

## Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education Professional Development Awards

Awarded in June 2018 ☸ Funding for 2018–2019

**Assumption College (MA)** will develop a two-day workshop, at which an expert in the area of vocation will counsel and share expertise on matters of mentoring and vocation. The goal of this work will be to enhance the knowledge, skills, and expertise of faculty who teach and mentor undergraduate students in the SOPHIA (Sophomore Initiative at Assumption) Program. At the training workshop, faculty will read and discuss academic essays on vocation, working to build and develop a common language that will allow teachers and mentors to more deeply incorporate vocational discernment into the relationships they build with students. After the conclusion of the training workshops, there will be two follow-up conversations with workshop participants, one at the end of each semester in the academic year.

**Austin College (TX)** will design and execute a number of gatherings and workshops over the course of the academic year in an effort to educate faculty about the concept of vocation and how liberal arts colleges are specially situated to help students through the process of vocational discernment. Faculty will create a series of pilot programs to test how best to help students through that process. These goals will be achieved through fall faculty reading groups, using NetVUE's series on vocation as primary reading materials. This will be followed by a spring retreat and a summer workshop. All of these programs will provide faculty mentors with a set of tools they have hitherto not used, which in turn will help students begin thinking about their own careers and lives in a broader, more holistic light. Faculty will employ these tools in future mentoring activities, which will result in vocational conversations with hundreds of students in the years following this project.

**Fontbonne University (MO)** will implement several programs attended by a group of 20 faculty and staff from both academic and student affairs to build a community that is knowledgeable about vocational exploration. First will be a book group, utilizing NetVUE texts that reflect the school's programmatic balance. A workshop, led by an expert in vocational exploration, will facilitate group work on the infusion of vocational exploration into the programs in the participants' areas. Ideas generated in the workshop will be taken back to the departments to be refined for the purpose of making plans to implement changes. Finally, participants will close the feedback loop by giving a public lecture showcasing their work and recommendations for infusing opportunities for vocational exploration throughout the university.

**Lipscomb University (TN)** will embark on a pilot project that will include a series of "Faith, Learning, and Vocation" week-long seminars for a small number of faculty, as well as lunch seminars for another small rotating group of faculty. Each summer, three week-long seminars of 13 faculty will meet, led by two scholars who have thought and written about the theological exploration of vocation. The hope is for such seminars to occur every year, well beyond grant funding, for a total five years, with a goal of 195 Lipscomb faculty participants by the end of the summer of 2023. These will be followed by a series of mini-seminars to convene for two days

over the course of a single week each semester for the same time period, eventually providing opportunity for the vast majority of Lipscomb's faculty and staff to engage in topics related to the theological exploration of vocation.

**Mount Mary University (WI)** will implement and execute numerous project training sessions with the goals of educating the community on the tradition of narrative in vocational literature and practices. The goal is to develop vocational narratives through storytelling, as well as examining alternative languages and media for sharing narratives, including art, music, and the spoken word. Through several training sessions, employees will discuss and reflect on the power and importance of narrative as a tool for students in the vocational discernment process, as well as share examples of vocational narratives. Employees will also complete a mapping activity to visualize their own vocational journey, sharing and discussing these in the training sessions. After a break during the semester, participants will come together to recap their strategies for building and sharing narratives, attending to the challenges and successes they faced when actively applying these insights to the student context.

**Ouachita Baptist University (AR)** will reinvigorate the vision for vocation among faculty by hosting an expert in the area of vocational development for a lunch-time address, as well as an evening address. The faculty members and staff will also be presented with a memoir of a conflicted journey towards meaningful work, along with other academic works on vocational exploration. Questions from these readings would be raised and discussed at bi-monthly roundtables, with small appointed reading groups. Of the roundtable participants, 20 would be asked to contribute short essays telling their stories of discovering their vocations within the context of their faith and academic cultures. These essays would then be compiled into a reading for the future use of the college.