

Building Community on Campus:

1. Community is similar to happiness: if you pursue it as the end goal, it's not as likely to happen as when it develops as a byproduct of pursuing a larger mission or purpose. In other words, part of attracting and keeping people in community that is transformative is more than just having a fun time together. Do you want to be a cruise ship (where people get served) or a battleship (where everyone is part of the mission)?
2. Content for Bible study or speakers may initially draw people in, but what sustains connection over time is deeper relationships. Food also helps!
3. One major purpose for community is for personal/spiritual growth. Relationships are often key to how the Holy Spirit grows us. What kinds of platforms can a fellowship create that will foster deep relationships? Often the weekly, on campus Bible study has trouble going deep relationally since there's a revolving door of who attends. Some additional ideas: smaller groups that ask for a commitment, mentoring groups (1-2 mentors plus 5-8 students), prayer/accountability partners (makes it easy to reschedule as needed), regular service events together, or a retreat. See attached for one idea.
4. Sometimes, deeper relationships and community can be catalyzed by an off-campus, extended event, such as a retreat or a conference (for instance, [Believers in Business](#)).
5. Get feedback and involvement from some key 1st years (whom you may later recruit to replace you).
6. As with recruiting to an event, personal contact is impactful. Your leadership team could schedule regular offers of prayer, encouraging emails, and coffee chats with 1st years to provide another point of contact and encourage them to connect with others in the fellowship.
7. For social events, instead of defaulting to the run of the mill shallow conversations, insert at an appropriate time a "Question of the Evening." Could be things like:
 - How are you managing life balance?
 - Where are you seeing God in your studies?
 - What opportunities are you seeing God open up for you in terms of relationships and career?
8. For all events, be sure there is agreement and shared language for the goals and audience of the event. Include some sort of community building in each event. For instance, with a Bible study, have one leader take a turn to tell their story for the first 5-7 minutes and then invite nonleaders to start doing so later in the term.
9. Issue: people attend a Bible study but don't speak up. Possible solutions: split the larger group into discussion groups of 2-4; ask the quiet folks in advance to share; ask them offline

why they don't share; make it safe for people to ask questions or not know the 'right' answer by being an example as a leader who asks questions of the group; have a time at the end in small groups to pray for each other.

10. Issue: poor attendance at a Bible study. Possible solutions: think about what is most relevant to both 1st years and 2nd years at that particular time of year and then make sure the study addresses it (relevancy); personal invitations to be done by leadership team; consider 1st year's schedules; provide free food; consider this a motivation and customer issue -- without feeding into a consumeristic attitude; be sure to have a welcome strategy for newcomers who show up; make sure the leadership team all has the same understanding for the Bible study's objectives so the marketing message is the same from each leader.