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From the Editor: Why All This Talk About Vocation?

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FROM THE EDITOR

Why All This Talk About Vocation?



“Why all this talk about vocation?” This question, the theme of last summer’s conference for Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education, was the first in-person gathering for the group since 2019, which increased the joy in seeing one another while also raising the stakes of why

we gather. Why, amidst all of the disruptions to higher education and continuing concerns about community spread of COVID, would we gather for presentations, workshops, and conversations about vocation? Mark Wilhelm offered a deceptively simple answer to the question in his keynote address, printed in this issue: *“Lutheran higher education...is vocation-based education.”*

We talk about vocation because we must: it is who we are and what we do, even if incompletely, clumsily, and unjustly at times. Wilhelm, who has served Lutheran higher education in various capacities for multiple decades and will retire in late January of 2023, calls us to “constructive work” and “corrective work” in the next decade of our work in vocation, a call that resonates with many authors in this issue.

In this issue you will read several responses to Wilhelm’s keynote address, offered in panel format at the conference

and printed here for continued conversations among us on our college/university campuses. Each in their own way, Marit Trelstad, Vic Thasiah, Drew Tucker, Mary-Paula Cancienne, and Paul Pribbenow are already pushing, via vocation, toward constructive work and corrective work, outlining a living-together in higher education that widens and deepens the work as well as the narrative of what we do when we gather to learn and to teach for the sake of the world. Vocation must not be a mark of privilege, but must instead lead us boldly into reforms that call into question and even undo unjust systems of which we are part.

Julius Crump and Madyson Ray, both of whom attended the Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education conference for the first time last summer, write in compelling ways about why the work of vocation is essential to joy and purpose in learning as well as authentic relationships between professors and students.

The final two pieces are companions, since Elli Cucksey shares the constructive work she did in her role as librarian as a response to her experience as a student of Womanist theology with Beverly Wallace. In Wallace’s co-authored piece with Yolanda Norton, they root the work of vocation in the soul (“Doing the Work One’s Soul Must Have”). Engaging Womanist theology through coursework and the Black Girl Magic Academy, and cultivating spaces of freedom and empowerment through the Beyoncé Mass and Womanist Experiential Learning Initiative, Norton and Wallace invite

Colleen Windham-Hughes, PhD, MDiv, was born into and ordained by the United Methodist Church, yet became Lutheran (ELCA) over time, due in part to over a decade at California Lutheran University, where she holds the Wilbert and Darlene Carlson Endowed Chair of Youth and Family Ministry and serves as associate dean of Interdisciplinary Programs and Community Outreach.

ELCA colleges and universities to host existing events and expand the work to undergraduate campuses.

Take action based on what you read here

- 1) Reach out to one of the authors printed here and continue conversation about, or schedule an event that lives out, our shared calling to “vocation-based education.”
- 2) Complete the short survey we have designed to understand Intersections’ past and chart its future.

- 3) Contribute to the Spring 2023 issue: “Vocation (in) Disruption.” We invite pieces on finding vocation amidst disruption as well as being called to disruption as a vocation. Perspectives from all areas of Higher Education at Lutheran colleges and universities are welcome, including students. Submissions are due 15 January 2023.

There are several mic-drop moments in this issue; do not miss them!

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Spring 2023 “Vocation (in) Disruption”

We invite pieces on finding vocation amidst disruption as well as being called to disruption as a vocation. Perspectives from all areas of Higher Education at Lutheran colleges and universities are welcome, including students. We publish both short reflections of 500-600 words and features of 1000-2000 words. If you would like to be in conversation about an idea that is brewing, please be in touch with the editorial team: Colleen Windham-Hughes, windhamh@callutheran.edu and/or Jessica Easter, jeaster@callutheran.edu

DUE: 15 January 2023

