



Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) Program Development Grants

Awarded in March 2023 • Funding for 2023–2025

Bushnell University (OR) will strengthen current initiatives to engage students in meaningful theological reflection on vocation and calling. This will be done by establishing a new Vocation Institute to equip staff and faculty members with the common language and tools to facilitate vocational exploration with students. Grant supported activities include retreats, departmental gatherings, and the development of a vocational discernment orientation course for new staff and faculty members.

Butler University (IN) will offer a new workshop series for faculty members and instructional staff who teach courses predominantly for first-year students. The workshop will focus on how to help students explore the purposes of their education, how it leads to a meaningful life, and how to explore their future directions in life during uncertain times. Participants will work together as a cohort during a full year of sessions to revise their course syllabi and design pedagogical tools that will help students encounter and explore their vocations in these courses.

Campbell University (NC) will expand its efforts to champion a culture of vocational discernment across the institution. This goal will be pursued through the creation of faculty learning communities that equip instructors to integrate vocational exploration into their pedagogy across all courses of study. Each year-long cohort will explore personal vocational journeys, discern how these personal vocations align with Campbell's institutional vocation, and imagine new ways to equip students for lives of purposeful leadership and meaningful service.

Carthage College (WI) staff and faculty members will engage in efforts to discover and narrate their own sense of vocation and develop skills for engaging students in discussions about discerning their various callings. The broader goal of this project is to develop a wider community of practice around vocational exploration and discernment. Eventually, each

Carthage student will have multiple vocation-related conversations with staff and faculty members during their undergraduate years.

Dominican University (IL) will support a collaborative community of practice that convenes staff, faculty members, and resident experts to explore best practices for integrating vocational discernment and contemplation into the curriculum and co-curriculum. The goal is to develop a new narrative of vocational discernment within historically and traditionally marginalized student groups, focusing on constellations of success rather than singling out shining stars. Through a summer retreat, monthly gatherings, and peer presentations, participants will be equipped to create courses and experiences within academic major tracks that build student skills in vocational reflection, exploration, and discernment.

D'Youville University (NY) will implement a community engagement program aimed at the sophomore and junior class levels to further advance the foundations of vocational exploration they encountered in their first-year seminar. Drawing on the institution's Catholic heritage and the motto of St. Marguerite d'Youville to "never refuse to serve," this project will include place-based learning, contextual knowledge, and hands-on service to facilitate vocational development. Concerns of diversity, equity, and inclusion will be infused throughout the project including an emphasis on understanding and disrupting systemic injustice and bias.

Franklin College (IN) will integrate vocational exploration into academic advising through a new first-year advising structure that includes a weekly one-credit course that will extend into students' first spring semester. Academic advisors of sophomore, junior, and senior students will receive support to create deeper and less transactional relationships with advisees through common participation in vocational discernment programming. Additional activities will include a January-term course on vocational exploration targeted at undecided sophomore students, as well as professional development and retreats for academic advisors across campus.

Geneva College (PA) will implement three new hallmark programs that align with current co-curricular vocational exploration programming: first, a sophomore year vocational exploration retreat that provides the opportunity for students to explore their own vocational journey and how it weaves into the narrative of their lives; second, a summer fellowship for rising junior-year students built around the themes of the current co-curricular vocation program; and third, a junior-year event that challenges students to consider how they can contribute solutions toward local, national, and global problems through their individual fields of study.

Hastings College (NE) will develop and implement a new course, "Know Thyself: An Exploration of Vocation," as a pilot for permanent incorporation into the general education curriculum. Beginning with a three-day vocational and spiritual retreat, the course will challenge undergraduates from all majors to begin charting vocational paths which reflect their deepest

beliefs and encompass their greatest strengths. Students enrolled in the course will spend significant time examining social justice issues and will be challenged to articulate how their chosen field works for equity, acceptance, and integrity within communities and the world.

Hope College (MI) will revise, deepen, and expand its vocational programming in the first-year experience by embedding peer advisors in each first-year seminar. The program seeks to increase visibility for underrepresented groups of students, to provide leadership positions to diverse sets of qualified juniors and seniors, and to create opportunities both to teach and to model vocational concepts. Training will be created for first-year seminar professors and student peer advisors with an emphasis on strengths-based, proactive advising that includes attention to vocational exploration and discernment.

Houghton University (NY) will implement a pilot program open to all students to aid in their transition after graduation. Beyond typical senior-year capstone projects, this optional May term course will provide graduating students with a culminating experience focused on vocation in life after college. This program aims to equip students with vocabulary for connecting their unique gifts and strengths with day-to-day life at work, in their family life, through local volunteering, in spiritual practices, and in all aspects of their lives after graduation.

Loras College (IA) will launch a new program that aims to deepen and enrich vocation through links to mission and leadership. The program invites staff and faculty members to build dexterity and proficiency with the language of vocation, to facilitate application of vocation to curricular and co-curricular efforts, and to increase use of the college's new leadership framework. Participants will attend vocation workshops and speaker events, which will cover a variety of relevant topics for our campus—including participation in community, in vocation and difference, and in advising and mentoring.

Marquette University (WI) will use the structured general education program of the core curriculum to create an early introduction to vocational reflection. Using resources from the Jesuit tradition that defines Marquette's mission and identity, the project will support a redesign of a distinctive core curriculum course, capitalizing on a structure that pairs faculty members from the university's professional colleges with colleagues in the liberal arts and sciences. The project team will develop teaching resources for the course; it will also seek to ensure that the foundations for vocational exploration that are introduced in the introductory course are carried forward throughout a student's undergraduate career.

Mitchell College (CT) will situate the practice of purpose-seeking in its first-year experience course by extending the existing mentoring program, building a series of cocurricular activities, and infusing service learning into the first-year curriculum. The first semester will focus on purpose-seeking, primarily through a seminar in which all first-year students explore a holistic

wellness model, including vocational wellness. The second semester will include a seminar in which students make connections with mentors, academic departments, and the larger community. To support these initiatives, student leaders, faculty members, and staff will engage in ongoing professional development.

Northwestern University (IL) will facilitate learning communities for staff and faculty members, as well as with undergraduate students, in first-year through fourth-year class cohorts. These groups will center holistic wellbeing and interreligious engagement with a focus on futurism in historically underrepresented communities. This project will provide training for staff and faculty members, and will support student gatherings, using creative expression around topical areas such as vocational exploration, futurity, social justice, interreligious dialogue, leadership development, and community engagement.

Otterbein University (OH) will, over the next two years, launch a one-credit course focused on vocation and the meaning of work. This project will also implement a campus-wide career conference, support innovative department-based initiatives that align with current student post-graduate success initiatives, and provide ongoing professional development for staff and faculty members to support the entire initiative.

Tabor College (KS) will refine the vocation initiative currently embedded in the core curriculum by creating department-specific courses centered on vocation and faith formation. This project will also increase application of the vocational emphasis by incorporating a biblical integration element into every program of study. Finally, the project will help students better connect vocation with career through a “theology of work” component that links the first two elements of this project.

The College of Wooster (OH) will intentionally connect student curricular and co-curricular experiences to career development and vocational discernment, encouraging students to deepen the connections among their current experiences, their vocational journey, and their career goals. This project will facilitate the creation of a cohort of “vocation champions” among staff and faculty members. It will also design and implement a range of vocational engagement options within departmental curricular programs.