



Creating a memorable Welcome Week

By Laurie Germeraad Kagay





Personal *introduction*

- BA in Biblical Studies from The Institute for GOD
- MA in Theology and Ministry from Welch College
- Enough-to-get-by Graphic Designer since High School
- Bible Teacher
- 15 years of experience in nonprofit communications
- Engaged in mission work to East Africa
- Fundraiser
- Now Marketing and Enrollment VP
- One player on a dynamic team that puts on “iconic” welcome weeks at The Institute for GOD

John's 3rd Epistle and hospitality to strangers

5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you.

6 They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God.

7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans.

8 We ought therefore to **show hospitality to such people** so that we may work together for the truth...

11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. For whoever does what is good is from God.





A story of "no help"

- College Basketball Player
- Straight-A Student
- Moved 4 states away from his family for a full ride
- One month into college, his life changed forever



A missed opportunity

A Parent Review:

- I don't know your school.
- I love my son.
- I feel like I just dropped him off in a parking lot and drove away.

Then crisis hits...

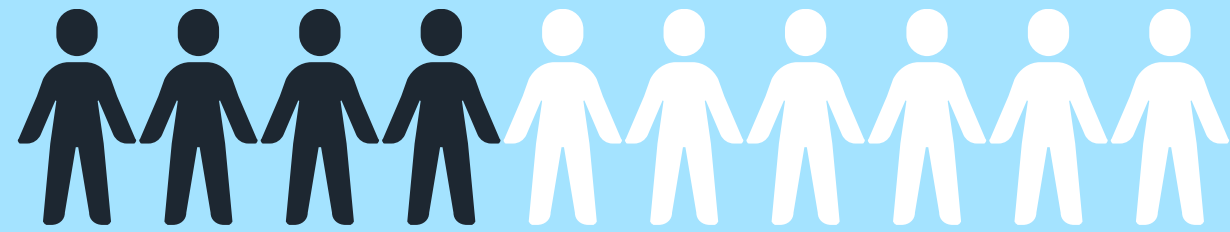
A conversation that *put us in motion*

“What’s the best way to ensure we get mission fit students?”

...

1. Pray over each applicant
2. Vet appropriately
3. Put on an awesome welcome week





4 out of 10

High school seniors hit NONE of the college readiness benchmarks.

Students are the least prepared for college than they've been in three decades. (The Hill)



85%

of incoming students want to know their friends before getting to college.

(ZeeMee Study)



Knowing Gen Z

Today's **teens** are less likely to drive, **work, go on dates**, or go out without their parents. (A survey of 8.3 million teens between 1976-2016 in Childhood Development)

Youth depression has doubled since 2011, making the Gen Z's upbringing as social media guinea pigs the most pessimistic generation we've ever seen. (Twenge, New York Post)

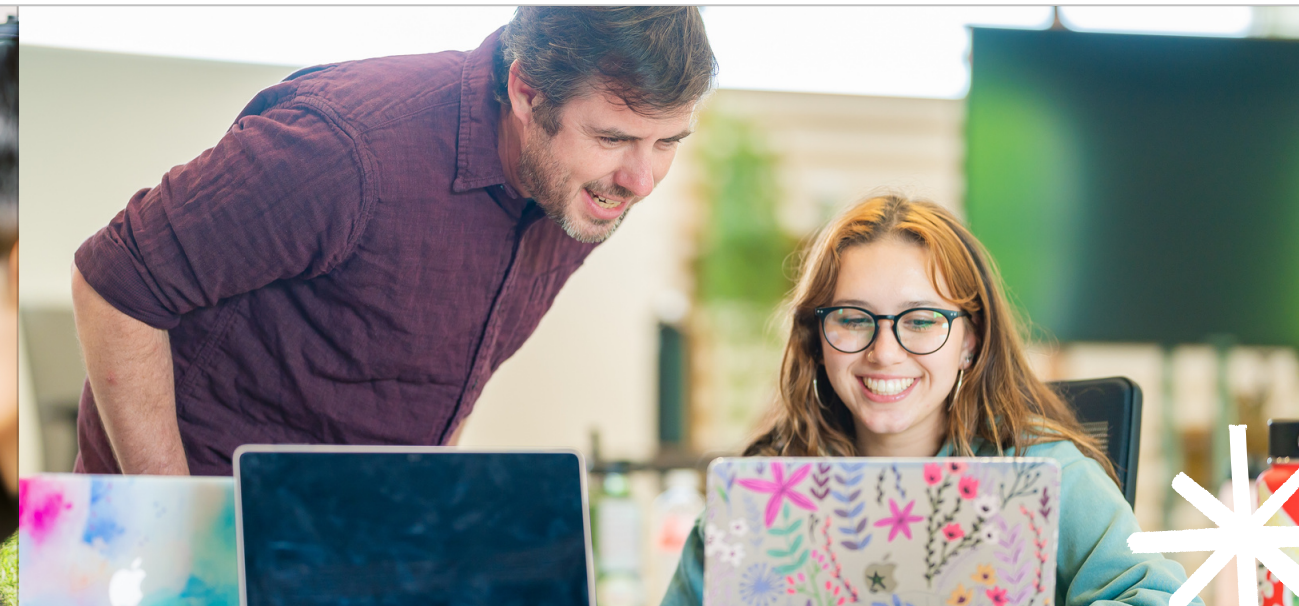
Students are (most often)
strangers to your institution,
acclimating to a whole new way of life



Strangers to your
city



Strangers to your
college



Strangers to
adulthood

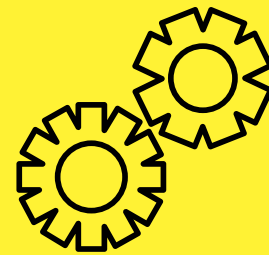
4 tips for planning a *memorable*

Welcome Week



Know Your Audience

Involve your admissions team and learn the specifics of your incoming class



Use Welcome Week as a LaunchPad

Survey staff about the “fixes” that need made on campus. Pressurize Welcome Week as the launchpad for new programs & systems



Maximize your Resources

Get Sponsors or Get Creative. Remember your most valuable resources are your staff. Play to their strengths!



Communicate Early

Work with marketing and admissions and customize your CRM to build hype and set expectations with incoming students and their families



Executing a memorable

Welcome Week



Don't forget the parents

- Build in a meal or an event to commemorate this very big moment in families' lives. Help parents know you are on their side.
- You don't want them to only hear from you when something hard is happening or when you need more money for scholarships. Make them your fans from the beginning.

Ideas: Refreshment Hours, Parent Meeting, Allow Parents to Meet One Another



Prayer, worship & *Bible Studies*



This is the reason the students chose your school. Make sure they get plenty of it the first week so they can connect to the Lord in prayer, worship with their new friends, and learn Bible lessons before classes start.

Ideas: Morning devotional with varied faculty, Evening worship and Bible study with the whole student body, Journal prompts

3 Succeeding in Academics

Reduce anxiety about the academic experience by ensuring proper onboarding to learning platforms, and helping them succeed with the tools available to them.

Ideas: Logos Bible Software Demos, Library Tours, Answering Questions about your educational model, Lunch with faculty



4 Tools for the biggest stressor: *finance*

- Ensure students know how to pay their bills, the consequences of late bills, and who to talk to about their concerns
- Make it fun!

Ideas: Budgeting Seminars, Time Management Seminars, “Budget Busters,” One-On-One Personal Finance Counseling



Preparing for Work & *Life Balance*



Help students think through the way their job impacts their weekly schedule. Frontloading this conversation prevents class conflicts later.

Ideas: Incorporate campus jobs onboarding as a part of your Welcome Week, or Promote jobs available in your city/area.

Build Roommate Relationships

How would you like sharing a small space with someone you barely know? Create intentional activities to help them through the awkward moments and begin forming friendships.

Ideas: Video competitions, Roommates-only dinner, House meetings, Cooking meals together



Campus *Acclimation*

Take time and make sure students understand your campus, the safety and security provided to them, where they can be, and where they can't.

Ideas: Campus Scavenger Hunt, Strategizing locations for various Welcome Week Events



Exploring the New *City*

How are your students learning their new location? Do they know where to open a bank account or visit a doctor? How about just where to wash their car or the favorite local coffee shop? Give them space and time to explore with some rubric of completion before classes begin.

Ideas: Nashville Scavenger hunt and social media challenge, City adventures, Welcome Week bingo



Example

Welcome Week Bingo

Complete at least
one row for a prize.
Two rows for an
even better prize!

Get some groceries!	Scope out local coffee shop/ homework spots.	Get set up at a local bank	Set up your dorm room & share a pic on social media!	Take a walk in the neighborhood
Cook a meal in your new kitchen & pic on social!	Get recommendations & find a nearby mechanic	Attend church and community prayer	Share your faith story with your roommates	Find a local gym & workout with a friend
Take a nap (Jesus did.)	Know where to take out the trash	FREE	Call your parents & let them know how you're doing	Find & visit your mentor's house
Look up what doctors are in your network in Nashville and keep the info!	Get a Nashville Public Library card and visit a local branch	Make a budget for your personal finances	Change your address with the post office	Meet one of your neighbors (outside of the dorms)
Make a workplace post	Post about your life in Nashville on social media	Visit downtown Nashville with a friend!	Put important documents in a safe place	Hear a faith story of at least one alumni

Incorporating students in your campus *Community*



It's important to build in times for students to get to know the people who make your school what it is. How are you doing that on your campus?

Ideas: Backyard BBQs at your President's house, Campus church services dedicated to student integration, Fishing with the dean, Kayaking with alumni



Keep it *Active*



Integrating students into your college is an overwhelming process and if you're not careful, they can sit for way too long. Keep them moving and active with lots of breaks and engaging activities.

Ideas: Competitions, Pool Parties, Picnics at the Lake, Bonfires, Movie Nights, Concerts, Snowball Fights, Karaoke Parties, Cooking competitions



Everything is *Content*

Devote time and money to documenting it all:

- Create holy FOMO in future students
- Keep parents informed
- Capture B-Roll useful for future projects
- Fill your social channels with pictures
- Put your channels in the hands of students for an authentic take

Keep it going **Create a Campus Culture of Hospitality**

Welcome Week is not a hurdle to get over, it's a marked time for hospitality commemorating something new, that you will continue. It's the start of their adult life, and you're there to help them launch into their discipleship journey.





Time for *Takeaways*

What are 3 things you might add
to a future Welcome Week?



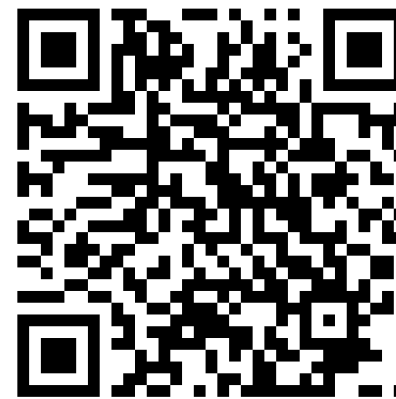
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College Conversations

