STUDENT NETWORK ADVOCACY

*Collecting student network contact information*

Often students have incredible networks that can be wonderful supporters of InterVarsity's ministry! For many this could be their parents for others it might be family, pastors, mentors, family friends, etc. The first step is to invite your current students to join you in reaching out to them.  Here's a guide.

The first step is to ask the students for permission to contact people from their network and then gather contact information. Permission is key and will seem awkward at first, but after the first year, it will feel normal. Remember your audience: if your students come from an indirect culture, you will need to contextualize how you approach both the students and their network.

Do this at two Large Groups or Core Meetings in a row to make sure you get as many students participating as possible. Make sure you have contact cards on each chair and extra ones available in case a student wants to provide more than one contact. You can also use an online form to gather the data.

**Large Group Announcement**

As you may or may not know, this ministry happens in part because many alumni, local churches, friends and parents all over the country are praying for us and partner financially with our ministry. They care about what happens here and they want to see the Gospel advance on campus.

As your staff, I am always looking to expand our team of people who partner with us. I believe many of you have people within your network that could be people that are interested in partnering with our ministry. If you are comfortable, could you please fill out the card on your chair with the contact information of people within your network that you believe would be interested in caring about InterVarsity. For many students this could be their parents, but it could also be other family or friends, a mentor, your pastor from home, etc. If you provide their info, I would love to contact them and do three things:

1. Share with them about InterVarsity's ministry.
2. Invite them to stay connected and informed about what IV is doing so they can pray.
3. Invite them to support our ministry financially.

This is a given, but I feel I should say this anyway: know that my commitment to you is in no way contingent on your participation in this. The purpose is simply to raise awareness about InterVarsity, so that we can have a larger network to pray for and raise the necessary funds for the ministry. Many InterVarsity groups have an annual tradition of reaching out to student networks with great results. This is also a great way for you to learn how to advocate for something you believe in, and I’d love to help you think through how you could talk to the people within your network about InterVarsity also.

If that sounds good to you, please fill out their info and I will collect it. I’ll be sending a letter/email to them before Thanksgiving break. If you’re interested, I’d love to connect with you before Thanksgiving break to help you think through how you can share about InterVarsity with these folks while you’re back home. If you have any questions, just let me know. Thanks!

**Large Group announcement geared toward parents specifically:**

Everyone, grab the information slip under your chair. You know that awkward moment when it's time to meet the parents?  Well, friends, that time has come for us. It's time for me to meet your parents.  Let me tell you what I mean...For those of you who don't know, I am on staff with InterVarsity. This means I work for God and for you full-time!  In a church, the congregation supports the ministry that happens. But in a parachurch org like InterVarsity, we don't take a regular offering for this ministry. Instead we rely on family, friends and community members who love and care about the university and college students like you.

So I need to raise about $6,000 per MONTH to keep this ministry running. These funds allow staff to work full-time with you and provide food and supplies for outreach events as well as other ministry costs.  A lot of the people who give are my family, friends and people who know how important campus ministry is. So I hope you know how loved and cared for you are! There are hundreds of people who pray for you and give to this ministry in order to see you grow in your faith.

But there are also alumni and parents who give to this ministry...which is where you come in!  For many of you, your parents care a lot about your spiritual growth and would love to invest in InterVarsity.  Maybe some of your parents aren't believers but might want to see you grow in your leadership skills.  Either way, many of your parents would be interested in hearing more about InterVarsity from a staff perspective.

So I would LOVE to meet your parents and tell them more about what we are doing. Here's a few reasons why you might want me to meet your parents, too. When parents meet the staff, it builds trust between them and InterVarsity.

1. They are more likely to give permission regarding IV events.

2. They are more likely to help with conference costs.

3. They are encouraged to hear me bragging about you.

Usually, I first send a letter to parents to introduce myself. Then I give them a call and see if they'd like to meet so I can tell them more about the ministry, and then ask them to pray and maybe give. You don't have to make a judgment about whether or not your parents can or will give. You're just giving them the opportunity to know more about InterVarsity. If that sounds good to you, please fill out their info on the parents slip and pass it in.

**No Large Group? No Problem:**

If the chapter you lead has a more decentralized model of ministry (small groups are primary structure), you probably have a system for sharing information with the whole chapter. It might be a chapter communications structure (email, social media, etc.), or it might be a leaders’ meeting where you coach student leaders on how to share with their sphere of influence. When thinking of student network advocacy, you can actually use those same structures to get the word out. Here are some tips as to consider if this is your context:

1. Plan for more time. It will take more time for the information to work down to small groups and back up to you, so start a few weeks earlier (early October if you want to send a letter around Thanksgiving).
2. Prepare your student leaders well. Take time during the leaders meeting to prepare your student leaders just as you would with conference recruitment. Doing this well in a decentralized context is largely based on how well you prep your leaders. Be sure to provide them with a script, cast a compelling vision, and provide contact cards (or online form) for them to use.