



Vocation across the Academy Grants  
Awarded in June 2020 ∞ Funding for 2020–2023

**Aquinas College (MI)** will strengthen its commitment to vocational discernment by expanding the pilot course “Work, Leadership, and Purpose.” In addition, the college will create new initiatives, including a career podcast, an interactive board game, and a senior retreat. The program will intentionally engage more faculty, students, and community members through training, mentoring, and scholarships for field experiences. The program’s goal is to help ensure that students graduate in four years and receive everything that they need to do so. It will also assist students in developing a sense of place in the world and will arm them with tools to answer their calling.

**Augustana University (SD)** will develop a series of “Interdisciplinary Pathway Programs,” which will be housed in a newly created Center for Interdisciplinary Studies. In order to enhance students’ engagement in discerning their callings, these programs will build on the vocational reflection initiated in the first year seminar courses (and continued in Augustana’s sophomore retreat), through both guided academic coursework and integrated co-curricular efforts. All students in various pathway programs will take a common capstone course, in which they are guided by a “Design Your Life” curriculum to reflect on vocation. In addition, a co-curricular senior retreat for students in the pathway program will serve as a culminating point of reflection and preparation for life beyond the academy.

**Canadian Mennonite University (MB)** will create a Centre for Vocation, which will develop a linked stream of faculty advising and teaching of vocation across the curriculum, enabling students to imagine and navigate a life of meaningful work and service. The Centre will productively link student advising and CMU’s distinctive required practicum (which focuses on work-integrated learning) with the exploration of theological meaning. Its theological focus is rooted in Anabaptist tradition and centered on discipleship as a kind of agency that spans CMU’s curriculum. NetVUE funding will help to provide for the resources, faculty development time, and community consultation necessary to carry out this institution-wide initiative.

**Concordia College (MN)** will create, promote, and institutionalize vocational reflection programs in academic departments throughout the campus, with attention to three foci. First, a progressive sequence of seminars, workshops, and speakers on vocation will be provided for

science and pre-professional students. Second, the college will create vocational exploration seminars and treks for students in the humanities, using a current successful exploration seminar in the English department as a model. Third, Concordia will design and develop vocational programming specifically for student-athletes, with the goal of helping them to incorporate their athletic experiences into a wider philosophy of life.

**Covenant College (GA)** will further an existing student-to-community partnership program through the provision of funding for student work, additional mentorship reading materials, and a new mentorship structure that pairs faculty members or alums with individual students. A minimum of 15 students will be paired with local organizations; through these relationships, participating students will be encouraged to use their talents for the good of the organization and for their own personal development. The faculty/alum mentoring partnerships will further enhance student reflection on their internship experiences. The entire program—along with enhanced communication with partner organizations—is designed to ensure that the students, the college, and the community are thriving, and that students’ vocational callings are intrinsically connected with their broader call to live as faithful culture makers in all areas of life.

**Dakota Wesleyan University (SD)** seeks to reimagine private higher education in service to rural America. It will do so by inquiring into the ways in which the creation of efficient pathways to career—and thereby economic security—may open up authentic opportunities for vocational exploration that, paradoxically, transcend a narrow focus on career. In particular, this transcendence will be sought for first generation and low income students. The project also seeks to honor the preexisting sense of calling that the university’s students bring to their studies (as evidenced by the number of graduates who return to professional careers in their rural communities of origin upon graduation) through a consistent civic orientation within the entire general education program. This updated approach will include a speaker series on issues of civic relevance, as well as a set of project-based courses to be executed in cooperation with the University’s rural partners for the benefit of their communities.

**Davis & Elkins College (WV)** will further develop its honors program to support vocational discernment throughout all four years of each student’s undergraduate career. The program will strengthen the current opportunity to take four sequential courses that are designed to provide increased preparation and reflection on future vocational goals. Grant funding will support the training and participation of additional faculty and peer mentors, project leadership, off-campus immersive learning events, and community engagement opportunities for students in the honors program. This funding will also allow increased student participation across campus in vocation-related practices, such as on-campus learning events. Ultimately, this will allow students to work towards embodying the mission of the College through “preparing for successful and thoughtful engagement in the world.”

**Earlham College (IN)** will seek to construct and implement a developmentally scaffolded four-year vocational discernment program for its students. The proposed initiative will integrate the spirit and wisdom found in Parker Palmer’s book *Let Your Life Speak* with the practical advice

found in Burnett and Evans's *Designing your Life*. Students will engage in a variety of reflective and applied activities, beginning in their first semester and continuing throughout their undergraduate years. Project activities will include the development of a series of course modules, advising workshops, and luncheons. These experiences will span all four years of a student's academic career and will seek to cultivate in students a habit of vocational discernment through reflection, dialogue, and real-world experience.

**Huntingdon College (AL)** will make use of the unique opportunities afforded by its location in Montgomery, Alabama, birthplace of the modern Civil Rights Movement, to provide a series of campus-wide shared experiences and discussions around vocation and justice. Huntingdon will introduce a common reading focused on issues of justice and race, and will develop new courses that specifically address questions of vocation and justice within the context of disciplinary programs. Funded initiatives will also broaden the arc of vocation by introducing vocation-related programming as early as freshman orientation. Programming will also support faculty to develop pedagogies and programs of study that meet the needs of traditionally underserved populations.

**Le Moyne College (NY)** will develop the *Vocational Companions* program to provide 48 faculty and staff/administrators with intensive exposure to the work of vocational discernment. It will focus on how this work can help students to develop a philosophy of life, in addition to preparing them for a career. In addition, the program will support each participant in developing, implementing, and assessing concrete vocational discernment materials—including programs, courses, and course modules—that will directly support students' vocational discernment and career readiness.

**Malone University (OH)** will use grant funds to support a campus-wide vocation initiative, the Pendle Hill Pledge, which aims to strengthen the preparedness of traditional undergraduate students to live meaningful and purposeful lives of service to the church, community, and world. The grant will support faculty development efforts to improve advising practices, to develop vocation reflection assignments across the curriculum, and to integrate experiential learning into existing courses. It will support the piloting and launching of a new annual retreat for sophomores and transfer students. It will also provide for the development of community partnerships within each residence hall, by means of an alum and community mentoring program and small grants to students in support of their participation in experiential learning.

**Newbery College (SC)** will equip faculty and staff to develop a common language of vocation across campus, with particular attention to the intersection of vocation, civic responsibility, and equity and inclusion. The proposed initiatives include: biannual workshops and symposia to build the vocational literacy and cultural competence of all faculty and staff; mini-grants for departments and programs to incorporate vocation into their curriculum and programming; support for faculty to develop experiential domestic travel courses; and support for a faculty/staff task force to research and design a four-year vocational pathway for students. The four-year

pathway will include both curricular and co-curricular programs and will be integrated with vocation initiatives developed by departments and programs.

**Piedmont College (GA)** will launch its *Quest Program*, a set of three mission-centric interdisciplinary learning communities that prioritize different aspects of vocational exploration. This program builds on a new general education course that has been developed for vocational exploration, and is a collaborative effort among the college of arts and sciences, the division of student life, and the student success center. It will include the establishment of a living-learning community for student participants, facilitated by a student vocational advisor. In addition, the program will foster increasingly broad faculty involvement, through a series of workshops that focus on the book *Vocation across the Academy*.

**Saint Martin's University (WA)** will develop and implement a comprehensive four-year model of intentional vocational discernment, focusing on four themes: (1) exploration; (2) charting a path; (3) in the community; and (4) transition from college to career. The university will implement *Saints Promise*—a guarantee that students who participate in the program, and who meet all conditions of the contract, will have a successful outcome at the end of four years (whether by employment or by continuing education). The grant will support the success of the *Saints Promise* program by providing resources for exploratory activities, including vocational discernment retreats, career treks to employer sites, faculty advising, and student engagement in professional development and financial wellness.

**Schreiner University (TX)** will align, integrate, and expand its various vocational initiatives. It will expand its faculty and staff development program to include a yearlong focus on the University's Presbyterian heritage, the experience of meaningful work and purposeful lives, and vocation/calling as both a concept and a practice. Faculty and staff who have been so trained through this program will assist all first-year students through a career and purpose assignment (and subsequent reflection) in their first-year seminar. Project participants will also develop a remediation experience for sophomores who have not yet articulated their purpose or pathway, as well as providing high-achieving juniors and seniors the opportunity to pursue purpose-focused internships within churches and communities throughout the region and the state. Schreiner University will increasingly demonstrate that it is “the house that hope and purpose built.”

**Valparaiso University (IN)** will support the continuation and strengthening of its summer *Calling and Purpose in Society (CAPS)* fellows program. Project funds will be used to provide stipends for fellows who would otherwise not be able to participate. These funds will also provide for the assessment and evaluation of the program by staff from Valparaiso's Institute for Leadership and Service, and for site supervisors to continue to develop the program to strengthen its capacity to meet its mission and goals.

**Wagner College (NY)** will use grant funds to further its mission to foster student success through a focus on preparedness for career and for life. Through liberal arts scholarship and experiential learning, the college intends to support students—more visibly and meaningfully—

to link academic pursuits with life purpose through vocational exploration. A series of workshops will be collaboratively developed and delivered by faculty, campus life professionals, student mentors, and alums through a series of digital tools and in-person seminars. These workshops will be embedded within the first-year program in order to achieve the project's goals.

**Wheaton College (IL)** will use grant funds to support *iScholars*, a program in which students explore solutions to the world's most difficult problems. As a feature of the college's Center for Faith and Innovation (CFI), the *iScholars* program will be an immersive learning opportunity that enables students to gain experience in the day-to-day pressures of working on projects with businesses and nonprofits. Applying skills from various majors, *iScholars* will work within interdisciplinary consulting project teams to develop and deliver solutions to clients. Each team will engage with a range of mentors and coaches from the CFI community of faculty and community leaders.