

## Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education

### Vocation across the Academy Grants

Awarded in Summer 2018 ☞ Providing funding for 2018–2021

**Ashland University (OH)** will undertake a multi-faceted project to deepen students' understanding of vocation and life calling. Aspects of the grant will include: (1) holding a campus-wide event featuring a keynote speaker with academic credentials and a vocational message; (2) launching faculty-led research on transformation learning experiences, with special attention to two groups that have been identified for special efforts at retention (namely athletes and veterans); (3) working with each college, encouraging engagement in vocation and life calling programming; (4) piloting the Pearson Career Success Program; (5) deepening relationships with the Office of Christian Ministries team to provide more opportunities for students to discover and explore their gifts; and (6) embedding community service immersion experiences in life calling courses. The larger goal of this work is to increase knowledge and understanding of vocation and to foster a common language of life calling across campus.

**Belmont University (TN)** recognizes that one of the most transformational experiences for undergraduates is that of international study and travel. Global engagement experiences provide a prime opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of God, the world, and themselves—and to do so in a way that can lead to meaningful engagement with and transformation of the world. The NetVUE grant will allow Belmont to create a common narrative across global engagement experiences, in order to explore how these trips might foster vocational exploration and discernment for participants. It will also provide for the development of a practical means through which vocational exploration can be facilitated by every faculty and staff member who is tasked with leading Belmont's global engagement experiences.

**Bluffton University (OH)** will undertake a three-year project to plan, pilot, and fully integrate a sophomore "Learning in Community" block-course as part of the mission core sequence of a re-envisioned general education program. When fully implemented, the course will engage all sophomores in semester-long learning experiences in nearby Lima, Ohio—a community hard-hit by de-industrialization and related socioeconomic challenges. The program will encourage students to make direct connections between their academic study and their experiences of community engagement. They will also be made aware of the benefits of interdisciplinary faculty perspectives and will encounter organizations and professionals to broaden their understanding of diverse pathways to vocation. Finally, students will be given the opportunity to see that career development is intertwined with active engagement in the life of a community.

**Butler University (IN)** will create a faculty fellowship program that integrates vocational exploration into its new Social Justice and Diversity (SJD) courses, as part of its core curriculum revision. These courses naturally invite students to reflect on self, world, and direction, and to examine how their passions intersect with community needs in a multitude of ways. The NetVUE grant will enable Butler to convene a cohort of faculty members each year who are working to create, adapt, and teach SJD courses and to infuse them with elements of vocational exploration. The faculty cohort will meet six times a year to discuss and collaboratively create

strategies for the classroom setting towards this end, then serve as faculty mentors to the next cohort in the following year. Over a period of four years, the SJD Vocation Fellowship program will develop 45 faculty members to incorporate these strategies into their courses. Over time, thousands of students will be challenged to connect their own vocational exploration process to the issues explored in their Social Justice and Diversity courses.

**College of the Holy Cross (MA)** will expand and implement its vocational discernment initiative, *Vocare*. The goal of the initiative is to develop a coherent campus-wide approach—rooted in the institution’s mission and identity as a Jesuit liberal arts college—that is, designed to help students make connections between their academic studies and their futures in the world. The grant will support (1) intensive training for academic advisors; (2) expanded opportunities for students to engage in self-assessment, reflection, and discernment regarding their academic journeys and professional goals; and (3) the designation of a new leadership role to oversee the direction of the program and the implementation of the project activities.

**Dominican University (IL)** will bring the talents and skills of undergraduate faculty and university ministry into close collaboration, in order to foster vocational discernment among students across their four-year college journey. This work will complement and build upon vocationally rich efforts already underway at the first-year level, within the core curriculum, and as a feature of academic advising relationships. The initiative will include the creation of focused vocational reflection groups as a dimension of targeted liberal arts and science seminars. It will also provide annual weekend retreats, with separate events designed for sophomores, juniors, and seniors. These will provide contemplative time and will introduce practices for attending to developmentally appropriate vocational issues. The overall goal is to engage at least 20 percent of the undergraduate student body participating in some dimension of the program by the end of the grant cycle.

**Dordt College (IA)** will develop a set of curricular and co-curricular experiences that purposefully provide an intellectual and theological framework for vocational exploration. This initiative will equip Dordt faculty to blend the *CliftonStrengths* instrument with vocational development. The training that they will receive will allow faculty members to advise Dordt students in matters of vocation and calling during their first year through a new elective one-credit course, as well as revisiting and discussing their strengths during their senior-level capstone courses. The program will also provide certification of at least three additional faculty or staff members as Gallup Strengths Coaches to allow for greater implementation between curricular and co-curricular departments on campus. Ultimately, Dordt plans to institutionalize this program, and will focus on sustainability throughout the planning and implementation processes.

**Georgetown College (KY)** plans to extend its vocational reflection opportunities across the academy, with attention to three foci. First, it will develop programs that impact all students by adopting a common book for incoming first-year students and by developing a theme for readings in a required course for all first-year students. Second, the college will create new programs for experiencing the world and engaging its needs. These will include expanding the college’s civic engagement program for service learning, adding opportunities for international and domestic vocation exploration courses, and developing faculty capacity to lead

service/mission trips with students. Third, Georgetown will design activities for reflection on the meaning of life and faith through capstone exercises for participants of various established programs on campus, as well as career vocational reflection for students completing its “College to Career” program.

**Grand View University (IA)** will create institution-wide undergraduate vocational exploration initiatives through a three-pronged approach. First, it will infuse effective principles used by vocational discernment coaches into the entire advising program in a formalized, intentional, and sequential manner, integrating career planning early in a student’s advising process. Second, it will elevate the significance of its current “Celebrate Vocation Week,” coordinating meaningful alumni/ae-student interactions and supporting a student intern to help manage, coordinate, and market its efforts. Third, it will revamp and revitalize the Presidential Ambassadors Program, undertaking meaningful and coordinated efforts to infuse concepts of vocation into the program. All these strategies are designed to help students find their passions and purpose, both personally and professionally, and contribute to the common good.

**Hiram College (OH)** requires all traditional undergraduate students to engage in formal reflection at four points in their education. At each of these points, students formally reflect on a set of Guiding Questions that aim for holistic and integrative reflection around five interlocking aspects of their lives, personal and professional goals, and education, designated as the “5 Cs”: (curriculum, career, calling, character, and community). In order to expand this work into each of the college’s major programs, departments will be asked to reexamine their capstone experiences and to integrate reflection on the “5 Cs” into its major field curriculum. The NetVUE grant will assist each department in integrating elements of vocational reflection into courses and developing intentional scaffolding in ways that are appropriate to each department. To support this work, a core team of faculty members will help departments with the project, offer professional development for faculty and staff advisors, and create a variety of additional opportunities for students to explore vocation.

**Lewis University (IL)** will implement a comprehensive series of initiatives that promote and support vocation exploration and discernment. The university will (1) develop and implement a “Purpose and Calling” module for its freshman seminar course; (2) design and offer a new course that focuses on reading and writing one’s life purpose; (3) design two vocation-themed weekend workshops, one for traditional undergraduates and one for returning adults pursuing accelerated undergraduate degrees; (4) launch four interdisciplinary reading groups designed to foster collaboration among faculty members; (5) publish a second volume of *Journeys to Purpose* (a collection of faculty, staff, and student essays about their own callings and vocations); (6) facilitate a retreat during which faculty members will develop a pedagogy resource guide for colleagues, focusing on lessons, practices, and texts for integrating vocational themes into their courses; (7) create and update various promotional documents to create greater visibility across campus; and (8) sponsor a campus-wide symposium during which a new annual lecture will be launched and these NetVUE grant projects will be celebrated.

**Luther College (IA)** aims to expand current efforts to engage students in meaningful reflection about vocation and career by broadening the scope of mentorship to include peer students and alumni/ae. As part of its re-imagining of its comprehensive student advising process, the college

will design and pilot a small-group mentorship model that can later be introduced on a larger scale. The college will (1) recruit and train a cohort of upper-level students as peer mentors; (2) identify, recruit, and train a pool of alumni/ae mentors representing a variety of disciplines, careers, and generations; (3) offer workshops and mini-grants to support faculty and staff members as they develop courses, retreats, and other innovative ways to incorporate vocational reflection; and (4) continue efforts to deepen campus dialogue about integrating vocational reflection into more academic, co-curricular, and work-study experiences.

**Marian University (IN)** will infuse its general education curriculum and key co-curricular programs with the Catholic and Franciscan intellectual traditions. The *Vision and Journey Faculty Fellows and Seminars* will promote research focused on the intersection of the core general education experience of all Marian students with the college's Franciscan Sponsorship Values (dignity of the individual, reconciliation, peace and justice, and responsible stewardship). The university will (1) train a small group of seminar leaders, (2) create a faculty and staff program of Fellows to study Catholic and Franciscan intellectual traditions, (3) provide grants to faculty members to revise the syllabi and programs, and (4) empower the Fellows to act as ambassadors to the larger university. This will empower students to explore their callings in light of the Catholic Franciscan tradition.

**McDaniel College (MD)** will launch a new program that provides every student with the opportunity to engage in strategic, guided vocational exploration with a team of mentors, and to complete a tailored program of courses and experiential learning, which will prepare them for personal and professional success. The four components of the McDaniel Commitment—My Place, My Design, My Experience and My Career—build upon one another to create a scaffolded four-year program of strategic vocational exploration that is embedded within the college's general education curriculum. This approach is designed to help students deepen their understanding of how the liberal arts can guide vocation. It also speaks more broadly to the relevance of the liberal arts in today's challenging climate.

**Millsaps College (MS)** will undertake two broad initiatives: building partnerships across the college, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration. The first initiative will involve (1) strengthening collaboration with the Center for Career Education; (2) incentivizing student participation in the Wellspring student pipeline; (3) a new collaboration with the Chaplain's Office and the Religious Studies department with regard to pre-ministerial students; and (4) establishing a new track within the Pathways to Success program. The second initiative (interdisciplinary collaboration) will include (1) assessment of current curricular offerings, and (2) interdisciplinary curricular innovations for use across the campus, especially for students in business and pre-health fields. The larger goal is to avoid institutional silos and to increase student and faculty participation in vocational inquiry across the divisions, departments, and offices of Millsaps College.

**Northwest Christian University (OR)** will undertake a threefold project, designed (1) to coordinate vocational initiatives already initiated; (2) to engage more faculty and staff members across the campus in vocation-related work; and (3) to introduce new programming to meet the needs of the student body. The Office of Career Development, the Christian Ministries department, and the Academic Services area each are engaged in vocational efforts, but further

intentional engagement of faculty and staff members across the campus is necessary to develop a common language and to understand the role that each person on campus plays in empowering students to find their calling. The grant will encourage faculty mentoring and student discernment (especially in the junior year), develop shared learning objectives and evaluation methods in vocational exploration courses, and strengthen vocational exploration efforts across the curriculum. The desired outcome is that students will discern God's call on their lives and leave the university as purposeful graduates.

**Palm Beach Atlantic University (FL)** will develop a Transformational Advising Program (TAP). This program is designed to improve (1) in-term and year-to-year retention for first-year and sophomore students; (2) student engagement in vocational preparation; (3) persistence toward degree completion; and (4) career placement for students possessing identified "at risk" factors. Using a structured intervention built on Motivational Interviewing (MI), a select group of faculty and staff members will be trained in TAP and connected to students who represent common risk factors toward degree completion and eventual job placement. The TAP intervention will involve face-to-face interviews, a select battery of assessments, and feedback sessions addressing student motivation toward vocational exploration, with a goal of improving student retention and success rates.

**Saint Joseph's College of Maine** will undertake a threefold program designed to help students to become persons of *intention*. The college will develop (1) a President's Vocation Institute featuring a student retreat, leadership training, and conversations around vocation with the president; (2) a SophoMORE Experience program that seeks to engage all students at a point in their college career when they are often most ready to consider questions surrounding vocation; and (3) a faculty and staff vocation cohort, which will engage a variety of groups on campus (including the academic center for excellence, career development programs, study away programs, and campus ministry) in conversations inspired by the reading of common texts over a period of months. The ultimate goal of all three parts of this program is to bring vocation and intentionality to the forefront of considerations at the college, and to begin the process of making these values truly emblematic of the institution.

**St. Andrews University (NC)** seeks to renew its sense of identity, purpose, and mission through a three-part program. First, the university will continue the redevelopment of its mission and identity around vocation. This will involve articulating a renewed identity and purpose built around the education of the whole person, integrating this into the life of the university, and developing materials that articulate this renewed identity to our various constituencies. Second, the university will complete the redesign of its St. Andrews General Education (SAGE) courses with a focus on vocation. These courses will make use of a common set of tools related to vocation and moral decision-making that can help each course play a role in preparing students for responsible and meaningful engagement in the wider world. Third, St. Andrews will begin a new "Faith and Life Fellows" program for students committed to exploring the relationships among faith, service, and social transformation. This will include a summer internship with *Growing Change* that complements this program, as well as a new course in Faith and Social Entrepreneurship.

**Trinity Christian College (IL)** will support a robust cross-divisional, cross-campus effort to design new courses and re-shape co-curricular programming to educate students toward its newly adopted vocation-centered learning outcomes. The college will develop the specific courses and programs to realize the new learning outcomes that include key elements of vocational exploration. More specifically, the NetVUE grant will provide funds for “Grounded, Called, and Engaged,” a multi-year project to gather faculty and staff members from across the college in order to develop meaningful and enduring vocation learning opportunities for students. In addition, the funding match structure of this grant will give the college needed momentum to approach donors with an opportunity to fund a center for vocation, with a director who can shape this work into the future.

**University of Dayton (OH)** will engage faculty members, staff, and students from across the curriculum and co-curriculum to implement the first phase of *Life Callings*—a plan to make vocational discernment an integral part of every student’s education at the university. This first phase will involve integrating vocational discernment into the university’s First-Year Experience (FYE) program. This integration will be based on the definition of vocation as “answering a call to discover one’s unique gifts and employ them in service for the common good in ways that are personally satisfying and bring meaning to one’s life.” The grant will support teams of faculty and staff that will (1) create, pilot, and assess strategies for integrating vocation into a range of FYE initiatives, services, and courses; (2) prepare faculty and staff members to promote student vocational discernment in these and other classes by reflecting on their own callings; and (3) expand online support for student, faculty, and staff vocational discernment on campus.