

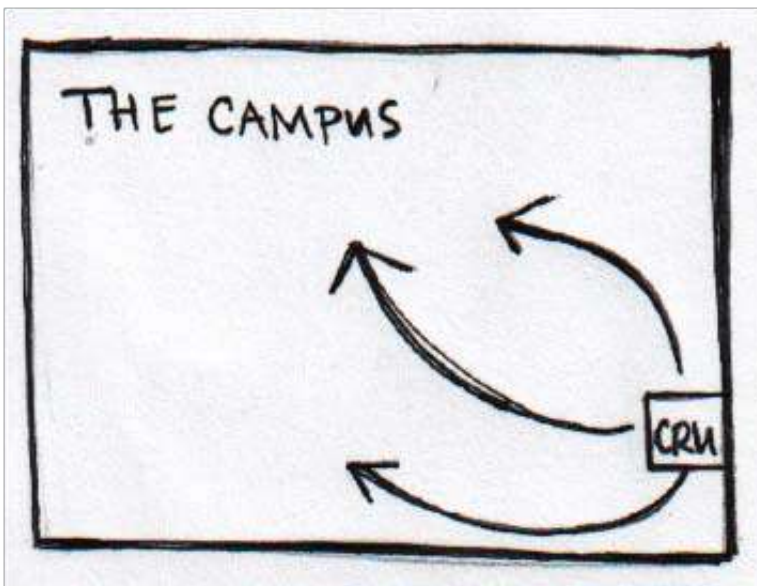
November 2009

Hey friends,

By now you may have heard that significant changes are in the works for Cru. Last summer other leaders and I began asking the Spirit to speak to us and show us where we need to go as a movement. This semester more leaders joined the conversation and have been talking with each other, and seeking to listen to the Spirit in hopes of discerning his voice together. Though not everything is clear to us we do believe there are three major areas of change we need to pursue. On Thursday, December 3rd, following Cru we will be holding a movement wide meeting to talk about the changes that will be enacted next semester. We hope you'll plan to come and join in the conversation. In the meantime please read this letter carefully. Mark it up, ponder it, talk about it with your friends, and ask Jesus what it all means for you. We'll discuss it more fully on December 3rd and have a panel of leaders available to respond to your questions.

Let us mention two things up front. First, the changes are sweeping. We have had no preconditions or limits in what we will pay, change, suffer, or do to fully follow Christ here at Penn State and beyond. Everything has been on the table these last several months. Second, we don't know all answers to the questions this is likely to raise. Our assumptions are that some answers will become clearer as we move through this together, and that some of the answers will come from you. In fact we are counting on both of those assumptions. We have been asking Jesus to speak to us as we step out in faith, and expect that he will speak through many of you. We need you to share with us your thoughts, especially as you seek the Lord in all this.

As mentioned above there are three areas where we hope to see significant improvement in Cru. Not just incremental growth, but major, transformational change.



First, **we need to penetrate far more of the campus with the gospel.** In any given year we do a pretty good job of helping about 2,000 people hear the gospel. What that means of course is that we do a pretty bad job of helping the other 40,000 people hear the gospel. In this the Cru logo is a better description of us than we wish it were. Our footprint is a small square on a huge campus.

We believe that Jesus wants us to be part of a new solution that penetrates every corner of the campus with the gospel until everyone at Penn State knows someone who is truly following Jesus. We will pray, plan, partner, love,

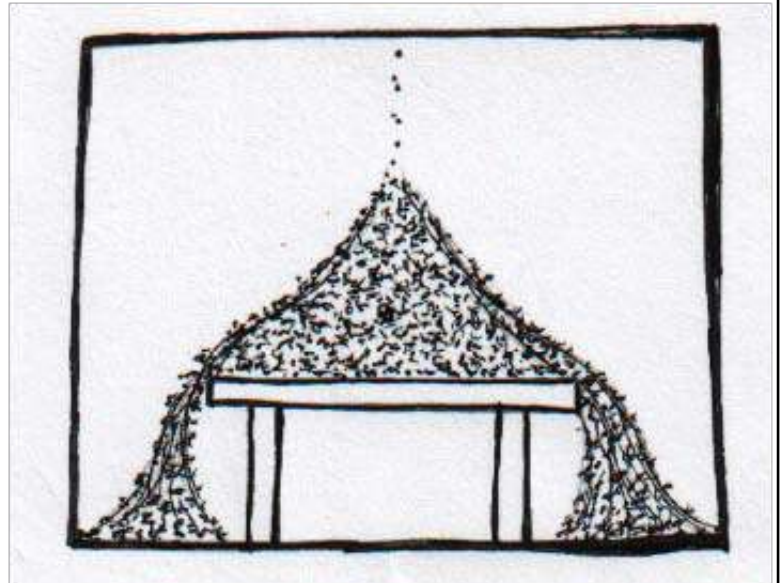
live, listen, talk, engage, explain, and risk until literally every student at Penn State knows a Christian who is vitally living out their faith. Just imagine a witness for Christ in every sorority, on every dorm floor, throughout every major, and on every team. In every apartment building, every club, every ethnicity, and

every affinity group. We are expecting it to take about a decade until that is fully realized, but along the way, including next semester, hundreds, then thousands, then tens of thousands will hear the gospel from someone they trust as intentional missional communities grow and spread.

To this end we are creating a new leadership lane to complement the manager and multiplier lanes. We're dubbing it the missionary lane. Anyone can and should of course share their faith with anyone they know. But as we experiment and learn in this new direction we will be making a specific commitment to 20 people who themselves make a commitment to incarnate the gospel in a particular community. If you want to lead in this way we'd love you to apply to be part of the pilot group. Over time we hope it will expand many, many times over, but we want to start small and learn before we open it up wider. More on this to come.

Second, **we need to dramatically increase our capacity to love and serve students.** Our current structure is designed to help us love and serve students, but it's not nearly scalable enough. Even this semester we have had to turn down students who want to be discipled because we simply don't have enough disciplers. As often happens, too much of the work is being borne by too few shoulders. As God brings more people to faith our structure must be able to accommodate and even facilitate significant growth.

Think about a table you are pouring sand onto. At some point the sand won't pile any higher and it will start spilling off the edge. The only solution is to enlarge the table. In our case the sand represents the students in the movement and the table represents our leadership. We will never have enough staff to form a table of the size that we need. Instead we need to free up and empower more students to be the table, while the staff function as the legs of the table. We will be here to support you, but it's your movement; you are the leaders.

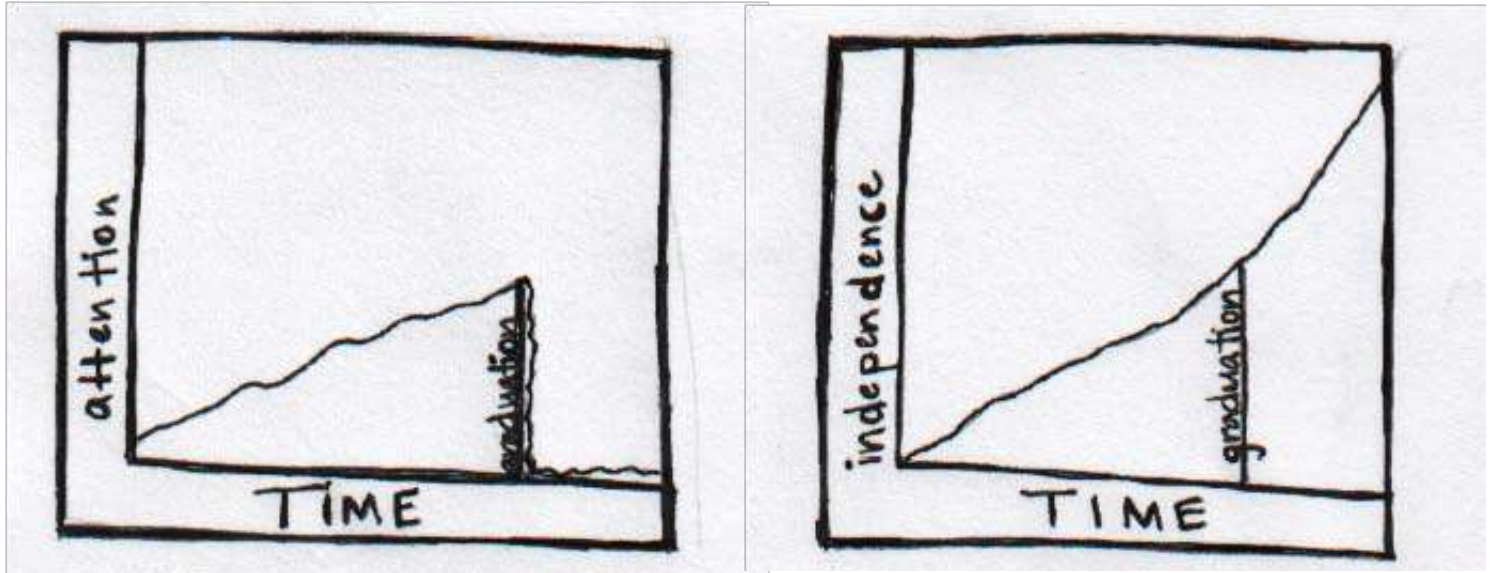


In contemplating this we have been inspired by the good work of Thon. We marvel at what the student leaders are able to accomplish and believe we have a lot to learn from them. Chief among the lessons we are taking from Thon is the tremendous power of competent and responsible students who have a vision to give their life to something worthwhile. You are clearly as gifted as those students, and our goal is even more worthy of our lives.

While we hope that the staff have been and will continue to be a significant advantage to you, in some ways our structure has limited your ability to own and lead. We will be making specific changes to reduce ways that we have unwittingly restricted your ability to own and lead Cru. We trust greater opportunities to lead will be developmental for you and will increase our capacities to love and serve those God puts in our path.

Third, **we need to build better bridges to life and ministry after graduation.** We often say that your 4 years in Cru are really about the 50 years that follow. But in some ways our structure hasn't helped prepare you for life and ministry after graduation. One reason is that some of our ministry methods don't transfer easily to the work-a-day world. More tragically though, we have heard from far too many of our grads that the sudden transition from the considerable support structures they experienced in Cru to the independence and relative isolation of the "real world" has been jarring. Indeed, too many of our grads cease influencing others for Christ, and worse still others stop walking with Christ at all.

Typically, students in Cru get increasing attention over time culminating in the greatest attention their senior year. Then the day after graduation, it all suddenly goes away. A friend of mine who works with graduate students observed to me that in graduate school, where the plan from day one is to create independent adults, they increase independence over time, not attention. In this way the newest, youngest grad students get the most attention to lay their foundation, and the oldest grad students function independently. The day before graduation is little different from the day after graduation since they have been steadily moving towards greater independence. It seems that we have something to learn from this system.



There are lots of particular changes we will be pursuing to support the big ones. We'll talk more about those on December 3rd but let me just mention one of them here. We are committed to much greater partnership with other Christian organizations, churches, alumni, volunteers, and any non-traditional allies God puts in our path. The job is too big to do alone. In fact, you may have already noticed an increased focus on church participation. Now, but especially after graduation, your vital involvement in a church will be among the most significant factors in your ongoing growth in Christ and influence for him. We believe strong relationships with local church members while you are still students can only help you and we are pursuing new ways to make this attractive and helpful to you.

There's more, but this is already longer than I had intended. Please do pray about these things and talk about them with your friends. **Please clear your calendar and make time to be with us the evening of December 3rd following Cru.** We want to hear from you, answer the questions we can, and collect the ones we can't just yet. And as answers come to your mind, please share them with us. We are depending on the Spirit to speak to all of us as we trust him to help us penetrate far more of the campus with the gospel, increase our capacity to love and serve students, and build better bridges to life and ministry after graduation.

These are exciting times at Cru, if not a bit scary, and it's a privilege to walk through it with you. We expect Jesus is going to do things we haven't before contemplated; we believe that you will have a role to play in it. Please come with us as we trust him for far more.

For our Joy in His Glory,

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