



Enhancing Vocational Exploration

A SEMINAR FOR MEMBERS AT NETVUE INSTITUTIONS • JUNE 1–5, 2026

The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) is pleased to announce a summer seminar for those serving on the faculty or staff at institutions that are members of its Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE). This seminar, Enhancing Vocational Exploration, is designed to bring together a small group of educators who seek to contribute to the growing national conversation about vocation and calling.



DATES AND DEADLINES

Nomination open
APRIL 2025

Nomination deadline
SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

Seminar Gathering
JUNE 1–5, 2026

Seminar Location
**THE ALEXANDER HOTEL
INDIANAPOLIS, IN**

Thirty years ago, the primary connections between the words *vocation* and *education* had mostly to do with trade schools; today, concepts of *vocation* and *calling* have often been accompanied by a marked increase in attention to issues of meaning, purpose, and identity across all sectors of society. This focus is particularly noticeable in higher education, and especially so in the time and place that we designate as “the undergraduate years.” During these years, institutions seek to offer students a reasonable amount of time, and a relatively unconstrained space, within which they can think about the kinds of lives they want to live and the kinds of people they want to be. How might educators take more advantage of this opportunity and find ways to enhance our students’ experiences of vocational exploration and discernment?

The participants in this seminar will bring to the table their experiences with vocation on their own campuses, whether in teaching, research, writing, service, or inter-office cooperation. Seminar discussions will also cover a range of activities that can enhance vocational exploration in undergraduate education. Some attention will be given to direct work with students, whether through classroom teaching, advising co-curricular activities, or mentoring students. However, this will not be the primary focus on the seminar. The primary focus of this seminar will extend beyond classroom applications to include research, writing, and institutional leadership on the topic of vocation.



SEMINAR LEADERS



DAVID S. CUNNINGHAM is the executive director of NetVUE, overseeing and guiding NetVUE staff from the national office at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Previously he served as director of the NetVUE Scholarly Resources Project, overseeing the development and editing of three books published by Oxford University Press. He is the author of five books and two additional edited volumes on theological themes. He holds a BSS in communication studies from Northwestern University, a BA and MA in theology and religious studies from the University of Cambridge, and a PhD in religion from Duke University.

RACHAEL A. BAKER is the associate director of NetVUE, where she develops trainings and works with NetVUE campuses to support efforts to implement vocation-informed programs. Rachael was a participant in the 2021 NetVUE Teaching Vocational Exploration seminar and has developed curriculum to engage students with virtue practices in courses across their programs. Rachael holds a BS in biochemistry from Calvin University and a PhD in biochemistry and biophysics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



JUSTIN D. KLASSEN is professor of theology and chair of liberal studies at Bellarmine University. His interests include contemporary theology, environmental ethics, and philosophy of religion. He is the author of books such as *The Paradox of Hope: Theology and the Problem of Nihilism*, and contributor to the upcoming fifth NetVUE Scholarly Resources volume. He was also a participant in the 2021 NetVUE seminar on Teaching Vocational Exploration. He holds a BA in humanistic studies from Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia, and an MA and PhD in religious studies from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

NOMINATION PROCESS

Any member of the staff or faculty at a NetVUE member institution is eligible to be nominated for the seminar. The typical nominee will have some experience of vocational reflection—whether through classroom teaching, working with students outside of the classroom setting, reading and writing about vocation, or some form of institutional leadership around vocation. Preference will be given to nominees (and to institutions) that have not yet participated in another NetVUE summer seminar.

- The nomination portal for the seminar is now open.
- Up to 12 participants will be notified of their selection in January 2026.
- Complete seminar information is available at
<http://www.cic.edu/EnhancingVocationalExploration>

CONTACT

For questions about the seminar or the nomination process, contact Rachael Baker, associate director of NetVUE, at (616) 632-1060 or rbaker@cic.edu.