

Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education Professional Development Awards

Awarded in June 2016 ☸ Funding for 2016–2017

Albion College (MI) will hold two one-day retreats for new employees, providing structure for mentor and mentee programming that will introduce the reflection on meaningful life work and a liberal arts school environment. A speaker will be invited to participate in the second retreat, focusing on vocational reflection and setting goals. Six lunches throughout the academic year will connect mentors and mentees to one another, as well as providing resources on campus related to meaningful work at the college.

Bellarmino University (KY) will create training sessions, workshops, and online tools to be employed in order for the campus to develop a clear understanding and definition of vocational exploration and discernment. Advising leadership will engage in professional development opportunities in order to expand expertise and capacity for student learning, development, and discernment, attending three events in total. Using expertise gained from these opportunities, the team will construct training materials, workshop design, and online materials for broader use.

Belmont University (TN) will support faculty members who will identify texts, select additional text resources, and develop a vocational pedagogy for use in First Year Seminar courses. Module design seminars will be led by experts in developing mission-centric dispositions in both students and faculty. The goal of these seminars would be to enhance the discussion of vocation by putting it in conversation with a Christian humanist perspective, in order to underscore how a faith-based “way of knowing” can reveal one’s purpose in life.

Dominican University (IL) will build a cohort of 20 faculty advisors for freshmen and sophomore students. This learning community will gather in early fall for a half-day in-service on holistic advising, along with guided reflection on the University’s understanding of vocational exploration. The group will meet four times over the course of the academic year, gathering around reading on the project theme from several vocational texts. Later in the year, the group will design a vocationally attuned intake questionnaire for advisor–student meetings at new student orientations, as well as collaborating with appropriate colleagues in each academic discipline to create model “guided pathways” for every available major across the student’s entire college experience. Among other goals, the program seeks to promote timely graduation through vocational exploration and discernment.

Dordt College (IA) has created an instructional team which will embark on listening/fact-finding field tours at select local and regional businesses and complete a literature review. After evaluation of the planned field tour and literature review findings, a white paper that offers a clear account of a framework for vocational exploration, along with practical illustrations for implementation. The team will then lead interactive workshops that share this framework with faculty along with monthly lunch-and-learn discussions based on vocational texts.

Lewis University (IL) will focus on the development and implementation of professional development for better faculty member understanding of the exploration of vocation. A keynote address will be open to the University community, as well as to colleagues at other local higher education institutions, with a speaker who is a recognized scholar in the field. Then, a small workshop gathering for approximately 20 faculty members will enable a deeper understanding of the role of *story* in undergraduate education as a means of assisting students to discern, develop, and articulate their own vocation narratives. Following the workshop, faculty members will write essays in which they describe their own vocation stories, which will then be compiled and published in a small anthology. This booklet will then be used by the faculty group in their own teaching and coursework, as well as being incorporated into a freshman seminar course. Lastly, during the end-of-year teaching sessions, a select group of the faculty members who participated in the group will present to all of faculty on their findings.

Point Loma Nazarene University (CA) will develop a reader on vocation that can be used with faculty, staff, and students. The development of this reader will foster deeper conversation among faculty and staff around how PLNU in particular helps students to identify and prepare for their calling. Faculty/staff reading groups will meet to read and discuss vocational texts as well as partake in the reading of “white papers” that were written a few years ago and possibly integrate them into the curriculum.

Schreiner University (TX) aims to enhance faculty members’ capacity to work closely with students as they consider their future careers and post-graduate educational possibilities. In order to do so, faculty members will engage in a speaker series, participate in reading circles, and develop an action plan to infuse vocational themes into work with students, particularly in advising. The information gathered from these events will allow the institution to move forward in establishing a meaningful and purposeful academic advising framework.

Simpson College will establish an advising group that will spend a year as a seminar of colleagues. Their goal will be to lay a foundation for refining the mission of advising at Simpson, with special attention to how vocational exploration can be better implemented into current programs. The group will read vocational texts in order to enrich their reflections, and the college will also work to establish relationships with colleagues at neighboring NetVUE institutions. At the end of the year, specific goals will be developed for further efforts to improve advising through a more overt tie to vocational exploration.

University of Saint Mary (KS) will extensively review elements of its existing vocational exploration curriculum and then develop a revised curriculum to be implemented the following academic year. This will begin with an analysis of existing programs, in order to determine which areas relating to vocational exploration and discernment are in need of development or redesign. Then, a facilitator will help project leaders and other institutions from the Charity Federation who join the program to determine learning outcomes, method of delivery, and pedagogical approaches. Finally, project leaders will engage in a process to establish a timeline and goals for completion of curriculum development and delivery.