

Ties That Should Bind Our Academies and Colleges

Cooperation and Collaboration

BY ELISABETH WEAR

Educating Adventist youth in today's society demands increased emphasis on collaborative partnerships. Declining enrollment, a constricting economy, heightened accreditation standards, and multiplying state mandates force academies and colleges to operate at peak efficiency. Stronger ties with sister institutions form part of that equation.

Beyond information sharing and area coordination, collaborative team building entails active cooperative effort to reach common goals. Although Seventh-day Adventist academies and colleges share a common aim of dedication to Christian education, strides remain to be taken to achieve true collaboration.

What examples would illustrate college/academy teamwork? Here are a dozen starting points:

1. Combine Community-Service Efforts

Despite their enthusiasm about community outreach, teens, teachers, and parents find maintaining and supervising service ventures to be challenging and time-consuming. Teaming col-

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College and academy students work together to feed the needy through Columbia Union College's Loaves and Fishes program.

lege and academy students can provide relief—and some exciting outcomes.

Stephen Rumble, college student director of Loaves and Fishes at Columbia Union College (CUC), Takoma Park, Maryland, invites students from nearby Takoma Academy (TA) to assist in providing soup and sandwiches for underprivileged children in a nearby subdivision. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons at 4 p.m., students from CUC and TA meet in the Sligo church kitchen, help prepare food, load a van, and serve hungry children and parents. "Academy kids aren't always the most disciplined. A few are motivated, but for the most part they'd rather stand around and talk to each other," says Stephen. "It takes constant encouragement. Still, we're glad they're involved, and I think they've

gained a real blessing."

Benefit: Cross-age community service extends outreach opportunities, encourages interdependence, and promotes mutual respect. For college students, learning to work with academy students may be as important an outcome as actually providing assistance to the community.

2. Develop Cross-Age Tutoring Practicums

For years, cross-age teaching has proved effective in grade schools. What happens when college students tutor academy students?

Dr. Betty McCune, a curriculum specialist at La Sierra University, Riverside, California, provides English tutoring for

net will also link the two campuses.

Frank Di Memmo, director of Instructional Media Services at Columbia Union College, is investigating ways to establish a cooperative cable network between the college and area academies and grade schools. The broadcasting of college courses could enable academy and grade school teachers to update

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valuable class time for one visit from the college recruiters, and academy seniors make one trip to the college. Absolved from further responsibility, academy teachers then promote their favorite college and criticize the other colleges. On the other hand, many colleges do even less—rarely promoting enrollment for local academies, and seldom publicly celebrating anyone's success stories except their own.

Using a collaborative model as they visit area churches, colleges should make it evident that they are seeking to enhance the success of feeder academies. Academy teachers would then enthusiastically support the area college—even after college days. Planning teams with participants from each academy and the local college should design ways to share recruitment responsibilities. Institutions should seize every opportunity to advertise the strengths of sister schools.

Benefit: Teaming local recruitment efforts means reaching more potential students. The success of each school within a union positively affects every other school.

5. Offer Academy-Based College Courses

With less money and more demanding consumers, academies need help in providing for advanced students. Colleges can offer advanced placement courses at local academies.

Columbia Union College allows calculus and English 101 to be taught at participating academies. It designs the course and approves the text and teacher. Academies absorb the teacher's salary, and collect and send tuition and grades to the college. Students pay 25 percent of the regular college tuition. Course credit depends on students' passing the course at a specified level.

Benefit: The academy provides increased opportunities for advanced students when it offers academy-based college courses. The college benefits from closer contact with potential students.

6. Transfer Transcripts Electronically

Rarely is a transcript request not viewed as urgent by the student. Yet, at the present time, it takes from two to

Friendship Games sponsored by Columbia Union College bring academy and church leagues together for workshops, games, and religious activities.

students at a nearby school. She will be matching college tutors with community teams in a campus-wide teen literacy program.

Benefit: College mentors can provide inexpensive tutoring for academy students, bring fresh insights, enhance subject relevance, and encourage college attendance. College departments thereby discover meaningful jobs and practicums for their students.

3. Share Resources With Sister Institutions

Technology often races ahead of school boards' ability to pay. Academies and colleges need new ways to share expensive resources.

At least one academy has offered to share its computer lab with students from a nearby Adventist college. In return, the college may install a computerized Novell network for the academy. Inter-

their certification. Advanced academy students could "sit in" on college courses and receive college credit.

The Potomac Conference is considering ways to link libraries at the grade school, academy, and college levels using the Al Gore "Information Super Highway" model. Information will be readily available to every student through school computers connected by telephone lines. Computerized bulletin boards will encourage students to post questions for other academy or college students to answer.

Benefit: Shared equipment extends possibilities for improved service at more affordable prices.

4. Commit to Reciprocal Recruitment Efforts

Recruitment efforts at academy and college levels rarely connect. Traditionally, the academy grudgingly gives up

three months after a student applies to obtain clearance for college acceptance. Countless hours of phone calls and wasted employee time are consumed in tracking misplaced transcripts.

In the immediate future, the local college and all feeder academies must be able to send transcripts electronically. Future computer purchases should focus on system compatibility throughout the unions and even divisions.

Benefit: Computerized transcript transfer reduces complaints about lost or late transcripts, promotes effective communication, and improves early identification of at-risk students who should be targeted for college remedial programs.

7. Develop Cross-Age Soul-Winning Teams

College religion and theology majors frequently hold evangelistic meetings in area churches with impressive results. Academy students often do the same.

Academy and college students can work together to hold evangelistic meetings and set up Bible studies in the community.

Week of Prayer programming and Bible conferences also provide opportunities for cross-age team building.

Benefit: Cross-age evangelistic teams increase opportunities for faith sharing at all levels. When academy churches are included, colleges gain access to a larger selection of churches for evangelism. Academy religion teachers can enhance faculty support when an evangelistic series is held at their academy.

8. Combine College and Academy Students for "It's Academic"

Remember the excitement of participating in college bowls? Colleges sported their smartest students, faculty worked on developing questions, and school mechanics put together complicated wiring for buzzers (that sometimes even worked).

If college and academy bowls are losing momentum, schools can experiment with college/academy teams. Within-union contests might well extend to other unions.

Benefit: Motivation for scholarly endeavors increases when college and

academy faculty present a united front to emphasize excellence. Cooperation lessens faculty workload in generating "Academic Bowl" questions.

9. Co-Teach Faculty/Student Workshops

How can quality elective courses be offered at the college level without wrecking the budget? Workshops are an effective method to accomplish this, as academy and college faculty team up and students from both levels can mix.

In preparation for its music workshop, Columbia Union College hires a well-known instrumental or choral conductor in the Washington metropolitan area such as Kennedy Center Choral Director Paul Hill. Students and faculty from the academy and college levels participate in a marathon of intensive workshops culminating in instrumental and choral concerts.

Monthly science symposiums at Takoma Academy feature college science teachers and scientists, including representatives of the nearby Goddard Space Center. The presenters discuss current research and answer student questions.

CUC sponsors Friendship Games at Takoma Academy, giving several acad-

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More than 100 elite players from six union conference academies attended workshops and performed at the annual Columbia Union Band Festival, held in February 1994 at the college.

emy and church leagues an opportunity to play. The games are usually held during a vacation week, with the college and academies sharing responsibilities for coaching, coordinating the leagues, and presenting Friday night worships and Sabbath activities. Each team pays a registration fee to support the referees.

Benefit: Hands-on faculty/student workshops that combine the college and its academies feature faculty teaching together as equals, focus on shared strengths, and afford greater instructional advantages than a single institution could provide.

10. Collaborate on Academic Standards

Academies and colleges rarely collaborate when it comes to establishing academic standards. If the college decides that Algebra II is a prerequisite for college entrance, a letter is sent to the academies with little thought about the impact on the academies' program or budget.

Academy and college curricula receive little collaborative review. College teachers rant about academies that teach four years of English and still produce college freshmen who cannot compose a decent paragraph. Academy

teachers feel frustrated when their students have to take remedial college courses even though they performed adequately in related classes at the secondary level.

Collaboration is needed between feeder academies and the college when setting collegiate entrance standards for mathematics, science, English, and overall G.P.A.

Dialogue needs to center on what must be taught at the college level and at the academy level—especially in mathematics, science, and English.

Both groups need to better communicate to academy students how to study for college entrance exams.

Benefit: Less frustration, increased motivation to meet standards, and greater cooperation and good will are realized when academic standards spring from a broad decision-making base.

11. Design Pedagogical Exchange

The November/December 1993 issue of *Change* asks, "Why is there so little professional discussion of teaching?"¹ Faculty who care deeply about teaching too seldom share the challenges of teaching their discipline.

Parker Palmer makes a plea to reconnect teaching to the disciplines. He suggests that teachers within a particular discipline discuss:

- *critical moments* in teaching and learning.
- *the human condition* of teachers and learners.
- *metaphors and images* of what we are doing when we teach, and
- *autobiographical reflection* on the great teachers who helped bring us into academic life.²

The Southern Union, which includes most of the southeastern United States, has introduced Design 2000, a K-16 model in which teachers and administrators at all levels participate in restructuring the curriculum. For example, the union plans to review and update the entire science curriculum, including textbooks, labs, resources, and

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Special weeks featuring the cultures of various peoples present opportunities for college and academy students to cooperate in presenting multicultural programs.

teaching methodologies. K-16 coordination of the school calendar also continues to be a source of lively discussion throughout the union.

Benefit: Sharing pedagogical dreams, demands, and dilemmas results in improved camaraderie and instruction as a result of dialogue between academies and colleges. Grading techniques, motivational strategies for apathetic students, courses to be taught, and teaching techniques are points for discussion between academy and college science, mathematics, English, history, and religion teachers.

12. Provide for Cultural Dialogue

The ethnic balance and diversity of each campus demands continued discussion on how to better educate our collective population. What are the dilemmas of a monocultural campus? Should black student unions be allowed? Is anyone doing anything for Hispanics on campus? How can we better relate to Asian students? Can a multicultural approach increase enrollment? What are the respective pitfalls?

Shenandoah Valley Academy, in New Market, Virginia, has successfully enrolled Asian students in an English-intensive curriculum. With declining enrollments, might this be a viable option for other academies? Could these be potential college students? What resources will be needed?

Columbia Union College enrolled Turkish students this past summer, providing them with tours and classes. Some

of the students had not bothered to read the brochures stating that CUC was a Christian college, or listened to the college liaisons, so they felt astounded that they could not smoke or drink on campus and that they actually had to attend classes. How could schools help such students prepare for and adjust to life on an SDA campus?

As academies and colleges share strategies and success stories, they can creatively solve the problems that they face when recruiting and enrolling foreign and multicultural students.

Takoma Academy, for instance, promotes a series of weeks featuring different cultures: Native Americans, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. Students plan and perform in the programs, parents bring ethnic food, bulletin boards are designed, display cases are filled, and performers are invited to demonstrate cultural rituals. This year has featured a special emphasis on Adventism, with presentations by college students.

Benefit: Academy/college cultural dialogue can help prevent misunderstandings, lower the risk of dissatisfied students and faculty, and maintain the integrity of a Christian environment. Enrollment increases might also be realized.

Summary

Cooperation and collaboration among overburdened colleges and academies must begin *now*. But what about the additional hours required for effective collaborating? Schools that cannot work together more effectively may face the ultimate calamity—extinction. ☞

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