



Guide for Connecting with Campus Offices That Work with Incarcerated Students

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1. Do some research online on your campus' web page

- a. Often the starting place is student services or student affairs.
- b. Sometimes you're looking for the "reentry program" or a "system impacted" program.
- c. If you can't find anything online, start with student services, and we suggest starting with a phone call.
 - i. This can be a little intimidating but it's far more relational than email and leaves less room for misunderstanding.
- d. If you can't get far online, go onto campus and start at student services with something short like, "I'm a mentor of students on campus and we're looking to see if we can offer any resources for students coming out of incarceration."
- e. Keep going until you find the point person. If they're not there that day, ask for their contact info and be patient but persistent about connecting with them. That means give a follow up email or call a week later if you haven't heard anything and then repeat weekly.

2. Beginning conversation

- a. Be sensitive about how you begin. These are vulnerable students, and the school wants to make sure no one is preying upon them.
- b. I suggested starting with something like, "I'm a campus minister who serves students on campus and helps them develop as leaders. I'm reaching out to see if there's any part that me or my group on campus could play in caring for students who are coming out of the prison system, whether it's tutoring, community, or them wanting to grow in any faith background they have."
- c. Then really listen. Answer their questions. Be transparent...we are not a high-pressure group, and they may be on guard for that. We are comfortable building community with any student of any background, and we believe that Jesus is a servant leader. Serving these students is a gift to them, and a way to bring the presence of Jesus to them.
 - i. To be clear, you don't need to SAY the Jesus part...but that can help you have integrity in terms of genuinely wanting to care for students. Often, they are ALREADY looking for places to grow in their faith as it is, but the administrators are touchy about that.

3. Where to go from here

- a. As you listen, pay attention to needs that God might be opening that fit where you and your chapter need to grow. Pray and listen to God. Share any needs with current students in your chapter. And be strategic about who you bring in the loop to connect with any students coming out of incarceration, in terms of their emotional intelligence, sensitivity, and cross-cultural skills.