



Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) Program Development Grants

Awarded in November 2021 • Funding for 2022–2024

Assumption University (MA) will establish a mentoring program to foster connections between previous graduates and students in their junior or senior year. The Aspire program, a collaboration of the Center for Purpose and Vocation, the Career Development and Internship Center, and the Alumni Relations Office, will build on the university’s existing vocation and mentoring initiatives. The program will provide reflective and holistic training for graduates interested in serving as mentors, as well as opportunities for current junior and senior students and their mentors to build relationships on and off campus.

Grace College and Seminary (IN) will develop four programs encompassing students, faculty members, and staff. Student mentors in the first-year experience programs will facilitate conversations that lay the groundwork for deeper thinking about vocation. All students will have the opportunity to join a cross-cultural trip centered on the topic of vocation; they will also increase their awareness and understanding of vocation through chapel speakers. Finally, faculty members and staff will be invited to a seminar on vocation and will be encouraged to join a monthly group where they may further consider their own story of vocation and how it impacts their teaching.

Hanover College (IN) will renew and strengthen its mission of preparing students for the vocation of democratic citizenship. With prominent graduates in the political sphere and a sharply divided nation, campus conversations have become highly charged at best, and prohibitively intimidating at worst. The college seeks to enhance student engagement with their “calling to citizenship” by developing a core group of faculty members, staff, students, and trustees who value the institution’s history and mission of educating citizens, and who will lead college-wide dialogue on complex and divisive social, economic, and political issues.

Lenoir-Rhyne University (NC) will develop resources that recognize the impact of trauma on an individual’s readiness for vocational discernment. These resources will be used in small learning communities across campus and will be made available to all NetVUE institutions. The development of these resources will focus on vocational discernment in the midst (and, it is hoped, in the aftermath) of a worldwide pandemic, while also acknowledging the more general

complexities of trauma on an individual's ability to discern and live into their sense of calling in the world.

Loyola Marymount University (CA) will develop new tools and enhance pre-existing campus resources to empower first-generation college students to explore pathways towards a life of purpose, service, and justice. Referencing prior NetVUE-funded work at Elizabethtown College and the University of La Verne, project leaders will create a vocational toolkit, an assessment process, and a professional development series to enhance student vocational understanding and values formation. The digital toolkit will be implemented in two pre-existing courses offered to all first-generation-identifying students. Grant funding will also support a series of retreats and gatherings for a select group of first-generation student leaders, faculty members, and staff participating in the vocation and values learning collaborative.

Mount Vernon Nazarene University (OH) will organize and formalize vocational explorational activities and initiatives on campus by revising part of its general education curriculum and launching the Center for Global Engagement (CGE), an office for experiential and service-learning that emphasizes vocational and purposeful living. The general education component includes two new courses that provide intentional vocational exploration: a sophomore-level class about vocation and its relationship to Christian calling, individual calling, and models of the good life; and a junior-level set of courses, overseen by the CGE, that invites students to engage in service-learning classes, mission trips, or other volunteer opportunities, encouraging participation in related vocational reflection around these experiences.

Nebraska Wesleyan University (NE) will strengthen and expand opportunities to explore vocation within sophomore- and junior-level courses. Two cohorts of faculty members, each representing ten departments, will design curricular materials to facilitate vocational exploration within their programs. Materials will be customized to fit the pedagogy, methods, and content of each department and shared among faculty members. The students' exploration journeys will be recorded in a portfolio that connects their learning from the first-year seminar to the senior capstone. Grant-supported activities include a day-long workshop, departmental retreats for collaborative curriculum revision, the launch of vocational exploration modules in ten departments, the creation of a digital resource library and a template for future course revision, and modification of department assessment plans to ensure adoption and sustainability of the vocational elements.

Philander Smith College (AR) will integrate reflection on calling and vocational discernment into its existing first-year general education requirement courses; it will also offer mini-grants to faculty members and staff teaching these courses. These mini-grants will allow instructors to revise existing courses to include greater engagement with vocational reflection and discernment. The grant will support a series of workshops and trainings in which participants learn effective advising and mentoring strategies through the exploration of personal narratives as one approach to vocational exploration and discernment.

Salve Regina University (RI) will develop a first-year undergraduate vocation retreat, which will help students explore questions of identity, positionality, and purpose. It will also introduce them to the critical concerns of the university's founding order, the Sisters of Mercy. The project

will also develop a “Build Your Life” sophomore vocation seminar, which will offer tools for vocational discernment and help foster vocational reflection and action in the Mercy tradition.

Southern Adventist University (TN) will strengthen the university’s interdepartmental and co-curricular efforts to foster student exploration of calling across all courses of study. Specific projects funded by the grant include job shadowing and reflection for general studies majors; group road-trips to visit professionals doing work outside of a degree’s expected parameters; a vocational exploration certificate developed within the university’s badging system; and increased training for faculty members and staff to support a large number of weekly, one-on-one mentoring meals between students and university employees.

Transylvania University (KY) will expand upon its “Alumni on Location” experience, in which students travel to metropolitan areas to meet with graduates in their workplaces. Graduates share their stories and give practical advice that will help students as they explore their vocations. The grant will allow the university to increase the number of trips, allowing more students to participate in this eye-opening and life-changing experience. In addition, pre-trip and post-trip sessions will be created to help students learn more about their values, strengths, and interests; these sessions will also help them prepare for and reflect on conversations with graduates who participate in the experience.

Wake Forest University (NC) will further develop and expand its career and leadership education curriculum to better meet the needs of first-generation students. This will be done through development and implementation of a credit-bearing course in which students engage in career events, develop professional competencies, discover and utilize vocational exploration resources, and complete public speaking and peer-coaching certification. Grant funds will also be used to support career treks and job-shadow experiences for student participants, as well as providing opportunities and training that will enable program participants to teach and guide other first-generation students toward vocational resources and opportunities. Participating first-generation students will also design and conduct research and will present their findings to university leadership.