



## Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) Grants for Fostering Leadership for Communities of Faith

Awarded in March 2026 • Funding for 2026–2027

**Belmont University (TN)** will launch a cohort-based ministry leadership fellowship that pairs undergraduates with Belmont faculty members who serve in local faith communities. Through an apprenticeship model, students will practice ministry in congregational settings, develop skills aligned with their interests, and receive mentoring that nurtures belonging and service. An orienting retreat and regular reflection gatherings will build a peer community and deepen vocational discernment. Faculty mentors will guide students throughout the year. Together, these experiences will help participating students clarify calling as they integrate academic learning with service to congregations and local ministries.

**Benedict College (SC)** will design an undergraduate faith-based leadership program in collaboration with a local church partner to prepare students to lead in communities of faith and community settings. Students will participate in interactive workshops, paid internships in church ministries, and close mentorship from faculty members and church leaders. Programming will build skills in communication, ethical leadership, conflict resolution, wellness, and food justice through community-engaged learning. The initiative will especially empower Black and underrepresented students to address urgent local challenges, including food insecurity, health disparities, and neighborhood safety.

**Bluffton University (OH)** will provide spaces for undergraduates to explore vocation and faith leadership in churches and faith-based organizations. The university will host discernment panels with guest speakers, offer a vocation-focused retreat, and arrange internships and project-based partnerships with local congregations. It will also foster guided conversations among students, faculty members, and faith and lay leaders about faith formation, spiritual practices, and vocational discernment, complemented by brief site visits to see ministries in practice. In these spaces, students will better connect academic study, spiritual practices, and service—clarifying their callings and preparing them for vocations within communities of faith.

**California Prestige University (CA)** will strengthen undergraduate pathways for discerning and preparing for leadership in communities of faith by establishing a campus hub for leadership formation. The initiative will integrate vocation-centered curriculum, spiritual formation, and ministry leadership studies with intentional intercultural learning across academic and co-curricular settings. Students will receive mentoring from faculty members and local ministry leaders; they will also engage in sustained, in-person ministry with culturally diverse congregations and faith-based organizations. Faculty development and shared assessment tools will support high-quality instruction and track growth in vocational clarity, theological reflection, and intercultural competence.

**Centre College (KY)** will strengthen pathways for students discerning leadership in communities of faith through a coordinated campus initiative. The college will develop an ongoing partnership with a local congregation to create an annual student internship that includes meaningful leadership experiences and guided reflection. It will also host three faith-vocation events—a graduate school fair, an alumni panel within a faith vocation symposium, and a student discernment retreat—to connect students with faith communities and clarify future vocations. To build lasting capacity, the Center for Career and Professional Development will create databases that connect students with Centre graduates serving in faith roles and with internship and job-shadowing opportunities across congregations and faith-based organizations.

**Dakota Wesleyan University (SD)** will expand a student chaplain ministry cohort to provide a structured setting for students to explore vocation with peers, guided by university pastors and local faith leaders. The project will offer student stipends and micro-grants for partnerships with local faith communities, encouraging young leaders and congregations to test new models of ministry and relational service. Weekly cohort reflection, mentoring by faith leaders, and hands-on leadership roles will give students agency as they discern callings to diverse forms of faith leadership on campus and in the community. The university will also develop a practice-based faith leadership certificate.

**Emmanuel College (MA)** will launch a summer faith leadership internship program that connects undergraduates with local communities of faith for vocational exploration through mentored ministry, workshops, and structured reflection. Summer interns will live on campus and receive stipends to take faith community leadership roles in worship, pastoral care, social justice initiatives, and community engagement while meeting regularly with site supervisors. Following the summer, the intern cohort will coordinate an interfaith community dinner series at partner sites, leading logistics and dialogue to introduce more students to diverse faith traditions and vocational questions.

**George Washington University (DC)** will launch the Interfaith Spiritual and Religious Leadership Fellows initiative, a two-year program that prepares undergraduates to serve diverse

communities of faith and interfaith organizations. Students will engage in regular seminars, mentoring with faith and service leaders, retreats, community-engaged learning, and site-based fellowships across Washington, DC. Guided by the university's center for interfaith and spiritual life and its council of chaplains, fellows will deepen interfaith competencies, practice theological reflection, and complete capstone projects with partner communities. The project will also build a cohort of practitioner-mentors committed to shared vocational reflection with students.

**Harding University (AR)** will launch a summer travel course in Memphis, Tennessee that prepares undergraduates for ministry leadership in urban contexts. Students will study urban ministry readings, engage in daily study and theological reflection, visit congregations and nonprofit ministries, meet with community leaders, and participate in urban immersion exercises. The experience will include site-based learning on issues such as race, poverty, immigration, unhoused populations, educational inequity, and food insecurity. Following the summer course, the university will continue vocational reflection through campus events during the academic year.

**Hendrix College (AR)** will foster vocational discernment and leadership formation for a cohort of undergraduates through partnerships with local communities of faith. Students will enroll in a course on leadership in a multifaith world and engage in internships within congregations and faith-based organizations. The course will feature leaders from multiple traditions who share perspectives and mentor students, while assignments and guided reflection help students practice deep listening, navigate differences in belief and practice, and connect learning to real ministry contexts. Internship projects in local settings will extend this learning through worship, education, and community engagement.

**Jarvis Christian University (TX)** will establish a two-year program that prepares undergraduates for leadership in communities of faith through immersive, mentored engagement with diverse congregations in East Texas. Each year, a small cohort will complete four consecutive two-month rotational placements in partner congregations representing varied denominational, racial, and liturgical traditions. Students will connect hands-on ministry with academic study through a preparatory seminar, faculty-guided theological reflection, and a public capstone colloquium. By positioning congregations as co-educators, the project will strengthen partnerships with area communities of faith and expand pathways for student leadership formation in those communities.

**Kansas Wesleyan University** will pilot the Ministry Intern Project, a collaborative internship program with campus ministry and local congregations. Students will serve in both campus and congregational settings, combining hands-on leadership with structured discipleship and mentoring. Interns will receive training for youth and children's ministry, justice and advocacy, outreach to older adults, and service with unhoused neighbors, while practicing

theological and spiritual reflection. The pilot will develop tools and resources that inform a broader multi-church model for preparing ministry interns.

**Lane College (TN)** will establish a Ministry Training Certification Program in partnership with regional church leaders to support vocational discernment, leadership formation, and community engagement among emerging ministry leaders. Over two years, participants will follow a structured curriculum integrating biblical studies, theology, church history, ministry practice, church administration, and governance. Students will pair coursework with mentored practice in congregations, community-engaged learning, and guided theological reflection. The program will prepare participants to be theologically grounded and socially responsive as bi-vocational leaders who serve congregations and the broader community.

**Lenoir-Rhyne University (NC)** will launch a two-year fellows program that prepares undergraduates for leadership in communities of faith. A cohort of ten students will serve in subsidized internships with congregations and faith-based nonprofits engaged in justice and reconciliation, pairing site-based work with on-site mentoring. Monthly gatherings will bring students together with university faculty members and site supervisors for shared dialogue, vocational reflection, and leadership formation. Fellows will also engage in conversations with seminary students for near-peer mentoring. In the second year, the cohort will complete a common course that integrates vocation, leadership, and justice.

**Loyola Marymount University (CA)** will design a pastoral music and ministry leadership initiative that prepares undergraduates for service in parishes and faith-based schools. Students will begin with a discernment retreat, then enter a summer–fall sequence that pairs mentoring with supervised parish internships. A formation gathering will equip parish mentors, and a weekend learning intensive will deepen students’ understanding of liturgical music and pastoral leadership. Throughout the initiative, participants will receive guidance from parish leaders as they integrate musical skills with spiritual practice and community life.

**Macalester College (MN)** will launch a multifaith internship cohort that supports undergraduates as they discern the vocation of leadership in communities of faith. Students will serve weekly in local congregations and faith-based organizations while also collaborating on campus as a multifaith intern team with guidance from chaplain mentors. Regular mentoring and group conversations will connect community-engaged learning with vocational discernment and leadership development. Fellows will plan four campus events shaped by their placement experiences, extending learning to the wider community.

**Northwestern College (IA)** will design and implement initiatives that support and equip women who are discerning or have received a call to faith community leadership. In partnership with local churches, the college will host an annual conference that informs, equips, and connects

participants who are interested in the topic of women in ministry. Building on relationships formed at the conference, students will be invited into a yearlong mentorship cohort led by a woman serving in congregational ministry. Cohort members will meet monthly for guided reading and reflection, engage in leadership opportunities, and visit congregations led by women pastors while remaining active in a local faith community.

**Piedmont University (GA)** will build a two-semester program for a small cohort of students to explore vocations in faith-based leadership, especially within small-town congregations. Students will meet with local faith leaders to learn diverse perspectives on community needs in North Georgia, then complete mentored placements in specific congregations that will include job shadowing and guided reflection. Through regular cohort meetings and journaling, participants will examine how faith communities bridge differences, support disadvantaged groups, and sustain the congregation's own spiritual, social, and administrative life. Partnerships with congregations will deepen ties between the university and surrounding communities and create pathways into ministry, with a particular focus on rural and small-town contexts.

**Saint Vincent College (PA)** will begin a pastoral ministry program that enables undergraduates to discern vocations to leadership in communities of faith through integrated coursework and ministerial experience. In collaboration with the local diocese and area parishes, the college will establish paid internships, provide scholarships (with attention to first-generation students), and identify and support ministerial mentors. The program will also create a new undergraduate course in pastoral ministry and connect students with mentors for semester-long placements, building on study in theology with complementary work in communication, psychology, and business.

**The College of Wooster (OH)** will connect students with local faith communities for authentic leadership experiences that support vocational discernment. Students will complete internships, mentoring, and co-created projects with community partners to gain practical skills while exploring their callings. Through structured workshops with faculty members and community partners, the program will design placements and reflection activities that integrate faith and leadership, preparing students for ministry and other service-oriented vocations. Participants will contribute collaboratively to congregational and community initiatives and receive guided mentoring.

**Valparaiso University (IN)** will establish an undergraduate internship program that links students with area congregations for mentored, yearlong ministry experiences. In partnership with churches across traditions, the university will match a cohort of interns to sites, pair them with congregational supervisors, and convene regular cohort gatherings for reflection and discernment. Students will explore vocation through guided mentoring, individualized and group

sessions, and collaborative ministry projects that serve local needs, all within an ecumenical mentoring network.

The Office of Church engagement at **Whitworth University (WA)** will enhance its Summer Fellowship Program by creating summer ministry apprenticeships that deepen students' faith, build practical ministry skills, and clarify vocation. Apprenticeships will move students from observation to participation to leadership, in a rotation of residencies across the various ministries of a host congregation. In addition, the university will convene a yearlong cohort of local faith communities to develop mentoring skills and ministry capacity for encouraging and training young leaders.

**Wofford College (SC)** will establish the Faith and Leadership Scholars program to cultivate undergraduate leaders for communities of faith. The college will create a cohort-based pathway that integrates mentoring with ordained and lay leaders, a new course on the ethnography of religious leadership, and immersive engagement with a partner congregation. Scholars will participate in guided mentoring sessions, practice ethnographic fieldwork and reflection, and connect classroom learning with ministry experiences such as worship leadership, faith formation, outreach, and administration. Faculty members and congregational leaders will cooperate to provide structured mentoring and cohort gatherings to support ongoing vocational discernment.