



## Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) Grants for Reframing the Institutional Saga

Awarded in February 2021 • Funding for 2021–2023

**Anderson University** (IN) will produce a collection of essays and a documentary film in order to narrate its institutional saga. These materials will reference the institution's recent centennial history and make it available to constituents in more accessible formats, including for use with students and other institutional stakeholders. The essays will articulate ways the university's history and context frame contemporary questions in society and church. The documentary film will be created in order to articulate the institution's history and approach to its higher education mission in light of its current context.

**Augsburg University** (MN) will explore its historical saga, focusing on whether that saga adequately informs and reflects the university's aspiration to be an anti-racist, inclusive teaching and learning community. This project will engage 12 members of the Augsburg community—students, faculty members, and staff—in a community of learning and practice that will include conversations, workshops, and public presentations to allow for a wider consideration of the unfolding future saga. This group will write essays that will be combined into a published volume, which will be required reading on campus as part of Augsburg's abiding conversations about its role as a university in the 21st century.

**Augustana College** (IL) will undertake a research and writing project to examine the relationship between its founding mission (serving Swedish Lutheran immigrants entering ministry or teaching vocations) and its current work. The institution's present-day context includes a curriculum of over 90 majors and programs of study serving a diverse student body, including rapidly rising numbers of persons of color and international students. This project will allow the college to extend one of its most important affirmations—namely, that its many innovations and transformations are rooted in its historical identity as a Lutheran liberal arts institution. The ultimate goal is for the institution to live into its calling to be a place of belonging for all students and a good neighbor to its economically, racially, and religiously diverse community.

**Dominican University** (IL) will create a new written account—as well as a permanent, on-campus, museum-quality exhibit—of the institution’s saga from its founding to the present day. This project will reinterpret Dominican’s pioneering spirit for a new moment in both institutional and national history. Its creation will require a deep dive into the historical record, lifting up voices from the past whose influence may have gone overlooked or unseen in earlier narratives. The exhibit will trace the thread of Dominican values of *caritas* and *veritas* from its foundation to its present mission to provide access, excellence, and empowerment to this culturally and religiously diverse generation of college students.

**Elmhurst University** (IL) will conduct a thorough inquiry-based initiative to clarify its “Being,” in addition to an exploration of the ongoing journey of “Becoming.” This project will build upon a previously-published institutional narrative with an updated volume. Complementing this printed work, the university will also create an enduring “Calling All Voices” storytelling project, which will include a podcast, website, and opportunity for written submissions, all reflecting on the connection between an individual’s identity/ies, the university’s mission and values, and how one’s personal narrative interweaves with the legacy of the institution.

**Fontbonne University** (MO) will examine its identity as an institution that “serves the dear neighbor without distinction” through four initiatives: archival and oral history research on two pivotal but insufficiently understood periods of the institution’s history; production of a new account of that history by appending this new research to previous work; analysis of how its constituencies could more deeply associate the institution with its Catholic identity and with the charism of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in particular; and student-led multi-media, visual art, and poetic projects that articulate anew the institution’s mission and identity for its next 100 years.

**Goshen College** (IN) will undertake a book project that will contribute to the larger ongoing campus and community conversation regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion—particularly in light of the fact that nearly 50 percent of Goshen College students today identify as something other than white U.S. Americans. The research will draw on interviews, discussion groups, numerous internal reports, and the broader literature on contemporary higher education. The book will provide a structure for conversation and debate among all constituencies about the college’s mission and identity. It will also help to orient new faculty members, “de-mystify” the college’s culture for prospective students and their families, and give voice to perspectives from groups that have been minoritized at Goshen.

**Grove City College** (PA) will facilitate a two-year, college-wide series of “Core Conversations” that will explore the dynamic relationship between its core curriculum, its Christian mission, and its institutional history. The project will convene faculty members, administrators, and staff to discuss the college’s institutional identity as it begins a revision of its core curriculum for the first time in 15 years. The project will focus on the relationship between the core curriculum and the college’s history, and will include writing and publishing a monograph on what distinguishes a Grove City College education in light of the college’s history and contemporary moment, as well as hosting a college-wide symposium to celebrate and share this work with the college community.

**Huntingdon College** (AL) will engage in a thorough archival analysis of its history and conduct interviews with alumni, faculty members, and college officials to fill in the gaps. Because current students will assist faculty members with this reframing process, project leaders will develop

several special-topics courses to conduct the interviews and the archival research. Once the research and courses are complete, the team will create a monograph that gathers the research collected about the past to inform the future identity and instruction of vocation, especially in regard to the relationship between vocation and issues of diversity and social justice. This knowledge will be vital to the college as it continues to develop its new Race and Justice Center over the next few years.

**King University** (TN) will produce a book on its historical mission and contemporary context, focusing on the ways that the institution's calling has helped students discern their vocations. This volume will take shape in conjunction with a series of conversations on King's past and present, involving faculty and staff members, students, graduates, and the community. The chief editor will solicit chapters from a variety of contributors, who will focus on the ways that King's institutional saga has shaped them. The book will be used with prospective students, first-year students, staff, faculty members, graduates, and community supporters. The book's aim will be to tell King's story in a way that gives every part of the campus renewed focus and mission, and that also invites others to become part of its saga.

**Lipscomb University** (TN) has been shaped since its founding in 1891 by the biblical vision of the Kingdom of God, embodied in the summons to serve all humanity and especially those Jesus called "the least of these." Today, as Lipscomb transitions from a religiously provincial institution into an urban institution with an increasingly diverse student body, it seeks to consider how its founding vision can strengthen its Christian identity while allowing it to serve its current students. It will do this by undertaking a series of in-depth, campus-wide conversations to result in a book that will inform its work for many years to come.

**Messiah University** (PA) will convene a group of faculty members to produce a high-quality, edited volume of essays that reflect the institution's distinctive vocation. Meeting together for sustained reflection and dialogue, the group will read a common body of texts related to Messiah's history, theological heritage, mission and identity, and strategic vision. Group members will carefully consider ideas that emerge from their common readings and will compose essays for a coordinated writing project over the course of two years. Essays from this volume will be used in the semester-long program that orients new faculty members, co-curricular educators, and administrative leaders to Messiah University's distinctive history, identity, and mission.

**Mount St. Mary's University** (MD) will produce an edited collection of essays that explores the influences and circumstances that shaped the university as it is today. Fifteen contributors will examine the ways in which the university has changed over time, approaching the subject through varied lenses and conducting archival research, oral interviews, and data analysis. During the research and writing phases, contributors will assemble in lunchtime writing meetings, workshops, and a concluding conference. They will engage constituencies across campus as well as external interlocutors before submitting the manuscript for publication.

**Salve Regina University** (RI) seeks to accomplish three main goals: develop a shared, concise, updated historical narrative of Salve Regina University; root and frame the newly articulated core values of the institution (identified through a recent strategic compass process) in relation to its shared Mercy, Catholic heritage and the Mercy vocational paradigm; and invite members of the university community to reflect on the relationship between their own values and story and

those of the university. The project will accomplish these goals through the creation of an edited volume of essays, which will examine how the institution's values have been made manifest throughout its history and how these values call the institution forward into the future.

**Sewanee: The University of the South** (TN) will complete work on the multi-year Roberson Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation, including a new history of the university that directly addresses its racial history. The project will include an interactive website with online exhibitions that provide multiple points of entry to encounter the institutional saga, a series of community conversations that seek the testimony of living Black alumni, a short film that documents previously untold stories, and a wayfinding path that allows people to engage with a reframed institutional saga on the physical campus. This work will prepare the university to thrive in a society that is becoming increasingly diverse and will help leaders plan for a future that allows a diverse student body to undertake fruitful vocational exploration.

**Stillman College** (AL) is the only historically Black college founded by the southern branch of the Presbyterian Church USA. Yet, although the story of its founding (during Reconstruction by Reverend Charles Allen Stillman) is well known, this is not the case with respect to the depth and extent of its history and its relationship to the church. This project will uncover and present this history in ways that will be accessible both to the college and to the church. Specifically, the goal of the project is to demonstrate that, even in the midst of constant change, the historical connection between the college and the church remained—and that these ties are now being recalled as the college reframes its identity as a mission of the Presbyterian Church USA.

**The University of La Verne** (CA) will explore the significance of its heritage and history, seeking to tell a more inclusive history of the institution, while also drawing on its historical legacy as a resource for its present and future vision. The final products of this project will include academic essays that tell a more inclusive history, a permanent public art piece, and a campus-wide art installation that significantly represent the outcomes of a newly framed history, heritage, and vision.

**The University of St. Francis** (IL) will launch a two-year initiative to re-examine its historical narrative and articulate a new institutional vocation that responds to a present and a future that were unimaginable until a short while ago. Two book projects will reflect this work. The first is a volume of 100 short essays organized around the university's core values of respect, service, integrity, and compassion. These essays will discuss how these values have been reflected in the past and how they are being realigned for the future. A companion volume of student writing will be introduced with a brief institutional history; this volume will illustrate how students live out the institution's core values and create its vocation as they engage with current events.

**Wesleyan College** (GA) will update its institutional saga through the production of a digital narrative housed on the college's website (with accompanying video and archival footage). This digital narrative will be accompanied by a printed catalogue that will serve as a permanent snapshot of the project as it exists at the end of the grant period. The catalogue will include transcripts of several of the alumnae interviews that will be part of the digital narrative on the website. The combination of a digital and printed account will bring to life the stories of the women of Wesleyan and present the institution as part of its larger setting.

**Whitworth University** (WA) has, from its founding in 1890 to the present, engaged a variety of issues—sometimes willingly and sometimes unwillingly—related to race, ethnic diversity, and most recently, sexual orientation. This project will explore in detail those issues and will culminate with a historical essay in both hardbound and digital formats, which will serve to update the university's recently published institutional history. The project will also fund a 20-minute documentary presentation for classroom use.