

2015

Full Issue, Number 41, Spring 2015

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/intersections>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Religion Commons](#)

Augustana Digital Commons Citation

(2015) "Full Issue, Number 41, Spring 2015," *Intersections*: Vol. 2015: No. 41, Article 1.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/intersections/vol2015/iss41/1>

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Intersections by an authorized administrator of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@augustana.edu.

SPRING 2015

Intersections



IN THIS ISSUE

Called to Leadership

Intersections is a publication by and largely for the academic communities of the twenty-six colleges and universities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Each issue reflects on the **intersection** of faith, learning, and teaching within Lutheran higher education. It is published by the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit of the ELCA, and has its home at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, the institutional sponsor of the publication. **Intersections** extends and enhances discussions fostered by the annual Vocation of the Lutheran College Conference, together lifting up the vocation of Lutheran colleges and universities. It aims to raise the level of awareness among faculty, staff, and administration about the Lutheran heritage and church-relatedness of their institutions, especially as these **intersect** with contemporary challenges, opportunities, and initiatives.

About the Cover and Artist

Gala Bent

outstretched, 2005

Acrylic on panel, 12" x 15"

galabent.com

Gala Bent is an artist and teacher who lives in Seattle, Washington with her husband, Zack Bent, and her three sons. She is represented by G. Gibson Gallery and is studio faculty at Cornish College of the Arts, Seattle. This painting is from a series in which she was attempting to put imagery to the silent and invisible impulses of prayer. The longings

and pleadings and questionings of that space often take the form of images in her mind, sometimes figurative or symbolic, other times geometric and abstracted. No matter what shifts her faith has taken over the years, prayer as a practice is so embedded in her psyche that it bubbles up without explicit invitation. And she welcomes it.

Intersections

Number 41 Spring 2015

Mark Wilhelm Publisher
Jason A. Mahn Editor
Angie Williams Secretary
Leanne Paetz Graphic Designer

PUBLISHED BY

The Congregational and Synodical
Mission Unit, The Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America

PUBLISHED AT

Augustana College
639 38th Street
Rock Island, Illinois USA 61204-2296

EDITORIAL BOARD

Laurie Brill LECNA
Jacqueline Bussie Concordia College
Lynn Hunnicutt Pacific Lutheran
University
Darrell Jodock St. Olaf College
Tom Morgan Augsburg College
Kathi Tunheim Gustavus Adolphus
College
Ernie Worman Newberry College

Contents

- 4 From the Publisher
Mark Wilhelm
- 5 From the Editor
Jason A. Mahn
- 6 Vocational Leadership
Darrell Jodock
- 13 Sharing Leadership within
Colleges and Universities
Leanne Neilson
- 16 Mentoring in the Academy:
Of Gurus, Coaches, and Sponsors
Faith Wambura Ngunjiri
- 23 The Dangers of "Vocation" for
Students Thinking about Career
Carl S. Hughs
- 25 Women in Leadership: Obstacles,
Opportunities, and Entry Points
Susan S. Hasseler
- 31 Superheroes and Origin Stories: Tools
to Discover and Claim One's Callings
TJ Warren
- 33 Leading from Within: Peer-Learning
Consultations to Explore Our Callings
and Campus Capacities for Leadership
Chris Johnson
- 41 Old and New Ideas of the Liberal Arts:
A Review of *Claiming Our Callings*
David Crowe and Katie Hanson

From the Publisher



The colleges and universities of the ELCA play a leading role the common life of American higher education. Faculty fulfill active roles in the professional societies of their disciplines, personnel from ELCA schools regularly participate in accreditation

visits and other forms of work with accrediting bodies, and the presidents of our institutions take up leadership roles in the major agencies of higher education, to cite several examples of leadership by our schools. As an example of presidential engagement, let me note that Chris Kimball, president of California Lutheran University, is currently serving as chair of the Board of Directors for the Council of Independent Colleges. We can be proud of the contributions of our schools to the American higher education community. We teach students to lead and to serve. Our colleges and universities teach by example through their collegial service to the wider higher education community.

Our schools lead the larger higher education community in ways other than the fine work done by individuals with the agencies of higher education. The colleges and universities of the ELCA are recognized leaders in important aspects

of the mission of American higher education. Our schools have long been recognized leaders in global education, and pace-setting leadership continues in this arena. More recently, the Interfaith Youth Core has pointed with appreciation to the leadership of our community in promotion of interfaith understanding. In these and other ways, ELCA colleges and universities are in the vanguard of higher education's mission.

I am most proud of the recognition given by the church-related higher education community and others to the health of ELCA colleges and universities as a network of schools. Executives from foundations and agencies, as well as leaders from other churches, often comment that among church-related colleges and universities, our network of schools *works*. We are noted as a community that maintains a sense of shared identity and work as a church-related network of schools, all the while living as good citizens of the larger academy and higher education community instead of embracing a sectarian stance. Although many improvements could be made to our network, I celebrate the health in our community that is recognized by others.

As you read the essays in this issue of *Intersections* about our community's vocation to prepare leaders, celebrate with me the leadership shown by ELCA colleges and universities within the larger community of American higher education.

Mark Wilhelm is Program Director for Schools, Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit, ELCA.

From the Editor

Training for “leadership” is so ubiquitously heralded in higher education as to become almost meaningless. Institutions nationwide create leadership development programs for their students, and leadership itself is one of the fastest growing fields in American higher education, from residential colleges to on-line education to doctoral programs. Employers, we are told, look to hire students with “leadership skills.” To meet demand, there are leadership labs, programs, certificates, retreats, majors, emphases within majors, and countless other ways to credential students as leaders. If in Lake Wobegone all the children are above average, in college they must be a good deal higher than that.

The pervasiveness of would-be leaders would be a contradiction in terms (or worse, would cultivate an upward-bound rat-race, where second from the top means failure) if leadership really meant being on top and in control and having no one to answer to. I fear it is often so in our dominant culture. Whether it’s Donald Trump wagging his finger at Hollywood has-beens on television, Oprah giving things away, or presidential candidates looking “electable,” we are inundated with images of leadership that fascinate and even inspire but rarely empower and almost never serve. If they represent all that leadership means, many of us would be authentically called *away* from it.

Martin Luther had a different understanding of leadership. Because Christ led and leads others by serving them—as the early Christ-hymn puts it, by becoming “a slave”—followers of Christ also are called to lives of self-giving service, to the point where “my learning is not my own; it belongs to the unlearned and it is a debt I owe to

them...[and where] my wisdom belongs to the foolish, my power to the oppressed” (*Luther’s Work*, Vol. 27, 393).

Lutheran colleges and universities are no longer places where Lutherans alone, or Christians alone, work and learn. Our missions now go beyond the training of future pastors and teachers to tend to the needs of German or Scandinavian immigrants. Still, our different institutional DNAs continue to carry forward a shared mission to train servant-leaders—those who lead by serving and serve by leading. Witness the pairing in many of our mission statements of “leading” and “leadership” with language of responsibility, service, citizenship, community, justice, participation, purpose, and care.

Essays by Jodock, Neilson, Ngunjiri, Hasseler, and Johnson in this issue of *Intersections* were first delivered at the 2014 Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference at Augsburg College under the theme, “The Vocation of Leadership: What does this Mean?” They flesh out what leadership might mean among students, faculty, administration, and staff on our campuses. The shorter essay by Hughes, the creative reflections of Warren, and the book review by Hanson and Crowe also call us back to our central gifts and tasks. I thank each author for her or his wisdom and care, and for readers of *Intersections* for sustaining this ongoing conversation about the vocation of ELCA colleges and universities.



Jason Mahn is Associate Professor of Religion, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois.

DARRELL JODOCK

Vocational Leadership



The 2014 Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference explored one aspect of a Lutheran approach to higher education, an aspect with no agreed-upon name. I propose that we call this educational value “vocational leadership.” It is “vocational” because it seeks to benefit the neighbor

and the community. It is “leadership” because it inspires and invites others to participate in that service, usually because the project takes more than two hands. And I propose that fostering vocational leadership in its faculty members, staff members, and students is a priority for a Lutheran college. Persons with a variety of religious commitments can endorse and support this endeavor, but it is institutionally anchored in the Lutheran concept of vocation. This anchoring stabilizes the college’s commitment to vocational leadership, enriches its meaning, and gives the concept a distinctive coloring. Members of the college community can understand and appreciate this anchoring without themselves becoming Lutheran.

Understanding a Lutheran College

Before I discuss vocational leadership, allow me to describe the larger framework within which it is situated. The religious identity of a Lutheran college has three

elements: activities (classes, dormitory life, athletics, theater, choir, the dining service, etc), educational values (which inform policies and decisions), and anchoring theological principles. I will begin by using two images to help discern the relationship among these three.

First, we can think of the college as a large bridge held up by concrete pillars. All the activities occur on its expansive deck. Students usually spend four years moving across the bridge. The deck is held up by pillars (that is, by shared educational values), and the pillars are in turn anchored by footings (that is, Lutheran theological principles). The distinction between pillars and footings, or between educational values and theological principles, is crucial for what I want to say. The educational values include, for example, the practice of radical hospitality (or creating a safe place to learn by practicing generous interpersonal relations), opening the door to a deeper freedom, inspiring a robust sense of vocation (understood in its broader or ethical sense), fostering vocational leadership, cultivating wisdom, fostering a sense of agency, pursuing excellence for the sake of the wider community, valuing music and the arts, recognizing the role of mystery, practicing epistemological humility (or caution about claims to know), valuing civil discourse, and welcoming interreligious dialogue. We will not be able to explain or explore these educational values here; I list them simply as examples of what I identify as educational values. Similarly I will not explain or explore the theological principles that anchor those educational values, but

Darrell Jodock currently serves as the Martin E. Marty Regents Chair in Religion and the Academy at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. He is Professor Emeritus at Gustavus Adolphus College, having served there as the Drell and Adeline Bernhardson Distinguished Professor of Lutheran Studies. In 2014 he received honorary degrees from Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota, and Carthage College, Kenosha, Wisconsin.

here are some examples: the centrality of the gospel (that is, the good news of God's remarkable generosity); a down-to-earth, active image of God working in and through humans; a "theology of the cross" (a principle quite specific to this tradition) that recognizes the limits of what we can know about God and is ready to live with unanswered questions while at the same time pursuing knowledge; an understanding of vocation as a religious call; a sacramental sense of the presence of God amid the ordinary; a profound sense of "freedom from" and "freedom for" as a consequence of experiencing God's generosity; and a relational, communal, and paradoxical understanding of Christianity.

The second image is of a third path. Some colleges are sectarian. They follow a path that expects religious uniformity. They are an enclave, religiously rooted but not inclusive. Other colleges are non-sectarian and so follow a second path. They have severed their ties with a religious tradition and are a microcosm of American society, inclusive but not religiously rooted. A Lutheran college follows a third path as it seeks to be both rooted and inclusive—rooted and anchored in an open and intelligent version of Lutheran principles and inclusive in the sense of welcoming into its midst persons of other religious traditions for dialogue and mutual learning and in the sense of serving the wider community, not just the church that sponsors it. If we return to the image of a bridge, the non-sectarian college has no functioning religious footings, while the sectarian college collapses its footings and principles so that its theological teachings directly affect what happens on the deck. A college that follows the third path makes a distinction between educational values and theological principles (between pillars and footings) in order that it can be both rooted and inclusive.

While we are still discussing the larger framework for vocational leadership, let us add a word about the footing that anchors it: the theological principle of vocation as a religious call. (Note that I am here discussing the footing, not the shared educational value.) In the religious arena vocation is motivated by gratitude for the gifts received from a generous God. It assumes that God cares about the wellbeing of others. And it calls individuals to serve the community in all areas of their lives. As the Scriptures are understood in this tradition, they invite believers to

imagine ways to benefit the community without serving as a detailed rule book. Believers have freedom to decide how to serve. For Luther, the exercise of this freedom needs to be guided by wisdom. Such wisdom is an understanding of people and communities—how they function and what they need in order to experience wholeness. He thinks we learn wisdom by examining human societies in the past to see what went right and what went wrong (Luther 368-69) and by examining the history of the people of God.

"A college that follows the third path makes a distinction between educational values and theological principles (between pillars and footings) in order that it can be both rooted and inclusive."

Wisdom benefits from increased knowledge, but it is more than knowledge. It is a kind of art—the art of knowing what a community needs, the art of knowing how much change is possible without creating a backlash, the art of knowing how to value people and at the same time adjust for their failures, the art of being present with people and empowering them without controlling them, and the art of knowing how to inspire people to do what is right and just. Wisdom is what guides the decision-making of free persons as they serve their neighbors and the community. An essential ingredient is the capacity to listen—to make sure that we understand the specific needs of this particular group of neighbors at this particular time. As we listen, we stand beside our neighbor rather than assuming a position of superior insight, thinking we know in advance what the neighbor needs. Whenever possible, vocation thus involves a "doing with" more than a "doing for."

This theological principle anchors at least two educational values. The first is fostering a robust sense of vocation. When understood as an educational principle, vocation means seeing the self as nested in a larger community (indeed, an ever large community, from family to neighborhood to city, to state, to humanity, to the earth as a whole) and regarding service to that community to be

the highest ethical principle. By “robust,” I mean a sense of vocation deep enough not only to support but also to challenge our occupations, not only to support but also to challenge our political involvements, not only to support but to challenge our parenting, and so forth. Ethical humanists, Muslims, Jews, Christians, and others can adopt this educational value. The second educational value is central to the present essay: fostering vocational leadership.

Twelve Facets of Vocational Leadership

Let me try to unpack this concept. My procedure will be to turn the concept this way and that and identify twelve facets of vocational leadership. They will appear in the form of a list, but they are all part of the same concept. Because vocational leadership applies to our own role in our college and because the mission of the college is to equip students to become vocational leaders in society as a whole, I will apply the concept both to the college and the wider community.

“‘Leadership’ often refers to the role of ‘designated leaders’—to persons elected or appointed to chair a committee, to persons with titles such as supervisor, director, dean, provost, vice president, president, and the like. But, any person, any member of a community, including a designated leader, can be a vocational leader.”

First facet: If vocation is about *what I do*, then vocational leadership involves *inspiring, inviting, and organizing others* to serve the neighbor and the community. Vocational leaders undertake tasks that require the cooperation and involvement of others. Note that in a Lutheran college both vocation and vocational leadership are less from the inside out than from the outside in. They are relational concepts, not forms of expressive individualism. They are not so much about following one’s passions or one’s own

interests (though these may come into play) as they are about responding to the deep needs of those around us and allowing those needs to shape our ethical priorities.

Second facet: Vocational leadership uses the word “leadership” differently from the way it is normally used. For example, “leadership” often refers to the role of “designated leaders”—to persons elected or appointed to chair a committee, to persons with titles such as supervisor, director, dean, provost, vice president, president, and the like. But, any person, any member of a community, including a designated leader, can be a vocational leader. To cite a second example, “leadership” is sometimes equated with “command and control.” The leader decides, the leader speaks, and others obey. But, vocational leadership is not about “command and control.” Still another example: “leadership” is often associated with certain personality traits, so that charismatic individuals are considered to be “born leaders.” Leadership is then what some people have and others lack. But a person does not need to be “charismatic” in order to be a vocational leader. Vocational leadership is open to anyone from anywhere in the social system.

Third facet: The goal of vocational leadership is creative, beneficial change. Its effectiveness has to do with what gets accomplished and whether it benefits the larger whole. The focus is more on results than on the status or attributes of any of the persons involved.

Fourth facet: In contradistinction to a sense of helplessness or victimization, vocational leadership involves a sense of agency—an expectation that I can make a difference, even if I am not in a position to solve the whole problem. Thus, vocational leadership has a paradoxical understanding of power. It is more about empowering than about accumulating power, but it does not avoid utilizing non-coercive forms of power. Everyone has some sort of power (being educated is one form, as is community respect, charisma, wealth, a healthy support system, etc.), and vocational leadership can use all these forms of distributed power for the sake of the neighbor and the community.

Fifth facet: Vocational leadership involves what Ronald Heifetz calls “moving to the balcony”—that is, stepping back to view the whole in order to help decide what kind of change is beneficial. Heifetz says, “Imagine you are on a dance floor, swept up in the dance, an active participant

in a complex scene. There are some things about the dance that you will only know by actually dancing. But if you move to the balcony for a while, you can see things that you can never discover on the dance floor—the larger pattern of interactions of which you are a part. You can gain perspective and can make new choices” (qtd by Parks 50). Or, if we want to return to my image of the college, vocational leadership involves getting off the deck of the bridge where we carry out our day-to-day job and stepping back to see the whole—to observe the larger pattern of interactions of which our work is a part and to understand the pillars and footings that support the identity and mission of the college. Not only does a person need to see the whole, one needs to imagine what the whole could become so that it would serve its purpose even more fully than it currently does.

Simon Sinek has a Ted Talk in which he draws three circles. The inner circle is “why.” The next circle is “how,” and the outer circle is “what.” His argument is that people are not persuaded by technical details about the “what.” In order to persuade, one needs to move from the “why” outward (Sinek). If he is correct, then an essential part of going to the balcony or stepping back to see the bridge is identifying the purpose of it all. Why does this college do what it does? What values and principles are at work? And how could these values and principles be more perfectly embedded in the “how” and the “what” of this college?

Sixth facet: Vocational leadership values a person’s colleagues enough not to manipulate. It works best when it can draw on relationships of trust. Here another educational value of a Lutheran college comes into play—namely that generous interpersonal relations create a safe place within which challenging deliberations can take place, genuine education can occur, and creative, beneficial changes can be undertaken.

Seventh facet: Vocational leadership involves a variety of tasks. Sometimes an individual does only one and supports colleagues as they undertake the others. Sometimes an individual does more than one. The following gives some idea of the variety:

The first task is listening. This is crucial if a person is to serve. But it is surprising how often this step is skipped—especially when dealing with people on the other side of a social, political, ethnic, or religious boundary. (In a college

setting, one such social boundary is often between the faculty and the administrative staff.)

Another task is identifying the need—identifying as clearly as possible the underlying problem that deserves attention. This sometimes requires more careful consideration than we would expect. How a need is described can make a good deal of difference in what comes next. For example, back in the 1960s the John Birch Society identified the problem as the infiltration of Communists into American churches and other institutions. Not only was this almost entirely inaccurate, but it had the effect of fostering suspicions and dividing communities, and thus weakening American society rather than fulfilling its original purpose of strengthening it. A faulty description led to a faulty proposal, which in turn led to results that were counterproductive.

“Generous interpersonal relations create a safe place within which challenging deliberations can take place, genuine education can occur, and creative, beneficial changes can be undertaken.”

Given our current political environment, it probably is worth adding that vocational leadership should focus its attention on specific people and not merely implement an ideology. Competing ideologies polarize and paralyze. So long as vocational leaders pay attention to specific people and specific needs, different outlooks and social philosophies tend not to get in the way of constructive cooperation. In fact, they can contribute to a deeper perception of the multiple aspects of what is under discussion.

Another task is to inform others in the community about the need and to invite them to care about it. We should not underestimate the power of “naming.” All of us are capable of ignoring needs in our community and in fact do so quite regularly. We can, as John Steinbeck says, “know a thing and still not believe it” (399). To name a need is to bring it into the light. The vocational leader persuades others in the community that the problem exists and that it needs attention.

Another task is to imagine alternative ways to respond to the identified need and, usually in consultation with others, decide what plan is the most likely to be of benefit. This too often requires careful work, because the proposal should take into account the interests of others in the community. The closer it can come to a “win-win,” the more stable its results will be. That is, if the proposal benefits one group at the expense of another, the long-term consequences can threaten or undermine whatever has been accomplished. (We see this in Iraq where the Prime Minister has taken steps to benefit the Shi’ite portion of the population at the expense of the Sunnis and Kurds. The results have not been good.) Here as elsewhere, collaboration is important. The person formulating the proposal benefits from trying it out with other stakeholders and listening carefully to their response.

“We Americans have a tendency to think that a need is merely a problem to be fixed. This assumes that the problem can be isolated, but we live in social systems where everything is connected to the system as a whole.”

Perhaps we should add one more comment about this task of formulating a proposal. We Americans have a tendency to think that a need is merely a problem to be fixed. This assumes that the problem can be isolated, but we live in social systems where everything is connected to the system as a whole. The shockingly high numbers of mass incarceration of non-violent offenders in the United States serves as an example. Un-awareness, vindictiveness, poverty, race, sentencing laws, economics—all these and more need to be addressed in order to adequately address the complex problem. Deciding what sort of proposal will be of the greatest benefit is not easy, but it is a crucial step.

Yet another task is to marshal support for the proposal. This may mean seeking a commitment of time and energy. It may mean seeking financial backing.

Another task is to serve as a spokesperson for the project, explaining it to those who do not participate in its implementation.

Finally, another task is to organize those who work on the project, designing strategies, defining tasks, training participants, and dealing with unforeseen difficulties.

Eighth facet: Vocational leadership involves keeping one’s eye on the goal of providing help. Without this, things may easily go astray. Personality conflicts may become an impediment. Or the project may degenerate into “us” vs. “them”—“we” being the enlightened champions of right and “they” being its recalcitrant enemies. In systems theory, a leader whose attention is focused on the goal is said to exhibit a “non-anxious presence,” which avoids being caught up in the fears and reactions that the proposed changes may arouse (see Steinke 31-45). This does not mean ignoring the fears nor adopting a bull-headed determination to succeed no matter what, but it does mean a persistent yet flexible focus on the defined need and the importance of helping meet that need. Another way to name this aspect of vocational leadership is the importance of avoiding the “hidden issues” which may get in the way. Throughout any process of getting something accomplished, one or more “hidden issues” are usually at work. These are factors that operate “under the table” while the project is “on the table.” Pre-existing rivalries may be a hidden issue. Or, because, as someone has said, most people do not fear change but instead fear loss, the fear of loss may be a hidden issue. Concern about who gets credit may be a hidden issue. The list is very long. These hidden issues need to be acknowledged and confronted so that attention can return to the main task rather than being diverted in confusing ways.

Ninth facet: Vocational leadership involves risk. None of us is wise enough to anticipate exactly what will happen as we work with others to serve the community. The effort may fail. Or, even if it succeeds, the effort may have unexpected negative consequences. No one can provide a set of instructions for exactly how to solve the problem.

Closely related but not quite the same, vocational leadership also involves admitting failures—both personal failures and failures having to do with the proposed project—in such a way as to be able to learn from them. We have already emphasized the role of wisdom. Such wisdom comes from acting and reflecting. It comes from acknowledging failures rather than denying them or blaming them on someone else. Wisdom enhances vocational leadership.

Tenth facet: Vocational leadership often involves helping a designated leader do his or her job. Perhaps we could say it involves being a good follower—an engaged, constructive follower. This may mean voicing support for a proposal that is likely to help the college or the neighborhood, even if it does not benefit me. Or it may mean helping the designated leader understand what is going wrong and recommending changes in how a proposal is being advanced. The temptation is to take a different route and practice what a friend of mine calls “magical thinking”—that is, expecting the designated leader to be able single-handedly to improve things and then becoming so profoundly disappointed when this does not happen as to blame that person and become either a disengaged complainer or an outright opponent.

“Vocational leadership often involves helping a designated leader do his or her job.”

Eleventh facet: Faculty and staff do not arrive at our colleges with training in vocational leadership. A faculty member, for example, typically has just escaped from graduate school, where he or she navigated a highly structured, very individualized program. The new faculty member likely has been encouraged to think about a career as an individualized project. Seldom has that person had much experience with vocational leadership or been encouraged to think about it. Nor do faculty members easily understand the way communities operate or discern the role they each are currently playing in the dynamics of their college community. Going to the balcony to understand the college as a whole does not come naturally. Unfortunately, falling into turf wars is much easier. Similarly, staff members often come from work environments in which they have experienced a “command and control” style of management. They have not been encouraged to see themselves as vocational leaders. Once hired, few opportunities are provided to help them understand how a college community works. All of this suggests that fostering vocational leadership needs some attention among the faculty and staff on our college campuses, so that the college can function better and

students can be equipped for vocational leadership in the communities and workplaces where they will live and work.

Twelfth facet: Students likewise do not typically arrive at our colleges with training in vocational leadership. Yes, they may have been the captain of a football team or president of the student council, but this often involved fulfilling specified tasks rather than identifying problems and solutions or going up to the balcony. Just as medical schools teach by mentoring students as they practice medicine, so we need to find ways to mentor students in vocational leadership.

Vocational Leadership and Martin Luther

Let me try to build my case for vocational leadership in another way, by discussing Martin Luther. Most of us know the story of his religious struggles and the years of study and reflection that transpired before he found a breakthrough, discerning God’s generosity and God’s active role vis-à-vis humans. Less well known is his vocational leadership. The Reformation would never have started had he not been concerned about the effects of indulgences on the lives of his parishioners and others. It was concern about the wellbeing of the community that prompted him to draft the 95 Theses and call for a debate regarding the proper role of indulgences. The 95 Theses sought to name the problem and suggest a solution. The goal was to return to a more limited understanding of their role and to disconnect them from the fund-raising efforts of Leo X. The debates he proposed were a way of enlisting support from the ecclesiastical, theological, and academic community. His eye was on the whole, not just his parish or his university.

Similarly, Luther could have considered it beyond his responsibility as a theologian to worry about elementary education, but he nonetheless wrote an open letter to the city councils throughout Germany, urging them to provide schools for young men and young women at public expense. He recognized a need and tried to organize support for the project. Similarly again, he could have been content with the accepted idea that society needed beggars in order for others to give alms, but he imagined an alternative, a society without beggars, and worked with others to organize community chests that would provide

support to the elderly, to orphans, and to others who would otherwise be forced to beg. In each of these instances and others he was exercising vocational leadership of the sort that I have been trying to describe. He had no “designated authority” that placed schools and begging in his portfolio of occupational responsibilities. Sensing a need, he “moved out” into areas that affected the society as a whole.

The Importance of Vocational Leadership

Why is vocational leadership important? Let me provide three answers, in ascending order of importance:

One answer is that communal leadership is part of the DNA of the Lutheran tradition. It is the logical extension of the priesthood of all believers and a religious sense of vocation. As already noted, it was practiced already by Luther himself. It is no accident that Lutherans in the United States (though only 3 percent of the population) are known for their network of social service agencies—a network larger than any other in the country. Lutherans expect God to work behind the scenes and to work through humans and other creatures to foster wholeness and justice and peace. God’s work is to mend the world, and the way God does this is by calling humans to serve the neighbor—through vocation and through vocational leadership.

A second answer is that *our colleges* need people who are practiced at vocational leadership. A college is

a learning community in which most of the significant creativity comes from the bottom up rather than from the top down. Vocational leadership is an antidote to individualism and careerism and to a “silo mentality” among departments that undermine the strength of a college community and its ability to respond creatively to the contemporary challenges higher education is facing.

“Vocational leadership is an antidote to individualism and careerism and to a ‘silo mentality’ among departments that undermine the strength of a college community.”

A third, more significant answer is that *our society* needs people who are practiced at vocational leadership. In his article “Bowling Alone” and the book by the same name, Robert Putnam has tracked the way civil engagement has declined over the last sixty years. Concomitant with that decline has been a decline in trust and a decline in our social capital. Our society needs people who are both engaged and prepared to provide the kind of leadership we have been discussing. Educating vocational leaders is a crucial part of the vocation of a Lutheran college.

Works Cited

- Luther, Martin. “To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools,” *Luther’s Works* (American Edition), volume 45. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1962.
- Parks, Sharon. *Leadership Can be Taught*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2005.
- Putnam, Robert D. “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital.” *Journal of Democracy* 6.1 (Jan. 1995): 65-78.

- _____. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000.
- Sinek, Simon. “How Great Leaders Inspire Action.” Accessed 1 January 2015, www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action
- Steinbeck, John. *East of Eden*. New York: Bantam, 1952.
- Steinke, Peter. *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2006.

LEANNE NEILSON

Sharing Leadership within Colleges and Universities

This essay takes concepts from the previous article by Darrell Jodock and applies them to the college or university setting. I address the unique aspects of higher education to help understand how to create an environment for vocational leadership, starting at the institutional level, and then drilling down to individual roles.

Jodock referred in his article to what Ronald Heifetz calls “moving to the balcony”—stepping back to view the whole. Practicing vocational leadership in colleges and universities requires that we move to the balcony and focus on the mission and purpose of our institutions.¹

Mission and Purpose of Lutheran Colleges and Universities

Mission statements are meant to guide institutions; what is more, vocational leadership should be tied to the mission. The mission statement of ELCA colleges and universities are readily available online. Read through some of these statements—including that of your own college or university—and think about the following questions:

1. How do these mission statements articulate the institutions’ Lutheran identity and the concept of vocation?
2. The vocation of a Lutheran college or university responds to the needs of its specific community. How do these mission statements articulate service to the neighbor and the community?

Leanne Neilson is the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, California. She is a clinical psychologist, and started at Cal Lutheran as a psychology faculty member in 1993.

3. How does your institution live out its mission?
4. In your own work, how do you connect to, or support, your institution’s mission statement?

Of course, mission statements are not unique to higher education. All types of organizations have mission statements. To be effective leaders and to encourage vocational leadership within higher education we have to look beyond the mission statement and understand some of the unique aspects of the work environment in higher education.

If you have worked both in higher education and also in an organization outside of higher education, then you are well aware of significant differences between higher education and corporations. Some differences include:

- Differing work environments and expectations of faculty and staff;
- Faculty governance systems;
- The use of committees and consensus-seeking, which slow decision-making processes;
- Close contact—and sometimes uneasy relationships—between faculty and staff.



The issue of faculty and staff relationships warrants further discussion. In his article, Jodock writes that “vocational leadership values a person’s colleagues enough not to manipulate. It works best when it can draw on relationships of trust.” To practice vocational leadership we have to find ways to create safe and trusting environments, which includes the relationships between faculty and staff.

Between Faculty and Staff

There is a tendency among some faculty to be unaware of the way they treat staff. There are situations at my institution where faculty and staff have been placed into a working relationship on a particular project, and the staff members have felt that faculty were disrespectful. Staff members have reported feeling disregarded and ignored, and felt that they were treated as if they are less important than faculty. Sometimes this comes from reactions to faculty being overly critical.

Faculty members are very good at probing, questioning and analyzing. It is natural for some faculty members, when ideas are presented, to immediately criticize and find fault. They question and resist accepting anything at face value. In situations where staff and faculty are placed in the same room to solve an issue or have a discussion, faculty members make good use of their critical minds. That can lead to staff perceiving faculty to be abrasive, rude, and critical. And of course, they are critical because that is what they are trained to be. This cultural difference needs to be understood for faculty and staff to learn to work together. When a faculty member becomes critical of an idea, it is important not to take it personally. Sometimes the feeling of disrespect that staff members report is because of this difference in how staff and faculty approach an issue. Other times it may be due to a true lack of respect that faculty unfortunately can have toward staff, based on differences in power and education.

If you are a faculty member and you don’t think this happens at your institution, then you are challenged to be more mindful, and to make an effort to more closely observe interactions. You might ask some of the staff leaders on your campus about their experiences and observations.

Another issue related to faculty and staff relationships shows a lack of respect in the other direction. It is not uncommon to hear staff members make derogatory comments about faculty related to their schedules. Looking at faculty schedules listed on their office doors might give a wrong impression because the schedules tend to only indicate class times and office hours. What is not listed is the time spent prepping for classes, keeping up with their discipline, grading papers, and serving in various roles on campus. Staying up until midnight grading papers doesn’t show up on the schedule posted on the door. Faculty members do have more flexible work hours, and that can be enviable to staff who have to report in at 8:00 AM every day, twelve months of the year.

To create an environment for vocational leadership, these disrespectful comments and actions between faculty and staff must be addressed and changed. Consider the following questions:

1. Are there examples of times when you have observed staff or faculty at your institution being disrespectful of each other?
2. How might we create an environment of trust and respect among faculty and staff, or other groups on campus?

Leaders, Followers, and Team Players

Incorporating vocational leadership into our work means that we need to focus on individual roles and recognize the importance of support systems. We all play a variety of roles in our work. Sometimes we’re in a leadership capacity, whether it is a formal leadership role of supervising others or teaching a class. Sometimes it is less formal—it might be leading an activity or project. All of us are also followers. We all have someone to whom we report, and we also take on a follower role in various activities. In any given day, it is possible to go back and forth between leading, following, and being a team player.

If vocational leadership creates an atmosphere that is mutually empowering, then we need to consider how to both support and empower those who lead, and also how to take feedback from those who follow.

Consider the following questions:

1. How can you support those who lead? How can you empower those in leadership roles?
2. How can those who follow support you? What can you do to encourage their support?
3. What will get in the way of this happening?

Imagine what it would be like if everyone at your institution tried to create this environment of mutual support!

Vocational leadership starts with using your mission statement, guiding your institution to “move toward the balcony,” and creating a common understanding of serving the neighbor and the community. It requires that we understand the unique aspects of higher education including relationships between faculty and staff. Finally, it means looking for ways to support those who lead and to encourage feedback from others.

Endnotes

1. Special thanks to Darrell Jodock for preparing the outline that the author used for this presentation at the 2014 Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference.

CALLING ALL CHANGEMAKERS...



Our Mission

The Milkweed Group creates safe, courageous spaces that nourish inner wisdom, sharpen clarity of purpose, and fuel capacity to live and lead for the sake of a better world.

Our Work

- Clearness Consultations
- Retreat Facilitation & Design
- Workshops & Trainings
- Consulting & Speaking

Our Motivation

We live in a culture that thirsts for meaning. Our work will help you discover your capacity to contribute to a better world by reconnecting what you do with who you truly are.

What People Are Saying

“The retreat helped staff think in new ways about how to effectively educate, advise, and mentor students to navigate the various callings and commitments in their lives.”

- Kristen Glass Perez, Augustana College

www.milkweedgroup.com • milkweedgroup@gmail.com • Chris Johnson • 1303 Rockbend Parkway, St. Peter, MN 56082

Mentoring in the Academy: Of Gurus, Coaches, and Sponsors



How have you experienced mentoring? How have you experienced *effective* mentoring? What made it effective? And, what challenges have you experienced related to mentoring?

These questions guided table discussions during my facilitation on the topic of mentoring at the 2014 Vocation of a

Lutheran College conference. Research has long established that mentoring is an effective approach for enhancing the professional development of individuals in organizations. Participants at the conference shared how mentoring had impacted their careers. During the second part of the workshop, I facilitated discussions on an activity called the Personal Board of Directors, specific to the different kinds of mentors needed for thriving in the academy. Here I articulate the place and purpose of mentoring in the academy, looking at the various roles that different kinds of mentors play. I urge us to get the support we need in order to ably serve in our chosen vocation and adequately meet the demands of the calling we have received.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is an efficacious strategy for enhancing the advancement of individuals. It impacts on access to

resources, personal growth, and job satisfaction. Both academic and practitioner literature recognizes the viability of mentoring (McCauley; Tolar). Most definitions of mentoring involve a relationship between two people, one of whom is more experienced, and the other less experienced. As McCauley defined it,

A mentoring relationship is an intense, committed relationship in which a senior person (the mentor) stimulates and supports the personal and professional development of a junior person (the protégé). This sort of relationship is generally understood as emerging and developing naturally in the course of organizational life... having a mentor supports career advancement, access to organizational resources and rewards, personal growth, and job satisfaction. (443)

This idea of a hierarchical relationship is perhaps the most studied and discussed form of mentoring. The definition provided here refers to traditional mentoring, which is very well covered in the literature. However, mentoring can take place between people of similar skill or experience level—that is, peer mentoring. In this paper, I discuss both forms of mentoring—the hierarchical/traditional and the horizontal mentoring approaches—because both are needed in order to advance, to experience life or job satisfaction, and to serve effectively in our chosen roles.

Experts recognize that “mentoring is indispensable to learning throughout our careers, not just while we’re

Faith Wambura Ngunjiri is in her second year at Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota, where she serves as Director of the Lorentzsen Center for Faith and Work and associate professor of ethics and leadership in the Offutt School of Business. Prior to coming to Concordia in 2013, she served as director of research and faculty at Eastern University in Pennsylvania.

wet behind the ears.... Mentoring is how we identify and fill critical gaps we'd struggle to address on our own. A good mentor is part diagnostician, assessing what's going on with you now, and part guide, connecting you with the advice, people, and resources you need to grow and move ahead" (Erickson 1). Indeed, when I look back at my working life, I can discern the places where the diagnostic eye of a mentor enabled me to make necessary moves that I might otherwise have missed. Good mentors have been instrumental to my journey in academia, playing important guiding and supporting roles.

"When I look back at my working life, I can discern the places where the diagnostic eye of a mentor enabled me to make necessary moves that I might otherwise have missed."

From an organizational standpoint, investing in mentoring programs enables organizations to attract, develop, and retain quality employees and increase the diversity of their employees; universities do it to retain faculty, staff and students, and to create and maintain a diverse working environment (Tolar 172). Formal mentoring is often set up within the organization, where individuals (both mentors and mentees) are chosen and possibly assigned to each other, for a set period of time, with the hope that those relationships will blossom beyond the set time/formality. Informal mentoring, on the other hand, "is the natural coming together of a mentor and protégé...done in friendship through personal and professional respect from each to the other...a long term relationship" (Buzzanell 33).

Beyond the form of mentoring, we also consider the functions that mentors play: career guidance, social guidance, psychological support, organizational understanding, and spiritual support (Buzzanell). Mentoring takes place through face-to-face dyadic relationships, through online and other computer-mediated means, and in groups or clusters. For instance, at Concordia College, new faculty members undergo two years of group mentoring facilitated by a senior colleague (Associate Dean of the College, Dr. Lisa Sethre-Hofstad), with training

and counsel about various issues related to our roles of teaching, research, and service. A second form of group mentoring at Concordia is provided through the Dovre Center for Faith and Learning, focused on understanding Lutheran Higher Education. This group mentoring includes discussions of relevant texts, and talks with the facilitator, Professor Ernest Simmons, as well as other Lutheran Higher Education experts. Both types of group mentoring—the first required and the second voluntary—enable faculty to not only gain a deeper understanding about the culture and norms of the institution, but also to develop community with colleagues from different disciplines and parts of the institution. These types of mentoring experiences are instrumental in helping new faculty members acclimatize and settle into their roles. Most academic institutions have some kind of formal mentoring program for junior and/or new faculty. Whatever form or process, the bottom line is that people share expertise that is helpful in enabling individuals to advance through the organizational hierarchy.

Spiritual mentoring has not been as widely discussed in the literature as other more traditional approaches to mentoring. According to Buzzanell:

Spiritual mentoring refers to a particular way of interacting in mentor-mentee relationships. Spiritual mentoring transcends the usual career, psychosocial support, and role modeling activities to embrace the whole person. Spiritual mentoring might mean that teachers/mentors reframe their jobs so as to assist in cultivating both their own spiritual development and/or that of others. (18)

Buzzanell frames spiritual mentoring as a mutual relationship of spiritual growth and development, where the mentor sometimes guides the process, while other times it is the protégé who directs it. She views it as the coalescing of spirituality, career, and mentoring; it is a co-mentoring relationship irrespective of hierarchy because both parties are mutually edified. I add this discussion of spiritual mentoring because, as people who work in faith-based institutions, we all should be participating in some form of spiritual mentoring, amongst ourselves as faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as with the students whom we serve. According to Buzzanell, "Spirituality offers a process for encouraging inner and good work

within the interactions...Spiritual mentoring takes place in overlapping processes: offering opportunities for development, engaging in spontaneous teaching and mentoring, enlarging and enriching resources, and encouraging continuous development" (18, 20). The spiritual values of compassion, humility, simplicity, and altruistic love make spiritual mentoring relationships efficacious and help to contribute to community-building.

The Mentoring Relationship

There are many reasons why mentoring is necessary in the careers and educational journeys of individuals in our institutions. Sometimes an individual seeks a mentor to play a specific role, such as helping to reconfigure her career in a time of transition, providing encouragement during crisis, or maintaining momentum in a long-haul project such as a book or dissertation (Creighton; Gibson). Career transitions can include new jobs, or even getting ready for retirement. Research and experience suggests that mentoring does work, most of the time, when done well. Mentoring can help the protégé to achieve her career goals. But it can also be derailed if something gets in the way of the relationship. There are three parts to that mentoring relationship: the mentor, the protégé, and the context in which it takes place. While we often frame mentoring as beneficial to the protégé, it is also of benefit to the mentor, as it allows her to share her experience, to reflect on what has contributed to her success, and to give towards the advancement of another.

"While we often frame mentoring as beneficial to the protégé, it is also of benefit to the mentor, as it allows her to share her experience, to reflect on what has contributed to her success, and to give towards the advancement of another."

What does a good mentoring relationship look like? What derails mentoring? Some of the issues that can get in the way of an effective mentoring relationship include lack of time for mentoring, poor planning, lack of chemistry

between the mentoring partners, lack of understanding about mentoring for either party, and—for women and minorities—a recognized dearth of mentors (Davis; O'Brien et al.; Tharenou). Research on mentoring suggests five overall themes of negative mentoring experiences: "mismatch within dyad, distancing behavior, manipulative behavior, lack of mentor experience, and general dysfunctionality" (Tolar 174). Have you experienced any of these in your mentoring relationships? I have. In one of my previous jobs, supervisors were assigned as mentors. My assigned mentor and I got along famously outside of work, but she tended to overstep her boundaries in the work setting. What I learned from that relationship was more about what not to do in a mentoring relationship—she was a good friend but a terrible mentor.

So, what are the various relationships that are, together, referred to as mentoring? According to the gurus of mentoring research, "individuals rely upon not just one but multiple individuals for developmental support in their careers" (Higgins and Kram 264). Individuals receive mentoring from many different kinds of people—friends, family, senior colleagues, colleagues at the same level, and community members, who "speak into" the individual's life at a specific period in time. Some of the people who were important as mentors when I first entered academia as a graduate student are either not in my life anymore, or not playing an active role in providing me with guidance. The kinds of mentors I needed as a graduate student are different from the mentors I need now—some individuals have remained and their roles have evolved, others have dropped off and new ones have joined my personal board of directors. Similarly, there are those that I have mentored in the past who no longer need my support or guidance; as seasons in their lives change, so do the reasons for needing mentoring.

Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Melinda Marshall and Laura Sherbin in their chapter in the *HBR Guide to Getting the Mentoring You Need* argue that "the relationship between sponsor and protégé works best when it helps both parties" (11). They titled their chapter "The Relationship You Need to Get Right," foregrounding the fact that mentoring is, indeed, a relationship that has to be managed effectively for it to work. An effective mentor-protégé relationship needs to include responsiveness, effective guidance, and working together

to achieve shared goals. Beyond the sponsor-protégé dyad, Higgins and Kram's developmental network perspective on mentoring suggests that mentoring comes from simultaneous relationships at any given point in one's life, and it can be personal or career focused (268). Mentors provide developmental assistance—both career and psychosocial support. Career support includes exposure, visibility, sponsorship, advocacy, and protection. Psychosocial support includes friendship, counseling, acceptance, affirmation, and sharing. Some of the mentors that I find most effective

“Role confusion can cause relationship strain and disappointment.”

in my life not only provide guidance and support for my career, but have also been great sources of psychosocial support during life's drama, whether that drama was connected to my work or my personal life. Yet there are others whose support is either personal or professional, not both. Clarity on the roles that individual mentors play in my life has been helpful to me, so that I am not expecting psychosocial support from someone whose role is purely career related. Role confusion can cause relationship strain and disappointment.

Calling Many Mentors

We could talk about mentors, coaches, peers, and sponsors as separate individuals, or as roles that we need in our career progression. Below, I list the types of roles that we need played. As you read through each one, reflect on your own network of mentoring relationships. Do you have people playing these roles? Are you playing any of these roles for others? Where are the gaps? Who can fill those gaps?

The Connector

The best description of a connector is contained in the little book, *The Go Giver*, by Bob Burg and John David Mann. The authors describe the connector as someone who, having heard about an individual's need, introduces her to someone who has the resources she needs to meet that

need. The metaphor works for mentoring too. A mentor who serves the role of a connector helps to create linkages that are useful for the protégé and may also be useful to the mentor. The connector can be a peer, someone with more experience, or even someone with less experience. Their role is to connect you with other people and sometimes with resources you need to develop and advance. Most times, connectors are people with more resources and experience than the protégé they are supporting.

The Sponsor

Hewlett and colleagues highlight the fact that

the best sponsors...go beyond mentoring. They offer not just guidance but advocacy, not just vision but also the tactical means of realizing it. They place bets on outstanding junior colleagues and call in favors for them. The most successful protégés, for their part, recognize that sponsorship must be earned with performance and loyalty—not just once but continually. (12)

The sponsor puts one's "reputation on the line for a protégé and [takes] responsibility for his or her promotion. A good sponsor will groom you to audition for a key part... and coach you on your performance" (Hewlett 14). Hewlett and colleagues argue that sponsors make things happen for their protégés by their influence or by their presence. Sponsoring is one of the most important roles in our mentoring network. Without it, it becomes difficult to advance. There has to be someone who can vouch for your abilities, competencies, and potential, someone who can advocate for you. This role cannot be overemphasized. Researchers suggest that without sponsorship, "a person is likely to be overlooked for promotion, regardless of his or her competence and performance" (16).

The Taskmaster/Accountability Partner

This summer, in a bid to ensure we achieved our writing goals, my accountability partner and I checked in with each other every Monday morning to indicate our goals for the week, and every Friday evening to report on our progress. By the end of the summer, we both realized this had helped us keep up with our writing, as we didn't want to give excuses or explain our failures to each other more than once or twice. We helped each other to stay on track

on our writing goals. A good example of a taskmaster is a dissertation chair or coach. I play the role of taskmaster for my dissertation protégés, asking every so often where they are in their dissertation journey, whether they are still writing, what is getting in the way, and encouraging them to stay on task towards completion. In academia, we need accountability partners when we are working on long goals such as dissertations, articles, books, or project reports.

The Motivator

This role involves psychosocial and spiritual support, a shoulder to cry on when you need one. The role is very important to ensure we have emotional support when going through change or struggles. The motivator can also be thought of in spiritual terms—as a prayer warrior, that person you can call anytime of day or night to ask for prayer during a difficult period. When working on a long-term project such as a dissertation, the motivator plays the role of cheering you on when it feels like you are never going to get done. She is the person who will rally you on after you receive that damning feedback that makes it feel like months of work is going down the drain. He is the person you call to complain about the vagaries of the academic life, who listens without judgment then offers to go to the gym or for a run with you to let off steam.

The Dreamer

Many years ago, I got an email from a mentor, who said this: “the world has yet to see what God can do with a woman whose life is fully sold out to him.” I wasn’t doing anything significant at the time, at least not in my own eyes. But this prophetic statement helped me to begin to envision a bigger life role for myself, something beyond mere comfort and paying the bills. This prophecy from a man I deeply respected reminds me that I am not there yet, not done yet—that there are bigger and greater things yet to accomplish, to the glory of God. We all need someone who can dream big dreams when our own vision is short-sighted, someone who can strategize and challenge us to move beyond our comfort zone.

The Sage

This is the guide who gives timely advice. Often times, this is the traditional mentor role that comes to mind when

we think about that hierarchical relationship of mentor-protégé. The sage is often wiser (as the name suggests) due to having more experience and can therefore provide directions in how to navigate organizational culture, politics, tenure, promotion, and other elements of academic life.

The Proofer

The proofer’s role is to read, edit, and provide unflinching feedback not only on manuscripts for publication, but also on documents such as reports, important letters, grant applications, and other forms of writing that we do within the academy. The proofer is a very important role, one that, unfortunately, many people do not have, and therefore send out material that really needs that objective set of eyes. Should you really send that angry email? Is that application ready to go? Speaking as an editor and dissertation advisor, it can be quite infuriating to get manuscripts that have not been sufficiently copy-edited, to spend hours trying to make sense of the content in the midst of substantial writing issues. Having a trusted proofer, a friend or colleague who can read the manuscript dispassionately, reduces such occurrences. That person can tell you when you are not making sense, when your ideas are not yet fully formed, when you need to rethink that sentence structure.

Race and Gender in Mentoring Relationships

As mentioned earlier, women and minorities report having a harder time finding mentors in the academy (Tillman; Tharenou). As a woman and a person of color, I know this all too well. So rather than regurgitate what the research clearly says about these challenges, I share what has worked for me.

My personal “board of directors”—those many mentors who play the roles articulated above—includes individuals who are white, black/African, Asian, and Latina. It includes men as well as women, some are close to my age and many who are much older—among them, senior professors, administrators, and even retirees. This rich and diverse group of mentors ensures that every role is served well. I have those who play the role of sponsors, those who provide spiritual and psychosocial support, those who are elders and those who are peers. There

are those who, like myself, are immigrants to the United States and know what it feels like to be outsiders within the academy (Hernandez, Ngunjiri, and Chang). There are those who, as peers, proofers, and coauthors, help enhance my productivity in the academy. Some have been great connectors, others wonderful sponsors who help to point me towards doors of opportunities. That is not to say that it has been an easy journey. It has been circuitous, a real labyrinth (Eagly and Carli) that I have learned to navigate slowly but surely. However, it might have been

“It is up to us (women and minorities) to reach out to all those who have the skill sets and experiences we need as mentors.”

impossible without this “cloud of witnesses,” men and women whom God has used to help me navigate this treacherous terrain. This short account of my personal experience highlights the fact that, for women and minorities, especially in ELCA institutions that tend to be predominantly white, and whose leadership appears to be primarily male, it is up to us (women and minorities) to reach out to all those who have the skill sets and experiences we need as mentors. But it is not only up to us as individuals. Our institutions need to create programs and provide the kind of environment in which these kinds of relationships can be built successfully. The formal mentoring programs are a good start, as is ensuring an open and welcoming culture for diversity of all kinds. The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities has a very effective Leadership Development Institute that caters to women, one that has mixed participants, and one aimed at multiethnic participants and has been quite helpful in preparing a pipeline of women and minorities for leadership roles within their member institutions. ELCA colleges and universities need similar mentoring programs to prepare women and minorities for leadership in our institutions, especially as we think about ways to enhance the diversity of our student bodies.

Conclusion

So, do you have the mentors you need to successfully navigate the current stage of your career and effectively advance as far as you can? Determine for yourself which roles are necessary in your personal network of relationships, and whether you have people playing those roles. One exercise that is helpful in this regard is to draw a Personal Board of Directors diagram, where you would indicate the individuals playing particular advisory and support roles in your life. You may notice that certain roles are more important at particular points in your career or life. But is there someone you can call upon to play each important role?

Our discussion of mentoring highlights that it is a relationship that requires management, mostly by the person seeking to be mentored. In conclusion, then, consider the following advice:

1. Seek the help you need. Be proactive to fill the gaps in your personal board.
2. Recall that you need more than one mentor; various individuals should play different roles.
3. Attract sponsors, then work to maintain those relationships.
4. Recognize that everyone needs mentoring, not just junior faculty and staff. Even those entering retirement may need mentors to help them reconfigure what a fulfilling and significant life looks like beyond the career ladder.
5. When all is said and done, pay it forward. Mentor others.

As we work together to prepare our students for ethical and responsible service in the world, we also must be prepared and equipped for our roles. Getting the support and guidance we need as faculty, staff, and administrators enables us to play those roles more effectively. Further, receiving the gift of mentoring then should translate into our paying it forward by mentoring, coaching, and supporting the students we have been called to serve. So let us, individually and collectively, as singular institutions and as a fellowship of faith-based schools, harness the power inherent in mentoring relationships, to the glory of God.

Works Cited

- Burg, Bob, and John David Mann. *The Go-Giver: A Little Story About a Powerful Business Idea*. New York: Portfolio, 2007.
- Buzzanell, Patrice M. "Spiritual Mentoring: Embracing the Mentor-Mentee Relational Process." *New Directions for Teaching & Learning* 120 (2009): 17-24.
- Creighton, Linda, Theodore Creighton, and David Parks. "Mentoring to Degree Completion: Expanding the Horizons of Doctoral Proteges." *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* 18.1 (2010): 39-52.
- Davis, Danielle Joy. "Mentorship and the Socialization of Underrepresented Minorities into the Professoriate: Examining Varied Influences." *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* 16.3 (2008): 278-93.
- Eagly, Alice Hendrickson, and Linda Lorene Carli. *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007.
- Erickson, Tamara. "Introduction: Taking Charge of Your Career." *HBR Guide to Getting the Mentoring You Need*. Ed. Harvard Business Review. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2014. 1-8.
- Gibson, Sharon K. "Whose Best Interests Are Served? The Distinction between Mentoring and Support." *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 7.4 (2005): 470-88.
- Hernandez, Kathy-Ann C., Faith Wambura Ngunjiri, and Heewon Chang. "Exploiting the Margins in Higher Education: A Collaborative Autoethnography of Three Foreign-Born Female Faculty of Color" *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* (2014): 1-19.
- Hewlett, Sylvia Ann, Melinda Marshall, and Laura Sherbin. "The Relationship You Need to Get Right." *HBR Guide to Getting the Mentoring You Need*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2014. 9-21.
- Higgins, Monica C, and Kathy E. Kram. "Reconceptualizing Mentoring at Work: A Developmental Network Perspective." *Academy of Management Review* 26.2 (2001): 264-88.
- Inzer, Lonnie D. and C. B. Crawford. "A Review of Formal and Informal Mentoring: Processes, Problems and Design." *Journal of Leadership Education* 4.1 (2005): 31-50.
- McCauley, Cynthia D. "The Mentoring Tool." *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 7.4 (2005): 443-45.
- O'Brien, Kimberly E., Andrew Biga, Stacey R. Kessler, and Tammy D. Allen. "A Meta-Analytic Investigation of Gender Differences in Mentoring." *Journal of Management* 36.2 (2010): 537-54.
- Tharenou, Phyllis. "Does Mentor Support Increase Women's Career Advancement More Than Men's? The Differential Effects of Career and Psychosocial Support." *Australian Journal of Management* 30.1 (2005): 77-109.
- Tolar, Mary Hale. "Mentoring Experiences of High-Achieving Women." *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 14.2 (2012): 172-87.

Calling Female Leaders!

Save the date for a

Pre-Conference Workshop on Women in Leadership in Lutheran Higher Education

July 20, 2015

in conjunction with the Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference
(see ad on page 43)

Provost Susan Hasseler (Augustana College, Sioux Falls) and Associate Professor Kathi Tunheim (Gustavus Adolphus College) will be co-facilitating an afternoon lunch, short presentations, discussions, and a panel session of women leaders in Lutheran higher education.

Please watch for details from your campus representative.

CARL S. HUGHES

The Dangers of “Vocation” for Students Thinking about Career

Why do Lutherans so often use the word “vocation” when what we really mean is “career”? As someone who graduated from an ELCA college and now teaches at another, I know that I have been guilty of this sin. Anyone who has hung around Lutherans knows that career and vocation are not supposed to be equivalent; this is why Lutheran liberal arts colleges are said to be the opposite of what are conventionally called “vocational schools.” Nonetheless, especially in the college setting, it is often tempting to conflate the two—to use vocation as a theologically glorified synonym for one’s present or future job. Vocation easily becomes a euphemism that allows us to distance ourselves from the distastefulness of actual remunerated labor. I have come to believe that this misuse of vocation language is extremely dangerous. Misappropriating vocation in this way distorts our tradition’s deepest insights about calling and, just as importantly, about work.

When Lutherans conflate vocation and career, notice that we’re never speaking of just *any* sort of career. We’re talking about careers that are “fulfilling,” “meaningful,” and “worthwhile”: work that is a “passion.” If we are privileged to have found gainful employment that suits us this way, then vocation language is seductive; if we are dreaming about pursuing such a career in the future, then it can be even more intoxicating. Yet what does this understanding of vocation imply to a student who follows

her passion and never finds a full-time job with benefits in her field? Did she misperceive her true vocation? Did she not work hard enough to live out her calling? In my view, the dangers of construing vocation this way are at least as great for those who *are* able to find meaning and identity in their jobs. Defining vocation as one’s career tips the scale in any reflection on work-life balance. It invites career to consume the totality of our lives—drastically constricting the scope of God’s calling to us.

When Luther wrote about vocation, he did so in order to resist the narrowness of the understanding of vocation that he had inherited. In his late medieval world, only those who pursued “religious life” as monks, nuns, and priests had vocations; everyone else did not. By emphasizing the universality of God’s grace and the priesthood of all believers, Luther argued that all people could be conduits of God’s love, in every arena of their lives. As Martin Marty has provocatively put it, according to Luther’s expansive understanding of vocation, “the mother suckling the baby and washing diapers, the farmer at work, the couple having sex were as likely to be engaged in God-pleasing activities as was any nun engaged in prayer” (104).



Carl S. Hughes is Assistant Professor of Theology at Texas Lutheran University, Seguin, Texas, and author of *Kierkegaard and the Staging of Desire: Rhetoric and Performance in a Theology of Eros* (Fordham 2014).

In our society today, I don't think that most of us are tempted to limit vocation to service to the church. But we are constantly tempted to limit our vocation to our jobs. Think how readily we define ourselves and others by our professions. It is our first question at a party: "And what do you do?" *He's* an architect. *She's* a doctor. *I'm* a professor. "Oh, you're just some paper-pusher somewhere? Excuse me, I think I'll hit up the buffet table." When we fall into the trap of limiting vocation to career, the result is that we close ourselves to others as they truly are and constrict our sense of ourselves.

There is a Tyson chicken plant across the road from the Lutheran college where I teach. Do the minimum-wage workers there have vocations from God? Vocations as meaningful as those of our college pastor and president? I think the Lutheran answer to these questions is Yes. However, in order to answer the questions this way, I don't think we should have to pretend that menial labor is generally a source of deep personal fulfillment. Instead, we need to refocus what we mean by vocation so that it refers first and foremost to people rather than professions. People called to be mothers and husbands and mentors and friends. People called to hike and play sports and paint. People called to organize for their rights and those of others. People called to advocate for the humane treatment of animals. People called to vote with certain values in mind. People called to change babies' diapers. As a theological concept, vocation is both infinitely encompassing and infinitely particular. It affirms each facet of our created selves—including our professional selves.

Works Cited

Marty, Martin. *Martin Luther: A Life*. New York: Penguin, 2004.

But it is always bigger and more numinous than any one aspect of our lives.

At its core, Luther's theology of vocation should challenge our society's paradoxical tendency to both fetishize and denigrate work. It should call into question our implicit assumption that only those fortunate enough to get paid for "doing what they love"—and who thus, as the saying goes, "never work a day in their lives"—are living out callings from God. Vocation should empower us to affirm work *as work* without suggesting that it is coextensive with God's calling to any human being.

"Luther's theology of vocation should challenge our society's paradoxical tendency to both fetishize and denigrate work."

So when we mean to speak of career on campus, why not just speak unblushingly of "career"? Our Lutheran tradition enables us to prepare students for professional practicalities without resorting to a loftier euphemism. At the same time, our tradition calls us to see our students as much more than their future professions. It calls us to think of vocational discernment as a never-completed process that implicates entire selves. Most fundamentally, it requires us constantly to question the limits we impose on how God can be present in our lives and in the world.

SUSAN S. HASSELER

Women in Leadership: Obstacles, Opportunities, and Entry Points

The women came into the room in a variety of states and stages—laughing, cautious, curious. I knew some of them very well and others just a little. In preparation for a presentation at the 2014 *Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference*, I had invited all female faculty and academic administrators at Augustana with five or more years of experience to gather for food, drink, and conversation about women in leadership. After grabbing a cup of coffee or glass of wine, the women settled in and the conversation began in earnest.

Toward Inclusive Excellence

Throughout my professional life, my work has consistently focused on promoting full inclusion in educational settings. I began that work focusing on students with disabilities. However, having descended from a line of wonderful women who have sought to find their calling and use their leadership gifts in various historical contexts, my professional interests soon expanded to include women in leadership. Experience in ethnically diverse school settings further broadened this scholarly interest to include race and ethnicity and inclusion in K-12 and higher education settings. The work of the American Association of Colleges and Universities on inclusive excellence brought coherence to this broader set of interests and has shaped much of my work since then, including this study.

Susan Hasseler is serving as the first female Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College at Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Her scholarly interests include inclusive excellence, international education, and higher education leadership. She regularly collaborates with university colleagues in South Africa and across the United States in these areas.

I first came across the concept of inclusive excellence in *Making a Real Difference with Diversity* (Clayton-Pedersen, et al.) in which the authors articulate a powerful argument for the idea that there is no true excellence in education without the inclusion of diverse voices.

While I was already convinced that the full inclusion of women and people of color in education and leadership was an integral part of our calling to “act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8), the idea that the inclusion of all voices is essential for educational excellence seemed to be particularly powerful and compelling—and very closely aligned with the basic tenets of Lutheran higher education. If we intend to prepare all of our students to lead and serve in a diverse and challenging world, a clear understanding of the ways in which Lutheran institutions of higher education support and inhibit the inclusion of diverse perspectives seems especially important. Since leadership plays such a key role in shaping the mission and daily work of an institution, women and people of color must be engaged in leadership roles at all levels.

Unfortunately, while the positive impact of women in leadership has been discussed and clearly demonstrated



in multiple areas over multiple decades, *Benchmarking Women's Leadership in the United States*, a recent extensive study of leadership throughout society, notes that "women remain, on the average, less than 20% of positional leaders across 14 sectors in the United States" (Lennon 6). If we believe that "meeting complex challenges of the 21st century requires diversity of thought, experience and perspective", this report asks, "how can our nation

"Women are often among the highest performers in institutions and institutions with women in positions of leadership often perform exceptionally well."

begin to meet these challenges with this kind of minimal representation of diverse perspectives in leadership?" In their detailed examination of top performers across all 14 sectors, the authors demonstrate that women are often among the highest performers in institutions and that institutions with women in positions of leadership often perform exceptionally well (5). In their section on academia, for example, they note that "while women only hold 29% of the tenure track positions at doctoral institutions, female researchers comprised 56% of grantees for some of academia's more prestigious awards in education, health, humanities, and science" (8). The report highlights the particularly powerful influence of academe on society, stating that

academic leaders can have far-reaching influence on the universities they represent, as well as within other institutions where their scope of research and knowledge can affect much of society. In particular, female academicians can influence many arenas outside of their home institutions in their pursuit of generating knowledge and educating leaders of tomorrow. Like all educators, their reach surpasses a discipline or field. Perspectives brought by diverse women representing various socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds encourage a breadth and depth of ideas that cannot be found in a homogeneous pool. (12)

In the context of this compelling literature on inclusion and excellence and the positive impacts women have on the institutions and organizations they serve, it was clearly high time to determine how women were experiencing leadership in my own institution: Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Twenty-two articulate colleagues helped me explore these questions in two delightful focus group conversations.

Claiming the Call to Lead

The four open-ended questions used to shape these conversations came from the literature on leadership development, which consistently points to the importance of perceptions of personal leadership capacity, encouragement to lead by mentors and other significant others, and the clear identification of obstacles and opportunities as key components in the development of leaders. The questions are as follows:

1. How have you been involved in or provided leadership at Augustana?
2. How did you become involved in leadership? What kind of encouragement, if any, did you receive to lead?
3. Have you experienced or observed any obstacles to or opportunities that support the engagement of women in leadership at Augustana? If so, what were/are they?
4. What specific things can Augustana do to ensure that the leadership gifts of women are fully utilized to serve our mission?

As a way to help the participants get to know one another, I began each conversation with a question about the leadership roles they held on campus. However, the responses to this question were a bit surprising. Although most of the women either currently or had recently held a specific leadership role such as department chair or program director, they all began by identifying general leadership activities such as leading in the classroom, mentoring students, or serving on committees. After I identified specific leadership roles on campus and pointed out a few folks in the room who held those roles, one of the women said, "Come on, women! Men would have easily claimed these positions. What is our problem?" Only then did the participants begin to name the leadership roles which many of them held and to explain those roles in more detail.

While some of the challenges of identifying with “administration” particular to academe will be explored later, the tendency for my female colleagues to be more comfortable identifying relational roles than hierarchical or authoritative roles aligns with the literature on gender and leadership styles. Relational leadership, a collaborative and process-oriented approach described by Regan and Brooks, Uhl-Bien, and others, seems to develop out of the lived experience of women. While this leadership style has been shown to provide real benefits to an organization, it can also create challenges for the promotion and advancement of women in leadership. Understanding that one can claim a call to lead while embracing a relational style appears to be a good topic for future examination at Augustana, particularly as we provide powerful leadership modeling for our students, both male and female.

“The tendency for my female colleagues to be more comfortable identifying relational roles than hierarchical or authoritative roles aligns with the literature on gender and leadership styles.”

In light of the prominent place that identifying, encouraging, and mentoring members of underrepresented groups plays in the leadership literature, the response of this group of women to the question about encouragement to lead was also quite interesting. Again, when asked how they became leaders, the initial tone was self-deprecating. “No one else wanted the job so here I am!” And once again, a group member used humor to push her colleagues, noting that, “Consider who might be in charge if you choose not to be!” This comment led to a number of poignant comments on leadership including being “allowed to lead” by the senior male faculty in her department “who did not shut me down” to the affirmation of being appointed or nominated for a role where “they saw something in me that I did not see.” Many participants spoke about the influence of mentors, both male and female. As one participant shared, “Having a mentor who saw my leadership gifts and challenged me to use them changed my life.”

The role of encouragement and mentoring in leadership development is prominent in leadership literature (and in the multiple webinars and podcasts that are offered to us daily via email). However, while we have an extensive mentoring program for new faculty at Augustana, mentoring for new and prospective leaders is quite limited. Clearly there is an opportunity and need to more systematically encourage women to consider their calling to leadership through formal and informal mentoring programs.

Obstacles and Opportunities

While obstacles and opportunities around leadership emerged in response to the first two questions, the conversation became very lively when question three was asked directly. Having engaged in these kinds of conversations for many years, I was particularly struck by the tone of hope and empowerment surrounding the very real challenges that women in this group face in leadership roles. When obstacles were shared, the participants listened carefully and sympathetically but also shared ways in which those obstacles have or could be turned into opportunities. Within this part of the conversation, four major themes emerged.

Valuing the intellectual work of leadership

The rhetoric about academic leadership among faculty often has a negative or dismissive tone. Faculty members who take on administrative roles frequently reference “Crossing over to the dark side” and are offered condolences on their appointments. “You lose 20 IQ points the minute you become an administrator,” is another familiar comment. Upon my arrival at Augustana, a faculty member who was incensed about a negative response to a request said, “You do have a degree in something, don’t you?” (My diplomas were hung in a prominent location in my office the next day!) As one member of the focus groups indicated, “I couldn’t wait to become department chair to make some things happen but I keep having to pretend it is a burden.”

Women are certainly not the only academics who hear this kind of rhetoric but the impact can be stronger on those who are seeking to establish academic credibility in a historically male-dominated context. One faculty member

articulated this challenge very well when she said, “The expectation that women will be the worker bees rather than the wise scholars makes it even more difficult to maintain academic credibility when you take on a leadership role.” As new definitions of intellectual work and academic leadership emerge, such as those articulated in the New American Colleges and Universities study on holistic departments and conversations about vocation and leadership take on new energy, there is an opportunity to replace this negative rhetoric with language that identifies and values the rigorous intellectual work of leadership. This shift in rhetoric will be especially important as we seek to encourage women to use their leadership gifts in academic contexts.

Religious and cultural interpretations of appropriate gender roles

While perspectives on gender roles have shifted significantly in the past two decades, the theme of student perceptions about women’s roles still emerged as an issue in these conversations. Multiple stories were shared about either subtle or obvious ways in which students challenged female faculty members’ authority or bypassed them to consult with male colleagues. Religion Department faculty and Campus Ministry staff members described the particular challenge of addressing students’ strong beliefs about biblical interpretations of women’s roles in church-related leadership. Women in historically male-dominated disciplines related examples of the ways in which they have had to work particularly hard to establish credibility with students and their colleagues. In addition, participants discussed student expectations that they will be more “nurturing” or “flexible” than their male colleagues and how this has impacted their classroom and scholarly work.

Having spent a lifetime addressing issues relating to gender roles, this conversation could have been quite discouraging. However, the women in this group immediately offered examples of ways in which they used these events as learning opportunities for male and female students. They also shared powerful examples of collaborative efforts with male allies who recognized the problematic behavior and offered to work with the female faculty members to address it. Informal conversations and formal discussion groups have emerged around gender roles

and continue to provide a place for men and women to be educated and to educate one another around gifting, calling, and equity. Providing direct support and encouragement to those engaging in this educative work is essential for addressing these perceptions in a constructive way.

The cultural realities of caregiving roles

While group members were able to share powerful and exciting examples of ways in which perceptions of women’s roles were being addressed on campus, this conversation also led to a discussion of the ongoing imbalance in the amount of time women spend on family care responsibilities. Recent studies by the Family Caregiver Alliance and others indicate that women spend 50 percent more time providing care than male caregivers and that women are more likely to opt out of employment while engaged in caregiving. While embracing their complex lives as professionals and family caregivers, the women in this group identified the real impact that caregiving has on their professional lives and in particular on their willingness to take on leadership roles.

“The group discussed the opportunity our institution has to ‘live up to its family-friendly rhetoric’ as we look at the impact of caregiving on our faculty and staff.”

The group discussed the opportunity our institution has to “live up to its family-friendly rhetoric” as we look at the impact of caregiving on our faculty and staff. Augustana has already developed shared leadership roles in a number of areas but continued examination of leadership expectations and time allocation is needed. In addition, we have recently introduced parental leave and pre-tenure extension policies that provide more appropriate support for men and women to engage in family caregiving. While these are steps in the right direction, it is clear that we need to expand our efforts to make it possible for caregivers to use their leadership gifts in appropriate ways.

Embracing a strong voice

Responses to “strong” women have been a part of the public discourse since Deborah Tannen’s *You Just Don’t Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* became a New York Times bestseller in 1990. It is clear from the response to Sheryl Sandberg’s 2013 book, *Lean In*, that this conversation is still ongoing. It was also clear from the focus group conversations that female leaders at Augustana are still processing the messages they receive about speaking with a strong voice.

“One woman said, ‘Sometimes I moderate my voice so much that it no longer sounds like me at all.’”

Some of the most poignant moments of the conversation came when women talked about addressing the general discomfort they still hear regarding strong women. They talked about the stress of constantly needing to monitor and moderate their speech and interactions; the difficulty of “finding the right balance between direct and indirect, firm and gentle, confident and vulnerable.” One woman said, “Sometimes I moderate my voice so much that it no longer sounds like me at all.” Another stated, “I want to be heard, not liked.” A third said, “What if I’m not a subtle kind of person? Why can’t I still be heard even if I’m loud or passionate?” Many shared painful instances of being called pushy or bossy and having to determine whether to be quiet or to move forward in spite of these silencing labels.

However, as with the other themes, the women also talked about ways in which this ability to evaluate impact and moderate one’s voice has made them more effective communicators and leaders. As one participant said, “Learning how to read an audience and choose a particular tone has made me a better teacher.” Another pointed out that “the ability to negotiate is a special gift women have developed because of our lived experience.” One participant said with a twinkle, “I like the challenge of trying to figure out how to say something in a way that persuades others to do what I need them to do.” And one participant

summarized the conversation with particular elegance when she said, “Women know how to feel the openings and find the entry points; we dance with the elements.”

The strong interest in the theme of women and voice was also evident when I presented this information at the 2014 Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference. After sharing the four obstacle/opportunity themes described above, each table group was asked to choose one of these themes and discuss how it is embodied on their campuses and how they might overcome the obstacles and expand on the opportunities. Six out of the seven table groups chose to discuss the theme of women’s voice. The challenge of having to constantly monitor and moderate one’s voice in order to be heard clearly resonated with female conference participants as well.

What Now?

Since these groups immediately gravitated toward overcoming obstacles and expanding opportunities, many excellent suggestions for next steps emerged:

1. We need to be more deliberate about nominating, encouraging and appointing women to leadership positions in our institutions. In addition to reviewing hiring and promotion procedures and ensuring that women are in the pool of candidates for leadership positions, we need to look very carefully at the results of these efforts. For example, as I have examined the numbers at Augustana, I have noted that we have good representation of women in the department chair role but not necessarily as council and committee chairs, which are very important roles in the academic division. This is something that needs appropriate review and strategic action.
2. We need to frequently and specifically affirm the leadership gifts of women. Women who have evidenced particular gifting in this area may need to be invited, encouraged, and even persuaded to take on leadership roles since they may not be nominated or nominate themselves. This encouragement needs to be deliberate and ongoing in order to create a climate of support for women in leadership.

3. More professional development needs to be provided for all current and prospective leaders. In addition to providing specific training and mentoring for division, department, and council and committee chairs, thoughtful conversations about the intellectual calling of leadership need to be initiated and supported. These conversations very effectively could include students and staff in order to build a stronger leadership culture across the campus.
4. Careful examination of our expectations of leaders, including distribution of tasks and appropriate allocation of time, is an ongoing need. Models of shared leadership, reasonable goals and timelines, and ongoing discussion of roles can help make leadership manageable and more appealing to women and men.

Works Cited

- Clayton-Pedersen, Alma R., Sharon Parker, Daryl G. Smith, Jose F. Moreno, and Daniel H. Teraguchi. *Making a Real Difference with Diversity*. Washington DC: American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2007.
- Family Caregiver Alliance. *Women and Caregiving: Facts and Figures*. 2012. Accessed 1 January 2015, <https://www.caregiver.org>.
- Lennon, Tiffani. *Benchmarking Women's Leadership in the United States*. University of Denver-Colorado Women's College. 2013. Accessed 1 January 2015, <http://www.womenscollege.du.edu/media/documents/BenchmarkingWomensLeadershipintheUS.pdf>
- Mahn, Jason A. "Why Interfaith Understanding is Integral to the Lutheran Tradition." *Intersections* 40 (Fall 2014): 7-16.
- New American Colleges and Universities. *Re-Imagining the Academic Department: The Holistic Department Concept*. 2014. Accessed 1 January 2015, <http://www.anac.org/academy/NACU%20Holistic%20Department%20Draft%20Report%205May14.pdf>.
- Patel, Eboo. "What it Means to Build the Bridge: Identity and Diversity at ELCA Colleges." *Intersections* 40 (Fall 2014): 17-25.
- Regan, Helen B. and Gwen H. Brooks. *Out of Women's Experience: Creating Relational Leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 1995.
- Sandberg, Sheryl. *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. New York: Knopf, 2013.
- Tannen, Deborah. *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990.
- Uhl-Bien, Mary. "Relationship Leadership Theory: Exploring the Processes of Leadership and Organizing." *The Leadership Quarterly* 17:6 (December 2006): 654-76.

Capacity and Calling

These conversations were both hopeful and sobering. It is clear that we have significant work to do on our campuses to ensure that we are experiencing the inclusive excellence that diverse leaders bring. However, we have both the calling and the capacity to embrace this work. Expanding the conversations to include people of color, male faculty and staff, and students will provide even more richness. What an incredible and important task we have as we create places for all of the members of our community "to hear and respond to their callings" (Mahn 15) and to find those grace-filled places "where the light falls" (Patel 25).

TJ WARREN

Superheroes and Origin Stories: Tools to Discover and Claim One's Callings

Clark Kent: "How can I decide what to do with my life when I don't even know who I am? I feel like I'm walking in a dream, and nothing's real, not even me."

Jonathan Clark: "Then maybe the answer is to wake up. There will come a day Clark, when for the very first time, you won't have to hold back...a day when you can cut loose...a day when you can finally be who you truly are... you're unique in all the world. Extraordinary. Not just *any* man...and more than just a man...a *SUPER*-man. Live Clark. Follow your passion. Show the whole world what you can do. Fly, Clark... Fly..."

From *Superman: Earth One*, by J. Michael Straczynski and Shane Davis



Origin stories—the stories of heroes coming to be—are fascinating. This is why we tend to get caught up in them. I can't tell you the number of times I have read or seen the origin of Superman. I never get sick of it, and apparently, neither do others, as the story gets told over and over again. Origin stories define characters: where they came from, who they were, what they've faced, and how they have discovered themselves, their strengths, and their calling. We know many characters within literature and film, but until we know their origin, we do not know their purpose in the world. I am convinced that discovering one's origin and referring to the stories of our fictional heroes can be powerful tools in helping individuals discover and claim their callings.

Joseph Campbell identified a "monomyth"—a single story—that can be observed within many forms of literature and film. As writers and filmmakers continued studying the pattern, they later referred to it as "The Hero's Journey." Although the pattern has been debated and modified throughout the years, many agree that it consists of 12 stages: the ordinary world; the call to adventure; refusal of the call; meeting with the mentor; crossing the threshold; tests, allies, and enemies; approach; the ordeal; the reward; the road back; the resurrection; and the return with the elixir. These stages can serve as a catalyst for helping individuals understand their own origins.

TJ Warren is Pathways Center Associate for Vocation and Mentoring at Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa. The illustration in this essay is his own.

For example, in my own journey (where I'm the hero—which is fantastic, I must say), identifying *my ordinary world* consisted of being a young Iowa boy who believed he was meant to impact the world in some way, but was also unsure of who he was and how he could contribute. Then, my freshman year of high school, I attended a youth leadership conference called Get a Grip where I *met my mentor*. By experiencing this leadership organization, I discovered that my way of impacting the world was by encouraging people, making them laugh, and helping them realize their true potential. After a few years of being mentored and continuing to discover myself, I *crossed the threshold* by attending college.

This is just one way we can take a look at our own origin stories. By walking through “The Hero’s Journey” stages, we can start to pinpoint significant moments in our lives that have shaped us and that demonstrate what we are good at. This method of reflection can lead to other questions, such as: “Does your origin story *decide* your vocation?” For example, does coming from a family of medical professionals mean you cannot pursue an art degree? The concept itself can at least start the discussion on a level that people understand and relate to.

As I have worked in higher education, I’ve noticed that we tend to make things incredibly complex as we work with students. Although college is a time for rigorous exploration and discovery, we need to find opportunities to meet students at their level and relate what we are trying to teach with their experiences and interests. Once we have their attention, the rigorous exploration and discovery can commence.

When an individual walks into my office, his or her attention is immediately drawn to my Superman and

other hero collectibles displayed there. These items generate discussion. Students, faculty, and staff ask, “Why Superman?” My response is always, “Because he humbly seeks to do good in the world using the many talents that he possesses.” And to the general question of, “Why superheroes?”, I say, “Because I believe we are all superheroes in our own way. The hero’s journey lives within all of us.”

Heroes—however we define them—speak to all of us. Whether they are fictional (Superman, Wonder Woman, Harry Potter) or real (Rosa Parks, Ghandi, Mother Theresa), they speak. Why do they speak to all of us? We can relate to their failures, hardships, and struggles. We can also relate to their successes, the moments at which they overcame adversity or some villainous foe. Heroes inspire us to do and be something more—to pursue our calling. We must find ways to help others become the hero in their own lives.

As higher education professionals, we have an opportunity to mentor students along their own journeys—as Professor Charles Xavier does with the X-Men. We get to challenge, support, and encourage students to focus on their strengths and manage their weaknesses so that when their true purpose does call, they can, as Jonathan Kent says, “fly.”

As you work with students, find stories of heroes that speak to you—superheroes, friends, family members, politicians, social justice leaders, and so forth. Use these role models, mentors, and leaders to help others realize who they are and how they can contribute to society. As you provide these examples, help others articulate their origin stories so they might find their purpose in the world and “wake up” to take their call.

Works Cited

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949.

Straczynski, J. Michael (author) and Shane Davis (illustrator). *Superman: Earth One*, volume 1. New York: DC Comics, 2010.

CHRIS JOHNSON

Leading from Within: Peer-Learning Consultations to Explore Our Callings and Campus Capacities for Leadership

What inner landscapes and campus terrain do we navigate concerning our individual and collective work with leadership? What ideas and insights, questions and conundrums do we hold in this work, around which we could benefit from the wisdom and deep listening of our colleagues? In his 2014 workshop at the Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference, Dr. Chris Johnson utilized exercises in deep listening and what might be thought of as a “modified clearness committee” approach—with its roots in the Quaker tradition—to invite participants to learn from one another as they live out their leadership callings. Reproduced here are his introductory comments and guidance, as well selections from the resources distributed at the conference.



Education for vocation is the *hallmark* of Lutheran higher education. It is what makes us *distinctive* in the larger landscape. One might even say that “vocation” is the vocation of a Lutheran college. What is more, the vocation of leadership, and leadership as a key aspect of vocation, is in our institutional DNA.

Vocational leadership is also *soul work*. The rigors and hungers of the leadership that we’re called to offer in these times demand that we show up fully and authentically. It demands that our work be rooted in the deepest soil of ourselves-in-relation-with-all-there-is and that we draw on the nourishing reservoirs of spirit to sustain our work

over the long haul. In using the language of spirituality I’m informed by the broadly inclusive understanding of scholar and author Sharon Daloz Parks, who writes:

The etymology of the word *spirit* directs us to such roots as “air,” “breath,” “wind”—a sense of *power moving unseen*. Spiritual consciousness acknowledges that there is more to life than we can directly see and touch, an intuition of mystery, depth, and meaning at the essence of our experience of life. A “spiritual” sensibility can be as intimate as our in-most thoughts and feeling, and at the same time

Chris Johnson is Founder and principal of The Milkweed Group, and has more than 20 years of experience speaking, writing, leading workshops, and facilitating retreats in higher education, faith-based organizations, and business and not-for-profit communities. Formerly he was the Director for Vocation and Integrative Learning and Associate Director of the Center for Servant Leadership at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota.

it can be evoked and informed by the vastness of the universe in which we dwell.

When we speak of the human being as a spiritual being, we acknowledge an animating essence at the core of our lives—our experience of awe and wonder and our capacity to be moved, vulnerable, compassionate, loyal, tender, loving, insightful, excited, curious, engaged, and sometimes outraged...While the word spirituality is too often used in ways that feel ungrounded, careless, and even deluded, we also know that there are times when we are in the presence of someone who seems deeply authentic in a way that manifests a quality we best describe as spiritual, that is, attuned to some larger knowing...that yields a paradoxical sense of both gravitas and freedom.

A spiritual sensibility arises, in part, from the intellectual capacity to apprehend more than the immediate and the partial and to have an intuitive grasp of the whole. Spiritual sensibility evokes a sense of the whole of time, space, and possibility....The capacity to recognize the connectivity and the interdependence of all things (seen and unseen) and to discern fitting action within that wholeness is a part of what we mean when we speak of that which is authentically spiritual, and it is the ground of the most profound moral and ethical commitments. Seeing life as an interdependent whole...can give rise to the courage to risk something big for something good. It can give rise to a sense of "calling"—the conviction that Life asks something of us and we respond, can be responsible. (Parks, "Leadership" 4-5)

Finally, vocational leadership, perhaps especially as we practice and develop it in higher education, calls for us to *cultivate a robust ecology of capacities and qualities*—in ourselves and in those we serve—that include but go beyond important "knowledge" and "skills." Vocational leadership requires, for example, that we activate not just the conscious mind but the deep mind (see Zajonc). It's about not just the what and the how, the strategies and techniques, as important as they are; it's also—and perhaps primarily—about the why and the who. It's not just about "doing" things that leaders (or scholars, or teachers)

do but about "being" a leader (or a teacher, or a parent, or a community member). It calls for an intuitive, contemplative, quiet yet keenly attentive mind—and a listening heart that is adept with artful discernment, perspective-taking,

"Vocational leadership is about evoking and inviting others' best selves to co-create a story that is worthy of our callings."

expansive imagination, mindful presence, trust and trustworthiness. Vocational leadership is about evoking and inviting others' best selves to co-create a story that is worthy of our callings.

Stories of Self, Us, and Now

We live in a culture that thirsts for meaning; people hunger for a sense of wholeness and purpose. We also live in what Sharon Parks calls a time of unprecedented peril *and* unprecedented promise in our lives and communities, in this democracy, and on the planet. In the increasingly high-stakes marketplace of higher education, moreover, colleges and universities are having to asking themselves very important and challenging questions: What is the purpose and value of what we do, for the student and for the world? What differentiates an education at, say, an ELCA-related college or university from one offered somewhere else? What *matters* about the teaching and learning, the scholarship and advising, the discovery and creative work that we do—beyond simply credentialing students for jobs (as important as that surely is) or "training" them for a "successful life" in our consumer culture? How can what we do make a substantive and positive difference in these unprecedented times, and in people's lives?

Questions such as these raise further questions about our own lives and work—and about the kind of story we want to live by in order to be our best selves and to co-create a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. These questions point to yet more fundamental questions for ourselves as educators and for our institutions: Toward

what kind of story—toward what vision of the world as it could and should be—do we want our work to contribute? Into what kind of story do we hope our students will live?

Human beings are storied and story-making creatures; story is how we seek to understand who we are and how we should live. Harvard scholar and community organizer Marshall Ganz writes about what he calls “public narrative,” which has at its heart three interrelated stories: “a story of why I have been called, *a story of self*; a story of why we have been called, *a story of us*; and a story of the urgent challenge on which we are called to act, *a story of now*” (qtd by Palmer 166, emphasis added). The exercises described at the end of this essay use these three interlocking “stories” as a framework to help us to explore the personal, relational, institutional, and even global dimensions of vocational leadership.

“Toward what kind of story—toward what vision of the world as it could and should be—do we want our work to contribute? Into what kind of story do we hope our students will live?”

A “story of self” communicates who I am—my beliefs and values, my experiences, why I do what I do, why I’ve been called. It helps me to answer the question, Who am I, and why am I here? It helps me to understand and to describe my identity and the inner and outer contours of my daily life. A “story of us” sees who we are through a lens of connection and relationship, of shared values and experience. It communicates who we are—our shared values, our shared experience, and why we do what we do; why we’ve been called. It answers, “Whose” am I, and what’s my place in the world?

The relational spin of a story of us, by the way, is suggested by the shared etymology of our English words *pub*, *public*, and *puberty*. In the culture that gave us the shared root of these words “puberty” referred not to the dreaded teenage-hormone-inflamed years we couldn’t wait to escape, but rather the developmental time when a person matured into the responsibilities of a citizen, to help to shoulder the challenges of *public* life. “Pub,”

similarly, is short for “public house,” where community members of every stripe gather to celebrate the gifts and work out the challenges of their shared, common, *public* life. By suggesting this way of thinking about the story of us I do not mean to elicit nightmares about bodily fluids, or about hanging out at bars and drinking to oblivion. Instead I’m trying to point us to the fundamental human capacity for connection and interdependence that equips us to live more deeply, across the lifespan, into qualities and capacities of commitment to the common good.

A “story of now,” finally, is a story of the urgent challenge to which we’ve been called to respond; it points to a way of seeing the world that “transforms the present into a moment of challenge, hope, and choice”(Ganz). It expresses our lived answers to the question, Who are the times we live in calling me to be? And again: What are they calling us to do in the here and now?

Not Your Normal Story

Our colleges provide fertile soil for engaging every member of the community in the crucial life-work of developing and aligning their own stories of self, us, and now—stories that can help them to tap into the deep soil of their best selves and orient their lives toward helping to create a more just and peaceful world. By way of contrast, the writer Ellen Goodman describes what could be thought of as prevalent “master narrative” in twenty-first century American culture when she observes that “normal life” in our society is “getting dressed in clothes you buy for work, driving through traffic in a car you’re still paying for, in order to get to the job you need so you can pay for the clothes, the car, and the house you leave empty all day in order to afford to live in it” (qtd in DeGraaf, Wann, and Naylor 36).

In this dominant cultural story people are seen in individualistic terms, are largely defined by their work, and are valued by measure of their accomplishments (or their failures) and their “stuff.” Life is about the daily grind, going through motions, staying on the hamster wheel, moving continually faster, striving for “more.” The part of the story that focuses on college too often assumes a vision of education as “credentialing” for employment (the job you need for the clothes, car, and house), and the student is seen as little more than a passive consumer of the commodities of knowledge and skills that are delivered

by experts. Leadership, moreover, is often thought of and practiced in a hierarchical, command-and-control, top-down, “yell-louder” manner, as the purview of people who hold formal roles or positions of power. But for the sake of what, and at what cost? In so many ways, life in this culturally dominant story seems to be deeply unhealthy, resulting in burnout or breakdown of self, relationships, communities, and the planet.

“Life in this culturally dominant story seems to be deeply unhealthy, resulting in burnout or breakdown of self, relationships, communities, and the planet.”

But of course “normal” is not the only story we might live by. The heritage, missions, and core values of our colleges and universities point to a powerful alternative, which can be summarized by the word “vocation.” As we know the word simply means calling, invitation, or summons, and is related (via the Latin *vox*) to the word “voice.” Vocation can be described as a calling to live out your distinctive gifts, passions, and sense of meaning or purpose in ways that benefit the community and help address the world’s deep needs. Vocation is how you live out who you most truly are, in and for the world. Vocation can be thought of as a way of understanding what it is to be human, what it is to be a person or a “self,” through four interconnected lenses:¹

1. Persons are *gifted*, both in terms of discerning and nourishing their gifts, talents, skills, competencies, strengths, interests, and passions, and in terms of knowing that their very lives are gifts to be cherished and shared with others. Giftedness grows out of and expresses a capacity to live one’s life with a “posture” of awe and gratitude—theologically, a posture of grateful response to grace—rather than one of entitlement, fear, or cynicism.
2. Persons are *free*, that is, free *from* the need to conform to social norms and practices that are ultimately damaging to their spirit and destructive

of community and the planet, or *from* the need to earn God’s favor through “good works,” or *from* prejudice and narrow-mindedness—as well as free *for* a life of meaning, passion, and purpose in service to the neighbor, free *for* a hope-filled life of courageous willingness to risk for others and to stand up for justice.

3. Persons are *nested* within or connected to realities and relationships that are greater than themselves: to community, for example, or to a cause that evokes care and action, key relationships, a healthful environment, God, or a hopeful future. Vocation grows out of and expresses a sense of the self not primarily as an isolated, independent, individualistic unit but rather as fundamentally relational, interdependent, and interconnected with one another, the Earth, and all there is.
4. Persons *matter*; they have agency and efficacy and make decisions and actions that are meaningfully their own (e.g., at least partly within their control and subject to rational deliberation) and do in fact matter in the lives of others. Mattering grows out of and expresses a sense that their lives have significance, a sense that they have a role in the larger working out of the meaning of things, a sense that the choices they make and the actions they take really do make a positive difference to others.

“Vocation provides grist for a story of *self* as gifted and free, a story of *us* that emphasizes the fundamental connectedness of the self, and a story of *now* that sees every person as mattering in response to the challenges and opportunities of these times.”

Vocation provides grist for a story of *self* as gifted and free, a story of *us* that emphasizes the fundamental connectedness of the self, and a story of *now* that sees every person as mattering in response to the challenges and opportunities of these times. Our colleges recognizes, moreover, that the need in these times is for the practices and gifts of what Parks calls “mentoring environments”

or “mentoring communities.” She points out that if our aim is to mentor young adults into the world as it is—or put differently, to prepare them to live “normal” lives—an individual mentor is enough. In order to be mentored into the world *as it could be*, however, a mentoring community is needed. By “mentoring community,” Parks means not just a community of individual mentors, but a community whose shared narratives, practices, discourse, and culture collectively mentor all its members toward lives of contribution to a just and peaceful society that works for all. A mentoring community thinks about human becoming in the largest and most profound frames, as we make the most extraordinary decisions about how we need to heal and co-create the world (Parks, *Big Questions* 174).

This last piece is crucial since, as Parks points out, even the Mafia is a mentoring community (253). In other words, it is important that our institutions continually ask the “for the sake of *what*” question—we teach, advise, mentor, learn, and lead “for the sake of *what*?” And for those of us who work in these places: What are we doing here, really? Why do we do what we do, in the way we do it? Do we really want our work to be about simply training and credentialing students for “normal” life—in that going-through-the-motions, hamster-wheel, burn-out-and-breakdown sense of the word? With education for vocation as the hallmark of our institutions, what is the story that we want our—and our students’—lives and work to be about (see Braskamp and Wergin)?

Hearing Yourself

In response to the ideas and questions I’ve been posing so far, what do you hear yourself saying? Take a few minutes to reflect on these prompts:

- How would you describe your “story of self?” Who are you, really, and how does that person “show up” in your vocational leadership?
- How would you describe your “story of us”—your sense of connection and community, your sense of responsibility for others and of your contribution to a bigger picture?
- How would you describe your “story of now?” Who are these times calling you to be, and what are they calling you to do?

And in terms of our shared work around vocational leadership:

- Toward what kind of story do we want to guide, mentor, and educate our students?
- What is the story that shapes, guides, and sustains your own life, work, and vocational leadership?
- How do you understand and put into practice the power of story, of “big questions,” of mindful presence, of intentional pause, and of deep listening—in your life, your work, and your leadership?

Practice in Community

At this point, the 2014 Vocation of a Lutheran College attendees divided themselves into pairs or triads to participate in exercises of deep listening or a modified version of clearness consultation. The spirit of each is the same, in that in both cases the emphasis is on being fully present to the other person(s), asking questions that are about them and their story—and not about you, your stories, or your curiosity. The point to each is also listening without succumbing to the understandable temptation to want to “fix” the other person.

Deep Listening

The paired “deep listening” exercise invited partners to tell stories from their own experiences related to the focus of our gathering.² Mary Rose O’Reilly, in her book *Radical Presence: Teaching as Contemplative Practice*, writes of the power of deep listening: “One can, I think, *listen someone into existence*, encourage a stronger self to emerge or a new talent to flourish.” And in learning to listen well, one can also learn to be *listened to*, “to be able to stand being heard. It’s frightening because true attention... invites us to change.” She continues:

Attention: deep listening. People are dying in spirit for lack of it. In [our] culture most listening is critical listening. We tend to pay attention only long enough to develop a counterargument; we critique the student’s or the colleague’s ideas; we mentally grade and pigeon-hole each other....People often listen with an agenda, to sell or petition or seduce. Seldom is there a deep, openhearted, unjudging reception of the other. And so

we all talk louder and more stridently and with a terrible desperation. By contrast, if someone truly listens to me, my spirit begins to expand. (17-21)

In this exercise, pairs take turns listening to each other about things that matter. They are invited to use the questions below as openings or invitations without trying to use them as a script. Each listens to her or his partner carefully for the full time allotted, asking some of the following questions and/or some others of her or his own. The exercise is not intended to be primarily a two-way conversation (although there will of course be some natural “give-and-take”). Instead, participants devote all of

“Participants devote all of their attention to the selected partner for the entire time, providing a safe, courageous space of attuned hospitality to whatever the partner wishes to share as she or he explores the landscapes into which the questions lead.”

their attention to the selected partner for the entire time, providing a safe, courageous space of attuned hospitality to whatever the partner wishes to share as she or he explores the landscapes into which the questions lead.

After a short break, partners switch roles. The new listeners again simply *listen* and *attend*, and the new speakers use their turn to explore, however they wish, the terrain opened up for them by the questions. By the time partners are finished, they should also have an understanding about what each would like to remain confidential. Guiding questions particularly attuned to the theme of leadership include the following:

1. Tell me a quick story about yourself—anything you like, but something that goes a little deeper than the typical surface-level small talk—that you think could help me begin to get to know “the real you.” How does that person—the real you—tend to show up in your leadership?
2. Tell me a story about a time when you feel like you “failed” as a leader. How has that experience affected

you and your leadership over time? What have you learned? Now tell me a story of a time when you “succeeded” as a leader? How has *that* experience affected you and your leadership over time? What have you learned? What differences do you see in yourself (and your leadership) when you compare and contrast those two experiences? Who are you when you’re leading at your very best?

3. For what do you need to listen, what voice/Voice do you need to hear, at this point in your leadership? What tends to interfere with your capacity to listen? How might you “turn down the volume” of your life so that you can listen and hear more deeply?
4. At the intersection of your institution’s gifts and the needs of the world, what is your institution’s vocation of leadership? In other words, what is your institution’s “deep purpose” with regard to leadership? Given who your institution really is and aspires to become, and given the hungers and needs of the world, why should it bother to care about leadership, and what does it need to do in order to live more fully into its leadership calling? What are the implications of all this for you and your work?
5. What is a question or concern about your vocation of leadership that seems to be tugging or whispering at the edge of your awareness these days?

Clearness Consultation

Clearness consultations are driven by the needs of each member of the triad and so do not include prepared questions. Instead, each person has an allotted time (at the conference, 25 minutes each) to explore a question, issue, challenge, dilemma, or conundrum of their choice, whether related to the topic of our gathering or otherwise. The other two members of the triad only ask “open, honest questions,” always keeping in mind that there is to be “no fixing, no saving, no advising, and no correcting.” At the end of the allotted time participants take a short pause and rotate to a new focus person.

According to Parker Palmer:

Behind the Clearness Committee is a simple but crucial conviction: *each of us has an inner teacher, a voice of truth, that offers the guidance and power we need to deal with our problems.* But that inner voice

is often garbled by various kinds of inward and outward interference. The function of the Clearness Committee is not to give advice or “fix” people from the outside in but rather to help people remove the interference so that they can discover their own wisdom from the inside out. (“Clearness Committee”)

The session begins by triads moving to chosen spaces in silence. They are invited to sit quietly and comfortably in a small face-to-face circle. The first focus person will break the silence when she or he is ready to begin; the other two take notes (which they give to the focus person) and someone watches the time so the focus person doesn’t have to. After an allotted time for open-ended questions, the time-keeper will ask the focus person if she or he wants committee members to mirror back what they have heard (without interpretation or advice-giving), or to continue with open and honest questions.

Here are some select, additional guidelines for asking open and honest questions, which are adapted from the work of the Center for Courage and Renewal (and its network of facilitators) and based on suggestions by Parker Palmer (“Clearness Committee”):

1. The best single mark of an honest, open question is that you can’t possibly anticipate the answer to it, nor think while asking it: “I know the right answer to this and I sure hope you give it to me!” So, “Have you ever thought about seeing a therapist?” is not an open and honest question! But “What did you learn from the experience you just told us about?” is.
2. Ask questions aimed at helping the focus person to explore her or his concern rather than satisfying your own curiosity.
3. Ask questions that are brief and to the point rather than weighing them down with background considerations and rationale that allow you to slip in your own opinions or advice, or turn them into stories about yourself.
4. Ask questions that go to the person as well as the problem—questions about the person’s inner life as well as the outward facts.
5. As you listen deeply to what is being said try to allow questions to come from your heart, rather than only from your head.

6. Sometimes questions that invite images or metaphors can open things up in ways that more direct questions don’t. At the same time, remember that the best questions tend to be fairly simple: clear, clean, brief (but not “simplistic”).
7. Allow questions to “bubble up” or emerge, rather than force them. Remember, this isn’t about you, and it’s not a contest—so don’t worry about whether your questions outshine others’ questions
8. Consider holding a question rather than asking it immediately, particularly if you’re not sure it’s a good question. If you’re not sure, sit with a while and wait for clarity. If it keeps coming back to you, ask it later.
9. Watch the pacing of your questions. Questions coming too fast can feel aggressive and might cut off reflection. Allow for space. Trust the silences. Breathe.

Conclusion

In my many years of teaching, conducting workshops, and facilitating retreats I have seen that there is great power—personally, professionally, and institutionally—in deep listening, powerful questions, courageous reflection, live encounter with difference and otherness: all crucial skills and capacities of vocational leadership. An academic mentoring community offers safe, courageous space for people to discover, explore, and claim their stories in the

“Attention to vocation can help us to see that the world calls us simultaneously more deeply into and more vigorously out of ourselves.”

company of others. Inviting people to explore their stories of self, us, and now, and to listen with deep presence, is to invite them to be more intentional about the choices they face in their interconnectedness, more authentic and purposeful in their freedom and agency, and more energized and effective in their work and leadership.

Attention to vocation can help us to see that the world calls us simultaneously more deeply into and more

vigorously *out* of ourselves. Vocation opens up the space to consider more humane and truthful ways of being in the world than those that tend to be offered by the dominant cultural stories. Reflection on questions of vocation, in the company of deeply listening others, helps us to map the deep architecture and the overarching stories of our lives, the foundational structures or frameworks of belief and

value, attitude and action that hold our lives together. This kind of integrative learning involves both an inward and an outward dynamic: A spiraling inward toward the depths of self, meaning, and faith, and outward into an ever-expanding world of community and effective action, for the sake of a more hopeful future.

Endnotes

1. Many thanks to our colleague Darrell Jodock, who helped to formulate this way of thinking about vocation at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter Minnesota, and at many of our colleges and universities.

2. This exercise was developed by Dr. Chris Johnson, ©The Milkweed Group, LLC and influenced by, among others, Jim Keen's "Lives of Commitment" workshop; Matthew Fox, *The Reinvention of Work: A New Vision of Livelihood for Our Time* (San

Francisco: HarperCollins, 1994); Claudia Horwitz, *The Spiritual Activist: Practices To Transform Your Life, Your Work, and Your World* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002); Judy Brown, *The Art and Spirit of Leadership* (Trafford, 2012); Larry A. Braskamp, "Leading as a Spiritual Endeavor: Living, Leading, and Developing Community with Vocation," *Spirituality in Higher Education* newsletter, June 2008, Vol. 4 Issue 3; and Parker Palmer, *The Courage To Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998, 2007).

Works Cited

Braskamp, Larry A. and Jon F. Wergin, "Inside-out Leadership." *Liberal Education*, American Association of Colleges and Universities 94.1 (Winter 2008): 30-35.

DeGraaf, John, Davin Wann, and Thomas Naylor. *Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2001.

Marshall Ganz, "What Is Public Narrative?" New England Grassroots Environmental Fund. 2008. Accessed 1 January 2015, <http://grassrootsfund.org/docs/WhatIsPublicNarrative08.pdf>.

O'Reilly, Mary Rose. *Radical Presence: Teaching as Contemplative Practice*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1998.

Palmer, Parker J. "The Clearness Committee: A Communal Approach To Discernment in Retreats." Accessed 1 January 2015, http://www.couragerenewal.org/PDFs/Parker-Palmer_Clearness-Committee.pdf

_____. *Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2012.

Parks, Sharon Daloz. *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Emerging Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith*. Revised ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011.

_____. "Leadership, Spirituality, and the College as a Mentoring Environment." *Journal of College and Character* 10.2 (Nov. 2008): 1-10.

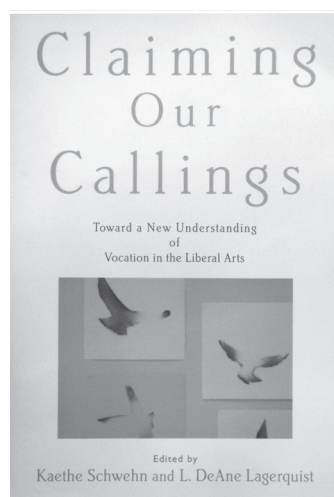
Zajonc, Arthur. *Meditation as Contemplative Inquiry: When Knowing Becomes Love*. Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne, 2009.

DAVID CROWE and KATIE HANSON

Old and New Ideas of the Liberal Arts: A Review of *Claiming Our Callings*

Claiming Our Callings: Toward a New Understanding of Vocation in the Liberal Arts (Oxford University Press, 2014) is a new collection of essays edited by Kaethe Schwehn and L. DeAne Lagerquist of St. Olaf College. The book is a valuable contribution to the national conversation about vocation and liberal education. It will be a particularly useful resource for faculty and administrative leaders working at Lutheran colleges, or at other colleges with dynamic and evolving religious affiliations and openness to faith, as they attempt to explain the complexity and depth of their missions to new faculty and other curious people.

The thirteen essays, all written by men and women teaching or otherwise serving at St. Olaf, illustrate the ways that faculty members of varying generations and disciplines have come to know their callings, and attempt to live them authentically every day, especially in the company of interested students. As professors of English and Education at another Lutheran college, Augustana College (Rock Island), and a married couple with the habit of talking shop at dinnertime, we find ourselves wanting to enter into discussion or even debate with some of these writers. Yet, at bottom, we would be thrilled to see our own college-age kids enrolling in any of these professors'



classes. We wish we could take a few of their classes ourselves. All of the essays in this book, including Schwehn's Introduction and Lagerquist's Afterword (which she co-authored with the late James Farrell) are thoughtful, sincere, and learned without being pretentious. All of the essays demonstrate a deep commitment to excellent teaching.

Many of the essays justify the book's promise to journey "toward a *new* understanding of vocation" (our emphasis).

The idea of vocation or calling is very old. So is Luther's widening of the idea when he declared that all believers, not just prospective priests and nuns, need to listen for God's call to their work and other daily joys. What is new for every generation is the creative task of loving the world and healing its wounds, even as that world changes, sometimes (as now) very rapidly. *Claiming Our Callings* reflects a changing curriculum, showing how consumerism, sustainability ethics, Buddhist meditation techniques, Eastern philosophies of peace and justice, and other non-traditional or non-Western ideas have now become typical and compelling issues in college classrooms. More established ideas get attention too. Donna McMillan (Psychology) reminds us that in discerning our vocations we can be challenged by our own powers of

Katie Hanson and **David Crowe**, who met at their alma mater, Luther College, are long-term members of the faculty at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, she in Education and he in English. Along with their teaching and tending of the college's Lutheran liberal arts identity, together they take students on study abroad trips to Norway, and lead a reading group called Faithful Readers at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Davenport, Iowa.

psychological denial. John Barbour (Religion) suggests that professors might help students to reflect on their faith lives by speaking about our own in non-coercive ways. He describes compellingly how this careful balancing act is possible for the willing professor.

Hovering over the book is a real worry: Are the liberal arts losing viability in an economy creating few attractive jobs? Is the never-ending tension on our campuses between idealistic mission and urgent marketing needs tipping the wrong way? Are we beginning to tell our students and their families half-truths about our commitment to their professional skills only, over-selling our assistance in helping them to secure remunerative jobs? These are not entirely new worries. As Schwehn writes in her introduction, even in the nineteenth century, "some Protestant schools maintained a traditional focus on contemplation, character-building, and coherence across disciplines" while "other schools chose to emphasize knowledge over character, specialization over synthesis, and individual advancement over communal service." This book is mostly about faculty tending the idealistic mission, St. Olaf's commitment to the phrase, "life is not a livelihood." Economist Mark Pernecky reminds us that you have to make money before you can give it away, but most of the essayists place more emphasis on students making meaning in all aspects of their lives.

"Most of the essayists hope that we all might turn away from comfortable models of success in the consumer society to models that are more demanding and difficult and even dissenting."

Most of the essayists hope that we all might turn away from comfortable models of success in the consumer society to models that are more demanding and difficult and even dissenting, and that our careers will be seamlessly connected to our faith (in whatever God or meaning-making system) and other deep commitments.

DeAne Lagerquist (Religion), the book's co-editor, lays the foundation for the book's Lutheran and interfaith

character. She sees her teaching and understanding of vocation emerging from Luther's and Bonhoeffer's theologies, especially their paradoxical claim that we die to ourselves in order to love the neighbor. Her essay might be read annually by leaders on every Lutheran campus, as a reminder of the reasons that we foster theological literacy, "not," she reminds us, "as an effort to change students' beliefs, but rather as a long-term goal that entails being articulate about one's own deepest commitments, being in compassionate conversation with others, and collaborating for the good of the world, even with those whose commitments are different from one's own."

Our other favorite essays were those that read more like published memoirs and impersonal histories. We particularly enjoyed reports of actual interactions with students, where teaching ideas and philosophies were tested. Anthropologist Thomas Williamson writes elegantly, his essay describing lively class discussions. He helps his students to learn, through illustrative stories about his friends' professional and personal journeys, how little the college majors we choose have to do with leading meaningful lives. (We had thought that the "major as destiny" myth was mostly an Augustana problem, and now not only feel better, but have Williamson's methods to imitate as well.) Biologist Kathleen L. Shea opens with sincere generalities about "ecological science and ... sustainable use of our environmental resources," but then vividly describes the various ways that Oles (readers are obliged to learn the local jargon) change campus ecologies. They learn how to plant and tend thriving trees, lead elementary school groups through the St. Olaf Natural Lands, protect seedling trees from marauding deer, build dikes and dig up drain tile to restore wetlands, and grow and sell produce to the food service provider. Some encounter life-changing realities in Costa Rica, but most learn to love the natural world right on campus.

Historian Jim Farrell's essay is a fitting memorial to his good work and good life. As his essay reports, he helped students to understand that consuming goods and services is heavy, taxing work. He argues that we may choose this work, or, in the interest of a damaged planet and the unemployed and poorly housed, we may choose to limit consuming in our lives. "You don't need to be religious to consume less," Farrell writes, "as the

number of 'downshifters' in American culture shows, but most of the world's religions also provide frames in which less consumption involves more meaning." Through his essay and other effects of his life, Farrell's good teaching continues.

"As our college leaders struggle with demographic and economic realities, they have to respond to those who exert career-minded pressure, from parents to boards to campus colleagues."

The Afterword suggests that *Claiming Our Callings* is "not merely a local [book] about parochial particulars," but there is a parochial flavor to any book composed exclusively by faculty of one college. The faculty's pride in their college is often on display, and local traditions and locations sprinkle the essays. That strikes us as justified—we are notorious for noisily loving our college too—but

perhaps it does wrongly hint to readers that the book's concerns are not widely relevant.

Clearly, Oxford University Press believes that this book has a wide audience, that it is no St. Olaf *festschrift*. We agree. We see ourselves pulling the book down from the shelf from time to time, to suggest an essay to a new colleague, or to try out a good teaching idea. Since our colleges are often better at acculturating new faculty into momentary campus disputes than to our enduring missions, this book would be excellent reading for new faculty at similar colleges. But really, anyone on a liberal arts campus can benefit from the book. As our college leaders struggle with demographic and economic realities, they have to respond to those who exert career-minded pressure, from parents to boards to campus colleagues. Here is a book that speaks another message we all need to hear, with force and in detail. The essayists in *Claiming Our Callings* remind us that we learn alongside the students, that we care about the whole lives that they will lead, that we know our world cries out for justice and healthy change. We and our students get to be agents of that change, even as we attempt to live out the old idea of the liberal arts.

Registration is open for the 2015
Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference

"Vocation and the Common Good"

July 20-22
Augsburg College, Minneapolis

Registrations are due June 5, 2015

Please contact your campus representative or Melinda Valverde, melinda.valverde@elca.org, 773-380-2874.

See also page 22 for details about a pre-conference gathering about women and leadership.

Sessions and Speakers:

"Vocation and the Mission of Lutheran Higher Education," Mark Wilhelm, Program Director for Schools, ELCA

"The Common Good in Society Today," Rahuldeep Gill, California Lutheran University

"The Lutheran Tradition and the Common Good," Samuel Torvend, Pacific Lutheran University

"ELCA Colleges and Universities Contribute to the Common Good," Laurie Joyner, President of Wittenberg University

Plus: "Cultivating the Common Good on Campus"—a session devoted to developing action plans among college and university cohorts

Intersections

Augustana College
639 38th Street
Rock Island, IL 61201-2296

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Rock Island, IL
Permit No. 23

ELCA College and Universities

Augsburg College MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Augustana College ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS

Augustana College SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA

Bethany College LINDSBORG, KANSAS

California Lutheran University THOUSAND OAKS, CALIFORNIA

Capital University COLUMBUS, OHIO

Carthage College KENOSHA, WISCONSIN

Concordia College MOORHEAD, MINNESOTA

Finlandia University HANCOCK, MICHIGAN

Gettysburg College GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

Grand View University DES MOINES, IOWA

Gustavus Adolphus College ST. PETER, MINNESOTA

Lenoir-Rhyne University HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA

Luther College DECORAH, IOWA

Midland University FREMONT, NEBRASKA

Muhlenberg College ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

Newberry College NEWBERRY, SOUTH CAROLINA

Pacific Lutheran University TACOMA, WASHINGTON

Roanoke College SALEM, VIRGINIA

St. Olaf College NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA

Susquehanna University SELINGSGROVE, PENNSYLVANIA

Texas Lutheran University SEGUIN, TEXAS

Thiel College GREENVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

Wagner College STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK

Wartburg College WAVERLY, IOWA

Wittenberg University SPRINGFIELD, OHIO



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.