

# UU Denominational Growth

Question: What investment could increase UU membership 37% over 20 years?

Answer: **UU Regional Campus Centers!**

**Imagine 50 UU Regional Campus Centers** spread across North America. A thumbnail sketch of each one:

- 80 active UU Young Adults (40 Local & 40 Remote in the region)
- 500 events per year including Worship, Social Action, Poetry, Theater, Writing, Comedy, UU Young Adult Groups, Vegetarian Food Service, UU Young Adult Conferences, Concerts, Coffee Houses, Peer Ministry, etc...
- Programming by, and therefore relevant to, UU Young Adults
- An on-campus building clearly identified as a UU Campus Center
- Professional staff for continuity and mentorship
- Thousands of non-UUs attracted to the UU RCC and given the opportunity to discover if they are UU

**What will it take to make this dream a reality?** An investment in UU Regional Campus Centers of \$1000 per UU High School graduate. We have about 5000 UU High School graduates per year.

**What is the potential Return-On-Investment (ROI)?**

- Current 10% retention of HS Graduates tripled to 30%.
- Empowered and energetic UU Young Adults attracting non-UUs to become UUs.
- An additional 4000 active UUs during college (an increase of 1000 per class).
- For each retained UU, add 2 new UUs... that equals 2000 incremental UUs per class!
- Over 20 years, that equals 60,000 additional UUs!
- That is a ROI of 1 additional UU per \$1667 invested by the association!



**Will it work? Consider what we know...**

1. UU Young Adults have formed 96 "Campus Groups" with only half being connected to congregations. Clearly many UU Young Adults are committed to supporting each other on campus, with or without congregational or denominational assistance. In addition to UU RCCs providing "local" programs, they can host regional events and provide ongoing support to UU Campus Groups in a 100 to 200 mile radius.
2. Congregations continually initiate Local Congregational Outreach Campus Ministry programs. However, these local efforts from every church on every campus rarely produce programs that are big enough to reach a "critical mass." Those that do survive typically strain the local congregation's ability to sustain them.
3. The UUA has shown commitment to UU Young Adults and Campus Ministry through:
  - The Mind-The-Gap project
  - Formation of the Campus Ministry Advisory Committee
  - Staffing of the Young Adults and Campus Ministry Office
  - Creating the Regional Organizing Consultants positions
  - Including \$2,000,000 for YA & CM support in the Campaign for Unitarian Universalism
4. YRUU youth have clearly expressed that they crave a UU home for the next step in their spiritual journey that is relevant to the needs of Young Adults. Few see joining a congregation as the next step.
5. \$1000 per High School Graduate, \$5,000,000 per year, is similar to the size of other efforts for UU YA&CM.
6. Actually, we already have some UU Regional Campus Centers currently operating as under-funded and little publicized "successful" local UU Campus Centers. They will flourish with denominational visibility and support.
7. Channing Murray Foundation is a UU Campus Center hosting 500 events per year. It's roots go back to congressional based "Campus Clubs" started 100 years ago. After the UU merger, it was incorporated and run as a Congregational Outreach Campus Ministry for 36 years. Since 1991, CMF has been a self-governing, financially independent UU Campus Center. It is ready to become a UU Regional Campus Center!

**Concentrating our resources on 50 UU Regional Campus Centers will:**

- Better serve the needs of our UU Young Adults at the RCC and in other Campus Groups in the region.
- Provide a "UU Evangelical Presence" of comparable visibility as other denomination's Campus Centers.
- Give UU High School graduates a clear "next step" option they do not have today.
- Allow investment in UU Campus Ministry with an identifiable ROI.
- Empower and include Young Adults as significant contributors to the growth of the UU denomination.
- Energize the UU denomination with creative talents, fresh perspectives and increased membership.

There is a marketing axiom, "the best prospect is a satisfied customer." If we better satisfy the needs of our Youth as they become Young Adults, many more of them will choose to become life long "customers" of the UU denomination.

Douglas K. Jones, Outreach Committee Chair, 217-377-6787 cell

217-344-1176

**Channing Murray Foundation**, 1209 W. Oregon, **Urbana, Illinois** 61801 01/22/06

# Religious Campus Center Economics 101

By Douglas K. Jones, Outreach Committee Chair, Channing Murray Foundation, Urbana, IL

Churches and Fellowships are communities that are supported by their members and provide support to their members. In this economic model, benefactors and beneficiaries are the same group.

Religious Campus Centers exist to provide programs and services to students and other members of the campus community. A separate group provides the vast majority of the financial and volunteer support needed to sustain the Campus Ministry. This economic model is very similar to a museum being supported by patrons of the arts for the benefit of the public.

Being a benefactor is rewarding. Being a member of a group providing something of value such as a Religious Campus Center or Museum means being a member of a community with shared goals. So when you combine the religious mission of Campus Ministry with personal rewards of being a member of group with a worthwhile purpose, it is little wonder that membership in a UU Campus Center feels a lot like being a member of a UU Fellowship or Church.

When you look at the economic model of a museum or Campus Center, you see that in addition to active members, there are significant sources of economic support in addition to the members. Museums get support from the government and/or philanthropic individuals and foundations.

Regional Religious Campus Centers receive support from local churches and from their Denomination. This is natural since the local church members receive the rewards of providing something of value and the Denomination is the long-term beneficiary of Campus Ministry.

It is common for larger local churches to reach out to their campus community. The extent of that outreach depends greatly on the level of denominational support. Without substantial denominational support, congregational based Campus Ministry typically includes activities like a weekly or monthly Young Adult group meeting, a few social events per year, an occasional social action event and pastoral services to students.

With denominational support, Campus Ministry typically includes a building on campus, full time staffs and the ability to provide hundreds of programs per year from a dedicated Religious Campus Center.



## The Economics of Channing Murray Foundation.

Channing Murray has a building on campus, a part-time staff and provides about 500 programs per year. This is all done with a very small budget (about \$55,000 per year) and the dedication of a core group of 25 to 40 "members" and a hand full of under paid staff. About two-thirds of these members are local Unitarian Universalist and the rest are community members who believe in the value of the CMF service to the campus community.

The local church, the Unitarian Universalist of Urbana-Champaign is the silent benefactor that provides the building at no charge to the Channing Murray Foundation. This church created CMF as a local outreach program over fifty years ago. After 36 years, CMF had grown far past an outreach program of a single parish church and became the first and I believe only Unitarian Universalist Campus Center that is financially independent and self governing.

When CMF is compared to the Campus Centers of other Denominations at the University of Illinois (and elsewhere), it is clear that they all have dedicated staff and volunteers, support of their local churches and provide service to students and other members of the campus community. It is obvious that denominational support is the fundamental difference in the economics of Channing Murray Foundation and other Campus Centers at the University of Illinois which include: McKinley Foundation (Presbyterian), Wesley Foundation (Methodist), University YWCA, University YMCA, Hillel Foundation (Jewish), Baptist Student Foundation, and Newman Center (Catholic).

Channing Murray Foundation was conceived, nurtured and support by the local church as it grew into the independent UU Campus Center it is today. The other Campus Centers where Outreach Ministries of their Denominations. Integrating CMF and the concept of UU Regional Campus Centers into the overall economic model used by the UUA to develop Young Adult and Campus Ministry programs will be challenging since the current model is designed to support congregational based Campus Ministry. However, since the overall Campus Ministry goals of the UUA and CMF are so closely aligned, the benefits of working together should lead to successful integration.

1/24/05