



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

Awarded in February 2024 • Funding for 2024–2026

Abilene Christian University (TX) will implement a program which guides faculty members in creating student formation initiatives in connection with academic curriculum. The program will begin with an off-site retreat for a cohort of faculty members to renew their own sense of vocation and begin collaborative design toward classroom initiatives. For the remainder of the program, cohort participants will meet regularly to share ideas and finalize plans for incorporating student-centered formational experiences in each of their academic departments.

Aquinas College (MI) will incorporate their existing vocation-centered experiential learning program into the curriculum, supporting more students in the exploration of their vocations in the real world. Adjusting this program for inclusion in the curriculum grants students a more extended opportunity for engaged learning (in which they actively participate in historical and cultural contexts, collaborate with community organizations, and engage in meaningful service), that they might better discern and align their passions with avenues for addressing both local and global community needs.

Bard College (NY) will establish a means of connecting various programs and initiatives through which students currently engage in vocational exploration on campus. Building upon successful efforts to engage staff, administrators, and faculty members from across the undergraduate curriculum and co-curriculum, Bard College will expand the scope of vocational engagement to professionals throughout the institution. In this first phase of this project, colleagues will join reading groups, attend talks, and engage in workshops, all towards earning certification which names their membership in this emerging network of vocation partners across campus.

Bethel College (KS) will launch a new two-hour vocation-centered course, required for all sophomore students, which explores openness and responsiveness to the purposeful summons of *shalom* in life, community, work, and service. This class will facilitate students' development as contributors to a diverse common good. Elements of this class will be extended to off-campus environments as well, and made available to incarcerated student communities, retirement communities, and local church communities.

Hendrix College (AR) will build on existing vocation programming by developing four new initiatives that create more deliberate connections to vocational resources for all students across their collegiate experience. This program will connect sophomore students with staff and faculty members for vocational mentoring, will create a retreat setting for junior students to explore their vocation more deeply, will implement a coach and faculty member connection initiative aimed at better coordinating the mentoring of student athletes, and will incorporate a peer mentoring initiative within the current engaged learning program.

Huntington University (IN) is embarking on a multi-faceted strategy to intentionally emphasize vocational exploration throughout the academic curriculum. Through this grant program, Huntington will (1) provide faculty oversight for the development of a Center for Faith Integration and Vocation, (2) enhance the first-year seminar to include vocational understanding, (3) reimagine the core curriculum around the theme of vocation, (4) offer mini-grants for vocation-specific curriculum development, and (5) facilitate alumni mentoring connections for students.

King's College (PA) will assemble a cohort from a variety of employee categories and divisions whose work will coalesce around three subtopics: (1) vocational exploration outside the classroom, (2) the challenges for marginalized and minoritized students and other underrepresented groups in exploring vocation, and (3) an exploration of how the charism of the Congregation of Holy Cross intersects with vocational discernment. The primary goals of the program (also three-fold) will be (1) to develop a plan for programming that can be used by those who regularly counsel large groups of students, (2) to develop a plan for student-facing offices to gain a greater understanding of vocational exploration, and (3) to refine the Holy Cross Experience vocational module.

Lawrence University (WI) will gather small cohorts of humanities faculty members to learn about vocational discernment through a series of reflective retreats, pedagogy seminars, and collaborative workshops. Through this work, faculty members will redesign components of existing courses to encourage students to connect their academic work to their ongoing vocational exploration. Members of each faculty cohort will mentor a subsequent cohort in the following year, ensuring continuity of the program over time.

Malone University (OH) will implement several initiatives expanding the reach of vocation programming on campus: (1) the integration of vocation as a central theme for the General Education curriculum, (2) the development of a new seminar for sophomore and transfer students focused on vocation exploration, (3) the expansion of existing alumni mentoring programs in the context of student retreats for vocational and career discernment, (4) the design of a senior capstone course giving increased focus to vocation-related themes, (5) the provision of mini-grants for General Education faculty members to revise their syllabi for existing courses to align with a focus on vocation.

Messiah University (PA) will expand and deepen vocational formation as part of a newly approved General Education curriculum. This project will equip faculty members to engage students in vocational reflection around the common content embedded in two new interdisciplinary courses and advance a culture of support for the vocational formation outcomes associated with these courses. Grant supported initiatives include selecting a cohort of faculty members who will help design and implement a series of faculty development activities aligned with project goals, including faculty retreats, a resource tool kit, and lunch dialogues.

Missouri Baptist University (MO) will develop strategic initiatives to engage students, staff, and faculty members in meaningful reflection upon calling and vocation. To do this, the university will (1) further develop essential ideas and definitions regarding calling and vocation, (2) revise General Education courses to incorporate vocation-related content more robustly, and (3) expand mentorship and training programs with an emphasis on calling and vocation. Grant-supported activities will include retreats, departmental gatherings, and workshops with guest lecturers.

As the oldest private military college in the United States, **Norwich University (VT)** will use Program Development Grant funds (1) to support public-facing lectures on leadership and vocation, (2) to lift up student ambassadors who will champion reflection on vocation, meaning, and purpose on campus, (3) to emphasize intentional incorporation of the discussion of vocational discernment in academic advising, and (4) to offer a new course on leadership, meaning, ethics, and service.

Roberts Wesleyan University (NY) will provide exploration and reflection opportunities for underrepresented and first-generation students to discover their gifts, calling, and purpose through a series of workshops, intentional mentoring, self-reflection, and individualized engagement with vocation and career advocates. The program will also expand professional and community networks for this vulnerable population of students, providing the opportunity for interactions that are encouraging, non-threatening, and educational. Additional efforts will include preparing resources for staff and faculty members to enhance interactions and

discussions on calling, vocation, and career with students and to embed them into curriculum or co-curricular experiences.

Seton Hill University (PA) will engage in an academic development program that incorporates discipline-specific community engagement as an essential pedagogical tool for student vocational discernment. The project will begin with a summer immersion institute and then assemble two cohorts of faculty members which will work together to design or redesign courses to incorporate community engagement as a tool for vocational discernment. This project steps beyond career exploration into vocational discernment by engaging the whole student and a commitment to the common good.

Simpson University (CA) will expand the integration of vocational exploration in the curriculum so that students receive multiple touchpoints throughout their academic program. Vocational exploration has already been added to the first-year experience, and now vocational exploration will be integrated into the General Education curriculum and into major courses. First Year Experience instructors and academic advisors across campus will also be trained so that students receive effective mentorship, coaching, and reflective conversation about vocational discernment.

St. Ambrose University (IA) is re-imagining its General Education program to cultivate students' vocational commitments in the areas of community engagement and global citizenship. St. Ambrose will also challenge and support its faculty members in their ongoing growth and development by founding a learning team to support them in the creation, design, and delivery of courses, collaboratively built to integrate additional vocation-related elements into St. Ambrose classrooms.

St. Lawrence University (NY) will create a learning community of faculty members to develop purpose-centered and purpose-driven courses for first-year and second-year students at St. Lawrence. This grant project will also engage students, staff, and faculty members in professional development toward building a wider campus culture of purpose-centered education and sponsor additional activities for students (workshops for student leaders and mini-grants to student organizations exploring vocation-related programming, particularly seeking to support students from underrepresented backgrounds) to encourage the exploration of vocation as they navigate their college and career experiences.

The King's University (AB) will enhance current opportunities for vocational reflection across the university community in three ways: (1) through a series of campus-wide colloquia which will gather staff and faculty members to talk about identifying, reflecting, and sharing their callings as individuals and as a community, (2) a conference on vocational narratives and vocational narration which will stand as the culmination of the colloquia series, and (3) the

development and implementation of a new interdisciplinary course on vocation and the good life targeted at second-year and third-year students.

Thomas More University (KY) will create programming for first-year and second-year experiences while also continuing a professional learning community exploring how vocation can be intentionally integrated across campus. The project leadership team will create new student programming, enrich the first-year experience, and institute a speaker series for students, staff, and faculty members. This work will aid in better modeling the institution's mission: to examine the ultimate meaning of life, find one's place in the world, and fulfill one's responsibility to others.

Union College (KY) will conduct a convocation for second-year students, hold workshops for vocational discernment, and seek to better connect students with current campus programs that engage students in vocational discernment. In addition, stipends and microgrants will be utilized to aid students, staff, and faculty members in collaborative projects focusing on vocational reflection, major and career research, community service, and social justice activities. These microgrants will position third-year students to make meaningful decisions about campus leadership, conference involvement, and internships.

The University of Dubuque (IA) will strengthen vocational exploration in the General Education curriculum through collaboration with faculty members. The program will create course modules to deepen students' understanding of vocation, character, purpose, and service, using an advisory committee of faculty members, focus groups, community partnerships, and professional development resources, to formulate module content. This project will enhance and expand vocational exploration opportunities in the General Education curriculum, reaching students regardless of major.

University of St. Thomas (MN) will expand our vocational exploration work using vocation storytelling as a guiding principle, particularly seeking to reach incoming students through a broad understanding of vocational exploration in the required first-year courses. Funding will also support vocational storytelling retreats for underrepresented, marginalized, and first-generation sophomores. Staff and faculty members will likewise gather for vocation-related retreats and small reading groups. Through collaborative stories and reflection, we will ask better vocation-related questions, and seek meaning and clarity on how this academic community is called to serve our communities and the earth.