

New Student Outreach Case Study

Instructions:

- Individually read the case study and consider the questions below. *(15 min)*
- Groups then discuss the questions. *(15 min)*

Monique, the solo InterVarsity staff member at a mid-size state university, spent the summer participating in an urban project. The experience left her with little time to plan for the fall. The summer project was a powerful experience and forced Monique to face issues of injustice and racism and see the power of the gospel at work. She was eager to see the gospel move on her campus that fall.

At spring camp, her core leadership team, which had grown 20% from the past year, decided together on a strategy that would focus on Missional Small Groups. That was the focus of the camp program and it seemed to really fit their situation. They worked hard at organizing a plan for the fall that would target new ministries in different areas of campus. Because of this momentum, Monique set goals 20% higher than last year when meeting with her AD for her annual review.

Though she did a lot at camp to get things organized for the fall, the summer project limited her ability to do much more, so she felt both eager and a little nervous going into the fall. But the leaders all arrived psyched about the year and ready to dive in.

The first big event of NSO was the missional small group kickoff week. The leaders were to go into the dorms or targeted ministry areas and give out home baked treats to every student, sharing about the vision of their group. They had practiced pitching vision and inviting before going out. Several of these teams encountered resistance, however, including a student in one dorm reporting the activity to their Resident Assistant, who asked the leaders to stop their “religious proselytizing” or they would be reported to the dean’s office. Word spread about this to the other leaders, which caused all of them to cease the inviting activities. The first small groups that week had about the same number as last year, with fewer non-Christians than hoped for.

At the next week’s small group leaders’ meeting, Monique found out about the resistance and the lack of inviting. Disappointed, she felt the weight of losing time, when other strong Christian ministries on campus were going all out with big events and visibility. She decided to do more training on inviting and pressed the leaders to keep on.

That week the leaders hosted a big pizza bash with games and prizes and with a gospel presentation. Every small group planned to invite their new contacts and have them invite friends. Less people showed up than expected, with a smaller number of new contacts than expected, too. Monique, who was to do the gospel presentation, decided at the event to scratch it, as it felt awkward at that point. Follow up with the new contacts was limited, because the leaders were still hesitant from the RA incident about knocking on doors.

Despite this, the number of students involved was about the same as last year and two of the other campus Christian groups had started strong, with several non-Christians actively seeking after the second week. Monique was concerned that her hoped for goals wouldn't be met. She considered gathering the small group leaders for a mini-retreat, but she couldn't find space for it in her calendar. Instead, she decided to meet individually with the leaders, including visiting some of their groups, to help coach and support.

She also was to speak at the area's fall conference in late September, so she had to carve out time for preparation. Plus there was a group of potential leader apprentices that she needed to train to join each small group (something that didn't happen over the summer). Because she spent a lot of time serving on the summer project, she spent little time on MPD. Her AD recently informed her that she had a deficit in her account and needed to focus time and energy on her fund raising.

Three weeks into the semester, Monique had been out most every weeknight on campus, meeting with leaders, new apprentices, prayer meetings, and continuing their large group meetings, even though they weren't the main focus. She noticed that she had less energy and also that her enthusiasm had waned. But with fall conference coming up, she thought that would be a great place for a lift. Her students could find more momentum after their shaky NSO. So she set her sights on the conference...

- What do you notice about the spiritual lives of the staff and students in mission?
- What do you think they are missing?
- What could you envision them doing to change things for the better?

Large Group Debrief (10-15 min)

- Use focus questions above to interact in LG and pull out key themes.
- Write these down on newsprint or some visible place.