



Missional Life Proposal Overview

May 1, 2012

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Executive Summary	3
Missional Life Initiative Proposal - Original.....	4
Pilot Year Outcomes	10
Missional Life Initiative - Pilot Experience	10
Missional Life Initiative - Measured Outcomes.....	14
Missional Life Initiative - Forming Communities.....	14
Missional Life - Projected Process	15
Preliminary Missional Life Course Proposal	19
Synopsis	19
Justification.....	19
Appendix A.....	20
Leadership Team's Statement of Grace (Working Document).....	20
Appendix B.....	32
Pilot Experience Survey	32

Executive Summary

The following proposal begins with a review of the Missional Life pilot project conducted by the Halbert Institute for Mission from October of 2010 through May of 2012 and concludes with recommendations for the program's future. It consists of three parts and two appendices:

- 1) The Original Proposal: This document, drafted in the Fall of 2010 and refined through the Spring of 2011 outlined the original purpose and plan for the Missional Life Initiative.
- 2) Outcomes: This includes a narrative review of the team's experience in this pilot process, an overview of a survey conducted in April of 2012 to assess the undergraduates' experience, and an account of the forming missional communities.
- 3) Current Proposal: Drawing on what has been learned from the pilot program, the team is proposing a plan that potentially expands Missional Life in both duration and scope. This section includes a projected timeline going forward and the recommendation and rationale to include a new credit course in the program design.
- 4) Appendix A: The Leadership Team Statement of Grace: This document was developed in the Fall of 2011 through the Spring of 2012 for two purposes: a) to clarify our commitments as a working team, and b) to model for our undergraduate students the nature and value of such a document for their own forming mission teams.
- 5) Appendix B: The Missional Life survey instrument.

The pilot leadership team for Missional Life has consisted of six students from ACU's Graduate School of Theology under the supervision of Dr. Kent Smith: Brent Bailey, Laura Beall, Jordan Bunch, Rosten Callarman, Ben Covington, and John Kaczmarek.

We present this proposal with gratitude for what we have learned, for the growth in missional maturity that we have witnessed among our students, and with hope that lessons we have learned will pave the way for deepening effectiveness in ACU's missional training in the years ahead.

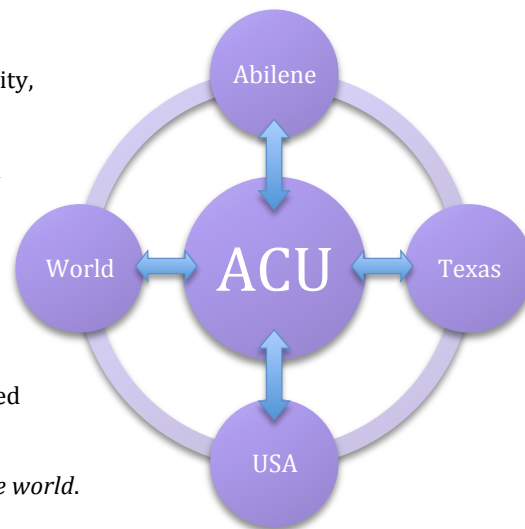
Missional Life Initiative Proposal - Original

Overview

ACU has committed to prepare students for missional leadership as a core platform of its 21st Century Vision. Graduates should leave ACU empowered to go into their future life and work intentionally engaging the mission of God. While some students are well prepared for such intentional living, no comprehensive plan is in place to deliver on this commitment across the student population. The time has come to address this need.

Opportunity

As a residential liberal arts Christian university, ACU has an exceptional opportunity to train people experientially in the missional life. In conjunction with learning these principles in ACU's academic courses, students will also be able to engage in substantial missional practice during these formative years. Students leaving the university as experienced missional practitioners will take with them significant new capacity to indeed *change the world*.



Resources

Across ACU's colleges a broad spectrum of leadership can be brought to bear in sparking missional imagination among our students. Across the Abilene community opportunities abound for students to engage a missional lifestyle while here. ACU's historic commitment to the global mission of God presents students with a vast array of options, both domestic and foreign, for cross-cultural engagement. The Halbert Institute for Missions is uniquely positioned to bring these resources together for the missional preparation of our students.

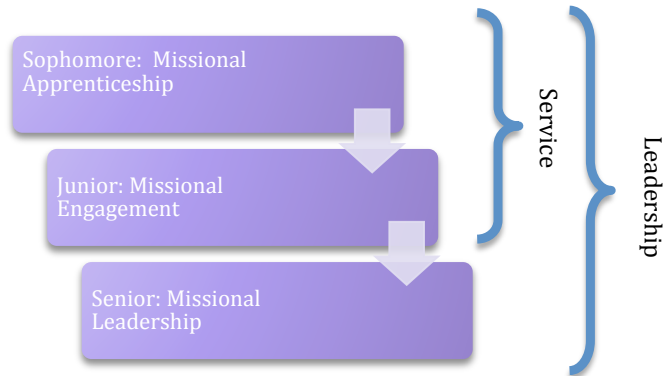
Proposal

Develop a certificate program in missional service/leadership made available to all ACU students beginning in their sophomore year. Students will undergo significant missional training in the first year of the program while living on campus. Moving off campus as juniors,

they will be challenged to engage with a missional context and community. Completion of this level will result in a Certificate in Missional Service. Seniors interested in additional leadership training/experience can opt for a Certificate in Missional Leadership.

Implementation

Prayer/Planning	Winter 2010
Recruit Pilot group	Spring 2011
Apprenticeship Pilot	Fall 2011
Apprenticeship Beta	Fall 2012
Engagement Pilot	Fall 2012
Leadership Pilot	Fall 2013



Contexts

Any effective training in missional competence will need to address contextual matters including theological and social factors that shape the program. To that end, the following observations provide a working framework for ACU's missional certificates:

Theological Context

"To be missional is to participate purposefully in what God is doing." This simple axiom has at its core several key ideas. It begins in the conviction that God has been and is at work in the universe and history to *reveal* his reign—that realm Jesus called "The Kingdom of God," where the Creator and all creation are rightly related.

It further asserts that people have been invited and called to cooperate in God's Kingdom purposes, and can learn to discern how to join in those purposes, to *attend* to what God is doing.

Beyond this, missional living assumes that people are vocationally gifted to *participate* in those kingdom purposes, demonstrating God's grace distinctly by their life and work.

The relationship of these three dimensions can be illustrated:



As the diagram suggests, participation in the life and work of God is itself revelatory, and leads to further opportunity to discern and join in what God is doing.

Social Context

Students arrive at ACU profoundly shaped by culture. This prior formation impacts every dimension of the life students envision and construct while in Abilene.

The Lily Foundation funded a massive study of the religious life of the cohort of American teenagers now passing through college and graduate school. The study report was published in the book, *Soul Searching*, authored by Christian Smith.

Soul Searching draws a number of conclusions that bear directly on the opportunities and challenges of training current students missionally. The three formational dimensions identified above are each addressed by the study:

Revelation: The great majority of American teens in this cohort are functional Deists—what the authors call “Moralistic Therapeutic Deists:”

“... the God of contemporary teenage Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is primarily a divine Creator and Lawgiver. He designed the universe and establishes moral law and order. But this God is not Trinitarian, he did not speak through the Torah or the prophets of Israel, was never resurrected from the dead, and does not transform people through his Spirit. This God is not demanding. He actually can’t be, because his job is to solve our problems and make people feel good. In short, God is something like a combination Divine Butler and Cosmic Therapist: he is always on

call, takes care of any problems that arise, professionally helps his people to feel better about themselves, and does not become too personally involved.”

To the degree that ACU students hold inherited, unexamined theologies of this nature, missional training faces an important challenge.

Attention: With respect to this most precious of assets, ACU students share another major challenge with their contemporaries:

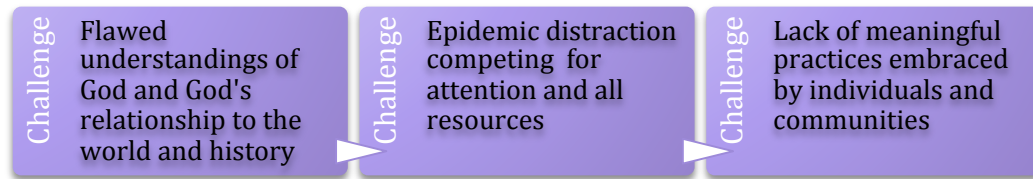
“Religious faith and practice in American teenager’s lives operate in a social and institutional environment that is highly competitive for time, attention, and energy. Religious interests and values in teen’s lives typically compete against those of school, homework, television, other media, sports, romantic relationships, paid work, and more. Indeed, in many adolescents’ lives, religion occupies a quite weak and often losing position among these competing influences.”

Missional training must find effective ways to help students navigate the myriad demands for their attention in light of God’s revelation.

Participation: Scattered attention leads to unfocused life practices. As reported in *Soul Searching*, however, exceptions were discovered:

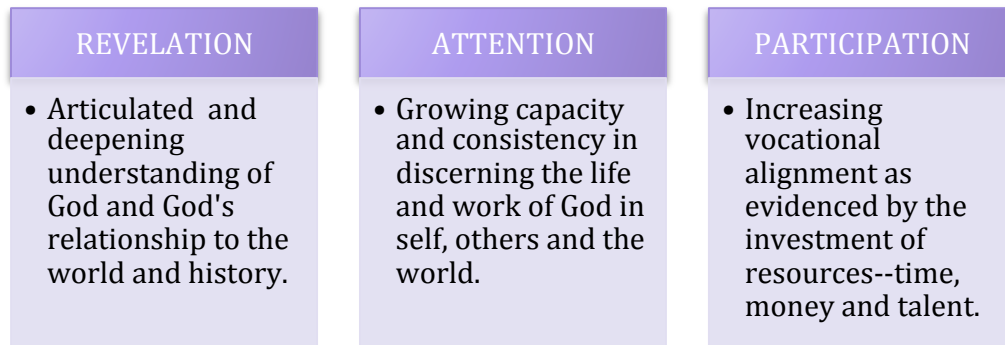
“Among the more religiously serious American teenagers, religious practices appear to play an important role in their faith lives. For the committed adolescent, religion is not simply a matter of general identity or affiliation or cognitive belief. Faith for these teenagers is also activated, practiced and formed through specific religious and spiritual practices.”

In sum, three core dimensions of missional formation at ACU will need to overcome significant challenges:



Outcomes

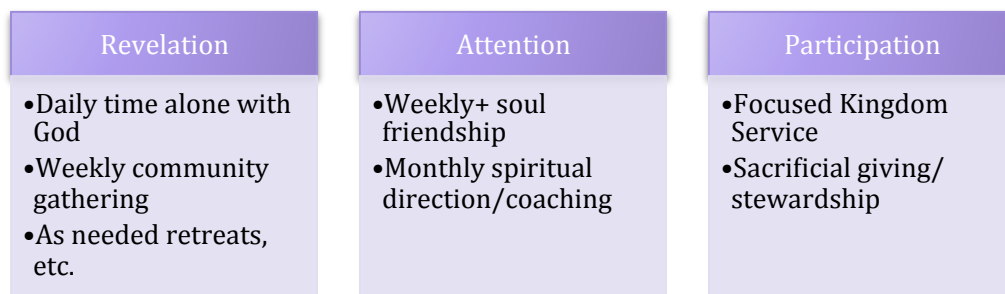
This theological and social description of ACU's context suggests three broad outcome areas. These outcomes in the lives of ACU students offer a working description of success for the program:



Practices/Measurements

A set of initial practices have been identified by the development team related to these outcomes. Plans call for the pilot cohorts to test these practices against the outcomes in the first year of the program. A careful review of the practices and their effectiveness in reaching the outcomes will be conducted during and at the end of the first year.

Initial practices include:



Missional Competencies

A competency is a demonstrated ability to perform consistently and effectively over time.

On completion of year one, students will have developed new competency in these areas:

Name	Competency Description
God-Centeredness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate a growing attentiveness to God in themselves, others and the world
Self-Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe accurately their sense of vocation—core passions, calling and skills
Replication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reproduce what they have learned in new contexts
Ears to Hear	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen comprehensively to others
Kingdom Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate a deepening Kingdom focus in every expression of their personal and community life.
Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pursue a lifestyle of stewardship of themselves, their resources and the whole Creation
Friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forge deep and lasting relationships as a clear life priority
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate for others with skill—as a key to cultivating a culture of honor.

Pilot Year Outcomes

Missional Life Initiative - Pilot Experience

Jordan and Brent had a positive experience leading a cohort of men over the course of the year. Their cohort included nine men throughout the fall, and then they lost four students, leaving them with five students in the spring (three did not return to ACU, and one decided to dedicate his time and energy to other pursuits). After an initial period of building relationships, the men of their cohort became close and vulnerable with one another, and they demonstrated great maturity in their commitment to the cohort, their participation in their disciplines, and the depth of their conversations with each other. Four of their students have decided to live in an intentional community off-campus in the fall, which will include two students who did not participate in MLI this year but had some interactions with the cohort. One of their challenges in the second semester was determining how those other two students (who are joining the intentional community in the fall but did not participate in MLI) fit into the life of our cohort; while they did invite them to join them for the monthly large group gatherings, they did not include them in their weekly cohort gathering time in order to maintain their established group dynamics and protect vulnerability.

Based on reflections with the cohort and other coaches over what contributed to their positive experience together, we have speculated a few different factors which may have played a role: Most of their students live in the same residence hall, where they have their weekly gatherings (which easily fostered relationships); all of their students are the same gender (which contributed to vulnerability and cohesion); six of their students participated in intentional community with Jordan the year before (providing a foundation of relationship that was easy for their three new students and Brent to engage); and the way many of their students joined voluntarily (rather than being recruited) may have contributed to firmer commitment. Jordan and Brent enjoyed the opportunity to build meaningful, purposeful relationships with these students and were challenged and encouraged by their faith and Kingdom vision.

Benjamin and Laura's experience of leading an MLI cohort was full of challenges and lessons learned; sadly, it included little interaction from students. Their small cohort of

four students came together somewhat haphazardly and struggled as a result. Benjamin and Laura had no prior relationship with three of their cohort's four students, as the students they had recruited chose not to participate and the students who comprised their cohort were mostly introduced to MLI through other means. In addition to having no prior foundation of relationship on which to build, cohort members were so invested in other activities (school, work, pledging, campus organizations, sports, etc.) that busyness prevented them from engaging the time and relational expectations of MLI with any real degree of commitment.

Largely as a result of being in new relationships that received little attention, students had difficulty being open and vulnerable with one another or listening well to one another. Soul friendships felt particularly unnatural, as—in a group of two males and two females—they were essentially determined by default and personalities did not always mesh well. When attended to at all, these relationships seemed to be motivated more by a sense of obligation rather than by joy or desire. The same was largely true of the few cohort meetings that occurred with students present.

After such a turbulent fall semester, Benjamin and Laura endeavored to reinvigorate the cohort for the spring semester, but with little positive response. One student made no efforts to engage the conversation of the group's continuance. Another indicated interest and excitement but failed to follow through. Another notified Benjamin and Laura of his decision to step away from MLI and focus on other aspects of life. And the remaining student claimed a desire to engage further in MLI but after one initial meeting withdrew from the program entirely. As of mid-March, the cohort was completely defunct.

John and Rosten's experience was similar in many respects to Benjamin and Laura's. Their cohort started off slightly stronger in terms of numbers, with eight students submitting application to join. The majority of these eight had a prior connection to Rosten as a TA. Before the first official retreat, one student changed plans and unenrolled from ACU and another decided to back out because of other obligations. After a few initial meetings a third student decided to withdraw from MLI citing a desire to focus on other pursuits. At five students, four females and one male, the cohort remained mixed gender. This specific mix caused some difficulties preventing certain advantages a same gendered group might have in communication and trust, but did not offer an even enough mix to overcome some of the

challenges associated with a mixed dynamic. Another challenge that was common in this first semester was commitment. As more demands were added to schedules throughout the semester (e.g. rushing/pledging), commitment became an issue. Regular meeting times suffered partial attendance and group meshing was handicapped. Two other students backed out midway stating over commitment.

At the beginning of the second semester, after being asked to evaluate their desires and commitments over the short break, one other student opted to leave the program. With two remaining students, the cohort continued to wrestle with commitment in the second semester, both to the weekly meetings and to the other practices. Halfway through the semester, two students who had expressed interest were invited to join the cohort, which is how the cohort stands at the end of the semester. While this new group has not had as much time to mesh, there has been some positive feedback for the limited experience.

In reflection of the entire experience, John and Rosten feel like two connected issues were central to the challenges they observed in their cohort: connection and commitment. Connection became difficult when students were unable to commit to regularly attending weekly cohort gatherings. As the connection to the cohort failed to increase due to lack of time together, commitment decreased. They also feel that the students experienced confusion and were possibly overwhelmed by the quick introduction of so many new disciplines. Boundaries became unclear and it is likely that early understandings of the process and commitments were missing. Additionally, John and Rosten agree that their communication was often lacking, and that they would like to emphasize connection to individuals in their cohort in future iterations.

In addition to the lives of each of the specific cohorts, a major component of the experience of the coaches involved planning and facilitation of near-monthly **gatherings with all three cohorts together**. These gatherings involved a large variety of locations and focuses and provided opportunities for education and active participation in different activities and disciplines aiming towards the desired program outcomes. Our large group gatherings included: a launch retreat weekend at Lake Brownwood involving cohort formation, introduction to the program, and introduction to the disciplines; a forum on stewardship involving a variety of ACU faculty and staff at Rhoden Farm, including a tour of the farm and the construction of three gardens; a tour of missional communities in Abilene,

including the Allelon community, the St. Ann's community, and Janet and Doug Mendenhall's CCC Friendship House, followed by a workshop on casting vision and discerning purpose; an afternoon retreat at the St. Ann's community focusing on community identity; and a final afternoon retreat at the Mendenhalls' home involving further exploration of community identity and sociocratic governance as well as a time of blessing.

For the most part, these large group gatherings were very positive and well received by the students. The extended gathering time gave space for more developed discussions, some instruction, and plenty of opportunities for hands-on practice, and the interaction of all of the students together provided a diversity of voices and senses of calling and mission. Students seemed to benefit immensely from these gatherings, and it was evident they gave very serious thought to the content of what was covered (based on follow-up conversations with different students). Coaches shared the burden of instruction, although formal presentations were kept to a minimum in order to devote the most possible time to giving the students the chance to experience what the coaches were teaching (which included a variety of different activities—planting a garden, engaging in quiet time and listening with God, visiting and talking with various people involved in missional communities, drafting real or artificial statements of community identity and purpose, etc.).

The biggest challenge for the large group gatherings was student involvement, which varied from month to month, but most gatherings included a vast majority of the students. These gatherings were planned and scheduled throughout the year, and it's not clear whether giving students further advance information about the gatherings would have resulted in a higher percentage of participation. A major benefit of these gatherings was the ease with which non-MLI students could participate. This allowed different similarly-minded individuals to attend, especially in the case of non-MLI students who were closely involved (or planning to be closely involved) with MLI students in community; this also allowed some students who did not join MLI at its inception to explore the program later in the year and consider joining a current cohort as appropriate. Another benefit was the relationships these gatherings fostered between members of different cohorts, as they got to know each other better and compared and contrasted their different communities and experiences. In spite of their minor challenges, these large group gatherings were an essential part of the program.

Missional Life Initiative - Measured Outcomes

At the close of the Missional Life initiative's pilot year, the leadership team constructed and administered a survey to measure the success of desired outcomes among students and to receive feedback to refine the overall ML process. The survey is still pending responses from students, and the results will be analyzed during the coming summer. The survey questions have been included in Appendix B.

Missional Life Initiative - Forming Communities

After the completion of the first year of the Missional Life Initiative, two communities have decided to continue living together in a very intentional way.

Javan Furlow is a member of Jordan Bunch and Brent Bailey's MLI cohort. He and his wife Glorie have been married for just over 5 months. They have made plans to move into a house just West of ACU with Glorie's twin sister Gloria and her husband Darren Hagood. They are all excited to pursue relationship with each other and the Lord in a very intentional way. They are still working on many of the details, but they all have a passion for the Lord and serving people. They are excited to see what people the Lord puts in their life and how He might use them to usher in the Kingdom in their neighborhood.

Joshua Brandon, Alex Cobb, Daniel Marolf and Andrew Saucedo are the other members of the Bunch/Bailey cohort. They have been discussing and working out their plans to continue intentional community with each other for over 6 months. They have made plans to move into a house 2 away blocks from the Furlow/Hagood house with each other in addition to their friends Nigel Gwini and Kevin Sorber (who was a member of Pirate Monks with them their freshmen year). They have plans to help kids in their neighborhood with homework after school, start a community garden, have block parties, and regular meals open to the community. While they are making some specific plans for their community based on their own gifts and calling, they are also putting a strong emphasis on continually listening to what Jesus may be asking them to do in their neighborhood.

Missional Life - Projected Process

Towards the end of the pilot year process, the Missional Life team constructed a timeline to show the anticipated continuation of the program in its future iterations. That timeline, included below, traces steps forward in the coming years for ML coaches as well as for cohort members in all three stages of the ML training process (apprenticeship, engagement, and leadership).

Based upon wisdom garnered through the pilot year, the ML process projected here contains adjustments necessary to ensure sufficient attention to pilot cohorts and greater cohesiveness and success for future cohorts. Two major modifications have been made for post-pilot cohort experiences. Components of the projected process that differ from the initial pilot year experience are:

1. The expansion of the Missional Apprenticeship stage from a sophomore year experience to a one and a half year experience spanning the spring semester of students' freshman year through their sophomore year. This both lengthens and adjusts the timing of this apprenticeship phase.
2. The proposed inclusion of an MLI-linked course in the fall semester of students' sophomore years (seen first in Fall 2013).

Given adjustments in the process, pilot-year students' experiences of ML will differ slightly from those of post-pilot year students. However, once in place, the following ML schedule (particularly as expressed for the Freshman cohort beginning Fall 2012) will be replicated yearly.

	Coaches	Missional Apprenticeship	Missional Engagement	Missional Leadership
Summer 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit additional coaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search for potential individuals in groups like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRNA cohorts, current and previous GST ResLife Coaches' personal relationships Finalize coaching pairs by August/September 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Sophomore (pilot) cohort relationships through social networks and email 		
Fall 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train coaches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct coaches' retreat/training weekend in September Meet once a week thereafter for training and planning sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit new Freshmen cohorts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search for potential individuals in groups like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dorms (ask ResLife staff) Freshmen Bible classes (ask TAs) LYNAY Emerging Leaders program Justice-oriented student organizations Coaches' personal relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue meeting as appropriate with Junior (pilot) cohorts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place emphasis on focused Kingdom service and sacrificial giving/stewardship Give attention to communities formed from pilot year MLI experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer training specific to their missional engagement contexts 	

	Coaches	Missional Apprenticeship	Missional Engagement	Missional Leadership
Spring 2013		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin meeting regularly with Freshmen cohorts<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ January<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Conduct initial retreat▪ Start establishing rhythms of daily time with God and weekly time with cohort◦ February<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Begin monthly coaching sessions with cohort members◦ March<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Offer large MLI gathering◦ April/May<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Encourage cohort members to begin identifying potential “soul friend”▪ Offer large MLI gathering and blessing for the summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue meeting as appropriate with Junior cohorts	
Summer 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin recruiting new coaches (as above in Summer 2012)• Confirm status of current coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain cohort relationships through social networks and email	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain cohort relationships through social networks and email	

	Coaches	Missional Apprenticeship	Missional Engagement	Missional Leadership
Fall 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Train new coaches (as above in Fall 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue meeting regularly with Sophomore cohorts<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ August<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Begin engaging in potential MLI-linked course◦ September<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Form soul friendships that begin to meet regularly▪ Offer large MLI gathering◦ October<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Offer large MLI gathering◦ November<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Offer large MLI gathering▪ Recruit new Freshmen cohorts (as above in Fall 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue meeting as appropriate with Senior cohorts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer opportunities to Senior cohorts and meet together as appropriate
Spring 2014		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue meeting regularly with Sophomore cohorts (as above in Spring 2013)• Begin meeting regularly with Freshmen cohorts (as above in Spring 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue meeting as appropriate with Senior cohorts (as above in Fall 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue offering opportunities to Senior cohorts and meeting together as appropriate (as above in Fall 2013)

Preliminary Missional Life Course Proposal

Synopsis

The Missional Life initiative proposes the creation of a new course for students participating in the ML apprenticeship/certificate program. The main objective of the course is to complement the development of ML competencies (see attached document). The course serves to connect these competencies directly to the academic context, bringing together the critical thinking and missional components of ACU's 21st Century Vision. Likewise, the program provides an innovative experience of integrated learning by connecting the classroom directly to uncharacteristic, team-based opportunities in Abilene nonprofit and community-building contexts and in contemporary expressions of the emerging church.

Justification

The present curriculum of ACU's various academic units lacks an integrated, interdepartmental method for introducing students to diverse practices of missional living and creation of sustainable, Christ-centered communities. Consequently, the ML pilot program was launched in Fall 2011 to engineer and execute a plan toward creating Certificates of Missional Service and Leadership. This two-to-three year certificate program serves to integrate the gifts, vocation and present context of students across the university toward intentional expressions of the Kingdom both domestic and abroad. Concomitantly, the creation of the ML course component creates a distilled context for deep conversation about missional living, critical reflection on personal and team vocation, and high-quality research into the implications of missional principles for Christians in any context. Along with the traditional missions education focus on missions theory and case study reflection, the ML course component directs students toward reflection on their concurrent experiences as they participate in service and learning throughout Abilene. Theories are translated more immediately to practice and in turn given adequate time for reflection. This form of missions education is intended to complement the forms already present.

Appendix A

Leadership Team's Statement of Grace (Working Document)

1) The Story of Us

Overview:

ACU has committed to prepare students for missional leadership as a core platform of its 21st Century Vision. Graduates should leave ACU empowered to go into their future life and work intentionally engaging the mission of God. While some students are well prepared for such intentional living, no comprehensive plan is in place to deliver on this commitment across the student population. The time has come to address this need--and the Missional Life Team has been given the opportunity to lead in this important work.

The Team:

I, Kent want to live in and for God's delight. I believe God's delight remains focused on uniting all things in Jesus Christ by calling forth a Divine family from every tribe, tongue and people. I believe ACU can become an amazing center for sending God-empowered, trained people into this life-affirming work across the planet. I believe MLI is playing a key role in helping us discover what this will take. And I am delighted with the team God has gathered to pioneer this work. I believe they are just right for the job.

I, Rosten, am excited about the Missional Life Initiative because I love working with people who are passionate about the Kingdom of God. I love getting to work alongside people who are already actively pursuing the Kingdom, as well as encouraging and aiding those who are just beginning the search. It is amazing to be a part of a group of people who share those passions, especially with a group of people that is as talented as this group. I am excited to see what happens with our students as they pursue deeper life with God.

I, Laura, chose to be a part of the MLI team because I firmly believe in the aims the group has to deeply impact the lives of students for the sake of the Kingdom. MLI's focus on community-building and attentiveness to God's gifting and guiding mirror my own interests, and I am particularly excited to see these things developed in the lives of undergraduate

students who are at once both very open to formation and full of great potential and passion to form the world around them. I see the Kingdom growing in and through MLI.

Furthermore, it is a great pleasure to be part of such a talented, ministerial group of people as those with whom I work in crafting and implementing the MLI experience.

I, Brent, was recruited into the MLI team by my friend Jordan, and I am extremely thankful I have been able to live in community with this group of people. I am constantly impressed with the imagination, thoughtfulness, and creativity of the group, and I am especially grateful for the ways we make room for all of the diverse perspectives in the room to have voice. As I have participated with this community and in a leadership role with our cohort, I have caught a greater vision for the kind of missional life we are all pursuing together, and I believe I have grown and will continue to grow through my involvement with this movement. I have seen immense growth in our students, and I believe wholeheartedly in the purpose and mission of the Missional Life Initiative as well as God's giftings among its leaders.

I, Benjamin, decided to join the MLI project because of the pedagogical deficit that ACU has built up regarding its mission. MLI appeared to provide an opportunity to further the conversation on healthy Christian education that actually equips Christian servants and leaders for God's mission in the world. Our early conversations about the topic were intriguing and hopeful, which convinced me that joining the pilot cohorts could provide a worthwhile learning experience. One of my key expectations was to see the MLI team instantiate the competencies that were named as desired outcomes for students in MLI.

I, John, decided to join the Missional Life Initiative out of a desire to practice mentorship/coaching with people who are passionate about life with God and pursuing the "other". I have a hope of connecting with a people who wish to join in the work that I'm excited about concerning my community and neighborhood. I have a faith in the importance of helping shape individuals centered around the Mission of God as I understand it. Finally, I was drawn to MLI because of my friendship with Rosten and his interest in this project and my trust of Kent's wisdom and insight.

I, Jordan, see this as our story

- We are dedicated to training students to join God on mission.
- We are passionate about that work.
- We listen to each other extremely well.
- We rarely let business matters trump personal matters.
- We love each other.
- We each have incredibly unique gifts and perspectives to offer that sharpen us.

2) Interaction Styles and Warning Signs

What you should know about Kent:

I am deeply interested in the intersection of theory and praxis, of ideas and lifestyle. I am at my best and happiest when I have freedom to imagine a better future, to think deeply about what that will take, and to work with motivated people as a team to see that possibility become a reality.

I quickly grow bored managing things that are already in place--and at this stage in life have learned not to try. If you work with me long, you'll likely have occasion to get frustrated with my lack of attention to the details. I do best when some of the people around me are gifted and willing administrators--and are merciful.

And--two kinds of fatigue make me especially poor company: 1) Lots and lots of time engaging with people without a break. 2) No time for a short nap in the afternoon. I have learned to self- manage in these areas most of the time, but it is not pretty if circumstances prevent for some reason--we don't want to go there ;)

What you should know about Rosten:

I love helping people understand how the life of God intersects with their life. I am passionate about communicating deeply, especially in one-on-one interactions and small groups (fewer than five). I am a very extroverted person, but I also require a good deal of alone time, or at least low-maintenance time. Besides time with God, this often looks like playing guitar, a video game, digging a hole, or a variety of other activities.

I have a hard time when too much is expected or asked of me, which is related to my need for low-maintenance time. I begin getting easily frustrated when my life is too busy or

fragmented. I also begin to deteriorate if I am unable to express myself artistically, usually through writing prose or music. In meetings and conversations, I begin to disengage when: 1) people do not seem to be listening well and/or interrupt others consistently, 2) conversation seems to be moving in circles, and 3) the amount of time given to a topic seems disproportionate to the relative importance of the topic. And honestly, people interrupting other people is one of my biggest pet peeves, whether it is someone interrupting me or someone else, or if I realize that I have interrupted someone. Finishing tasks is important to me, but only if the process through which we finish those tasks is good and honorable.

Probably the biggest warning sign for me is if I seem uninterested in what is going on in a meeting. That could also mean that I am distracted by my own thoughts (in which case I should probably be brought back on task), but it could mean that I am feigning disinterest because I feel unheard or like others are being unheard. On rare occasions, I will start to become sarcastic or snide.

What you should know about Brent:

I love walking with and supporting people one-on-one or in very small groups, and I am passionate about helping people attend to God's work and presence in their lives. I am also interested in issues of social justice and am growing in boldness to confront areas of injustice. I feel I express myself best and process my thoughts most effectively through writing, and due to my strong introversion, I value frequent times of solitude that give me opportunities to think and rest.

In all honesty, I struggle with meetings, and although I recognize and acknowledge how much more effective groups are than individuals for making things happen and thinking through things thoroughly, I must constantly fight the temptation to do things entirely on my own. I typically have no trouble giving all of my attention to the people with whom I am physically present, but in times of high stress or low energy, my mind's wandering makes it very difficult for me to listen to what people are saying or to put forth the effort to listen deeply. You may recognize this when I seem disengaged, when my answers and comments are short and shallow, or when I don't ask questions or offer input to move the conversation forward. I also tend to set personal deadlines I don't communicate well to others (such as, "I'll answer that person's email by Friday"), so it may seem like I have neglected a task when I am actually just working on my own (poorly communicated) schedule.

What you should know about John:

I love creating from making things, to solving problems, to forming new idea connections. I like to appreciate the creation of others, from nature and art, to inventions and concepts, and especially stories. I want to be a better storyteller. I work best when I have very clear goals or a strong picture of the core objective that is being worked on, as well as the creative freedom to make choices on how to get there.

I am generally stressed by having too much to do, poorly scheduled time, time spent on things I think I know already. When I'm stressed I seek out distraction; Youtube, video games, cleaning my room, even people. When I am upset I shut down. I don't talk. I can sometimes hide these signs but the more you know me the easier it is to spot my hiding. When I am in these emotional states I might need space. I might need you to pursue me and ask me questions. I might need some affirmation. Any of these three things might also drive me deeper into myself and I haven't figured out how to give tells on when which method is appropriate. The only sure fire things that work are music, hanging out with outcasts, and (for short-term effects) general silliness.

What you should know about Laura:

Things I value in communication:

- efficiency and attentiveness
 - not unnecessary brevity or shallowness, but rather focus that allows for deep communication
 - not multitasking with unnecessary unrelated activities
 - attention to the conversational process and how it conveys (dis)respect
 - are we on task? are all important tangents taken note of and connected helpfully?
 - who has had an opportunity to contribute (or not)?
 - who is displaying signs of restlessness or unspoken emotion?
 - building up individuals and groups
 - truthful yet tactful speech
 - vulnerability and openness
 - encouragement and affirmation
-

- respect
- seeking input from all whom the Spirit has given something to say
- humility and, as a result, advocacy
- allowance—and thankfulness—for differences and diversity

What you should know about Benjamin:

I always have been, and show good signs of remaining, an idealist of every form. I believe the high and lofty goals of good character, indomitable resolution and unfailing honor are the firmest foundations for building a good life. To be clear, these correspond to faith, hope and love, respectively, and simply express my cultural understanding of the Biblical principles. While these are attainable on an individual level, my key desire is to see them enacted regularly in the space between people. When this goal is threatened, I fall into a guard position and become wary. I generally do best in small groups (2-5), as I find it far more difficult to maintain healthy interaction in larger communities. I greatly value time alone, rarely find much of it, and feel worn and emptied without it.

Certain classes of action feel particularly threatening, and consequently create conflict, regarding each of the aforementioned virtues. For good character, it is lack of loyalty and cowardice that are most frustrating; for resolution, giving up without cause and lack of discipline; for honor, manipulation and dishonesty. Likewise, when I fail in any of these areas, I hold myself in severe reproof (though reproof does not preclude mercy). For better or for worse, I also value highly intelligent people. For me, intelligence is a key foundation for increasing wisdom (an assumption predicated on verses such as Prov 18:15), and it makes me far more trusting of any conversations that may occur.

I do best when conversation moves slowly and intentionally. For me, speed in conversation is a hallmark of debate and disrespectful arguments. Because I place a high premium on self-reliance (and beyond that, God-reliance), I often struggle to stay engaged in group problem-solving. This also means that if I don't serve a specific purpose in a community, I am likely to be disengaged and unconcerned with its workings. While many previous jobs attest to the fact that I will still do work assigned to me, it is merely a matter of resolution that keeps me going.

For a key text in my life on resolution, see Thomas Bacaulay's "Horatius." By good character, I refer largely to those things that Marcus Aurelius cites having been taught by various sources in Chapter 1 of *The Meditations*. I'll get back to you about a text on honor.

Warning Signs:

- Undue silence. I have an exceptionally strong belief in listening, but if I'm absolutely silent, it is most likely because I believe that something dishonorable or unjust is occurring.
- Physical tension. Generally if my frustration has reached a point of physical tension, I desire to leave immediately. Because of my upbringing, I will almost never do so, but it does lead to an escalation of emotion if the present situation isn't addressed.

*What you should know about Jordan:***Interaction Styles**

- I tend to see how things could be.
- I am very optimistic about the future.
- I love dreaming of how things could be.
- I am extremely empathetic, and when something appears to be wrong with someone else jump quickly to encouragement.
- I work best when I think out loud with a group.
- I prefer to lead a group. I struggle when I need to follow others directions.
- I am rarely satisfied with how things are, I want them to be better, because I believe they could always be better.

Warning Signs

- I give a deep (usually loud) breath.
- I check the time on my phone constantly.
- I get antsy (not sure if there is an obvious visible sign to this or not)
- My neck gets tense, I may rub it to try to loosen it.

3) Expectations

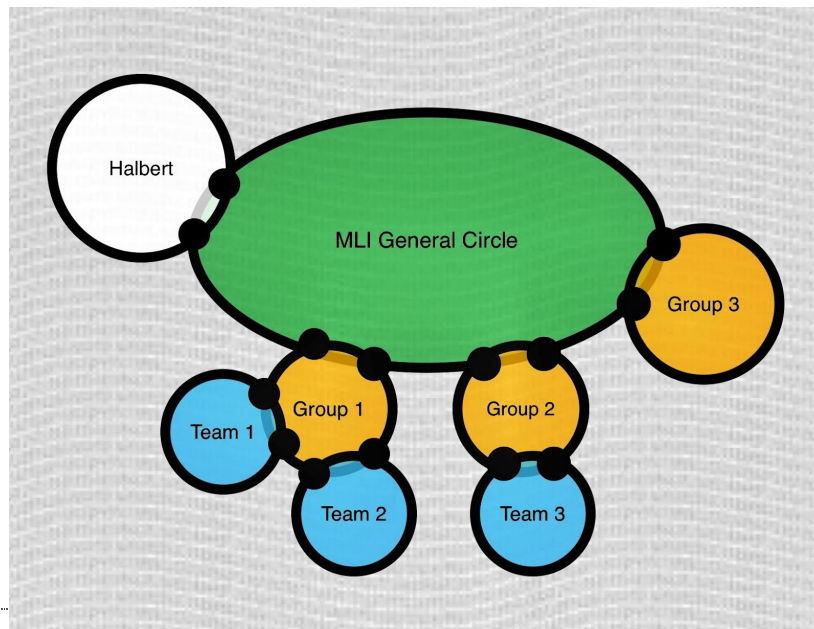
Vision: To do our part--no more and no less--to see a vibrant family of Jesus in close reach, culturally and geographically, of everyone--in the conviction that God's delight remains focused on uniting all things in Jesus Christ by calling forth a Divine family from every tribe, tongue and people.

Mission: To call ACU students into Christ-centered communities on mission with God so that they develop by practice the critical, missional and global perspective to lead in changing the world.

Aim: [From 2011-2014 to develop and pilot a sustainable, expanding process for training ACU undergraduates to spend the rest of their lives on mission with God, regardless of their location or career.]

Governance: The ACU Missional Life Team seeks to align its practice at every level with the purposes of God in the community of God as disclosed in the principles of natural governance found throughout God's creation. This approach to guidance within natural systems is broadly described in the discipline of cybernetics, and an overview of these principles for communities and organizations is found in John Buck's *We The People*.

Organization (Spring 2012):



4) Returning to Peace

If we sense at any point that something is coming between us, we will take the initiative to clear what is between us in the Spirit of Jesus. We will walk through the following process for Clearing together.

Steps of a Clearing

- 1. DATA**
- 2. JUDGMENT**
- 3. FEELINGS**
- 4. MIRROR**
- 5. WANTS**

The person who has the charge brings the other person into the center of the circle. Pick a facilitator (generally the group leader; do not self-facilitate a clearing). Either person can ask for a support-person to stand with them, if they want. Then the facilitator leads through the steps.

DATA

Unarguable facts of what happened, concisely stated without judgment or feeling (what a video camera would have recorded). Keep it clean: facts only—no judgment or feeling or interpretation or projection.

The listening person mirrors all the data back without interpreting, to make sure it is accurately perceived (not necessarily agreed with—just accurately heard).

JUDGMENT

The stories I made up in my head about what kind of person you are. These are not “true” about you—they are my thoughts and projections (my thoughts are not reality, they are only perceptions happening in my head which may or may not correspond to reality). They will be harsh, global, sloppy, and usually put you in the worst possible light (it can help to

intentionally exaggerate these so they can be seen clearly). I own these judgments as my own, so “accuracy” in terms of if they fit you or not is unimportant at this stage. Then, the other person mirrors back the judgments (again, not agreed with, just accurately heard and repeated).

FEELINGS

Name the SASHET emotions that occur for me in this situation, and how I am feeling right now.

As before, the person mirrors back what was said.

MIRROR

One or more of these phrases can help get at the mirror:

- How this is about me is _____.
- The truth is, I do that too by _____.
- This situation reminds me of _____.
- I feel now just like when _____.

Then, the person repeats that back.

WANTS

1. First, what do I want for myself?

What kind of person do I want to be when I get in situations like this? How do I want to respond when I feel like how I feel right now? How can I become stronger so that whatever happens to me, I take responsibility for creating what I want apart from what others do or do not do?

No mirror necessary at this point.

2. Second, what do I want from you?

Knowing you may or may not give what I request of you (I cannot control you), what “ask” do I want to make? There is a risk here, but I choose to step into it anyway and face the possibility of being turned down.

The person mirrors that back to make sure the request has been heard. Then, he responds to the ask:

- He agrees to give what was asked
- He chooses not to give it
- He negotiates something else.

After the “wants” are spoken and responded to, the facilitator should invite the person cleared with to say what he owns about the judgment brought to him. *“Although this judgment is about the person who brought it to you—it is their clearing, not yours—what part of it can you own? How is this actually true of you?”*

The facilitator asks each person if they are clear” (or “complete”). If not, find out what needs to be done so the person can get clear. When they both are clear, they share a final hug.

Note: Being “clear” means I have spoken my truth and am now able to be in community with the other person. The intention is that I have done what I need to do to take responsibility for how I feel and act. I have dissipated the energy of this situation through recognizing the “charge” is really inside of me. I know I will care for myself; whatever you do (or do not do) I take ownership of how I want to be. It does NOT mean every aspect of the problem or breakdown is over, or that I am happy, or that you are in agreement, or that you will do what I asked. The hug means the “energy” source has been properly identified (inside of me, not you) and that now, if I choose to work on myself, I have a clearer picture of what I want. I have reminded myself I do not need to change anyone else—indeed, I cannot change anyone else—in order to get what I want in life.

5) Short and Long-Term Agreements

The reconciling love of Christ is far-reaching and active. We are a people born to seek one another out in times of ease and in times of conflict. “If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother or sister has anything against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother or sister; then come and offer your gift” (Matt 5:23-24). Moreover, we are not called to the ways of the flesh, to extend love only to those in easy reach. From “love one another” flows the

consequent exhortation, “Love your enemies!” And how much more ought we to seek out the family, no matter how much distance we have set between ourselves.

Should there be any sign of division between us, any foothold for the machinations of evil, we commit ourselves to respond accordingly. Within **two days** following any damaging event, we commit to pursue the brother or sister with whom we have conflict. The command is for both parties and cannot be passed off in responsibility to the other, for just as we must seek out the brother or sister who “has anything against [us],” we also must go privately to the brother or sister who sins against us (Matt 18:15).

As we enter into conversation about our conflict, we commit to the following:

- We will re-read the Statement of Grace to be reminded of our common bond and shared goals.
- We will undergo an agreed upon conflict-resolution process.
- We will hear our critics with the humility appropriate to God’s children, recognizing that we are a people of planks and imperfection.
- We will speak the truth in love, admitting honestly our motivations and feelings.
- In all things, we will give to others the grace, the patience, and the understanding that we would hope to receive in turn.

We see the importance of reconciling the body as paramount and integral to our relationship with God. “For if you forgive people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you” (Matt 6:14). If we cannot come to agreement or resolution, we then commit to treat each other with respect and dignity whether near or at a distance. May no evil pass our lips concerning the other, whether making a mock or disparaging our brother or sister.

In all good faith, we commit to offer our conflict in prayer to God and to return within **two years** to seek peace again to the best of our ability. This may mean something as simple as a phone call or a letter. We do so for the sake of God’s glory, not seeking our own interests first.

Appendix B

Pilot Experience Survey

[Open ended question] What tools and events helped you as a learner in MLI this year? Why were these helpful? (This can include events in your cohort, large gatherings of MLI, tools such as the “Blueprint of We”, or anything else that can contribute to the learning process.)

[Open ended question] What would you recommend to improve MLI for your second year, or to improve the experience of the next first-year cohorts?

- **Self Knowledge** - Describe accurately your sense of vocation—core passions, calling and skills. “I am able to tell my story and identify how God has created me to join in God’s work.” “I have a clear understanding of my God-given identity and how that influences what I do.”
 - **Replication** - Reproduce what you have learned in new contexts. “I am confident I can cultivate in other settings the kind of relationships I’ve experienced in MLI.”
 - **Ears to Hear** - Listen comprehensively to others. “I am able to listen to others on their own terms and without judgment.”
 - **Kingdom Focus** - Demonstrate a deepening Kingdom focus in every expression of your personal and community life. “I recognize and am actively engaged in God’s work around me.”
 - **Stewardship** - Pursue a lifestyle of stewardship of yourself, your resources, and the whole Creation. “I manage my responsibilities and resources in a way that honors God.”
 - **Friendship** - Forge deep and lasting relationships as a clear life priority. “I form deep and meaningful relationships.”
 - **God-Centered** - Demonstrate a growing attentiveness to God in yourself, others, and the world. “I am actively pursuing relationship with God in my own life, in the people around me, and in the world.” “I am more aware of God’s presence in my own life, in the people around me, and in the world.”
-

- **Advocacy** - Advocate for others with skill—as a key to cultivating a culture of honor.
“I skillfully protect and support the interests and needs of others.”

On a scale of 1 to 10, rate your competence at the end of this year of the Missional Life Internship in (10 is the ideal and 1 is the opposite):

On a scale of 1 to 10, rate your abilities and competence before the beginning of your Missional Life Internship in these areas (10 is the ideal and 1 is the opposite):

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much did MLI contribute to the change in these areas (10 is completely and 1 is not at all):

Comments on your experience with the competencies:

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is complete participation and 1 is no participation, rate your participation in each of these practices of the Missional Life Internship:

- **Solo time with God** (Daily)
- **Community gathering** (Weekly)
- **Retreats and all-gatherings** (Monthly)
- **Soul Friendships** (Weekly+)
- **Coaching and Spiritual Direction** (Monthly)

Comments on your experience with the practices:

How long were you involved in your MLI cohort?

- Less than 1 month
 - 1-3 months
 - 3-6 months
 - I have been involved in my cohort for the entire internship.
-