

PROPOSAL 3

Proposal: Resurrecting Campus Ministry in Fundy St. Lawrence Dawnig Waters (FSLDW)/Bermuda-Nova Scotia (BNS) Region

Origin: Justice, Mission and Outreach Committee

1. What is the issue?

The report “Towards 2035” shows starkly the drop in membership in the United Church of Canada. It challenges us to look to the future with optimism rooted in our recognition of the changes in our society and the constancy of our need for the Holy Spirit. While we search for new ways to live our faith, we cannot forget what has served us well in the past. UCC campus ministries have eroded over time and our current ministries are not reaching our youth. Campus chaplaincies can touch the lives of hundreds of young adults every year.

Recognizing the social justice work done by that ministry, when financial support for the Dalhousie campus ministry ended Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council assigned JMOC the task of responding to that loss. In responding to this request, JMOC asked: *Where does Campus Ministry most naturally belong so it can thrive?*

2. Why is this issue important?

Young adults need spiritual care and counselling and guidance as they navigate questions of identity and purpose into adulthood. Campus ministry builds relationships with this generation, offers outreach to respond to their current needs, and encourages an inclusive faith where Christian Nationalism and Fundamentalist ideologies often take hold. A positive experience of faith in the first third of one’s life allows a person to identify their own gifts and learn to use them to serve others. Thus, it creates a great sense of purpose, nurturing resiliency and mental well-being.

3. How might the Region respond to the issue?

Therefore, we believe that God is calling our Regions to recognize the critical importance of this unique type of ministry at this time, and to recommit to its value as an outreach ministry to young adults.

This proposal recommends moving the responsibility of “Campus Chaplaincy” from JMOC to Children, Youth and Young Adults (BNS) and Faith Formation and Education (FSLDW).

4. What will be the impact?

For the denomination, the need to connect with young adults is crucial to our sustainability. For communities of faith, opportunities to expand intergenerational reach adds different perspectives, beliefs and rituals that benefit the whole body of Christ. For young adults, the presence of accessible spiritual care at a time of existential questioning can be life-changing and life-saving. There is a strong need to feel loved and accepted as one seeks to find their place in the world.

This is not just an administrative shift, but a correction of alignment. Campus Ministry is fundamentally a relational, developmental, and formational ministry, not primarily a justice

program. Its day-to-day work is centered on accompanying young adults in their spiritual growth, identity formation, and faith exploration. JMO is structured to address systemic issues, advocacy, and outreach. Having Campus Ministry under JMO risks treating young adults as recipients of outreach rather than as people being formed, mentored, and integrated into the life of the Church. Moving it recognizes that young adults are not a “mission field”; they are part of the Church’s present and future.

Campus Ministry is deeply about faith formation. That work aligns directly with Faith Formation and Education. When Campus Ministry sits alongside Children, Youth, and Young Adult ministries, it becomes part of a lifelong faith journey rather than a disconnected initiative. Placing Campus Ministry in formation-focused bodies ensures that justice engagement emerges from deep roots rather than being the sole organizing framework.

5. How does this proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?

Campus ministries work to include the most vulnerable, such as foreign and racialized students, those who identify as 2S&LGBTQIA+, and individuals struggling with poverty. This proposal also helps to affirm the important role that youth and young adults play within faith communities and society at large. It also empowers voices that have been historically missing or under-represented at the table.

6. For the body transmitting this proposal to the Region:

Yes, this proposal is going to both regions.

Yes, this proposal is originating in a bi-regional committee and is directed at two committees, one from each region.

7. Who will speak to this proposal on behalf of the originating body?

Dr. Kathy Bigsby (co-chair of Justice, Mission and Outreach)

Rev. Natasha Pearen (member of Justice Mission and Outreach)

Rev. Catherine Stuart, Regional Minister for Children, Youth and Young Adults (resource, if needed)

Rev. Shepherd Munikwa, Regional Minister for Justice, Mission and Outreach (resource, if needed)