Teaching Vocational Exploration
A SEMINAR FOR NetVUE FACULTY MEMBERS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS • JUNE 22–26, 2020
Techny Towers Conference & Retreat Center

Led by

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www.cic.edu/TeachingVocation
One of the most promising ways that faculty members can serve their students is to introduce them to the subject of vocation. What would it mean for students to think of themselves as “called” or “summoned” to use their intellect and abilities to have an impact on the world by doing good?

Faculty members teach students at a critical time in their lives, a time when they are searching—and often struggling—to form a clear understanding of who they are and what they might do with their lives. Students often ask, “What kind of life is truly worth living?” They want to know how to use their unique talents and relationships to work for a better world. Faculty members committed to vocational exploration strive to help students discover what could constitute a truly good, meaningful, and flourishing life that would lead to well-being for themselves and others.

In recent years, many colleges and universities have experienced a rediscovery and deeper appreciation of vocational exploration and its relevance to institutional efforts to encourage students to think about the trajectory of their lives. College faculty members have the opportunity to guide students in the exploration of their respective vocations and to help them probe questions of meaning, purpose, and identity, as well as the contributions that they can make to society—and to do so from a variety of perspectives, including the theological and the ethical. This work can expand, deepen, and enrich faculty members’ understanding of the privilege and responsibility of their own callings as teachers.
ABOUT THE SEMINAR

This seminar aims to strengthen the teaching of vocational exploration by examining different meanings of “vocation” and their importance for undergraduate education, by considering content and teaching methods for courses that focus on vocational exploration, and by reflecting on the shape and experience of the academic vocation. Discussions also will focus on mentoring students for ongoing vocational exploration, understanding the characteristics of emerging adults, and considering how social, cultural, and institutional dynamics both facilitate and hinder living out one’s vocation. In preparation for the seminar, participants will be expected to read selected materials on vocation and submit a brief written reflection. They also will be expected in the academic year following the seminar to develop a new course or course materials or to redesign an existing course with greater focus on vocational exploration.

SEMINAR LEADERS

Paul J. Wadell, director of the NetVUE Faculty Development Seminars, is professor of theology and religious studies at St. Norbert College. From 2000 to 2010, he was coordinator for faculty and staff development of St. Norbert’s Faith, Learning, and Vocation program. Previously, Wadell taught for many years at Catholic Theological Union. His principal areas of scholarly interest include virtue ethics, the role of friendship in the moral life, and theological and ethical dimensions of vocation. He is the author of a number of books, including Happiness and the Christian Moral Life: An Introduction to Christian Ethics (2007), Becoming Friends: Worship, Justice, and the Practice of Christian Friendship (2002), and Friendship and the Moral Life (1989). Wadell also has contributed chapters to several volumes on theology and ethics and has written numerous articles for both scholarly and popular theological journals. In addition, he participated in the NetVUE Scholarly Resources Project and wrote “An Itinerary of Hope: Called to a Magnanimous Way of Life” in At This Time and In This Place: Vocation and Higher Education (2016). He currently serves as a member of the NetVUE Advisory Council. Wadell earned a BA in English from Bellarmine University, an MDiv and MA in theology from Catholic Theological Union, and a PhD in theology from the University of Notre Dame.

Darby Kathleen Ray is the Donald W. and Ann M. Harward Professor of Civic Engagement at Bates College, where she also is professor of religious studies and director of the Harward Center for Community Partnerships. At Bates, she leads institutional strategy and program development in support of the college’s civic mission, teaches in religious studies, leads workshops and seminars in community-engaged learning and research, and develops college-community collaborations. Previously, Ray was professor of religious studies at Millsaps College, where she also was founding director of the Millsaps Faith and Work Initiative. Earlier, she was a visiting assistant professor of religious studies at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. Ray is the author of Working (2011),
Incarnation and Imagination: A Christian Ethic of Ingenuity (2008), and Theology That Matters: Ecology, Economy, and God (2006). She also participated in the NetVUE Scholarly Resources Project and wrote “Self, World, and the Space Between: Community Engagement as Vocational Discernment” in At This Time and In This Place: Vocation and Higher Education (2016). Ray earned a BA from Sewanee: The University of the South and an MA and PhD from Vanderbilt University—all in religion.

ABOUT NetVUE

The Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education is a nationwide campus-supported network that fosters vocational exploration among undergraduate students on college and university campuses. Through national and regional conferences and a variety of programs, services, resources, and grants, NetVUE seeks to support member colleges and universities as they cultivate programs of vocational reflection and discernment, employing perspectives from theology, philosophy, history, literature, psychology, and other academic disciplines. This initiative is administered by the Council of Independent Colleges with generous support from Lilly Endowment Inc. and member dues. An Advisory Council composed of representatives from member institutions guides CIC in the administration of NetVUE. Additional information about NetVUE is available at www.cic.edu/NetVUE.

PARTICIPANTS, LOCATION, AND EXPENSES

CIC will select up to 20 participants by competitive nomination. Full-time faculty members in any discipline or department at the rank of assistant or associate professor or the equivalent at NetVUE member colleges and universities are eligible to be considered. The seminar will take place June 22–26, 2020, at Techny Towers Conference & Retreat Center located at 2001 Waukegan Road, Northbrook, Illinois, north of Chicago and roughly 30 minutes from O’Hare International Airport. Thanks to generous support from Lilly Endowment Inc., CIC will cover most seminar costs, including materials, lodging, and meals, and will provide a travel stipend of up to $500 per participant.
NOMINATION PROCESS

Faculty members who wish to participate in the seminar should ask the chief academic officer of their institution to submit a letter as described below that makes a case for the nominee’s participation in the program. Each institution may nominate one individual. Full-time tenured, tenure-track, or long-term contract faculty members at the rank of assistant and associate professor or the equivalent are eligible to be nominated. The nomination form is available at www.cic.edu/TeachingVocation and must be submitted online. Each nomination should include the following:

1. Nomination letter from the chief academic officer that emphasizes the nominee’s qualifications, the nominee’s commitment to the institution’s mission, and the opportunities the nominee will have to incorporate vocational exploration into classroom teaching;

2. Completed nomination form;

3. Nominee’s curriculum vitae; and

4. Nominee’s statement of reasons for wishing to participate in the seminar, understanding of vocational exploration, and the anticipated results for the nominee’s teaching, research, or curricular development (no more than two pages).

NOMINATION DEADLINE

Please submit the nomination online in a single package by Friday, September 20, 2019. Selection of participants will be announced by November 29, 2019.

For questions about the seminar or the nomination process, contact David S. Cunningham, director of NetVUE, at (616) 395-6750 or dcunningham@cic.nche.edu. Additional information is available at www.cic.edu/TeachingVocation.