

Each ministry has its own distinctions so a flat line comparison is not a real possibility. My interest is in the level of accountability of the ministry. Our research has shown that a ministry has at least four levels of accountability. They are . . .

FOUR ACCOUNTABILITY ESSENTIALS

1. ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE CONTEXT OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY SERVED

This involves knowledge of the demographics, culture, student diversity, academic climate, strength/weakness of academic departments and programs, civic receptivity to having a college/university in its midst, political realities on campus, relationships of the ministry to other religious groups and the schools receptivity to religious organizations and influence on members of the academic community.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE MINISTRY

This involves stewardship of funds, staff time and energy, facilities available, theological point of view, understanding of the use and authority of scripture, tradition of the ministry's "style" of work, friends and adherents of the ministry, support/non support of congregations in its vicinity, recognition of its denominational labels, etc.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE PEOPLE THE MINISTRY SERVES

This involves a clear understanding of the context of the community the ministry serves and its tally of its resources inventory. With these in mind the ministry determines what segments of the academic community it will focus upon in its work and what priority may there be in this listing.

For example, if the ministry has chosen younger undergraduates as its focus how accountable is the program to their needs, how has it established a leadership development process, how does the ministry seek to relate to individuals whose involvement ranges from being at the core of operations to the margins and beyond?

The ministry may find it has something to offer to graduate students or to internationals or to providing a connection between the resources of the academic community to the needs of the civic community. It all goes back to the foundational assessment of the context of operation and the resources available.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY TO A GOVERNING BODY OF THE DENOMINATION(S) SERVED

This body may be a local church session or board, a committee of a denominational regional body (presbytery, district, conference, etc.). For ecumenical ministries it may be a bit more complex but the essential still holds; the ministry needs to have some relationship tie to a governing body of the denominations it serves and represents.

Thus, one way of assessing a collegiate ministry is to look into how it demonstrates these four levels of accountability.

On a more pragmatic level there is a "Self-Assessment Tool" the Collegiate Ministries Office of the Presbyterian Church (USA) has developed to be used primarily by a local ministry board to look at itself and gain a quantitative measurement about itself. It is important to look at those areas where a ministry may get a low "grade". Given the first three of the accountability levels mentioned above, the ministry might have determined it is appropriate not to take some action or not provide some service or not work with certain segments of the college/university.

The Self-Assessment Tool is on the web at <http://www.pcusa.org/collegiate/resources.htm> for review, reproduction and use.

Now, about those **specific** responsibilities. Responsibilities go both ways between the ministries and the governing body. Here are some suggestions to consider.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MINISTRY TO GOVERNING BODY COMMITTEE

1. Submit a year-end financial report and the most recently amended or adopted budget for the year showing the "actuals" of what was taken in and spent.
2. Submit a budget for the coming year
3. Submit a roster of local board members (or equivalent group responsible for oversight of the ministry) with their full contact information and civic positions.
4. Submit an annual report of the ministry with segments provided by the board chair or designee, at least 2 students or others involved in the ministry and the primary staff person
5. Include governing body committee members on the ministry's mailing list of those who receive its interpretive, promotional and funds development materials.
6. Invite the governing body Committee to hold its meetings periodically at the ministry site in so far as that is possible.
7. Obtain and review the most recent higher education ministry strategy documents of the denomination. For the Presbyterian Church ((USA) the booklet "Renewing the Commitment Mission Strategy for Higher Education Ministry" is at <http://www.pcusa.org/collegiate/resources.htm>.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY TO THE MINISTRIES

1. Administer an assessment process that reviews each collegiate ministry on the basis of its accountability to its context, resources, constituencies served and relationship with a governing body its denomination(s).
2. Advocate strenuously and knowledgeably to the denomination on behalf of collegiate ministries as vital agencies of evangelism, discipleship and leadership development.
3. Interpret to local churches their need to refer their college bound students to the campus ministries serving the schools where those students attend. Denominational collegiate ministries offices can assist with this process.
4. Identify congregations that have even a small segment of their church's program serving college students of their own and not of their own membership or are serving other populations of a nearby school.
5. Promote and encourage congregations to contribute to the special mission funds of their denomination which support higher education ministry, e.g. PC(USA) Extra Commitment Offerings.
6. Promote the observance of "Higher Education Sunday" as a time to pray for collegiate ministries and to take up a special offering to support the ministries related to the Committee.
7. Work with the denomination's collegiate ministry staff on the development of a rational process for the distribution of financial resources to the ministries.

8. Encourage the local ministry boards to provide a sabbatical period for their ministry staff.
9. Consult with comparable units of other denominations regarding ways to be more collaborative in their approaches to collegiate ministries in the region.
10. Obtain and review closely the most recent higher education ministry strategy documents of the denomination.
11. Establish at least a triennial review and consultation process with each ministry related to the Committee to reflect on the four accountability levels mentioned above as well as on the program, governance structure, staffing and the financial accountability and funds development process of the ministry.
12. Provide advance notice to the ministries (9 months minimum) of expected notable decreases/increases in financial support levels expected from the Committee.
13. Include on the Committee, or its subgroup that deals exclusively with higher education ministry, at least one representative from one of the campus ministry local board and a campus minister (not from the same ministry at the same time). Their participation may be ex-officio and their terms may be for a year or so to allow each ministry to be directly represented over time. Their presence will add a great deal of reality and integrity to the discussions and they can make their reports back to the various ministries.
14. Continually provide interpretive information to the news media of the presbytery about its collegiate ministries.
15. Coordinate with the ministries to provide an interpretive table at each of the Committee and the larger governing body meetings
16. Provide to each congregation of the regional denominational unit a reproducible copy of the "12 & 24 Ways To Keep In Touch With Your Congregation's College Students". Available as a pdf file at web site <http://www.pcusa.org/collegiate/resources.htm>.
17. Support a process to provide funds development training for the staff and board members of each collegiate ministry that is primarily responsible for raising its own operational budget.

These suggestions come from what I have heard from collegiate ministry staff and seen at work in some governing bodies. Higher education ministry staff are among the best, brightest and most dedicated in service to the church. They and their work far too often go overlooked because they are out of sight and out of mind. But this specialized ministry is crucial to the health and continuation of the church and to the development of a people who integrate faith and their knowledge to serve God and God's creation. Show to them that they are very much accepted even when they may not have met and "unstated" expectation. Be fair.

If you have any questions, comments or additional suggestions about this information please contact the PC(USA) Collegiate Ministries Office (pcc@pcusa.org) and we'll talk about them. Blessings upon you and your ministry.

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HOLDING COLLEGIATE MINISTRIES ACCOUNTABLE

**Building Working Relationships
Between Collegiate Ministries And
Those To Whom They Are Accountable**

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*"I am accepted only insofar as the last **unstated** expectation I met."*

-a frustrated clergy spouse

I received an email from a member of a denominational governing body committee responsible for oversight of higher education ministries within its bounds. The Committee wanted help in building next year's budget. I was asked, "How should we think about our funding responsibilities for our campus ministries?"

The task really is bigger than the budget. It touches the core of building relationships between ministries and funding units that are fair, equitable and mutual. Accountability issues need to be written. Expectations need to be stated.

This little brochure attempts to set some guidelines for both the funding units and the ministries to build such positive and mutual relationships. The mission of Ministry in Higher Education requires this high level of accountability of stewarded resources.

Accountability components should be standard for all the supported ministries. But the expectations of each ministry will be unique to that ministries context, resources and constituents

Accountability items and expectations are not the same. Accountability issues are what get written down and are matters of record. Expectations are matters that get mutually explored and affirmed. That exploration process is how the relationship is built. Holding the parties accountable is how the relationship is positively maintained.