National Initiative to Strengthen Christian Campus Ministries at Colleges and Universities

REQUEST FOR CONCEPT PAPERS

Updated November 2, 2026

Lilly Endowment is pleased to announce its National Initiative to Strengthen Christian Campus Ministries at Colleges and Universities (Campus Ministry Initiative). The aim of the initiative is to strengthen throughout the United States the capacities of Christian campus ministries at or near colleges and universities to nurture the religious lives of college students both today and into the future.

In this competitive initiative, the Endowment intends to award grants of **up to $7.5 million each to approximately 20 national and regional charitable organizations that support Christian campus ministries at or near multiple college and university campuses** (e.g., national and/or regional denominational agencies, campus ministry parachurch organizations, collegiate ministry associations, church networks, independent religious agencies) to support programs that advance the aim stated above and the following five objectives:

1. Assisting local campus ministry leaders in listening to and understanding more deeply the emerging spiritual interests and questions of students and in assessing how effectively their existing ministry strategies and programs are reaching and nurturing the religious lives of young people.
2. Creating new or enhancing existing programs of local campus ministries to help students explore spiritual questions, build community with other students, discover and test how they can draw more fully on their faith in making decisions about their futures and engage in Christian practices and rituals to deepen their faith.
3. Fostering more opportunities at local campus ministries for students to serve as Christian leaders and explore calls to Christian ministry.
4. Engaging in fundraising and related activities to strengthen the financial and organizational capacities of local campus ministries (including creating or increasing pools of financial resources to support local campus ministries).
5. Strengthening the charitable organization's own capacities and programs to provide resources and support to local campus ministries and those who lead these student ministries.

The Endowment recognizes that local campus ministries that serve students at public and private universities and colleges take many forms and are organized and supported by a broad range of religious and charitable organizations and individuals. These forms may include, among others: denominationally based and supported student ministries (e.g., student unions, student associations, student clubs, student forums, fellowships, foundations, etc.); ecumenical or interdenominational student ministries supported by a cluster of denominations, churches and/or individuals; campus chapters of parachurch collegiate ministries; congregation-based student ministries hosted by churches or parishes near campuses; Christian study centers that support student-focused ministries; independent religious agencies or networks that support student ministries on various campuses.

The Campus Ministry Initiative is intended to provide grants to organizations that support local campus ministries of various forms on *multiple* college and university campuses. It is not intended to provide grants directly to individual local campus ministries or ministries that serve students on a single campus. *Thus, individual local campus ministries, congregations that support students on a single campus, or Christian study centers based at a single university are not eligible to apply.*

The Endowment anticipates awarding grants totaling **up to $150 million** to selected charitable organizations that provide vital resources and support to local campus ministries.

Interested charitable organizations may apply for Campus Ministry Initiative grants through a two-stage, competitive process.

Stage 1 Concept Papers: In the first stage, interested charitable organizations that support Christian campus ministries at or near universities and colleges may submit **concept papers** that explain their interest in the initiative and provide initial descriptions of their potential programs for which they would like to request an implementation grant. Concept papers must be submitted through the Campus Ministry Initiative Concept Paper Submission Form, which may be found on the initiative's webpage.

Concept papers are due by January 25, 2027.

The Endowment will review the concept papers and intends to award planning grants of **up to $50,000 each to approximately 20 organizations** that submit concepts that show the most promise to advance the Campus Ministry Initiative's aim and objectives. The planning grants are intended to assist organizations in developing their concepts and preparing proposals for implementation grants. *The Endowment anticipates notifying organizations of planning grant awards in March 2027.*

Stage 2 Implementation Grant Proposals: In the second stage, selected organizations that receive planning grants may submit proposals for grants **up to $7.5 million each** that may be used for up to a five-year period to implement their plans. Selected organizations may request to use **up to $5 million** in these funds to support the programmatic and related expenses of their proposed programs. Organizations may request **up to an additional $2.5 million**, which would be subject to $1(Endowment)-for-$1(grantee) matching conditions and be paid on a matching basis, to create or increase a pool of funds to support local campus ministries.

Implementation grant proposals are due by June 7, 2027. *The Endowment anticipates announcing implementation grant awards in October 2027.*

More information about the background, eligibility, design considerations, selection criteria and concept paper guidelines is provided below. The Endowment will send at a later date proposal guidelines to organizations invited to move into the initiative's second stage.

Background

The Spiritual Interests of College Students

Many young people experience college as one of the most deeply formative periods in their lives. During the college years, students often explore and develop important aspects of their identity. They form dreams, find mentors, explore career options, cultivate significant relationships, gain knowledge of the world and

learn job skills. College also is a critical time for students to reflect on, explore and sometimes even rebuild earlier understandings of their faith, claim their faith and values as their own and learn how to draw on their faith commitments as they make decisions about their futures. For some students who might not have any religious background, college may be a time to explore spiritual questions about their faith for the first time. For others, their spiritual interests and faith commitments may take on more meaning and depth when they are away from their homes for an extended period of time. In both cases, the ministries supported through local campus ministries provide opportunities for students to explore and integrate faith more purposefully into their daily lives. For some, these ministries also provide important experiences through which they engage in vocational discernment with peers and mentors and explore calls to religious leadership as future careers. By leading campus ministry activities for their peers, young people have opportunities to develop and test their leadership gifts and abilities, to find and work side-by-side with mentors and to explore calls to ministry.

Many campus ministry leaders have shared with Lilly Endowment that their ministries are experiencing a significant increase in the number of students who attend worship services and participate in Bible studies and related religious activities. This surge in interest and participation has generated a national debate about whether a religious "revival" is occurring today among young people. While the jury is still out on this debate, campus ministry leaders report that greater numbers of students are seeking places to ask questions of meaning and purpose, to explore spiritual curiosities and to connect with something larger than themselves. They also note that many of these students have little knowledge about religious traditions. In response, many campus ministry leaders need not only to expand their ministry's activities to accommodate more students but also to reorganize and adapt their programs to provide students with basic understandings of scripture and to teach them devotional practices and rituals that nourish and deepen their faith.

Campus ministry leaders serving in a variety of contexts report that, beyond having a desire for worship and a search for purpose and meaning, an increasing number of students are participating in their ministries because they are looking for a "home away from home" on campus. Commentators of higher education have noted the increased pressures and uncertainties faced by students today. For example, they cite recent studies about the increasing mental health challenges and widespread sense of loneliness and isolation experienced by students today. Campus ministry leaders note that many students are looking for community and one of their highest motivations for participating in religious life is to find a place where they belong. In response, these leaders are spending greater amounts of time on building community among young people.

Challenges Faced by Local Campus Ministries

Several studies, including the Endowment-funded Landscape Study of Chaplaincy and Campus Ministry, which was conducted by John Schmalzbauer at Missouri State University, have documented challenges facing campus ministries and college chaplaincies today. One challenge is that job responsibilities placed on campus ministry leaders are expanding. While campus ministry leaders continue to guide their ministry's core activities (e.g., leading worship services, facilitating Bible studies, providing mentoring and spiritual direction, organizing fellowship events), they report that they are increasingly responding to mental health challenges of students, helping to address campus conflicts generated by increasing polarization and needing to spend more time raising funds to support their ministries.

Another challenge is responding to the increasing diversity of campus life. Reflecting broader American culture, public and private colleges and universities are enrolling students from a broad spectrum of religious communities, including Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and other traditions. Campus ministry leaders report that students are seeking to deepen their own faith, but they also are curious about and

interested in learning about other religious traditions. These leaders also recognize that they must organize and conduct their ministries within a diverse religious landscape. As a result, local campus ministries need to attend more intentionally to interreligious engagement than in the past.

A third challenge is financial. The economic uncertainties and financial stress experienced by denominations and church networks have resulted in an unevenness and diminishment of resources flowing to local campus ministries. As a result, many campus ministry leaders are now being asked to expand their ministries to meet increasing student interest with fewer resources.

Supporting Local Campus Ministries

National and regional organizations that support local campus ministries also face their own challenges. Since leaders of these organizations work with ministries at or near multiple colleges and universities, they have a vantage point from which they are able to track trends in higher education and campus life and spot common challenges facing individual campus ministers. They also are able to identify campus ministries that are navigating these challenges with thoughtfulness and creativity and developing new and innovative approaches to nurture the religious lives of students in ways that respond more directly and fully to their emerging spiritual questions and interests. One challenge for national or regional organizations, then, is to create or enhance opportunities for campus ministry leaders to share insights and resources with one another and to strengthen their networks of local campus ministries.

A second challenge is cultivating and supporting campus ministers who are well-equipped and prepared to work with college students and lead local campus ministries. Religious leaders have shared with the Endowment that there is a need to strengthen the ways that individuals are identified and prepared to serve as campus ministry leaders. Leading a local campus ministry requires many common pastoral skills (e.g., designing and leading worship services, pastoral counseling, teaching scripture, administration), but it also draws on specialized knowledge and competencies unique to campus contexts (e.g., understanding the interests of and relating to college students, knowledge of the structure of higher education institutions). At the same time, many current campus ministers report that they work in isolation from other local campus ministries and lack regular and consistent opportunities to interact with their peers. Regional and national organizations are best positioned to find ways to cultivate and prepare future campus ministry leaders and to create communities of practice to support current campus ministers.

A third challenge is financial. Many denominational agencies and campus ministry associations and networks are facing their own economic uncertainties and experiencing diminishing levels of financial support from their donors. At the same time, the demand for resources from local campus ministries is increasing. Many local campus ministries are experiencing a surge in student involvement and seeking resources to support their growth. Religious leaders also recognize opportunities to expand their networks and start campus ministries at new colleges and universities. Regional and national organizations have both the need and the opportunity to enhance current or develop new ways to raise funds and to strengthen their capacities to support local campus ministries.

Through the Campus Ministry Initiative, the Endowment seeks to support **national and regional charitable organizations that support Christian campus ministries at or near multiple college and university campuses** in helping local campus ministries and in strengthening their own capacities to address these and other related challenges.

Eligibility

Charitable organizations in the United States that **support Christian campus ministries at or near multiple colleges and universities** in the United States and that are tax-exempt public charities under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3) and corresponding statutes are eligible to apply for grants through the Campus Ministry Initiative.

Eligible organizations may include national and regional denominational agencies, campus ministry parachurch organizations, collegiate ministry associations, church networks and independent religious agencies, among others. As noted above, the initiative is not intended to provide grants directly to individual local campus ministries or ministries that serve students on a single campus. Thus, individual local campus ministries, congregations that support students on a single campus, or Christian study centers based at a single university are not eligible to apply.

The Endowment seeks to support organizations from a broad spectrum of Christian theological traditions that demonstrate the capacity, readiness and commitment to develop and implement programs that support campus ministries at multiple colleges and universities and that advance the aim and objectives of the initiative.

Through the Campus Ministry Initiative, eligible organizations may submit concept papers for proposed programs that would require **up to $7.5 million** to implement. In developing their concepts, organizations may request to use **up to $5 million** in grant funds to support the programmatic and related expenses of their proposed programs. Organizations may request **up to an additional $2.5 million**, which would be subject to $1(Endowment)-for-$1(grantee) matching conditions and be paid on a matching basis, to create or increase a pool of funds to support local campus ministries. The intent of the matching portion is to provide organizations with both encouragement and support to build up the financial resources available for local campus ministries.

Eligible organizations may submit concept papers for smaller programs that are appropriate for their organizational capacities and would require smaller implementation grants to execute. There is no minimum amount for implementation grants. At the same time, organizations may submit concept papers for larger programs that, in addition to a potential implementation grant from the Endowment, would require funding from other sources. In their concept papers, organizations should identify sources and the estimated amounts of these other funds as much as possible. Those organizations selected to prepare an implementation grant proposal in the second stage of this initiative will be required to confirm the sources of these other funds and include them in their program budgets.

Concept Design Considerations and Guidance

Eligible organizations may propose a broad array of strategies for supporting Christian campus ministries at colleges and universities. As they start to explore possibilities, the Endowment encourages organizations to begin their deliberations about whether to submit a concept paper by engaging in a listening process with students to hear and understand more deeply their emerging spiritual questions and interests as well as the impacts of new technologies and other influential social and cultural forces on their religious lives. If an organization or the local campus ministries that it supports has recently conducted these kinds of student listening sessions, it may wish to review key findings. In their concept papers, organizations should describe

how insights from these conversations with students helped them assess the strengths and weaknesses of programs offered by local campus ministries and informed the design of their proposed concept.

The Endowment also encourages leaders of charitable organizations, in conversation with campus ministry leaders, board members, donors and other stakeholders, to review how local campus ministries are supported and the kinds of programs and resources that would enhance their ministries with students. These conversations may include considerations about how campus ministry leaders are prepared and supported, strengths and weaknesses of current programs for nurturing the religious lives of students, and the ways financial resources are secured and distributed to fund the ministries. In their concept papers, organizations should share insights from these conversations and describe the organizational and financial capacities that would need to be developed or enhanced to strengthen and sustain local campus ministries.

One objective of the Campus Ministry Initiative is to foster more opportunities for students to explore potential vocations as religious leaders. In assessing strengthens and weaknesses of current programs, organizations should consider how local campus ministries are working intentionally to cultivate student leaders and providing encouragement for them to explore potential callings to Christian leadership through on-campus (e.g., serving as worship leader, leading small group study) and off-campus experiences (e.g., internships in local churches, volunteering at faith-based organizations). Where applicable, the Endowment encourages organizations to help local campus ministries identify and foster relationships with potential partners and collaborators to support leadership development (e.g., local churches and faith communities, regional or national religious bodies, Bible institutes and theological schools, retreat and conference centers, church camps, church and other religious networks, and independent religious agencies).

Nurturing the Religious Lives of Students

Organizations may develop concepts for proposed programs that are based on conversations with students and assessments of local campus ministry programs that would nurture the religious lives of students and require up to $5 million in programmatic and related expenses to implement.

The Endowment anticipates that many organizations may propose concepts for programs that would include a combination of the following types of activities:

Helping local campus ministries strengthen the ways they nurture the religious lives of students by providing resources that would help them:

- Enhance student worship services in ways that resonate with and reflect student interests, convictions, relationships and culture, including online and in person experiences.
- Provide more opportunities for students to learn and engage in a wide variety of Christian practices to explore spiritual questions, experience awe and wonder and grow in faith.
- Expand opportunities for students to engage the Bible and broader Christian theological traditions in ways that reflect the students' everyday experiences and the historic, contemporary, local and global interpretations of the Gospel.
- Offer more opportunities for students to build community with their peers by contributing to and feeling connected with service inspired by and related to their faith.

Assisting local campus ministries in encouraging students to serve as Christian leaders and explore potential calls to ministry by provide them resources to:

- Support students in designing and leading worship or small groups.
- Create leadership development opportunities for student leaders from single ministries or groups of local campus ministries.
- Support student internships in parishes and congregations to explore religious leadership.
- Establish mentoring relationships between students and religious leaders and with other parish or church professionals in ministries (including worship, children's, youth, and family ministries).
- Develop relationships with local congregations situated near the campus to enhance their ministries with students as leaders.

Building the organizational and financial capacities of local campus ministries by providing them with funding to:

- Increase staffing.
- Upgrade technology.
- Streamline or enhance administrative functions.
- Strengthen fundraising to increase financial resources flowing to support local campus ministries.
- Identify and sustain networks for strategic external partners and collaborators to support student leadership development, such as local churches and faith communities, regional or national religious bodies, campus ministries, Bible institutes and theological schools, retreat and conference centers, religious camps, church and religious networks and independent religious agencies, etc.

Strengthening the organization's own programs and capacities to provide resources and support to local campus ministries and the campus ministers who lead them to help:

- Provide professional development programs for campus ministry leaders, including support to increase financial literacy and management skills.
- Create communities of practice among campus ministry leaders in the organization's network to help them build supportive relationship with one another.
- Foster learning among campus ministry leaders about new models of ministry and best practices for supporting students' religious lives.
- Support ministries on additional campuses.
- Upgrade technology to more efficiently provide resources to local campus ministries.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, nor should it limit the organization's creativity.

Building Financial Capacity

In addition to the funds to support the programmatic activities noted above, organizations may include in their concepts for their proposed programs a request for **up to $2.5 million** in additional funding to create or increase the organization's pool of funds available to provide direct financial support to local campus ministries and help them become more financially stable and sustainable.

In considering whether to request funds for this purpose and what amount to include in the concept paper, organizations should engage in conversations with a wide range of leaders (including those beyond their own denominations or networks) about the aim of the initiative. Funds requested to support this objective are not intended to replace or offset existing financial support for local campus ministries. Rather, they are intended to help organizations develop and implement financial strategies to raise new funds to provide greater financial support to local campus ministries. These new funds may be 1) contributions raised from new donors or 2) increases in contributions from existing donors (only the increase over previous contributions would count toward the matching funds). Organizations invited to move into the initiative's second stage and submit proposals for implementation grants will need to include in their proposals their plan for tracking and documenting new and or increased funding.

The funds for this portion of a Campus Ministry Initiative grant, up to $2.5 million, are subject to $1(Endowment)-for-$1(grantee) matching conditions and will be paid on matching basis. Organizations must raise qualifying matching funds during the period December 1, 2027 to October 31, 2029. Only the qualifying matching funds raised during this period will be eligible for matching treatment. Qualifying matching funds must consist of contributions of cash or equivalents (e.g., stocks or bonds) received during the matching period or legally enforceable written pledges executed during the matching period to make such contributions on or before June 30, 2031.

The Endowment will pay the matching grant funds as organizations provide satisfactory supporting documentation that they have raised funds needed to satisfy the grant's matching conditions. Organizations may submit annually documentation about the portion of qualifying funds it has raised. For example, an organization includes in its implementation proposal a request for $1.5 million to increase its pool of funds for local campus ministries. These funds are subject to the matching conditions described above. During 2028, the organization raises $500,000 in new funds and submits in November 2028 the appropriate supporting documentation to the Endowment. The Endowment would then pay this portion of the matching funds in December 2028 or early 2029. The organization may repeat this process in 2029 relating to the matching funds it raises during that period. The Endowment anticipates making all payments for matching funds no later than December 31, 2029.

Organizations will need to describe in their concept papers their intent to request funds to build the financial capacities of local campus ministries. Organizations invited to move into the initiative's second stage and submit proposals for implementation grants will need to describe in their proposals the amount of matching grant funds they are requesting and their plans for raising the funds needed to meet the matching requirements.

Organizations have broad discretion for proposing a wide variety of ways to use these funds to build up the financial capacities of local campus ministries. The Endowment anticipates that many organizations may propose concepts for programs that would draw on the pool of funds in the following ways, among others:

- Supplement the salaries of campus ministers and staff.
- Cover a portion of ministry expenses to create or enhance activities to nurture the religious lives of students.
- Design and test new financial models for raising funds to support and sustain ministries.
- Provide internships and other opportunities for student leader to explore calls to Christian ministry.

Organizations may not use grant funds requested in the implementation proposals for scholarships, endowments or organizational operating expenses unrelated to the program.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, nor should it limit the organization's creativity.

Sustaining Campus Ministries into the Future

The Campus Ministry Initiative is intended to assist organizations in strengthening the capacities of local campus ministries to nurture the religious lives of students both now and into the future. Therefore, organizations should consider carefully the appropriate scale of their concepts and submit concept papers for proposed programs that, if successful, it could sustain beyond the end of an implementation grant period.

Toward this end, organizations should also include in their concept papers their initial sustainability plans that describe how they intend to continue their efforts into the future. The plans also should include a discussion about the approaches that the organizations intend to take to embed key program activities into its ongoing operations and/or to raise funds to replace grant dollars.

Selection Criteria for Concept Papers

The Endowment will evaluate concept papers on the quality and promise of the proposed program and the extent to which an organization demonstrates the following:

- A clear understanding of the existing and emerging spiritual interests and questions of students.
- A coherent and compelling concept design that describes a realistic and feasible program for advancing the initiative's aim and five objectives.
- A clear statement of the program's anticipated outcomes for students, for local campus ministries, for the organization, for the other stakeholders and constituencies.
- A compelling and realistic plan that demonstrates that the organization has the capacity to develop its concept and implement its proposed program.

The Endowment anticipates awarding **planning grants of up to $50,000 each to up to 20 organizations** that submit the most promising concepts to assist them in developing their concepts and preparing implementation grant proposals. The selected organizations that receive planning grants may submit proposals for grants for up to $7.5 million each to develop and implement their plans.

Although the Endowment hopes that all invited organizations submit strong implementation grant proposals and receive funding, the awarding of implementation grants to these organizations is not guaranteed and is at the complete discretion of the Endowment. The Endowment intends to award implementation grants only to organizations that submit compelling proposals that present high-quality programs that will advance the initiative's aim and objectives and demonstrate the organization's capacities to execute such programs.

Guidelines for Concept Papers

Complete concept papers must be submitted through the Campus Ministry Initiative Concept Paper Submission Form and must include the following components:

Official Request Letter: This **one-page** letter must be signed by the organization's chief executive officer and chair of its governing board.

Concept Paper Information Form: This form, provided on the initiative's webpage, requests key information about the organization and identifies information about the individuals responsible for the development of the organization's concept into a proposed program.

Executive Summary: This brief summary, **not to exceed one page**, should describe the organization, its mission, its key constituencies, the organization's concept and how it would advance the aim and objectives of the initiative.

Concept Paper Narrative: This narrative must be **no more than seven pages** and should be written in 12-point font, single spaced with one-inch margins. In the narrative, organizations should address the following:

- **Organization Profile:** Provide a brief description of the organization, including its mission, history, local campus ministries that it serves, major programs and annual operating budget. What is the organization's mission, and how does it relate to churches and/or faith-based organizations in its theological or ecclesial tradition or community? How many local campus ministries does the organization support? Where are these campus ministries located?
- **Rationale:** Explain the organization's rationale for submitting a concept paper. Why is it important for the organization to undertake the proposed effort? Who are the students that this effort seeks to reach and serve? What insights emerged from listening to students, and how does the proposed program respond to what the organization heard? How would this effort strengthen the local campus ministries that it supports? How would it advance the organization's mission? How does it align with the aim and objectives of the initiative?
- **Concept:** Describe the organization's concept for the proposed program, including its purpose, potential key activities and anticipated outcomes.
    - What is the concept's overall approach for nurturing the religious lives of students? How does the concept present a coherent strategy for advancing the initiative's aim and objectives?
    - What are the proposed program's potential activities?
        - What activities will deepen the religious lives of students at local campus ministries?
        - What activities will foster opportunities for students at local campus ministries to serve as Christian leaders and explore calls to Christian ministry?
        - What activities will build and strengthen the organizational and financial capacities of local campus ministries?
        - What activities will strengthen the organization's own capacities to provide resources and support to local campus ministries and campus ministry leaders?
    - What are anticipated outcomes for students, for campus ministry leaders, for campus ministries, for the organization?

- **Matching Funds (if applicable):**
  - › Does the organization intend to apply for matching funds? If yes, what are the priorities and intended uses for the funds?
  - › What is the organization's initial plan for raising these funds?
- **Funding Level:** Provide the estimated costs to implement the proposed concept and indicate the level of funding the organization would seek from the Endowment if invited to submit an implementation grant proposal. Why is this level of funding appropriate for the proposed program and the organization? (The Endowment understands that these costs are preliminary estimates and may increase or decrease when developing an implementation grant proposal.) What, if any, other funding does the organization expect to support the proposed concept's implementation, and what are estimates of the amounts of any such support?
- **Initial Plan for Sustaining the Proposed Program:** Provide a discussion about the organization's initial plan to sustain, if successful, new and/or enhanced programs developed through a grant. What current sources of funding may be available? What new sources would need to be cultivated? (Organizations invited to move into the initiative's second stage will be required to submit a sustainability plan with their implementation proposal.)
- **Planning Grant Activities:** In the event that the organization is selected to move into the initiative's second stage and receives a planning grant to help prepare an implementation grant proposal, describe the activities the organization would undertake to develop its concept (e.g., research, hiring consultants, engaging in other activities to help develop the concepts and prepare implementation grant proposals, etc.).

Planning Grant Budget: This is a budget of **up to $50,000** for projected planning expenses during a potential planning period. Note that planning grant funds may be used for up to one year. *See the Guide to Planning Grant Budget Preparation for the required format.*

Letters of Support (optional): Organizations may include **up to three** brief letters of support from partners and/or potential collaborators. These letters should note the anticipated role of potential collaborators in the implementation of the proposed concepts and their intention and capacity to undertake this role. Note that if an organization is invited to submit an implementation grant proposal in the second stage of this initiative, updated letters of support/endorsement will be required.

Copy of Organization's Annual Audited Financial Statements: The annual *Audited Financial Statements* should be for the organization's most recently completed fiscal year. If the organization does not have *Audited Financial Statements*, it may submit with its concept paper *Reviewed Financial Statements* conducted by a certified public accounting firm.

Exempt Status and Charity/Foundation Status Information Form: This form, provided on the Endowment's website, is used to verify the organization's tax status as a qualified recipient of grants from private foundations such as Lilly Endowment. Please check a box in Section 2 of the form to reflect the organization's status. The organization's status may be located on an Internal Revenue Service exempt status determination letter, as indicated in Section 2 of the form and as described below.

Copy of Internal Revenue Service Exempt Status Determination Letter: Most churches and public charities (including regional judicatories and church networks) that are qualified recipients for grants from private foundations will have received a tax-exempt status determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This letter provides verification of the organization's status as a 501(c)(3) organization and indicates the section of the tax code under which the organization's public charity status has been established. Some regional judicatories or church networks may not have asked for or received such a letter from the IRS. If that is the case, the judicatory or church network should determine whether it is listed in the group exemption ruling for a denomination or other charitable organization. If so, the judicatory or church network should attach evidence that it is covered by the ruling. For example, by sending copies of the directory cover and the page on which the judicatory or church network is listed in the official directory of the denomination or charitable organization. No grants will be awarded until the proper tax status is confirmed.

Concept Paper Submission Instructions and Checklist

Concept papers are due January 25, 2027, and must be submitted through the Campus Ministry Initiative Concept Paper Submission Form on the Campus Ministry Initiative webpage.

Concept papers and supporting documents must be uploaded as a single PDF file in the order listed below:

- ☐ Official Request Letter - (one page)
- ☐ Concept Paper Information Form - (on the initiative's webpage)
- ☐ Executive Summary - (no more than one page)
- ☐ Concept Paper Narrative - (no more than seven pages)
- ☐ Planning Grant Budget - (up to $50,000)
- ☐ Letters of Support (optional) - (up to three)
- ☐ Copy of Organization's Annual Audited Financial Statements
- ☐ Exempt Status and Charity/Foundation Status Information Form - (on the initiative's webpage)
- ☐ Copy of IRS Exempt Status Determination Letter - (sample on the initiative's webpage)

Information Sessions: The Endowment will host virtual information sessions to discuss the Campus Ministry Initiative's guidelines for submission of concept papers. Organizations wishing to participate in one of these sessions must register via the links on the Campus Ministry Initiative webpage on the Endowment's website.

Please email any questions about this initiative to campusministry@lei.org.