

Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry
Susan K. Graham, Chair

Since being elected at the 2023 TWK Annual Conference, the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry (BHECM) has focused on building relationships with our campus ministers, many of whom are new to this role, and defining roles and responsibilities for our campus ministries, local Wesley Boards, campus ministers' supervisors, and the BHECM. In addition, we are asking questions, listening, and making time and space for team discernment and providing resources, consultation, and expertise to assist our campus ministries as they continue to grow and develop.

We have also been both relaunching campus ministry and re-envisioning our ministry models. In addition to the more familiar district-based model, a new model of campus ministry was initiated last summer, the congregation-based campus ministry. Both of these models connect campus ministry and local churches, but the congregation-based campus ministry is connected with a host congregation, often located in the same neighborhood as the campus ministry, and the campus minister is supervised by the host church's senior pastor or designee. In the district-based model, the district superintendent serves as the campus minister's supervisor. Our congregation-based Wesleys include Austin Peay State University with Hilldale UMC, Belmont University with Belmont UMC, Cumberland University and Lebanon FUMC, Fisk University and Clark Memorial UMC, University of Tennessee Martin and Martin FUMC, University of Tennessee South and Pulaski FUMC, and Vanderbilt University and West End UMC. Our district-based Wesleys include Bethel University, Middle Tennessee State University, Murray State University, University of Memphis, University of Memphis at Lambuth, Tennessee Tech University, Tennessee State University, and University of Tennessee Health Science Center.

All of our campus ministers attended our first Fall Gathering at Franklin FUMC, along with most of our local board chairs, clergy and district superintendents who supervise a campus minister, and our BHECM. Together, we explored ideas and initiated table conversations to define "What is an Effective Campus Ministry." We gathered for our Spring Gathering on April 10, at beautiful Camp Cedar Crest and continued this conversation, identifying indicators for measuring the effectiveness of our campus ministries, then naming indicator strengths, areas of growth, and each ministry's needs in order to guide each campus ministry's development.

Students find a place to belong at our Wesleys regardless of their background. Our campus ministers are building relationships with students who are engaged with our Wesleys and with students on campus who have not walked into a formal Wesley activity yet. Our Wesleys are inviting and faithful in their fellowship to the college campus and to their community. They are looking into their neighborhoods and inviting students at community colleges and technical and allied educational institutions into their ministry. Some of our students feel their Wesley is church on campus, and some have joined a local church. These students are growing as disciples and serve in ministry and mission. They are leading their Wesleys in worship, bible studies, small group studies, and opportunities to love and serve their neighbors.

We celebrate our 15 amazing campus ministries led by gifted and committed campus ministers and dedicated local boards. From our campus ministers, we learned that we have 897 students who are active, defined as attending a Wesley event at least once a month, in our campus ministries. Of these students, approximately 494 are highly active, which we define as attending a Wesley event at least twice per month. Last year, 118 churches actively partnered with our campus ministries, and these relationships are not one-sided. These students are blessed by the love and support of the local church and in kind, these students serve internships, assist with leading VBS, volunteer for events, offer tech support, lead worship as part of a praise band, and preach.

We give thanks for the work God is doing in and through our campus ministries and for the leadership of our campus ministers, their boards, and our students! We also celebrate that we as the BHECM have the joy, honor, and privilege of advocating for them and for equipping and empowering them in their ministry. We are grateful for our TWK connectional relationships with Bishop McAlilly, with our district superintendents, with our clergy, and with our congregations.

We look forward to our continued work together and all the many ways God will use campus ministry to transform the lives of our students and their campuses!