

Another Chapter in 75 Years of Ministry

By Nate and Laura Amodio

Seventy-five years of ministry. Tom Lin, the newly appointed eighth president of InterVarsity, stood in front of a 140-foot timeline highlighting those 75 years, ready to address the 1,400 InterVarsity staff members from across the United States at the first national staff conference under his presidency. As Tom spoke, several themes from our history surfaced: our commitment to prayer and in-depth Scripture study; the embrace of students of all ethnicities and cultures; and our staff members' willingness to say yes to God in risky ways. Tom encouraged staff to focus on Jesus' call instead of the challenges of ministry.

We were in awe as we heard stories of God's faithfulness in transforming students and faculty, renewing campuses and developing world changers. As we reflected on that legacy and Jesus' call, we left staff conference refreshed and ready for another semester.

This past summer, we said yes to God in a risky way, when we left the University of Illinois, with 300 students in InterVarsity, to now staffing three under-resourced campuses: Illinois State University, Bradley University and Knox College. We left a staff team of thirteen at the U of I to start a new team of the two of us, a supervisor, two interns and one part-time staff. Each new school had only about twenty students involved with minimal staff input and who weren't adequately trained or motivated to reach the campus. They followed Jesus, but didn't fully embrace gospel-centered efforts to leave their bubbles in order to reach curious college students.

One semester in, and already there's hope. We're learning the unique culture of each campus, future leaders are emerging, and we're seeing students internalize the gospel, gaining a heart for the lost. Our students are eager for an upcoming, five-week training on relational evangelism. At the training we'll cast a vision for our students to embrace a "come and see" approach where witness is their lifestyle in their spheres of influence. Our training culminates with learning to lead one-to-one seeker Bible studies. Rather than just having spiritual conversations, we want them to bring Scripture to their not-yet Christian friends and allow God's truth to speak directly to them. Students reaching students with the gospel, reaching all corners of campus.

As we try to reach these new campuses, we have two big goals: bring in missional freshmen who will partner with God in reaching others and raise up new staff who can continue the equipping of students reaching students. To do that well, we are learning to protect our time with God and each other. After all, our best leadership comes out of our own personal transformation we experience from God.



Our biggest personal challenge is finding time for a life outside of InterVarsity. Working with students means working many late nights. Training students at retreats and conferences means many weekends of travel. Saturday night outreach events makes waking up for church a constant challenge, yet a necessity for our spiritual well-being. Making our schedule compatible with adult friends is difficult. Three years into our InterVarsity staff careers, it has been crucial to establish good work/home boundaries, though we're not yet experts. Nor are we fully adjusted to our new campuses and new schedules. Will you pray for us? Our transformation. Our Sabbath, our personal retreats, our rest. Our marriage.

And pray for students and faculty to be transformed, campuses renewed and world changers developed. We believe reaching secular college campuses is crucial for bringing the kingdom to all corners of creation. International students from Knox College can return home with the gospel. Nurses from Illinois State can provide physical and spiritual care for the sick. Bradley engineers can impact co-workers and provide sustainable and empowering solutions for those in need. The list goes on.

We pray that our students graduate with so much more than just a college degree. As they grow in their love for God, his Word, his people of every ethnicity and culture, and his purposes in the world, we pray they leave college equipped and motivated to bring God's kingdom wherever they go.