

Issues to Consider When Chapter Planting on a Latino Serving Institution

Written by Orlando Crespo



Finding the Right Campus

- The graduation rate of a college or university plays a major factor in the effectiveness of a chapter plant because it cues us in on the unfortunate and likely turnover rate of students who get involved. But with a new chapter plant, there are several other factors we must also consider in finding the right campus:
 - *Is the school at which we are planting a feeder school for another school where we have a strong, vibrant chapter? If so, in reality we are not losing the investment we have made in these students but reap the benefits of their leadership at the school to which they will transfer. Having strong leadership and ministry ties between the two schools will make this transition smoother and more natural for the transferring students, and the new students in the chapter plant can gain vision from the already existing chapter.*
 - *Is there a strong Christian base of faculty and administrators at the campus that can provide ongoing and consistent leadership support for the prospective chapter during times of high student attrition rates?*
 - *Are there healthy, supportive churches near the college or university that have demonstrated a vision and love for the college students and faculty?*
- If potential for dorm and commuter ministry exists on campus, do not assume dorm ministry as your key strategy but pursue commuter outreach when your target group is Latino students and faculty because the majority of the Latino students you hope to reach will likely be non-residential students who have no connections to the dorms.

Seeking the Right Support

- With any chapter plant, strong support from the Area Director and the rest of the area team is essential. However, when it comes to Chapter Planting in a Latino Serving Institution, community support is highly recommended because often Latino students and faculty are still very tied to their communities. Without strong community connections on our end, we may find our students constantly battling with their allegiance between IV, their home and/or their church.
 - *Implication: In phase 1 of the chapter plant, the chapter planter should put in some extra work to visit the churches and/or homes of the Missional Christians they are meeting and try to impart their vision to family, friends and/or church leaders. This could potentially engender support for the student's ongoing involvement with the new Chapter Plant and make their experience with us less stressful. It could also increase the community's own level of involvement with the chapter long-term as they begin to see it as an extension of their own ministry to the campus and reap the benefits of gaining trained Missional leaders returning to their churches.*

Finding the Right Chapter Planters

- Along with strong gathering gifts, pastoral gifts must also be present early in the plant. Multiple gifts in use early in the life of a LaFe plant will allow us to minister holistically to the needs of Latino students and faculty who may have the relational gifts to be missional but lack basic Christian discipleship and life skills to maintain a balanced life.
 - *Implications: We may want to think about putting together chapter planting staff partners instead of individual chapter planters. If this is not possible, then the Chapter Planter, in cooperation with his/her AD, will need to recruit Volunteers or Interns with strong pastoral care gifts.*
- If church and community partnership is considered vital for the success of a particular chapter plant on a Latino Serving Institution, it will be most beneficial for the sake of gaining respect and building trust if the Chapter Planter is older and/or married. Latino Pastors and Church Leaders do not look as favorably upon a young Latino Minister without credentials, experience or connections.

Casting the Right Vision

- You must decide before the chapter plant begins that Catholic bashing will not be permitted at any planting event. This may be costly because some extreme charismatic, anti-catholic students or faculty members may have to be turned away.
 - *Implications: We will have to spend more time pursuing Missional Christians who are not solely Missional but also teachable and open toward other Catholic Christians. We will also need to build into the group a high level of acceptance for Catholics as we cast vision in the early stages of the chapter plant. And finally, it will mean that we should seek out Missional Catholic Christians who will be understanding, purposeful and completely committed to engaging Latino Catholic students and faculty members.*
- Many Latino students come from churches that have never had a vision for Campus Ministry because in their Latino pastors' countries of origin Christian clubs and evangelism on campus was illegal. We must fill our students with vision for campus outreach as not only permissible but also as a great opportunity to make Christ known with creativity, courage and boldness.

Seeking and Developing the Right Missional Christians

- The LaFe Ministries and Chapters that have thrived over a long period of time have not been the ones with large numbers of Latino students involved initially but rather those with staff workers who were consistent, spiritually authoritative and were successful in developing Missional Christians.
 - *Implication: New Chapter Planters must place a greater emphasis on developing Missional Christians than on posting larger numbers of Latino student and faculty involvement at every stage of the Chapter Plant.*
- Building relationships with Latino Christians who are Missional will mean investing extra time opening up your life and ministry to establish confianza (trust) and respeto (respect). Latino Missional Christians may seem hesitant or disinterested at first but as they begin to trust you and your vision for the campus, they will become loyal to you as their leader and extremely diligent in reaching out.

- *Implication: Be willing to spend extra time with Latino Missional Christians and open up your life and your home to them with honesty, integrity and kindness. This will be costly early on in the plant but will reap great benefits later.*
- Latino Students who are Missional Christians will likely be identified as such by their church and/or community leaders and recruited for leadership and service. (This is very much interconnected to the section above on “Seeking the Right Support”).
 - *Implication: To gain their full attention and commitment, the Chapter Planter must spend extra time casting vision for the campus as the students’ or faculty members’ primary mission field during their college years and what they can learn that will benefit their churches and communities later when they are able to be fully engaged as leaders.*
- Some Latinos students may be hesitant in approaching strangers but they are OK about opening up their networks of friendships and family if they feel they can trust the Chapter Planter.
 - *Implication: Latino Missional Christians may appear very outgoing but if they understand the vision and respect and trust the chapter planter, they will invite their friends to outreach events. However, they may need extra motivation and training on how to extend themselves to strangers.*
- When it comes to working with Catholic students and faculty, many of them may not yet have the value or skills for evangelism, even if they are devoted Catholic Christians. We must be alert to the potential a Catholic student or faculty member has for becoming Missional and invest accordingly.
 - *Implications: Passing the key marker of 5-8 Missional Christians in Stage 1 may take longer than usual. However, investing in Missional Christian development will pay off exponentially later as these students and faculty members begin to reach out to their friends and networks with newfound vision and spiritual authority.*
- Most Missional Christians will be very unfamiliar with InterVarsity.
 - *Implication: Get them to visit other healthy chapters in the area or division for vision building earlier rather than later in the chapter plant.*

Putting on the Right Catalytic Events

- As a way to build synergy and strength for Latino Ministry, utilize one day or weekend area LaFe gatherings as catalytic events that help new Missional Christians ramp up quickly to become part of the core and enter Stage 2 of the Chapter Plant.
 - *Implication: Your area will need to create space in the calendar and free up resources to make this kind of event possible. You may also need to ask for guidance from the National LaFe Ministry to put on this kind of gathering using “The Noche de Fe” format or a weekend Encuentro LaFe Conference.*

[Issues to Consider When Chapter Planting on a Latino Serving Institution](#) is posted on the [Collegiate Ministries website](#) with related resources for InterVarsity staff and student leaders.