



Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) Professional Development Awards

Awarded in May 2022 • Funding for 2022–2023

Abilene Christian University (TX) will create conversations, training, and development for faculty members and staff to help them understand and talk about the work of vocation. A steering committee will be convened to better understand staff and faculty member perceptions of vocation, to share information from the scholarly literature on vocation, and to discern a working definition of vocation appropriate for the campus community. This process and the definition of vocation it offers will serve as a roadmap to shape strategic priorities, funding, and programs in the future.

Asbury University (KY) will convene a planning committee of seven staff and faculty members to expand on a philosophy of vocational exploration and to create an information campaign to engage the broader campus in exploring the role of vocation in a liberal arts education. The planning committee will develop a faculty workshop on skills-translation advising. The project will also include a redesign of key courses to promote creation of innovative artifacts by students. The ultimate aim is to strengthen vocational exploration programming for students and to mobilize the campus around a common lexicon of work, calling, and identity.

Bard College (NY) will invite faculty and staff from across the college to participate in a reading group to explore vocabularies and frameworks for vocational exploration. This cross-constituency group of thirty scholars and professionals will read and reflect together over the course of an academic year, engaging shared texts and shared experiences of introspection and discernment. This initiative will begin by featuring a prominent scholar in social ethics who will speak on the role of ethical reflection in identity formation and meaning making. At the end of the year, the reading group will host a community event to share knowledge gained, with the goal of developing a program for students to engage in ongoing reflective practices that amplify and enrich meaning, purpose, and a sense of calling.

Bard College at Simon's Rock (MA) will engage staff and faculty members throughout the year to develop a shared language and set of values around the nature of vocation and its relationship to academic study, the liberal arts, and career success. The project will begin with a retreat for a

core team in summer 2022 and continue through monthly sessions that will engage all campus departments over the course of the academic year. Supplementing this, the core team will lead a winter retreat for all staff and faculty members in January 2023. In spring 2023, a new career fair will be piloted for students that will engage them vocationally as they consider their academic and career planning.

Brevard College (NC) will focus on the creation of a cross-campus collaborative program that will help faculty members, staff, and student leaders deepen their exploration of vocation. Through the development of cohort groups of faculty members, staff, and students, participants will engage in a shared reading, discussion groups, and a series of campus workshops and guest speakers. They will glean from each other, and from the invited speakers, practices to engage more meaningfully in vocational exploration.

Carlow University (PA) will conduct a reading group to envision how vocational exploration fits the institution's mission. Eight to twelve reading group participants will be chosen from faculty members and staff who are involved in key areas across the university, including first-year experience and core curriculum courses, mission and ministry initiatives, a service-learning gap year discernment program, and the student affairs office. This two-semester professional development offering will prepare participants to identify, create, and enhance vocational exploration opportunities for current and prospective students, paying special attention to the relationship between diversity, equity, and inclusion and vocational exploration.

Concordia University Chicago (IL) will offer a summer retreat for a cohort of faculty members who will read, discuss, and reflect on their vocation as faculty members in a Lutheran university. After the retreat, participants will continue their reflection and implement their learnings through luncheon discussions and participation in an annual vocational assessment. The goal of this project is to create a common language and understanding of vocation among the faculty—one that aligns with the university's mission and vision and that can be shared with students, staff, and the broader community.

Georgetown College (KY) will provide faculty members with a deeper understanding of the connection between the mission of the college and the development of a vocational framework for students. The first event will take 15 faculty members on a retreat experience to the Legacy Museum of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery and civil rights sites in Birmingham, Alabama. The second event is a retreat for all faculty members to be convened before the fall semester, where participants will present reflections on this experience along with a professional development opportunity.

Gwynedd Mercy University (PA) will develop a new mentoring program and will provide additional connections with the Sisters of Mercy. These efforts will connect new employees with current members of the institution in order to introduce them to the vocation of a Mercy education, and the role that vocation plays in the charism of the Sisters of Mercy. Additionally, the project will help current employees better understand the calling of the founding order, their role in continuing its mission, and how they can better help students explore their own vocational calls.

Huntington University (IN) will provide opportunities for staff and faculty members to explore vocation as it relates to the institution's mission and Christian commitment. The academic year will begin with a workshop for faculty members, who will prepare by reading a common text. A recognized voice on vocation, calling, and mentoring will lead the faculty to consider their role in vocational mentoring for students. Throughout the year, the program will provide professional development meetings, faculty and staff reading groups, and a final collective gathering to reflect on the year's vocational conversations and to consider the university's capacity to implement a new vocational emphasis across the curriculum and co-curriculum.

Methodist University (NC) will expand its current pilot mentoring program to a cohort of 33 faculty members and seven members of the advising staff, who will participate in three structured professional development experiences with the goal of increasing their capacity to mentor students. First, they will participate in a full-day workshop with an outside facilitator, followed by small group meetings using resources and readings on vocation. This will be followed by a half-day workshop to continue discussions of mission integration and vocational discernment, developing guiding questions and activities for each member's mentoring work. A third half-day workshop will focus on discussion and evaluation of the guiding questions and activities that have been developed and tested by participants.

Missouri Baptist University will cultivate a common language and understanding of vocation across campus. The project will include book study groups for faculty members and staff, as well as roundtable conversations in which group members will articulate their own experiences of vocational discernment. In addition, the university will invite a guest speaker on vocation and calling to speak at its annual in-service day. These activities will equip faculty members and staff to help students in their own vocational discernment and pave the way for future projects in light of this shared understanding of vocation.

Newman University (KS) will convene a faculty steering committee on vocation to define and create a common framework for vocation within the context of the university's curricular and co-curricular offerings. During the latter stages of the project, one half of the steering committee will create a proposal to embed vocational education more deeply in the curriculum, and the other half of the steering committee will focus on developing a proposal to embed mentoring related to vocation more purposefully within advising.

Norwich University (VT) will provide staff, faculty members, and administrators a sustained opportunity to think together about the role of vocation in training young adults for careers in military service and criminal justice work. Norwich will offer reading groups, retreats, and public discussions to integrate vocation into our academic and co-curricular programs, seeking to bridge gaps between these areas (e.g., between student classroom work and the Corps of Cadets and ROTC). This work will take place in close dialogue with the university's leadership center, giving greater attention to issues of professional meaning and purpose as elements of the institution's mission to develop civilian and military leaders.

Oglethorpe University (GA) will convene a group of faculty members and staff to explore vocation as a means of strengthening links among the liberal arts curriculum, professional academic programs, and career development. The group will read several texts with the goal of

understanding how vocation can offer underrepresented and underserved students the opportunity to utilize a strengths-based approach and to develop intentional plans for success in college and beyond. The seminar group will initiate a first-year experience advisory committee and a workshop on vocational mentoring for staff and faculty members. Seminar members will use their experiences to explore intentional curricular and co-curricular pathways for meaningful vocational reflection and to enhance advising networks to support every student.

Prairie College (AB) will provide training to faculty members and staff to enhance their capacity to create community between and among in-person and online students. This award will fund a selection of professional development opportunities, including a development retreat for 16 key faculty members to investigate and develop practices utilizing vocation as a means to create community in hybrid classrooms. In addition, project leaders will develop and deliver 20 training sessions to all faculty members and staff. This project is designed to help faculty members develop the skills, resources, and capacity to engage and facilitate meaningful conversation with students as they mentor them in the formation of their vocational identity.

Reinhardt University (GA) will promote and create new avenues for campus-wide discussions focusing on vocational discernment, with the goal of developing a common vocabulary and integrated approach to the vocational reflection process among staff and faculty members. These discussions will cultivate dialogue and lead to a faculty and staff team charged with developing a vocational discernment pathway for the university's students.

Roberts Wesleyan University (NY) will conduct a workshop and host a monthly book study series to equip a team of faculty and staff members from across campus to better understand the importance of vocational discernment in the educational process. The larger goal of this project is to help these educators discover and utilize vocational exploration resources in curriculum development and co-curricular planning, with a particular focus on first- and second-year students.

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College (IN) seeks to improve outcomes for all students, but especially for students of color, whom the institution has not been able to retain at the same rate as is the case for the overall student population. A core group of faculty members and staff will participate in training and reflection opportunities to develop a greater understanding of vocational exploration as it relates to the institution's mission and values. This group will then broaden discussion across campus, developing strategies to implement vocational exploration across instruction and services of the college in ways that can serve every student.

Simpson University (CA) will provide professional development opportunities to key staff and faculty members in order to enhance their capacity to integrate vocational reflection and discernment into student advising. The goal will be to transform the advising relationship from one focused on transactional academic progress to one focused on exploring vocation. Key faculty advisors, instructors of the first-year seminar, and student support services staff members will be provided with training and reflection opportunities help them embed vocation exploration activities into the student curricular experience.

Southwest Baptist University (MO) will provide a series of workshops for 12 staff and faculty members with the purpose of creating a more unified approach to vocation and calling. These events will allow members of the cohort to gain a better understanding of vocation and calling, to assess the current and future needs of students in relation to career development, to explore new opportunities for incorporating this knowledge into the first-year student experience, and to identify ways to continue these conversations in ongoing student advising. Additionally, the cohort will identify resources beneficial to other staff and faculty members and create a resource library. These initiatives are designed to yield opportunities to create additional workshops to further develop the university's framework of vocation and calling.

Southwestern University (TX) will provide a series of professional development workshops to engage staff members in conversations regarding vocation and life design. The workshops will be open to teams of staff, in an effort to elevate the discussion of life design and the ways the campus community engages students outside of the classroom to prepare them for post-graduate life. Programming will include a retreat, six monthly workshops, and a May showcase to share outcomes of the conversations with the campus community. At its conclusion, this project will produce a definition for the term "life design" that is specific to the university's campus culture.

St. Catherine University (MN) has identified three components of a meaningful life aligned with its mission and Catholic identity: spiritual formation, vocational calling, and an orientation to social justice. This project will convene a group of faculty members and staff to engage in a series of workshops and to develop mentoring strategies that can assist students as they reflect on their vocational calling. Participants will engage in vocation-related readings and conversation surrounding their work with the goal of developing a second-year experience for students relating to the above-named components of a meaningful life, which will be tied to coursework anchored in theology.

St. Lawrence University (NY) will begin to integrate vocation and calling into the fabric of curricular and co-curricular life through four major initiatives. First, the university will host a vocational expert for a mini-residency on campus. It will then engage a core group of staff and faculty leaders to create a vocational discernment vision statement. Multiple opportunities will be offered for staff and faculty members to learn about and participate in vocational discernment programming. Finally, the university will produce a white paper to serve as a guide to expand future programming.

Texas Lutheran University (TX) will convene a cohort of staff and faculty members to engage in discussions focused on vocation and calling with an emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Twenty participants will attend an overnight retreat, followed by a series of brown-bag luncheons. These gatherings will include discussions and personal reflections on vocation, as well as a consideration of how best to integrate calling into employee and student development. Based on these discussions, a university-wide event will be planned, consisting of external speakers and a panel discussion led by seminar participants.

The King's University (AB) will revitalize a traditional faculty gathering, transforming it into an immersive experience centered on vocational dialogue and reflection. Faculty members will receive training in attentive listening and in asking open-ended questions which reach beyond the

intellectual spheres of lived experience. Participants will read a vocation-related text and then participate in facilitated listening and conversation circles, focusing on their vocational stories. This training will continue for a group of faculty members selected to participate in an initiative involving first-year students, placing them into cohorts with faculty mentors and senior students. This group will meet as a community of practice, nurturing the three habits of vocational discernment: attention, reflection, and curiosity.

Thomas More University (KY) will create a professional learning community to explore how vocation, community, and student success can be defined and implemented across campus. Using key texts, participants will create activities, curricula, and programs that explicitly engage students in vocational discernment, community building, and student success across the institution. The results of this project will inform an ongoing professional learning community focused on calling, community, and curriculum.

University of Puget Sound (WA) will engage in a two-step process to develop a common language surrounding vocation, meaning, purpose, and living a useful life. A steering committee of faculty members, staff, and students will be convened to plan a retreat focused on vocation to take place during the academic year. This project will include a special focus on the connections between vocation and minoritized and underrepresented students, and will address questions of community cultural wealth, asset-based thinking, and community engagement.

University of St. Thomas (MN) will convene a series of gatherings for a diverse group of staff and faculty members to evaluate how vocational exploration and discernment is currently embedded into the student experience, to discuss texts on the broader concept of vocation and reflect on participants' own vocational journeys, and to cultivate a common understanding of vocation. The goal of this work is to offer meaningful opportunities for students to explore and discern vocation in their own lives. Participants will identify current programs, initiatives, pedagogies, and opportunities (both curricular and co-curricular) that help to cultivate a sense of self-awareness, reflection, and purpose among students.

Walsh University (OH) will provide a series of professional development opportunities for faculty members and staff—beginning with a retreat and followed by a reading group—to develop an understanding of vocation and purpose and its relation to the university's mission. The retreat will help faculty members and staff develop an understanding of their own vocation, strengthen their ability to mentor students, and cultivate a common language for connecting vocation to mission and student development. The reading group will also be tasked with creating a proposal for how the university can continue integrating vocation into the undergraduate experience.

Wisconsin Lutheran College (WI) will implement a training and mentoring program for selected staff and faculty members, using a model for vocational reflection developed by previous vocation seminar cohorts. Staff and faculty members in the program will participate in a two-day seminar that includes common readings, reflection and discussion, guest speakers, and an opportunity to plan future program development opportunities. A key institutional outcome for this proposal is to provide for a new cohort of leaders to continue the work of those who are retiring from their work in planning vocational discernment efforts on campus.