

LEADERSHIP

Mentors in faith



Lutheran campus ministries provide students with a haven from the pressures of academia while helping them realize their callings in Christ.

At Clemson University in South Carolina, Lutheran Campus Ministry helps students understand that their studies intersect with their Christian identity. The ministry's mentoring program, called 2x2, connects students with faculty and members of University Lutheran Church who are in similar fields. These small groups meet regularly to discuss how one's vocation can be discovered through one's studies.

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Tom Birdsong, a Clemson senior majoring in computer engineering, said that being part of 2x2 has helped him understand that his vocational discernment is an ongoing process and that there are many paths he could pursue.

"I felt strongly that whatever I ended up doing as a profession had to be in service in some capacity," he said. "I knew I wasn't going into a pastor role, but I was trying to find out how I could apply my engineering skills to projects that would create community and foster faith. Having the perspective of my mentors as people in academia and in my industry helped me realize there are a lot of ways that we can apply our vocation and do God's work at a community level."

Chris Heavner, campus pastor at Lutheran Campus Ministry—Clemson, thinks the 2x2 program gives students a community of support. "Our mentors are able to take students on field trips and immerse them in experiences they wouldn't always be able to have," he said. *Mission Support from the South Carolina Synod and the churchwide organization enhances the work of Lutheran Campus Ministry—Clemson.*

"In campus ministry, we never have members like you do in congregations," Heavner said. "Students come and go. It's important for students to know when they graduate that they can find a community of faith and continue to be surrounded by that cloud of witnesses. I couldn't be concrete with students about that if I didn't have the confidence that this was a ministry the whole church was supporting."

