

Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education

Program Development Grants

Awarded in Fall 2018 ∞ Providing funding for 2019–2021

Augsburg University will develop and pilot a student-curated electronic portfolio in which curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular experiences are reflected on and documented, focusing on the question of vocation. This vocation portfolio (vPortfolio) will be a modern, flexible tool that provides focus and coherence to vocational discernment processes for students, and will refocus Augsburg's institutional emphasis on vocation. This effort will place vocation at the dynamic interface among three stories: the story of self, the story of us, and the story of now.

Augustana College (IL) will pilot three sets of Education for Vocation Seminars, in which Augustana educators will introduce and discuss the value and methods of educating students for purposeful lives of faithfulness and responsibility in a diverse world. A first cohort of faculty will design, implement, and assess shared assignments that introduce all sophomores to the concept of education for vocation. A second cohort of faculty and other campus educators will deepen vocational reflection among self-selecting students who are studying away/abroad or involved in service-learning or internships. A final cohort will design, implement, and assess co-curricular events and opportunities that reinforce and extend classroom learning about vocation.

Bay Path University will strengthen and expand its existing vocational exploration initiatives to fortify and sustain the holistic and transformational experience that is part of the University's mission. The project will build and strengthen a culture of meaning, purpose, and vocation for students, faculty, and staff. It will provide ongoing development for faculty who lead the WELL program (Women as Empowered Learners and Leaders) as they continue working with students around these themes. It will also support a purpose-focused second-year experience and a new WEL400 section focused on meaning, purpose, and service across multiple faith traditions. Finally, the project will underwrite the development of a series of multi-day off-site experiential learning opportunities for WELL program students, along with additional training for student leaders.

Bethany College (KS) will develop active co-curricular service-learning opportunities that expand upon its Peer Ministry Program, Core Experience, and related course offerings. These co-curricular opportunities will include guided preliminary critical reflections, direct engagement with local and regional service institutions and political action organizations, and facilitated debriefing reflection discussions. The goal of this work is to enhance students' synthesis of knowledge, experiential learning, and processes of vocational discernment. Such co-curricular expansions will enhance the capacity of students to recognize and meet the needs of the world and the needs of others, enabling them to live into Bethany's mission in which students lead lives of faith, learning, and service.

Bethel University (MN) will provide Summer Institutes to engage both faculty and staff in discussions about vocation and to provide opportunities to integrate vocation into their work with

students. Faculty will review their curricula to identify courses into which they will incorporate assignments and activities related to vocation. Staff who interact with students on a regular basis will also participate in the Institutes, so that they can more effectively work with students to help them discover their vocation. This work will be complemented by a series of workshops for students modeled on “Project Ex,” a program run by Bethel’s business and economics department, aimed at motivating students to reflect on their vocations and how their undergraduate education can prepare them for the future. Programs will include discussions of different employment paths that Bethel graduates have taken, how their major fields impacted their lives, and how their education helped them to discover and live out their vocations.

Bluefield College’s strategic plan advocates curricular and co-curricular programs that will facilitate students’ understanding of the impact of their gifts, callings, and vocations. To strengthen the College’s Vocatio program, this grant will be used to revitalize the existing Core program and integrate elements of the program into all course curricula, as well as into the chapel experience. The College expects to sustain and expand a comprehensive structure that enables undergraduate students to explore how faith, vocation, and calling can create meaning that contributes to healthy service to the wider community in a diverse world.

Concordia University, St. Paul will expand its existing vocational initiatives on campus to engage in cross-departmental course redesign, produce a high quality vocational video, pilot a vocational retreat and speaker series, and create an interactive online assessment tool. This tool will be designed to help university programs conduct quantitative and qualitative analyses of written curriculum based on the institution’s vocational language. The program’s goal is to weave vocation-related initiatives throughout Concordia’s diverse curriculum—including online, graduate, and cohort-based programs.

Concordia University Wisconsin will create developmental programming for faculty and staff at its two residential campuses, in its adult learning centers, and through its fully online format. The objective of this programming is to enable educators to provide undergraduate learning experiences in which students reflect on vocation as they demonstrate their learning in the six university global learning outcomes: Christian faith; service and global citizenship; integrated disciplinary knowledge; critical thinking/problem solving; communicative fluency; and analytical fluency. In addition to providing faculty and staff development opportunities, this project will fund the creation of digital learning materials and will support course revisions as needed to facilitate this learning by all students, including those enrolled in non-traditional modes. Evaluation of the program will include feedback from participants and the evaluation of student artifacts that demonstrate learning.

Eckerd College will deepen and further institutionalize its commitment to vocation at all levels of the undergraduate experience. The college will nurture a larger vocational reflection effort between and among our faculty across the disciplines, implement pedagogies and courses on vocation, and foster more explicit alignment and collaboration between faculty and student life professionals on vocational matters. The grant will also support the Center for Spiritual Life’s efforts to dedicate time to vocation-related program development and long-range planning in this area.

Elmhurst College will expand the scope of its Niebuhr Center to incorporate the first year student experience, effectively establishing a true intra-campus partnership between the divisions of academic affairs and student affairs. The Center will expand its scope in order to help first-year students who have not yet declared a major, regardless of the nature or degree of their faith commitment. It will challenge them to consider their responses to four questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What questions do I want answered? How can I turn a question into a vocation, a major, a career?

Furman University will develop programming and resources for students in their third and fourth year, and will extend the exploration of vocation and purpose into a student's major focus. This is part of an integrated four-year pathway that makes up The Furman Advantage. It will be shaped by academic departments according to the needs of their disciplines and majors, while also meeting university-wide standards for fostering exploration and reflection toward career development and post-graduate opportunity.

Gordon College will extend the reach of its Calling and Career Conference for sophomore students, in order to increase both the number of student participants and the range of industry representatives. In addition, the college will develop a series of vocation-related online resources for use by students and their academic and career advisors, in order to prepare them for participation in the conference. In addition, Gordon will develop a professional advancement course as a part of its curriculum. This course will be designed for students in their third year, as a means of extending the learning opportunities afforded by the Calling and Career Conference.

Lee University will design a comprehensive second-year experience for students involving academic study, service learning, faith development, student support, and mentoring elements. This experience will have an intentional emphasis on vocational exploration, discovery, and reflection throughout. The development of a virtual roadmap will help to guide the student experience. The project also includes a robust faculty and staff development component, which will support the creation of the second-year experience, enhance the existing discussion of calling at Lee, and provide more intensive opportunities for vocational reflection for key faculty and other personnel who have joined the institution in recent years.

Martin Methodist College will expand vocational discernment programs by enhancing current programs offered through its office of spiritual life. It will also develop new programs in partnership with the college's offices of career services, alumni and church relations, first-year experience, internships, and academics. These enhanced and new programs will provide vocational discernment opportunities for students in each year of college, as well as resources to encourage students to converse with faculty about their own discernment. It will also provide students with alumni and church connections through job shadowing and a road map to prepare for next steps after graduation. The "All Are Called" project will address first-generation students' need to connect with faculty quickly, will generate exposure to a broader variety of career paths, and will provide support for neighboring rural communities by professional alumni.

Maryville College will strengthen its founder's charge—to "do good on the largest possible scale"—in every area of college life. The Broad Vistas program will provide a significant experience for sophomore students, to celebrate their achievements in being half-way through

college and to encourage their persistence toward a degree. In addition, the college's Ethics 490 course will be reviewed and renewed in order to transition this core class, required of all seniors, into a new academic calendar. This process will involve recruiting and equipping a broader network of faculty members to teach the class and will include the development of teaching resources around ethics and vocation. Finally, faculty and staff reading and reflection groups will continue conversations that were recently begun and will enable even more members of the college community to reflect on common issues of individual vocation in light of the challenging future of liberal arts education.

Muskingum University will implement a holistic advising structure rooted in vocational discernment. The advising structure includes tailored advising goals for each year that will afford students the opportunity to reflect on issues of meaning and purpose with a network of advisors. First, the training of faculty and staff will guide campus members to consider their own vocations as they are trained to help students explore theirs. Second, a new advising curriculum will gather members of the campus community to host formal gatherings for students to engage in enriching vocational discussions. Third, the university will create a new advising delivery method by selecting, training, and empowering integrative advisors who will ensure vocational discernment in curricular and co-curricular experiences on campus. The outcomes of this holistic advising structure will be evaluated at the end of each year.

Ottawa University will create a Faith Ambassadors program, designed to exemplify the mission of the university. The program will establish curricular and immersion experiences for up to 60 juniors and seniors. In the fall, participants will engage in course work emphasizing self-assessment, academic analysis of experiential and service learning, and participation in service projects. In the spring, participants will develop self-directed projects, in which they will be mentored by faculty instructors, staff, and peers—both within and beyond the classroom setting. Additionally, a fall training conference will bring together faculty, staff, and service agency partners, and a spring celebratory event will highlight final demonstration projects. The program also includes the development of mentoring and networking connections through a four-part chapel series, to be planned and implemented by Faith Ambassador leaders.

Samford University will bring faculty from different disciplines together to work on powerful assignments as one way to foster ongoing conversations about teaching and learning across campus. Faculty will be provided with space to read, discuss, and process various models related to the concept of vocational discernment. Select faculty and staff will be trained as facilitators, who will then convene learning communities to read and discuss vocational discernment texts and explore associated pedagogy. Faculty will then design (or re-design) assignments that incorporate elements of vocational discernment into their existing classes. This project blends Samford's established commitment to student-centered learning in a Christian environment with its Quality Enhancement Plan, providing opportunities for faculty to design powerful assignments.

Southwestern University (TX) will strengthen and expand its Alumni Network Mentoring Program, moving from a conventional view of one's future "career" to a vocation-focused approach. The program will extend its reach to support students to understand that their true calling may have many branches, and to apply this knowledge intentionally as they seek to find

their place in the world. The program will be extended to cover all four years and will intentionally recruit underrepresented minority and first-generation students, as well as alumni mentors who share this demographic background. It will use alumni mentors, faculty, and staff to bridge two existing Southwestern programs in the office of spiritual and religious life and the center for career and professional development. Ultimately, the program will empower student participants to explore their vocational callings and leave the university confidently prepared to be self-aware global leaders.

Susquehanna University will develop enhancements to its first-year student vocational exploration program and expand activities to the sophomore experience. The current program was developed by providing training for faculty and staff to encourage reflection and exploration of purpose in the context of the first-year Perspectives course, academic advising, and mentoring. This program will be enhanced by (1) adding the CliftonStrengths assessment tool as a resource for faculty and staff to engage students across co-curricular experiences; (2) encouraging innovative course design that challenges faculty to incorporate vocation exploration in sophomore courses; and (3) launching a holistic approach to student vocational exploration through living-learning communities and project-based learning.

The College of St. Scholastica will develop a Values in Action project, designed to strengthen the theological exploration of vocation across the college community. This project will allow the college to increase student, faculty, and staff understanding of the nature of vocation and its relationship to the college's mission and values. It will also seek to identify and implement shared vocation language that will be used throughout a student's experience at the college. The goal of this work is to increase opportunities for students, staff, and faculty members—on all campuses, and whether face-to-face or online—to reflect on their own calling in life in terms of both occupation and role within the larger community. The project is designed to increase the integration of vocational exploration in both curricular and co-curricular offerings.

University of Mary Hardin-Baylor will expand its VOCARÉ Initiative and strengthen its existing campus culture of meaningful life exploration and vocational development, so that it permeates all areas of the university. First, the university will launch an on-campus Vocation Emphasis Week, hosting a series of vocation-focused lectures and activities that engage and inspire students. Second, it will encourage its faculty members and staff to explore their own vocational journeys by providing retreats that prepare them for mentoring students in their work of vocational exploration. Third, the university will integrate vocational exploration into its existing First-Year Seminar course, as well as developing additional vocational exploration courses in which students will eventually have the opportunity to enroll.

University of Mount Union will develop a number of activities for faculty members, staff, and students. These will include: faculty and staff reading groups on vocation; development activities for educators teaching in the honors program, the development of a two-credit course for freshmen and sophomores focusing on vocation; the creation of a seminar series to bring alumni back to campus to talk about their vocational journeys; the development of an eight-week vocation academy, and a vocation retreat for students interested in service projects or mission trips.

University of Saint Francis will weave throughout its students' experience an intellectual and theological understanding of vocation. The two-year project will strengthen current practices by a three-pronged focus for student reflection: on themselves, on their faith and values, and on their place in the world. Activities supporting this reflection will be integrated through all aspects of student life. These will include gathering a core group of faculty and co-curricular staff who have developed a common language about vocation; integrating these conversations into first-year experience activities; aligning this work with the introductory course on Franciscan studies; developing a retreat for student leader that focuses on vocational discernment; and inviting a national expert on vocation to visit campus. All these activities are designed to inspire students to view their career path and their lives through the lens of vocation.

Ursinus College will bring together two processes it has recently begun: transforming its core curriculum in light of the challenges of vocational exploration, and rethinking its identity as a religiously plural institution. The university will build capacity for discussions of religious pluralism, with particular attention to its relationship to vocational discernment. It will also improve support for all students in these areas, through curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programming and activities. Ursinus's new core curriculum is structured around four open questions: What should matter to me? How should we live together? How can we understand the world? What will I do? This curricular structure lends itself organically to discussions of vocation, meaning, worldview diversity, and interfaith understanding.