

9 Simple Ways to Make the Most of Your Summer on Campus

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Summers on most college campuses tend to have a lot less foot traffic. It might lead a person to think that college ministries take the summer off. However, a phrase that I was told earlier in my college ministry career is “Good summers make great falls!” I would posit that the harder a campus minister works in the summer the better his or her fall outreach season can be. Here are a few tips for having an incredible summer.

- **New Student Connections.** Host dinners and coffees with students that are clustered in different areas if you are at a regional school. This has been pure gold for us over the years. Every summer there seems to be a group of students coming to UA Little Rock from a particular area. Every year we have hosted at least one dinner meet and greet to connect with students and it has gone super well.
- **Volunteers.** Summer is an exciting time to mobilize volunteer groups to the campus to help with construction needs. The Baptist Collegiate Ministry in Little Rock has been blessed by construction teams over the years from a variety of churches in the area coming in to help with painting, planting flowers, yard clean up, remodeling, and a host of other things concerning our building. This also makes a special time of prayer and vision casting. I love being able to share with volunteer groups from our support churches about what God is doing in the next generation through college students.
- **New Student Contacts!** This is the most exciting part of the summer. College usually hosts some sort of summer orientation that is key and critical to be at. Summer is a good time to update or upgrade your promotional gear and be ready to meet new students.
- **Promotional.** Updating signage for flyers, promotional, campus building advertisements, etc. Usually, graphic design places have discounts during the summer, and it can save you big dollars when it comes to updating what you have for the next year.
- **Pastor Contacts.** Youth minister and pastor contacts are crucial. Summertime is the most fruitful time for me to connect with pastors in the local area and help students that are in their ministry get connected to our campus ministry. Consider intentional lunches and coffee meetups to check in on pastors and student pastors and to make sure they know you are ready and eager to connect with their incoming college students.
- **Partner Development.** This is vital during the summer. Our ministry has an advisory team of local pastors in the area. I meet with them during the summer and go through ministry goals, finances, and vision for the next year. I know there are many ministries that rely on support raising and summer is a crucial time for personal support meetups.
- **Fall Outreach Preparations.** This may be the most essential element. We plan our speaking series, small group curriculum, church event sponsorships, campus-wide collaborations, etc. during the summer. It is a lot of work, but it allows us when fall comes to focus heavily on relationship building and less work on event planning.
- **Leadership Investment.** Our leadership team turns over in March of each year. So, when it comes to commitments at the end of the spring semester their big goal is to help plan the calendar out a year in advance. But after that, they go everywhere during the summer. A few are local but we really encourage campus, international mission trips, and extended missions. But the relationships are just forming, and new leaders need encouragement, grace, and a good lane to run in. Checking in and seeing how they are doing, even

something as simple as a text message, is super important.

- **Summer training projects.** A couple of years ago we started a summer project focused on fun experiences, spiritual development, leadership training, and theological formation. The results so far are strong. Our churches have loved it and it has been life-giving for the students involved. We have large fun events each Sunday Night, small groups that meet throughout the week and different fun experiences throughout the summer and it has been a blast.