

The Language of Vocation at the University of Dayton (2.3.17)

Vocation is central to the University of Dayton's vision and mission.

In its efforts to educate the “whole person,” the University must attend to its students' intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth; help students define and live a life of purpose, meaning, and personal fulfillment; and develop in students habits of reflection, community engagement, and service. In other words, the University's goal is to graduate students who are actively engaged in discerning and realizing their vocation.

Vocation may be defined as follows:

Answering a call to discover one's unique gifts and employ them in service for the common good in ways that are personally satisfying and bring meaning to one's life.

The definition of vocation draws from cultural, religious, and secular traditions and reflects how the concept has evolved over time. A call is an insight to take a particular action or adopt a particular path in life through a process of discernment. The call's source may be *external* – a summons from God discovered in faith and community - or *internal* - a sense of purpose or direction that arises organically from within - or some combination of the two. A person may come to realize his or her vocation instantaneously or slowly over time. In fact, vocations change, and at any point in a person's life, he or she is likely pursuing multiple callings.

Vocation also assumes that every individual has unique gifts to share with others, a combination of skills, talents, knowledge, interests, and experience no one else possesses. In college, students may be preparing themselves for a vocation they will pursue later in life while at the same time discovering talents and interests they didn't know they had. Ultimately, vocation involves naming desires and cultivating skills to serve others: a person perceives a need—big or small, near or far—and takes action to address it by employing his or her unique gifts.

While the journey of vocational discernment may involve challenges or hardships, acting on one's vocation brings joy and a sense of personal fulfillment. By pursuing their vocations, people define their life's purpose. Vocation is formed and pursued in community, recognizing and acting on one's responsibility to assist and form mutually supportive bonds with others in pursuit of the common good.

Through the university's curricular and co-curricular offerings, students should be afforded multiple opportunities to ***discern and act on their*** vocations by engaging in a wide range of activities that can include:

- discussing their vocation and calling openly
- identifying and reflecting on their unique, defining gifts, talents, skills, interests, and experiences
- articulating who they are and how they can serve others in community
- examining activities that bring meaning and joy to their life
- questioning their life's meaning and purpose
- deepening their relationship with God through a journey of self-discovery and response
- learning and practicing the skills of effective discernment in the context of community
- reflecting on their responsibilities toward others
- analyzing how interactions with employers, mentors and wisdom figures impact career choice and vocational discernment.
- exploring the vocational implications of their education, professional training, and employment opportunities.
- preparing themselves for a lifetime of vocational exploration