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Vocation Can Change Throughout Life'

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MONDAY JANUARY 11, 2021

‘Vocation Can Change Throughout Life’

By Kristina Schulz, Katy Kelly and Heidi Gauder

Thanks to a vocation mini-grant, supported financially by the Council of Independent Colleges and the Lilly Endowment Inc., University Libraries offered a free and engaging program of new virtual workshops for its undergraduate student employees.

This program was designed in support of the University's efforts around a shared understanding of **vocation** as "answering a call to discover one's unique gifts and employ them in service for the common good in ways that are personally satisfying and bring meaning to one's life."

In three hourlong sessions for which they received their regular hourly compensation, a cohort of five student participants reflected on their experiences in connection to their own individual calling and vocational development. Benefits included interesting readings and self-assessments; a "goody bag" of supplies, containing snacks and a journal for their notes and takeaways and more; and fun workshops on Zoom.

University of Dayton is well-resourced for engaging students on the topic of vocation. As such, we invited campus colleagues to present at each workshop. Elizabeth Montgomery in Campus Ministry presented "Introduction to Vocation"; Aaron Witherspoon in Academic Affairs and Learning Initiatives presented "Using Identity in the Vocation Process"; and Adrienne Ausdenmoore from the Institute of Applied Creativity for Transformation capped off the series with "Vocation as Wayfinding: Designing Your Future One Step at a Time."

In a post-program survey, participants said the following about how this experience helped them think more deeply about vocation:

- "It gave me time to reflect on my life and interests

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and talents. The guided reflections were really helpful just to write down my ideas about my own vocation.”

- “It allowed me to use this time to reflect on vocation and understand that it does not always have a religious aspect. Vocation can change throughout life.”

In conjunction with each speaker’s perspective and information, we felt as though reserving time for this type of reflection in the semester was important. Each workshop included time for quiet reflection and/or writing, which was most helpful. Anyone can make time like this into a personally beneficial habit.

At the same time of this program for students, our colleagues Henry Handley, Diane Osman and Amy Rohmiller also received a vocation mini-grant and organized opportunities for Libraries staff and faculty to explore what vocation means to them and how sharing our vocational journey can positively impact students’ experiences at UD. Our program and theirs ensure an increased awareness of vocation in the University Libraries.

Our plans moving forward include repeating the program with a new cohort of students, with the same or similar speakers, and adding a fourth workshop with a tie-in to library employment. We’ll keep the cohort small to recognize individuality and create comfort in sharing within the group. Also, we’ll bring back the popular goody bags and notebooks.

For more resources on vocation, like the ones we explored alongside our student employees, take a look at this list:

1 *Defining Decade: Why Your Twenties Matter and How To Make the Most of Them Now* by Meg Jay (included in the students’ goody bags).

2 *The Designing Your Life Workbook: A Framework for Building a Life You Can Thrive In* by Bill Burnett

learning, leading and teaching basic communication in the popular and often required college course.

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3 [Video: Vocation Perspectives with Elizabeth Montgomery](#)

4 [Video: Vocation Perspectives with Adrienne Ausdenmoore](#)

— *Kristina Schulz is a lecturer and the University archivist; Katy Kelly is an associate professor and coordinator of marketing and engagement; and Heidi Gauder is a professor and coordinator of research and instruction. All work in the University Libraries.*

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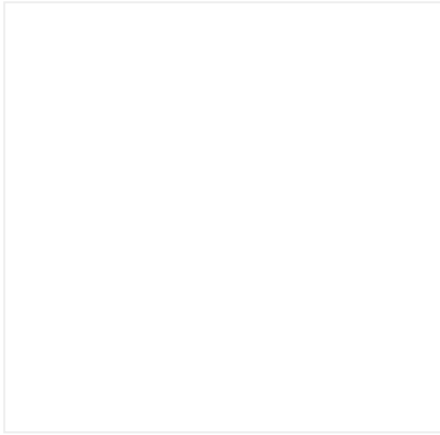
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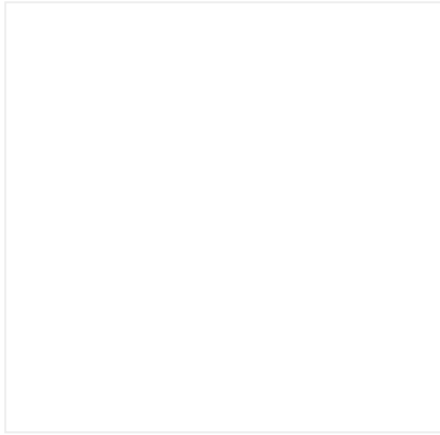
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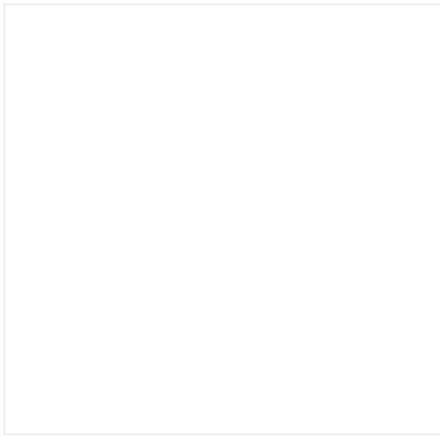
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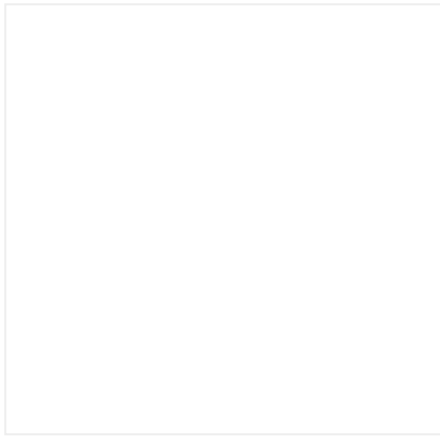
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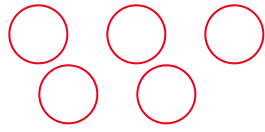
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