



Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) Vocation across the Academy Grants

Awarded in May 2021 • Funding for 2021–2024

College of the Ozarks (MO) will develop a five-day vocational reflection retreat for juniors and seniors. This retreat is meant to provide a summative experience for the college’s distinctive Work Education Program. Faculty members and staff will construct interactive teaching modules and will lead a series of engaging learning opportunities that enable students to consider their mission, vision, core values, work experience, and relational partners as they generate significant artifacts that support their vocational journeys. This “Vocation Week” retreat will become a core component of the college’s recently created character and leadership development track.

Harding University (AR) will create a well-integrated speakers’ series and documentary film to highlight themes of calling and vocation among all of its constituents, including its administration, student life division, admissions office, academic departments, and its network of graduates. The series and film will further build a sense of institutionalized identity, thereby providing the campus community with a common vocabulary and narrative as to its core values and the characteristics of calling. Grant funding will also be used to build an intentional foundation for advising and mentoring, with touchpoints provided from a student’s freshman to senior years. The combination of these efforts will cement themes of calling and vocation as focal points of the university’s institutional identity into the foreseeable future.

Pepperdine University (CA) will implement a four-year model of vocation and calling programs that reflect the themes of spiritual formation, community, career, resilience, and service. These programs have been designed to support historically marginalized student groups—especially first-generation college students and those sophomore students who do not participate in a study abroad program. The programs have also been designed to support the university’s efforts to provide students with resilience training, as well as creating mentoring relationships and communities around the topics of vocation and calling. This project’s four-year

model seeks to provide students with opportunities for reflection, discussion, and first-hand experience that will enhance their understanding of vocation and calling and its application to their lives.

Rochester University (MI) will expand its mentorship program known as RISE (Relationship, Inspiration, Support, and Engagement), which connects each student with a mentor from their chosen career field. The goal of this expansion is to make the program available to all juniors and seniors. Grant funding will also allow the university to develop programming to equip mentors with a deeper understanding of vocation, as well as enhanced mentoring skills. The project will include activities to strengthen the ties between curricular and cocurricular vocational efforts, and between the university and the community. The overarching goal of RISE is to help students define and achieve their vocational goals and successfully build relationships that support their transition from campus to the community.

The University of Mary (ND) will expand and deepen vocational exploration in three ways. First, it will develop a new four-year, credit-bearing curriculum for scholar-athletes, in order to encourage them to engage ideas about themselves and life choices in a connected way to their lives as athletes, and so assist them in leading lives of purpose. Second, it will assist the Mission for Life Office to engage an increased number of students in meaningful service opportunities and reflection on that service. Third, it will create a consistent communication channel for those in key areas across the university, thereby strengthening a common understanding of vocation and providing a means to share strategies among those who engage students in vocational exploration and discernment.

Wesleyan College (GA) will establish a cohort of students with significant financial need for mentoring, academic support, and vocational discernment. These efforts are integral to enhancing the college's commitments to becoming a model community for justice, equity, and antiracist practices. The college will develop a sustainable fund to support professional development experiences for students facing barriers to equitable access. Select faculty members and staff will receive intensive training each year to serve as mentors for students in the cohort. Each cohort will progress from meaning-making activities in the first year to vocational discernment and professional development in the senior year. Students outside each cohort will benefit from campus-wide programming aimed at helping them identify and connect deeply held values with praxis in the world. In addition, students across the college will also have access to new funds to enable internships and professional development that might otherwise be inaccessible without financial support.