



Planting at a Community College Lessons from Santa Rosa Junior College

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Santa Rosa Junior College is in its second year of being intentionally planted, meaning that we are focused on employing the Chapter Planting essentials to build a sustainable chapter. Here are some lessons we are learning.

Our Vision is basically the IV mission: lives transformed, campus engaged, world changers developed. We say this at the beginning of every meeting. We are not satisfied to be a small isolated group on campus, but want to reach into the every corner of the campus including staff, faculty (Christian and not), employees, athletics, other clubs, etc...

Outreach is always on. We have a great NSO plan, but we spend a week each month doing some sort of outreach table/proxe station. Actually, we rarely do info tables, almost always a proxe. We do a proxe hybrid, which is basically a 4x8 piece of plywood, painted black with a question stenciled on with white spray paint. Students are invited to 'vote' their response with a sticker on the board, then engaged in conversation. The proxe nets Christians, but also engages seekers and skeptics. Staff/volunteers also take at least one class where they can both learn something new as well as to have more opportunities for outreach.

Follow-up is relentless. We try to call everyone within 48 hours. Try to get a meeting on campus. Prayer walk the campus with eyes open, which means also running into some the students you have met. Everyone needs to get a call, text, email, and Facebook message. After a couple weeks of not showing up, try to call again (offer to take them off the list if they are not interested). We text everyone almost every week with reminders for Bible study. Getting face time in the first 2 weeks is huge.

Prayer is spontaneous. It is tough to get students for multiple meetings. Prayer happens better when I make a special call to meet together at a given time to pray for the campus/each other. We tend to prayer walk, stopping to pray by classrooms, dropping in on Christian faculty to offer prayer, praying for friends by name.

Bible Discussions are core. This was the number one invite during Stage 1. I led the first or second, but then asked students to lead. I asked for volunteers to lead, and then followed up with those whom I really felt would benefit. This means more time to meet with the student to prepare, then coach along the way. But this is great discipleship time. Most activities are held on campus during the day, though we do at least one weekly night activity, because we have learned that if you can get students there at night, you have more time and more community is built.

Gathering Events work best in homes around food. Because everyone lives at home or in apartments, doing potlucks prove to be well-attended activities. We would organize potlucks and at some point, make a vision pitch, usually inviting input and partnership for an upcoming event. Over time, we became bolder for these events, making bolder pitches for partnership and asking students to create. By the way, potlucks were great. We didn't have to spend the day cooking/shopping, nor did we have to spend a lot of money.

We began a **core meeting** our third semester. This coincided with the Stage 2 Wave. We celebrated a previous event, pitched vision for an upcoming event, and then broke up to plan. If

training was necessary, we would offer that. Core meets every other week, though we may switch to every week.

Monthly outreaches continue to be key. We actually call them "Question of the Month." Potential Missional Christians are invited/challenged to take part in these outreaches, which turn out to be a great place for mentoring on witness, apologetics, listening, praying.

Monthly Large Group gatherings coincide with the questions, so an easy invite can be made to a next step. Students increasingly planned and led these.

Mentoring happens in public and is at times interrupted by a chance to share the faith or pray for a hurting stranger. It is more like apprenticeship than traditional discipleship. It happens by going to an event on campus and debriefing it. It happens by making lunches and passing them out and praying for local homeless. It happens when students work with you to prepare Bible study or give a testimony.

Questions/Next steps:

Can **momentum** be sustained semester-to-semester, year-to-year? We see inklings of a positive outcome to this, but know that there will always be turnover. A faithful student one semester may not come at all the next, usually due to social base (a boy/girl friend, parent divorce) or job.

Can **staff presence** be maintained year to year? Having a staff presence, or perhaps an active faculty advisor is essential to continuity. Area leadership needs to be thinking about the pipeline. Most staff will not want to stay at the community college forever. It is hard work.

Leadership. Can we pull off a leadership team? Can structures be added to already full schedules?

Santa Rosa JC has about 30K students (many part time or reentry), has a rich history, somewhat ethnically and economically diverse, located in the heart of the county hub of 160K, one hour north of San Francisco in a largely unchurched area. Group is at about 40 students, 12 missional Christians, about 15% conversion ratio. Staff: 1 full time, 2 volunteers/interns. It has doubled the last 2 years.

[Planting at a Community College](#) is posted on the [Collegiate Ministries website](#) with related resources for InterVarsity staff and student leaders.