument to lead to the conclusion that you are not ready, rather than to attempt to establish a collegiate ministry initiative that likely would not bring about the intended results.

This survey expects many people to be engaged in the process. The order of the sections is intentional and should be followed.

The conversations will be meaningful and the results informative.

Blessings on the journey!
Do we need to work through a student-originated group to obtain space on-campus?
How will the congregation’s comments and ideas about this collegiate ministry initiative be gathered?
How is the college ministry considered an extension of the congregation’s ministry to children, youth and other young adults?
What is the church risking by becoming involved in a collegiate ministry?
Will this initiative be promoted as a program only of our church and denomination or as a venture with several churches and organizations supporting it?
What contacts do we have already with the university, especially student affairs and/or faculty, and how will we approach them for involvement in our making this decision?
Who else will we talk to at the college or university to help us understand the context the ministry would relate to?

3. The Resources to Conduct a Collegiate Ministry Initiative

Resources include more than a ministry director, a room to meet in and some money to fund the program. Key among the needs is the absolute commitment of the pastoral staff and elected leaders of the church.

What non-financial resources are needed to start and maintain this initiative (people, equipment, skills, facilities...)?
What resources are present in the church, its leadership and the congregation that would support this initiative?
What does this church have to offer that is unique?
What is our level of commitment and how do we assess that commitment?
How committed is the senior pastor to this initiative?
What role, if any, does the head of staff expect, intend, or desire in relation to the ministry?
How will the pastoral staff be involved in this initiative?
How can we assess that the congregation will have the time to devote to the collegiate ministry program and maintaining relationships with students?
Who else from the congregation would be enlisted to support this initiative?
How would they support the initiative?
What space in the church building is available for this initiative?
What space outside of the church building is available for this initiative?
How long would persons from the congregation be expected to serve as leaders of the program?
How will students be involved in the development of the ministry and as a program once it is started?
How does this church understand the use and authority of the Holy Scriptures?
What funding sources can be counted on from the church budget, gifts from individuals, giving bodies, and other sources?
What current congregational activities can be expanded/modified to become components of the initiative?

4. The “Who” the Collegiate Ministry Would Serve

The rationale statements give the platform for making the decision about engaging in collegiate ministry. The context of the church and the academy clarified the settings for the work. The inventory of resources pointed the way to deciding who the ministry might best serve. Now it is time to determine how this ministry could become a reality.

How will we determine with whom this initiative will minister?
What will be the scenarios of potential participants in the church’s collegiate ministry program?
Who will this collegiate ministry initiative welcome?
How would Presbyterian (PCUSA) students be dealt with differently than others looking for a church away from home?
How do we describe/categorize the types of religious values and backgrounds of the students that might be attracted to your collegiate ministry initiative?

5. The Accountability Factor of the Collegiate Ministry Initiative

This initiative will be costly in terms of time, resources and the commitment of dedicated people. For it to be an important and trusted mission of the local church the lines of accountability and responsibility need to be clearly drawn.

How will this initiative be administrated and held accountable?
What is the time line to make a final decision about the initiative?
What assurance is there that this church will engage in this initiative for at least eight years?
Ultimately, who is responsible for this ministry?
How do we respond to the statement, “Expect to experiment and fail with whatever programming is done, but keep trying until you hit on something each year it will probably be different.”?
What additional administrative/accountability/advisory structures will be needed because of the initiative?
What will the budget for the first three years of this initiative look like?
What possible changes could happen in the congregation as a result of this ministry?
How acceptable are these changes for the life of the church and its members?
What are the points of self-assessment and who will monitor that they are done?
What is the long-range plan for continued funding?
How will you define success, especially in the ministry’s first few years? How would a written prayer plan that was prepared for the dedication of the collegiate ministry program by the congregation?
When the prayer of dedication for the start of this mission is written what will it say?