

University of Dayton Program for Christian Leadership
General Assessment Report
September 12, 2006

I. Vision of the Theological Exploration of Vocation Program (Program for Christian Leadership) and its Relationship to Institutional Mission:

Mission of the Program for Christian Leadership:

The Program for Christian Leadership fosters the exploration of Christian vocation, grounded in and informed by the Catholic and Marianist traditions. Through academic coursework and programs, we endeavor to help students and faculty develop lifelong skills of discernment and leadership, encourage them to make commitments based on a Christian understanding of vocation, and explore their work in relation to their religious convictions.

We seek to strengthen our students' theological and personal understanding of the meaning and value of remaining dedicated and committed to living in a way that is consistent with the Christian faith. We work with the desire that our students understand their lives in a more theologically informed way, deepen their sense of Christian vocation, and become more willing to pursue ministry (lay, religious, and priestly) and assume leadership roles in their communities and churches because of this deeper understanding.

In addition, we help faculty members achieve a greater degree of integration between research in their professional disciplines and their faith life, and we encourage faculty members to explore their work in relation to their faith. The Program for Christian Leadership motivates faculty members to accept the increased responsibility for deepening and communicating the religious traditions of the University of Dayton.

Relatedness to UD's mission:

This program speaks to the heart of the mission of the University of Dayton. Our institutional vocation is to educate the whole person and to connect learning and scholarship with leadership and service. As a Catholic and Marianist university, it is our obligation to help form students who will be responsive to the needs of their communities and Churches. Our desire is to educate students so that they are able to shepherd their gifts and talents in a responsible way in which their Christian faith and their sense of vocation provide a framework for how they live their communal and professional lives.

Programs initiated by our original Lilly grant for the Theological Exploration of Vocation program and implemented by the Program for Christian Leadership (PCL) are consistent with the many components of the University's mission and vision statement. These include:

- The Chaminade Scholar program: Consistent with the vision for excellence in undergraduate education.
- Summer Workshop in Leadership & Vocation: Consistent with the vision for excellence in integrated learning and living, and in strengthening our Catholic & Marianist identity.
- The Faculty Fund for Vocational Exploration program, which helps faculty members integrate their faith and academic lives: Consistent with the vision for excellence in scholarship and research.

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- The Chaminade Scholar program, the Summer Workshop in Leadership & Vocation, and the Liturgical Music Ministry program: Consistent with the vision for excellence in leadership development and service to society.
- The Chaminade Scholar international vocation immersion experience and Chaminade Scholar diversity recruitment efforts: Consistent with the vision for multicultural and international learning.

These programs, which were initiated by our Lilly Endowment grant, are among the University's most distinctive programs and are prime examples of ways in which the University of Dayton realizes and fulfills its mission and vision.

II. Background and Key Program Elements:

In December of 2000, the Lilly Endowment Inc. awarded the University of Dayton a five-year, \$2,000,000 grant to develop programs in the Theological Exploration of Vocation. The Program for Christian Leadership (PCL), established by the grant, fosters the exploration of Christian vocation, grounded in and informed by the Catholic and Marianist traditions. In September 2005, the University of Dayton received an additional \$500,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment to continue its Theological Exploration of Vocation programs. Funding for "Sustaining the Theological Exploration of Vocation" will allow UD to continue key programs such as the Chaminade Scholars program, the Summer Workshop in Leadership and Vocation, the Faculty Fund for Vocational Exploration, and a mini-course in liturgical music ministry required for all campus music ministers.

General comments regarding evaluations: Each large-scale event, course, or retreat sponsored by the Program for Christian Leadership is evaluated with a survey. In addition, we have conducted a number of Focus Groups to gather more in-depth feedback from participants. These instances will be described in more detail below. In planning subsequent retreats, courses and activities, we make use of the survey results to improve our programs' effectiveness. For example, student evaluation of the Summer Workshop in Leadership & Vocation has helped us refine the workshop schedule as well as the content of the sessions. Chaminade Scholar course evaluations are ongoing, and materials are shared with faculty and department chairs. In one case, we have used student feedback to make a faculty change for a Chaminade Scholar course.

A. Student Programs

1. Chaminade Scholar Program

The Chaminade Scholar program, our central initiative, is helping a growing number of students examine the relationship between their faith and vocational choices, as well as providing them with opportunities to explore Christian ministry as their life's work. The goal of this program, which was articulated in our original proposal to the Lilly Endowment, was to engage a small, but focused group of highly talented students in a four-year exploration of vocation, discernment, and preparation for leadership roles in their churches and communities. This program is now in its sixth year; based on feedback and evaluation of courses, this program is hitting its targets. In the Chaminade Scholar courses, the students are thinking about how leadership qualities will be manifest in vocation; how they will live as faith-filled professionals in a post-modern society. They are exploring their responsibilities as Christians to their church, as lay leaders. In addition, these courses are challenging the faculty members to do something new – to connect the role of

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vocation with leadership and service, all in the context of both their research agendas and in teaching academically rigorous courses. The Chaminade Scholars program is a way by which the University is addressing the needs of not just the Church, but of our larger society.

Our first class of Chaminade Scholars graduated in May 2005. Of our 14 graduates, six are attending graduate school, one is as a youth minister at a local parish, one is teaching in a Catholic school, and another is undertaking a year of service volunteering with the Marianists. Of our second class, who graduated in May 2006, two are teaching in Catholic schools, one is performing a year of service with the Marianists, one is in graduate school in theological studies, two are in medical school, and another three are pursuing graduate degrees (mathematics, psychology, and library science).

We enlisted the Business Research Group to conduct Focus Group Exit Interviews with graduating senior Chaminade Scholars in Spring of 2005 and 2006.

Key Findings of the 2005 Focus group:

- The participants in the focus group have a strong positive disposition toward the Chaminade Scholars Program and agree that the most valuable aspect is the opportunity to build long-lasting relationships with those in the class. It is through these relationships, developed during the program, that the participants experienced personal growth and vocational understanding.
- Individual career choices were influenced by a variety of factors beyond the Chaminade Scholars Program. The interpersonal relationships built through the program, however, were instrumental in helping the participants understand and accept the complexities involved with such choices.
- The program enriched the participants' understanding of vocation and their understanding of the ways in which their faith influences all aspects of their lives.
- Based on this conversation, it appeared that all the specific goals of the Chaminade Scholars Program were, to varying degrees, achieved by this first class.

The Summary results from 2006:

- Chaminade Scholars' "post graduate plans were all articulated within a concept of a vocation that is based in faith and influences not just what they do in their work but their whole life experience. Their experience of the Chaminade Scholars program was all encompassing because the friendships and connections made in the early part of that program were the drivers for so many of their other involvements over their 4 years on campus."
- "They discussed the importance of the informal relationships developed with Marianists on campus that would not have occurred without meeting them through the Chaminade program. There was a definite sense in the responses that having a group with which they could be comfortable talking about issues of faith had made it easier for them to continue to pursue actively what it means to live your faith and to think more deeply about the idea of a vocation."

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While we have generally had positive experiences delivering these courses, we have found that one of our courses, REL356, was not particularly well-taught. After conversations with the faculty member and the department chair, the department has assigned a different faculty member to the course. Subsequent classes have been significantly improved and we are pleased with the change in personnel. (Course evaluations for each class and year are available if desired.)

2. Summer Workshop in Leadership & Vocation

The Summer Workshop in Leadership and Vocation (SWLV) is part of a broader range of activities designed to help a larger group of students deepen their sense of call or vocation through intensive and purposeful exploration. Through this workshop, incoming first-year students take part in a 5-day, 4-night residential learning experience in which they explore their call to learn, lead, and serve.

Each year (2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006) we have found that this experience helps to create close-knit communities of faith-filled learners. One of the goals of the SWLV was to begin to change the student culture on campus: to predispose students to a way of living, thinking, learning and acting before their arrival on campus as first-year students. Our evaluation data indicates that each year we are meeting our goals. (Please see 5-year summary of quantitative evaluation (attached).) We are also conducting a survey-based longitudinal study in which we are comparing the activities and leadership roles of students who attended the SWLV against a control sample of those who have not. The student workbook is available upon request from the PCL office. We are also conducting a survey-based longitudinal study in which we are comparing the campus activities and leadership roles of students who attended the SWLV against a control sample of those who have not.

The Summer Workshop in Leadership & Vocation has been very successful in meeting the goals that we have articulated for the week, and provides a base of students for engagement in on-going programming during the academic year. This experience has been helpful in bringing together a larger group of students who are interested in exploring vocation and the intersections of faith and professional life. While these students represent only a small percentage of our incoming class ($74/1750 =$ approximately 4%), they are a significant and influential force within their student community.

In Spring 2006, we enlisted the Business Research Group to facilitate a focus group with the graduating seniors who had attended the very first (2002) Summer Workshop. We were interested in knowing the long-range impacts of the workshop. The summary paragraph from this report states:

“The participants were a remarkable group of people who had utilized their workshop experience in a variety of different leadership capacities while on campus. Right from the start, they utilized the knowledge gained in the workshop to impact other people. They discussed mentioning to their friends what they had learned about the tradition. They noted the importance of the contacts they had made in helping them think they could take on particular tasks and knowing who to go to when they wanted to get something started.

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They utilized specific skills taught in the work shops as they took on leadership positions. They consciously utilized the language of the Marianist Charisms as they dealt with other students, the administration, their employers and the broader community. The impact does not end as they leave UD. All of the participants viewed their post graduate plans through a faith based lens that defined service as an integral part of what they would do.”

In addition, “The respondents all demonstrated substantial knowledgeable of the religious tradition at UD and its physical manifestations on campus.... For some students, UD’s religious tradition and the summer workshop operated to affirm and support a faith they already felt, for others, this encouraged a profound deepening. Some participants suggested the SWLV and UD’s religious tradition influenced their faith life because they were not afraid or ashamed of showing off their faith. Their experience of the workshop permitted them to openly discuss their beliefs because it was all right with their peers to discuss this part of their life. They did not feel odd if they went to Mass everyday.” The complete focus group report is appended.

We have found that while our focus is to engage the students in an academic, theological reflection on vocation, many of them are in an action-oriented, not reflective, frame of mind. This mindset results in students reporting a desire to “do more service” in the evaluation comments for both the Chaminade Scholar program and the Summer Workshop in Leadership & Vocation. While we appreciate and respect the students’ desire to work for change in these areas, we stick by our convictions that what they can do now, in school, to make the most difference, is to study. We feel that proper education in critical thinking skills can go a long way toward life-long commitments to working toward real solutions to current day problems. We typically respond to this by steering students who have a desire to do more service toward Campus Ministry service clubs, while at the same time, working with them in the classroom to form the academic skills component of their vocation.

3. Liturgical Music Leadership / Vocation of Music Ministry program

During each of the Fall 2002, 2003, and 2004 semesters, the PCL ran a 2-day workshop on the Vocation of Music Ministry. This workshop brought to campus a nationally known Catholic Liturgical Musician who met with our student music ministers for discussion, music-making and dinner on the first evening, followed by a morning workshop the next day. Through our evaluations and conversations with campus priests, we found that this “weekend workshop” was not enough education in the theology of liturgical music for our students to properly understand the liturgy.

To meet this need, the director of the PCL collaborated more closely with the Director of Campus Ministry and the Campus Ministry liturgy team to create a one credit-hour mini-course on the foundations and principles of liturgy for liturgical musicians. This course was required for all liturgical music leaders and co-leaders of both residence hall and Sunday liturgies during Fall 2005 and Fall 2006. During Fall 2005, thirteen students participated in the course; evaluations were very positive (attached). In addition, we enlisted the Business Research Group to conduct a focus group of the students who participated in the Fall 2005 class.

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The BRG's report stated, "The discussion provided substantial evidence that the course had had a rich impact on what they did as they prepared and their understanding of why they did what they did... Participants were extremely enthusiastic about the course and the instructor. They felt they understood far more clearly why the Church has the guidelines it has for the Liturgy. They articulated the notion that they had known what they were supposed to do before the course but not the "why". Student comments included:

- "We are more aware of the theology behind liturgical music. I think with that knowledge you feel that there are some actual reasons behind what is going on."
- "I have more of a theological background of why the Catholic Church has some guidelines for the liturgy."
- "I think it helped me have a better education of the liturgy. We are there to help people participate in the Mass."
- "I have more meaning behind what we can do and not do."
- "It helps when they want to know why they can't do a song they want to do because you can explain why."
- "I have actually lightened up in getting harmonies perfect. If they don't get it we'll move on. I think music needs to be beautiful, but it's not the focus, the focus is prayer."

The focus group report continues: "students reported that the course increased their appreciation of Mass. They also felt empowered by the variety of practical information that helped them be better liturgical leaders. Participants all felt their experience had given them a better appreciation of the Mass and readings. They noted they enjoyed Mass more now because they better understand the meaning behind certain aspects of the Mass. Almost all of the participants knew that they would continue to act as liturgical leaders once they left UD."

During Fall 2006 the course is being team taught by Emily Strand and the new Music Ministry Director (who comes to UD from Georgetown), Dr. Kimberly Hess. We are excited about being able to sustain this level of collaboration.

B. Faculty Activities

1. Fund for Vocational Exploration (FFVE)

The Faculty Fund for Vocational Exploration provides support for faculty projects designed to help undergraduate students explore vocation, as well as projects that allow faculty members to explore their own vocation as an academic in the context of a Catholic and Marianist University. This grant program offers funds to faculty in all disciplines to support either research or teaching projects and may be allocated among stipend, materials and supplies, and travel. Through five rounds of funding (2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006), the FFVE has funded 24 proposals. A description of these projects is available if needed.

Through the Faculty Fund for Vocational Exploration, we have supported 24 faculty research and teaching projects. (The RFP and a complete list and description of these projects is available if desired.) Publications have resulted from our FFVE grant program. As an example, Dr. Brad Kallenberg's paper on *Engineering as Vocation* forms the basis for a chapter in a book published by Notre Dame press.

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We enlisted the Business Research group to facilitate a focus group with previous recipients of FFVE grants in Spring 2005. Report is attached. As reported by the BRG, the key findings included:

- The FFVE grants have a unique position relative to other funding sources and that unique position is closely aligned with the mission of the University of Dayton.
- The FFVE grants serve to expand the meaning of vocation.
- The administration of the grants is successful. However, the description of the grant should make clear that the grants are available all, Christian and non-Christian alike.
- More emphasis could be given to the university's philosophy of "learn, lead, and serve."
- Given the unique position of the FFVE grants, they should definitely continue to be offered in the future.
- As a result of their work with the grants, these grant recipients do talk with students regarding vocation. These conversations, however, are limited in order to avoid any sense of indoctrination.
- The FFVE grants gave these recipients the opportunity to reflect on their own vocation and to share their work with others on the faculty.
- The FFVE grants also provided focus and allowed faculty the opportunity to become more articulate about vocation.
- The grant experience also provided motivation for the recipients to engage in additional activities such as mentoring students, sharing in discussions with others, and finding ways to relate directly to the "learn, lead, and serve" philosophy.

The FFVE grant program was one aspect of the PCL that was under consideration for cutbacks. However, as a result of our focus group study, we have decided to continue to offer this element of the PCL. We have learned that it is important for faculty members to cultivate the life of the mind and engage in conversation with other faculty members across campus. The group of FFVE grant recipients articulated in the focus group that they would like to be able to have more opportunities to share with others the ways in which the grants have affected their research and teaching, as well as their outlook on their personal and professional lives. We are looking for ways to include these opportunities for our interested faculty members as part of the vocation sodality as we move forward in our program. (This sodality concept has its roots in our Marianist tradition, as Fr. Chaminade worked with groups of lay people in "sodalities" or small prayer groups, to continue the Roman Catholic faith during the time of the French revolution.)

Many faculty members indicate on evaluations how much they value the opportunity to get together and discuss issues regarding faith, vocation, social justice, and Catholic higher education. The PCL is currently collaborating with the members of the Forum on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition Today to offer more on-campus activities through which our faculty can explore these issues. In addition, we are exploring the possibility of providing additional opportunities for faculty groups to meet to discuss their work, outside of our typical Faculty Exchange Series discussion that we sponsor each February.

2. Faculty Retreats

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During the first three years of the program, we offered retreats for both established and newer faculty; however, it was difficult to attract faculty members to these events. Through our evaluation and conversation with faculty participants, we learned that faculty programs compete for a faculty member's research time (which is especially important for newer, pre-tenured faculty members) and family time (especially for programs delivered in the evening or on weekends). Although we were able to recruit faculty to these retreats for a few years, we are now especially pleased that the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences has taken on this charge as part of a more comprehensive program for orientation of new faculty.

C. Campus-wide Impact

Through the Lilly Endowment's generous support of the University of Dayton's "Theological Exploration of Vocation" grant initiatives, the word "vocation" is now a part of the language of the University (including the professional schools), woven into conversations, courses, and the University's consciousness. We are especially interested in the upcoming conversations surrounding the circulation of the Marianist Education Working Group's report: "Habits of Inquiry and Reflection: A Report on Education in the Catholic and Marianist Traditions at the University of Dayton", as this document states that "education in the Catholic and Marianist traditions at the University of Dayton supports the discernment of personal and communal vocation." It is a testimony to the success of the program that the language of vocation is included as a key theme in this document.

D. Other Programmatic Changes/Modifications:

1. Graduate Student/Staffing decisions

During the program's first year, it became clear that additional staff was needed, and we decided to add a graduate student to the program. This student, who must have completed at least his or her first-year of Master's schooling in U.D.'s Department of Religious Studies, has helped us maintain the theological focus of the program. The graduate student has also been a good fit for the undergraduate student as they are typically younger (relative to the program director and other faculty members), and the students can relate well to the GA. This has helped make our Chaminade Scholar retreats successful learning experiences.

2. Chaminade Scholar Program

We have found that most of the students in the Chaminade Scholar program are not in it for the scholarship money. While they appreciate having additional scholarship funds, the dollars are not a primary motivator. Therefore, to reduce pressure on our budget, we are moving to a new funding model. Beginning with Fall 2006, we will not admit first-year students to the program. Rather, students may join the Chaminade Scholar program as sophomores in Fall 2007. At that time, the scholarship award will be \$1,000, and we plan to waive any additional tuition charges that are levied as a result of enrolling in required Chaminade Scholar courses. These \$1,000 scholarships are currently in the budget of the Scholarships office as "upper-class scholarships"; 15 of them per year will be allocated toward the Chaminade Scholars. See enclosed budget for funding implications. We will work more closely with the group of first-year students who participate in the 2006 SWLV to cultivate a pool of applicants for sophomore Chaminade Scholars.

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IV. Conclusion

We recognize that the program's full impact may not be understood for years to come. However, from our evaluations thus far, the impact of events sponsored by the program is quite positive. We have found that both students and faculty alike are ready to explore vocation in a deeper way. The opportunities provided for faculty and students to reflect on their lives, their faith, their work, and their callings have been much appreciated by those who have participated.

We will continue to use the process of goal setting, evaluation, feedback, examination of social context and University mission loop to evaluate whether we are meeting our goals. Are students and faculty experiencing a theological exploration of vocation, grounded in our Catholic & Marianist traditions? If not, is it due to a lack of resources? What are the qualifications of faculty members teaching the courses? Examination of the plans of graduating seniors and the reflection that was a part of their post-graduation decisions will be important. The level with which program graduates continue to interact with the program and with program friends will also be an important measure of success.

Our implementation grant for Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., has galvanized a number of important and mission-central efforts at the University of Dayton. In many ways, we are further along than we had hoped to be. Over the past five years, we have learned what has worked and what has been difficult to achieve in our campus environment. We desire to be able to continue to focus our programs, strengthening what has worked and enhancing the faculty environment for theological exploration and reflection on vocation. The Program for Christian Leadership will continue to offer and refine our programs more sharply, and as a result, help more University of Dayton students and faculty members think theologically about their lives as callings from God.