



THE COUNCIL OF
INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

PRESS RELEASE

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CIC ANNOUNCES LILLY ENDOWMENT GRANT FOR PROGRAMS FOR THE THEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF VOCATION **Grant is Second Largest in CIC History**

WASHINGTON, DC – The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) announced today that Lilly Endowment Inc. has awarded to CIC a grant totaling nearly \$2.4 million for a program on Using Theological Exploration of Vocation to Strengthen Independent Higher Education. The funding will support a program with three interrelated components: establishment of a Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education over six years for colleges and universities; extension for another four years of the leadership development program on Presidential Vocation and Institutional Mission that encourages and nurtures the theological consideration of vocation and its connection with the purposes of the institution among college presidents and prospective presidents; and the publication of a report on the 2005–2009 Presidential Vocation and Institutional Mission program.

CIC President Richard Ekman said, “Over the past several years, the Council of Independent Colleges has made a commitment to advancing vocational exploration as a guiding force in American independent higher education. The concept of vocation emerged as a significant factor from various sources and has been applied in different ways for different campus constituencies. CIC has identified three promising projects that capitalize on what has been learned about the theological exploration of vocation and how it can be adapted and developed to strengthen colleges and universities, their leadership, and the education they provide for their students.”

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These projects include:

Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE). The Lilly Endowment grant will enable CIC to establish a network of colleges and universities that wish to sustain campus efforts in the theological exploration of vocation. Through national and regional conferences, the development and exchange of resources, and participation in online networking services, CIC hopes that participating institutions will deepen vocational exploration on their campuses. Institutions that have well-established programs in the theological exploration of vocation will disseminate the results of their work through this network and find ways to mentor other institutions that wish to enter the conversation.

The Endowment previously sponsored Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation (PTEV) on 88 campuses. When that program closed, campus leaders approached CIC to work with them to sustain the constructive interactions that the Endowment had facilitated among participants. With a Lilly Endowment grant, CIC sponsored a national conference in March 2009 to build upon the momentum created by the PTEV initiative. This conference, *Vocation in Undergraduate Education: Extending the Theological Exploration of Vocation*, opened the vocational exploration to colleges and universities that had not been part of PTEV and laid the foundation for the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education.

Among the goals of NetVUE are to share knowledge, best practices, and reflection on experiences among previously involved campuses and others and facilitate the incorporation of additional colleges and universities into this enterprise. For more information about NetVUE, visit www.cic.edu/NetVUE.

“We have discovered,” said Craig Dykstra, Lilly Endowment’s senior vice president for religion, “that structured programs that encourage and guide students in the theological exploration of vocation do indeed help them draw on the wisdom of their religious traditions as they make decisions about their futures and figure out how to lead lives that really matter. We have been approached by hundreds of colleges and universities seeking to enhance their educational programs by incorporating vocational reflection more intentionally into their curricular and co-curricular activities. We are delighted that CIC is committed to sustaining and extending this important conversation and helping colleges across the country to advance their educational missions in this way.”

Presidential Vocation and Institutional Mission Seminars. The Lilly Endowment grant will allow for four additional leadership development seminar series over the next five years for academic leaders in private higher education. CIC has already held six successful year-long series aimed at increasing the commitment of college presidents and many who aspire to presidencies to the importance of aligning personal vocation and institutional mission for the role of the president in independent institutions of higher education.

“Presidents who participated in the seminars have become more reflective about their leadership responsibilities and consequently more effective leaders of their institutions,” Ekman said. “Further, prospective presidents, a number of whom have since been appointed to presidencies, report that the lessons they learned from the seminars guided their consideration of searches to enter and institutions to consider leading. With a better fit between presidents’ sense of vocation and their institutions’ mission, independent colleges and universities are benefitting from superior leadership.”

The American College Presidency as Vocation. This publication will document the effectiveness of the 2005–2009 Presidential Vocation and Institutional Mission seminar program as experienced by the participants themselves and examine whether their experiences ultimately improved the educational culture of their institutions. William V. Frame, CIC senior advisor and president emeritus of Augsburg College, with assistance from Richard T. Hughes, Distinguished Professor and Senior Fellow, Ernest L. Boyer Center at Messiah College (PA), will interview past seminar participants, seeking tangible evidence as to whether the program has made positive contributions to the satisfaction and durability of presidential life in America’s small and mid-size private colleges and universities. The results will be shared with presidents and prospective presidents, their spouses, and others in all sectors of higher education in a book, *The American College Presidency as Vocation*.

CIC expects the outcomes of the Using Theological Exploration of Vocation to Strengthen Independent Higher Education program to include:

- A deeper understanding of the intellectual and theological substance of vocational exploration;
- An examination of the role of theological reflection and vocational exploration in a variety of institutional contexts;

- Shared knowledge, best practices, and reflection on experiences across participating campuses;
- Development of a network for sustaining an extended program in the theological exploration of vocation;
- Incorporation of additional colleges and universities into this enterprise;
- Increased attention in independent colleges and universities to the importance of the connection between institutional mission and presidential vocation; and
- Longer, happier and more effective presidencies and greater satisfaction among governing boards with the quality of candidates for presidencies.

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*The **Council of Independent Colleges** is an association of more than 600 independent, liberal arts colleges and universities and higher education affiliates and organizations that work together to strengthen college and university leadership, sustain high-quality education, and enhance private higher education's contributions to society. To fulfill this mission, CIC provides its members with skills, tools, and knowledge that address aspects of leadership, financial management and performance, academic quality, and institutional visibility. The Council is headquartered at One Dupont Circle in Washington, DC.*