

CREATING YOUR COLLEGIATE LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

Samuel Van Syckel moved to Pithole, Pa, 150 years ago. It was the middle of nowhere — just a patch of ground in the foothills of the Appalachian mountains. But in January 1865, drillers struck oil in three wells, and less than six months later, approximately 15,000 people had moved there, including Van Syckel. He was a middle man — an oil buyer who would purchase the oil from drillers and then resell it to larger corporations. At that time, though, oil was collected in 300-pound barrels and then transported out by horse and wagon. The process was time consuming and labor intensive, and Van Syckel saw an opportunity. He was eventually responsible for building the nation's first commercial oil pipeline.

Samuel Van Syckel saw that it was one thing to bring oil up from the ground, but another thing entirely to distribute it out into the wider world. As those working day in and day out in collegiate ministry, we must come to the same realization. It is one thing to find students in our ministries who love the Lord and want to grow in Christ, but it's another thing to intentionally and strategically send them out into the broader world on mission. Just as Van Syckel once did, we must create our own kind of "pipeline" specifically for that purpose.

What if sending students on mission was normal in your collegiate ministry? What if the normal thing for college seniors to do in your ministry after they graduated was move to a new city, get a job, and help plant a church?

Or to move to an unreached people group to share the gospel? Or to join a college ministry to help reach students on campus? What if the question seniors were asking in your ministry was not IF they should be sent somewhere but WHERE they should go and HOW they should be involved in the mission of God? This is where we must move — to the normalization of "sending out" as an essential component of discipleship.

The truth of college ministry is that every student in your ministry will graduate and leave (or at least hopefully for their sake)! What if instead of them *leaving* your ministry when they graduated they were *sent* from your ministry to join in God's mission? What if one of the main ways God is going to accomplish the Great Commission is through college students saying YES to the mission of God after they graduated?

In order to see that happen in your ministry you need two key things — **Vision and Process!** We all know the importance of a clear and compelling vision — inspiring and calling people to sacrifice to see God do something great! But what we often forget is the second part — a clear process to see that vision accomplished. And that is where the idea of a leadership pipeline comes into practice. A leadership pipeline is able to take your dream and make it a reality. This article is aimed at achieving those goals by describing what a leadership pipeline is, why it is important, and how to implement one into your collegiate ministry.

WHAT IS A LEADERSHIP PIPELINE?

A leadership pipeline is a clear process that helps you intentionally develop leaders in your ministry.

It is a pathway of intentional growth and development to equip leaders with the necessary tools and resources for current and future ministry.

Every leader needs three things to develop: knowledge, experience, and coaching. Knowledge is information needed in order to grow. That could be theology, vision, or ministry training. But beyond intellectual knowledge, leaders also need experience that puts that information into practice. Examples of that experience include things like sharing the gospel, leading a small group,

accomplishing the vision that you have? Are you raising students up to be lifelong laborers in the harvest and sending them out? The old saying goes, “Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets.” So your ministry is perfectly designed right now to get the results you are getting. You may have a clear vision but do you have a clear process?

Second, a leadership pipeline develops clarity.

Once you realize that you have a process, it is important to clarify what that process is. This is important not only for leaders, but also for those actually on the pipeline. Once you have the process clarified, you will not only be able to clearly see where you are leading people; you’ll also be able to evaluate each step of the

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or speaking in public. The final component is coaching—feedback on how they are doing as leaders and a place for them to ask questions as they grow. A leadership pipeline implements all three in a systematic way to help leaders grow at the right pace while giving them the right opportunities at the right time.

WHY IS A LEADERSHIP PIPELINE IMPORTANT?

It is important to have a clear leadership pipeline for several reasons:

First, you already have a process. Whether you realize it or not you already have a process for developing leaders. It may not be intentional and clear, but you have a process nevertheless. Given that, the question is whether it’s working? Is your current process

process to make sure it is achieving its desired results. Clarity helps identify the knowledge, experience, and coaching people need to move to the next level of leadership.

Third, a leadership pipeline multiplies your

ministry. In Luke 10 Jesus says the harvest is plentiful and the laborers are few. In other words, the problem is not with the harvest; the problem is with the lack of laborers. This is particularly true in a leadership sense. Most ministries are capped because of the amount of leaders they have. What if the opposite was true of your ministry? What if you had more laborers than you knew what to do with? A leadership pipeline creates a clear way to multiply leaders which will in turn multiply the amount of people sent into the harvest. It will help you reach more people on campus, more parts of the campus, and plant more new ministries and churches.

EXAMPLES OF LEADERSHIP PIPELINES

Consider these examples from collegiate ministries that have proven to multiply disciples, ministries and churches. Every ministry context is different so we don't recommend copying and pasting these. However, it can be very helpful to see how others have implemented this concept.

- [Summit College](#)
- [Tarleton BSM Discipleship Pathway](#)
- [Resonate Church Leadership Pipeline \(Freshman to Church Planter\)](#)
- [Salt Company](#)
- GenSend Pipeline

GENSEND PIPELINE RESOURCES

We, at NAMB, are creating a list of resources that can help you develop students on their journey from lost to laborer. Consider using some or all of these resources, experiences and opportunities as a part of your pipeline.

High School — GenSend Break Opportunities

Intentional hand-off to GenSend Partner Church/Ministry/University

Freshman Year — GenSend Break / Summer for mature students

NAMB Equipping Resources:

- Life on Mission Devotional
- Gen Z Prayer Strategy
- Who's Your One Resources
- 3 Circles Gospel Tool
- Gospel Appointments
- 3 Habits for Everyday Evangelism
- Personal Ministry Impact Worksheet

Sophomore Year — GenSend Break/Summer

NAMB Equipping Resources:

- See above
- Multiplication Pipeline Series by Send Network

- *The Fuel and The Flame: Igniting Your Campus and Your Life for Jesus Christ* by Paul Worcester and Steve Shadrach

Junior Year — GenSend Break/Summer Leader, GenSend Mobilizer, or IMB Summer

NAMB Equipping Resources:

- *Calling out The Called* by Scott Pace and Shane Pruitt
- Next Gen On Mission Podcast
- *What Are You Going To Do With Your Life?* by J.D. Greear
- "What's Next?" Webinars?

Senior Year — GenSend Break/Summer Leader, GenSend Mobilizer, GenSend Semester or IMB Summer

NAMB Equipping Resources:

- *Calling out The Called* by Scott Pace and Shane Pruitt
- Next Gen On Mission Podcast
- *What Are You Going To Do With Your Life?* by J.D. Greear

Graduate — GenSend Semester, Journeyman, Planter Residency, Go2

NAMB Equipping Resources:

- *Calling out The Called* by Scott Pace and Shane Pruitt
- Next Gen On Mission Podcast

CREATE YOUR OWN LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

We have walked through what a pipeline is, why it is important and a few examples. Now we want to help you think through how to get started implementing your own leadership pipeline. We highly recommend working through this process with your team as it will create more ideas and buy in. Take your time and wrestle through it and don't be afraid to tweak it as the need arises. Your pipeline may be more simple than some of the examples. That may actually be better! The important thing is finding the right process and flow for your ministry and then working that process year after year.

GENERAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Think about the key leaders in your collegiate ministry right now. What were the most important influences to them growing as a leader? Think of the categories of knowledge, experience, and coaching. How can you be more intentional to recreate those types of experiences with your students?
2. What do you want to be the end goal (or goals) of your pipeline? That may be to produce a church planter, a missionary, someone who can start a new collegiate ministry or someone who can go into any context and make disciples. Whatever that is, what do you want to be true of that person and what are the necessary steps to get them there?
3. Are there any elements from the example leadership pipelines that you want to try to add or adapt to your ministry?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS


1. What does your ministry do to engage with freshmen before they even get to campus? How is your ministry connecting with churches, youth groups and camps in your area to find already interested freshmen?
2. The best time to reach a student with the gospel is during a freshman's first two weeks on campus. What does your ministry do to reach non-Christian freshmen during the first weeks on campus? What are some strategic ways that you could get more contacts and connect with more freshmen?
3. Once you reach a freshman, what are some key events that help them get connected and respond to the gospel? Often a Fall Retreat does a great job of helping new students bond with your ministry and get exposed to the gospel.
4. How will the freshman in your ministry be disciplined? Who will meet with them and what form will this take? What material will you use and how will that be delivered? (For example: At Chico Challenge upperclassmen leaders take freshmen through a series of training objectives called "*Be A Disciple*" and "*Make Disciples*" and then the book "*The Fuel and The Flame*.")
5. Many ministries use November as "Govember" where they use the month to focus on mobilizing students on mission. Summit College tries to have a customized "Summer Conversation" with every student about what they are doing with their summer before the end of the semester. What are some practical ways that you can start mobilizing and getting students to consider how to invest their summers early?

6. What catalytic opportunities over Winter Break or Spring Break do you have to help students connect, grow and gain vision for their lives? Many ministries utilize a Winter Conference, Spring Break Conference or a short GenSend Break mission experience to maximize the momentum in students' lives over the breaks.
7. What opportunities do freshmen have to serve? For those who want extra training and accountability, do you have any environments where they can plug in? (For example: At Chico Challenge, freshmen are allowed to join "Core Team" second semester as a greenhouse environment to help them gain training, vision, and accountability.)
8. What summer opportunities do you have available to help a student gain the training and experience that can prepare them to engage their peers with the gospel this Fall? (For example: Summit College encourages all new students to participate in "City Project" which is an intensive 10 week mission and training experience that prepares them for a life of ministry. GenSend Summer experiences are also a great way to help a student cut their teeth and gain training in hands-on ministry.)
9. As the next Fall semester hits, what leadership opportunities does your ministry provide for those who want to step up and lead others? What are the expectations for your leadership team and what ongoing training do you give them?
10. What evangelism tools and strategies do you use to equip your student leaders?
11. What does disciple-making look like with your student leaders? What are some key training objectives you want them to learn and master? How do you ensure that the input they are getting from you matches the output of serving in your ministry?
12. What training and leadership opportunities do you have for Juniors and Seniors that are showing potential to be "leaders of leaders"?
13. If a student could give 2 or 3 summers to do whatever your ministry suggested, what would be the ideal flow for their growth and development?
14. When do you start talking with your students about what God may be calling them to do after college? We recommend having the "I see in you" conversation with students sooner rather than later. (For example: Summit College has a personal "Go 2" conversation with each student challenging them to give two years to a strategic kingdom cause. They have seen over 1,000 students give at least two years after college to a strategic mission effort so far!)

15. How is your ministry developing relationships and partnerships with churches, church plants and missionaries to send your graduates to? How are you handing off students to these strategic partners that will help guide them upon graduation? GenSend Summer experiences do an excellent job connecting students with church planting leaders in strategic cities where they could get jobs upon graduation.

16. What is your current process for recruiting and bringing on collegiate ministry staff and interns? Chico Challenge has the “I see in you” conversation with potential staff their Sophomore or Junior year. This is not an official job offer but we are letting them know that we see potential in bringing them on staff and giving them these 3 ideas to consider. 1) It’s an incredible opportunity to pour back into our ministry. 2) It’s the perfect way to continue your training as a laborer and grow into a leader. 3) It’s an ideal choice to explore longer term vocational ministry or missions.

17. Once someone joins your staff, is there a process to continue training them and getting them ready to potentially plant or lead their own collegiate ministry one day? How can you improve the training and opportunities you are giving your staff?

18. After considering all of these questions with your team, take time to map out your own leadership pipeline. Seek to be as detailed as possible. If you have questions or would like to show us your pipeline email us at pworcester@namb.net and wsmith@summitchurch.com. 



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