

Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education Professional Development Awards

Awarded in June 2014 ☸ Funding for 2014–2015

Augustana College (IL) will reorganize and expand many academic and co-curricular programs into a single office. The Augustana Center for Careers, Opportunities, Research, and Exploration (CORE) will house staff members who will lead students through vocational discernment, academic planning, skill development for employment; and integration of academic enrichment opportunities such as off-campus studies and undergraduate research. The grant will be used to train over 100 advisors who will be involved with the CORE program. Three different groups of faculty members and staff will participate in retreats and workshops, read important vocational texts, and be exposed to speakers who are experts in the field.

Fairfield University (NJ) will organize three workshops for senior administrators and trustees, with the goal of developing leadership capacity to make vocational discernment a part of the institution's Jesuit educational focus. The short-term goal of this project is formation in mission among senior administrators and trustees in alignment with their active consideration of new strategic priorities.

Ferrum College (SC) will host faculty development sessions focused on spiritual identity and vocation. Participants will read vocation-related texts and participate in two enrichment trips that will help participants relate the college's institutional heritage and focus to vocational discernment among faculty, staff and students. These activities will equip faculty to integrate vocation across diverse fields of study, in order to assist students in better understanding and discerning their vocational callings.

Hendrix College (AR) will focus on professional development through a one-week mission trip for faculty members. This will provide significant opportunities for those present to take part in carefully-led reflections, discussions, journaling, and developing statements about their own vocational discernment. The goal is for faculty members to grow closer to and more appreciative of one another's gifts, while also examining their own. Through this, participants will understand how they can help students and others design engaged learning projects, and find ways to serve as resources for the professional development of their colleagues.

Hope College (MI) will develop a training seminar for new faculty hires that will assist them in being acquainted with the ongoing conversation about vocation, both on and off campus. A week-long seminar will take place, which will include readings from vocation-related books, articles, and essays. The seminar participants will then be divided into three groups, which will meet three times over the course of the semester. These meetings will include brief readings and opportunities for reflection, in order to continue conversations on the topic of vocation.

Manchester University (IN) will equip a core group of faculty members and staff to make use of appropriate tools, activities, and language to assist students in vocational exploration. The goal of this work is to create a more comprehensive plan for discussions about vocation and calling with students throughout their experience. A core team will develop a day-long “vocational summit,” which will bring key faculty members and staff together to learn and explore best practices for students’ vocational exploration. Participants will use the models presented to build on existing vocational efforts and develop a comprehensive plan for vocational programming at the university.

Marian University (IN) will focus on further development of vocational vocabulary among faculty members, staff, and administrators, as well as further equipping these groups with resources in order to foster discernment in and out of the classroom. A seminar will be developed for faculty members, staff, and administrators, in order to enhance overall understanding of vocation and generate new opportunities to explore vocation through curricular and co-curricular initiatives. A series of workshops will focus on core areas relating to vocation. After the conclusion of the workshops, participants will be encouraged to take part in a service learning project in a high-need community, in order to continue fostering the gifts and talents related to their vocations.

Samford University (AL) will plan six events for the course of the year, focusing on the building of knowledge and capacity of faculty members and staff to connect students, through experiential education opportunities, to resources for exploring their callings. Four workshops and panel discussions featuring area nonprofit leaders will allow faculty members and staff to discuss the ethical perspectives to which students should be exposed. Another workshop will focus on developing good internship experiences for students. At a culminating luncheon, participants will describe their work and their experiential learning opportunities they explored over the course of the academic year. This event will also serve to establish connections and solidify plans for robust vocationally grounded experiential education programs for the years beyond.

St. Norbert College (WI) will initiate a year-long Faculty Vocation Study Group, providing participants with stipends to encourage deeper engagement. This group will focus their conversations on the vocabulary of vocational reflection and discernment, with attention to its use among students. Participants will be asked to articulate the perspectives gained from this work, and to describe how it might be incorporated into their classroom efforts. The goal is to increase faculty members’ knowledge of their own vocational trajectories, in order to facilitate similar conversations with their students.

Seattle Pacific University (WA) will strengthen the understanding of the theological, spiritual, and academic meanings of vocation among faculty members and staff, as well as help them to understand the developmental milestones of college students. Professional development opportunities will be created in order to provide opportunities for spiritual discernment. Forums will focus on vocation as a framework for understanding, and will include attention to vocational research and to the development of a useful vocabulary. At the end of the project, leaders will use the results of these initiatives to recommend next steps and strategies.

University of the Ozarks (AR) will bring in a speakers for workshops on vocational mentoring that would be available for all faculty members and staff. In these talks, speakers will be asked to focus on their own experiences, and in particular, how their academic coursework and career choices have helped them to find both financial stability and personal fulfillment. The objective of this work is to extend the work of vocational mentoring and advising of students to a broad array of faculty members and staff on campus. This grant will also fund a series of facilitated conversations, using Parker Palmer's *Let Your Life Speak*, surrounding vocation and discernment.

Valparaiso University (IN) will develop an intensive seminar for administrators, in which participants will read texts that examine the development of the idea of the university, Lutheran higher education, and themes related to calling and purpose. The primary goal is to provide professional development experiences for administrators and staff who are charged with attending to the identity, mission, and vocation of Lutheran higher education, asking them to examine their own sense of calling. Ideally, these conversations and shared experiences will help participants to develop a deeper sense of common mission.