

[Wild Hope Center for Vocation](#)  
**Pacific Lutheran University**  
**Annual Report | AY 2024-25**

**CENTER MISSION**

*As ratified in Fall 2017 by the Wild Hope Steering Committee*

Vocation is being called into relationship with others to promote human and ecological flourishing

- We are called by new knowledge and experience, by other people, by pressing need, by global events and crises, and-for many-by the numinous, a higher power, by God, into awareness that life is more than securing a comfortable existence for oneself.
- We are called into relationships, into communities both temporary and life-long marked by diversity in life and thought, where we live into mutual responsibility for each other, trusting that we can be and do more together than apart in isolation.
- We are called together to promote human and ecological flourishing – the mission of this university – and so let learning animate service and care for this world and our commitment to strive for justice and peace wherever we find ourselves.

[The Wild Hope Center for Vocation champions and supports the university's mission.](#) We do this by providing opportunities for reflective exploration of meaning and purpose by students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other constituents. Each group matters as we engage in collective vocational reflection in order to not only promote but, more importantly, embody through lived experience, this mission that highlights learning, service, leadership, and care for other people, their communities, and the earth.

**OVERVIEW**

The Wild Hope Center for Vocation (WHCV) experienced a year of meaningful growth and momentum as it continued to align its initiatives with Pacific Lutheran University's strategic priorities outlined at the Fall University Conference. Central to the Center's mission this year were efforts focused on review, completion, and development across programs and partnerships. We initiated internal reviews of three cornerstone programs—the Wild Hope Essay & Video Contest, Meant to Live, and the Wild Hope Fellows Program—with the latter review led by Dean Stephanie Johnson from the College of Liberal Studies. We expect this to continue into the next academic year. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to thoughtful assessment, mission alignment, and student impact.

The Center's initiatives mapped directly onto the university's strategic priorities: improving retention and progression, optimizing recruitment, and maximizing resources. The Center's Operations Director supported retention and progression by managing an advising caseload of first-year students who were undecided on their major, and by working closely with the Center for Student Success on referrals for students uncertain about their academic path. Additionally, the Operations Director served as an FYEP 102 course instructor, directly contributing to students' academic exploration and persistence. The NetVUE "Reframing the Institutional Saga"

grant supported the university's recruitment strategy through the development of a student-centered video designed for prospective students and admission outreach. The team working with this NetVUE grant completed three major deliverables in total: a book, a dynamic digital timeline of PLU's vocational history, and the aforementioned student video. Meanwhile, the Center's successful Bjug Day of Giving campaign, which raised nearly \$9,000, directly supports the university's goal of maximizing resources and ensuring financial sustainability.

Programmatically, the Center launched and hosted two high-impact initiatives this year: the "Vocation for All" regional conference and a yearlong Staff Seminar cohort of eight participants. Both programs were well-received and fostered interdisciplinary dialogue about vocation as a framework for mentorship and institutional purpose. All seminar participants completed the program and designed culminating projects to enhance their work with undergraduate students. With our endowed account restored and paying out, and growing donor investment, the Wild Hope Center for Vocation continues to strengthen its role as a vital contributor to PLU's mission and future.

One of the most noteworthy accomplishments of the year was the Wild Hope Center for Vocation's relocation to a new, dedicated space in the lower level of the Anderson University Center. This move represents a significant step forward in visibility, accessibility, and collaboration. In partnership with Campus Ministry, the Center now shares a thoughtfully designed environment that fosters reflection, conversation, and community engagement. The Operations Director has a private office, allowing for confidential meetings with students, faculty, and staff, while a shared common area serves as a welcoming space for hosting workshops, small group gatherings, and collaborative meetings. This physical presence at the heart of campus reinforces the Center's role as a hub for vocational exploration and a resource for the broader PLU community.

While we celebrate many positive outcomes and achievements, a continuing concern remains with the Operations Director's non-exempt employment classification. This hourly status does not align with the scope, nature, and expectations of the position, which encompasses responsibilities more consistent with those of a paraeducator, administrator, and instructor. The Operations Director manages student advising, co-develops and teaches a four-credit FYEP course, oversees program logistics, and supports grant implementation and assessment—duties that require professional discretion, flexible scheduling, and independent decision-making. The current classification complicates essential aspects of the role, including travel, project-based work, and collaboration outside of standard hourly constraints. A reclassification would better reflect the position's demands and ensure continued success and sustainability of the Center's mission-driven work.

Looking ahead, the Wild Hope Center for Vocation enters a pivotal leadership phase with the reappointment of Dr. Antonios Finitis as Executive Director for a second and final three-year term. His continued leadership provides valuable stability and vision; however, it also signals the need for intentional succession planning in collaboration with the Office of the Provost. The Advisory Committee will be tasked with initiating this conversation in the coming year to ensure a smooth leadership transition and sustained programmatic strength. Dr. Samuel Torvend will

continue in his role as Director for External Relations, and Dr. Marit Trelstad will remain as Director of Vocational Reflection till the end of her appointment as Lutheran Studies Chair. Laree Winer will continue to serve as Operations Director through this three-year term, though she anticipates possible retirement at its conclusion. The coming academic year presents an additional leadership challenge since Dr. Trelstad will be in Namibia during the spring semester as the Site Director for PLU's Study Away Program. These transitions make it especially important to plan for interim coverage and to identify a way to appropriately compensate Dr. Torvend for his ongoing contributions. Proactive planning and resource alignment will be essential to sustain the Center's mission and momentum during this time of transition.

## **LEADERSHIP**

### *Executive Leadership Team*

Antonios Finitis (Executive Director)

Laree Winer (Operations Director)

Marit Trelstad (Director, Vocational Reflection/Lutheran Studies Chair)

Samuel Torvend (Director, External Relations)

### *Advisory Committee*

Terri Farrar (Kinesiology)

Paul Sutton (FYEP Director and Education - on sabbatical for Spring)

Joanna Gregson (Provost)

Megan Grover (Wang Center)

Katrina Hay (Physics)

Amy Stewart Mailhoit (Business).

Joanna Royce Davis (VP Student Life)

Jen Rude (Campus Ministry)

Jes Takla (Student Life)

Karmen Taylor Brown - (Center for DJS))

Bridget Yaden (Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies)

## **2024-2025 INITIATIVES**

With the approval and oversight of the Provost, the Advisory Committee and the Center's leadership team agreed to focus their efforts for the 2024–2025 academic year on two primary areas: fundraising and programming. Programming efforts are organized around three key phases—program review, development, and completion. This section of the report outlines our progress in these areas as of June 1, 2024.

### **Fundraising and Fiscal Stewardship:**

The Wild Hope Center for Vocation has continued to strengthen its financial foundation through a combination of institutional support, strategic grant management, donor cultivation, and successful fundraising events.

This year marked the first in which the Center managed its own organizational account, funded through the university's operating budget rather than through fundraising. This account provides \$2,000 annually and supports our student intern position. We are pleased to report that we ended the fiscal year with a positive balance of \$201.91, reflecting careful fiscal stewardship.

In addition to this operational account, the Center managed five grant-related accounts, representing a significant level of budgetary oversight for a center of our size. These include four NetVUE-funded initiatives and one grant from the Knutson Foundation of St. Olaf College. These grants are in various stages of implementation and are tied to targeted programmatic outcomes. Further details about these programs will be outlined in the programming section of this report.

We also oversaw three endowed accounts that support a range of our initiatives: the Barbo Family Fund, the Class of 1958 Meant to Live Fund, and—new to us this fiscal year—the Betty and Edgar Larson Swedish Heritage Fund. These endowed funds provide essential long-term support and stability for our programming. Looking ahead, we will also begin managing a new endowed account in the next fiscal year, funded by the PLU Class of 1973's 50th Reunion Gift, which has just completed its required "resting" year.

Our fundraising strategy remains twofold: we are working to both expand our donor base and cultivate relationships with individuals who have the capacity to contribute at higher levels. A key component of this strategy involves ongoing engagement with NetVUE to identify and apply for relevant grant opportunities that align with our mission and goals.

A major highlight of the year was our successful participation in Bjug Day of Giving. Under the leadership of the Director for External Relations, from September 1 through October 16, we organized and promoted a targeted campaign across multiple constituencies—including PLU faculty and staff, alumni, and friends of the Center. As a result, we raised a total of \$8,538 (\$7,538 during the campaign and an additional \$1,000 in an earlier gift designated for Bjug Day). Aside from scholarships and athletics, this was the largest amount raised by any office or academic unit at PLU during the event. Bjug Day continues to serve as the primary revenue stream for our unrestricted gift account, providing vital support for the Center's mission-driven work.

### **Program/Project Completion**

*The NetVUE Program Development Award*, led by Operations Director, Laree Winer provided essential support for the successful implementation of the 2024–2025 Wild Hope Staff Seminar on Vocation. The \$10,309 grant enabled the Center to relaunch this signature program following a decline in interested applicants due to the pandemic, significant staff turnover, and limited access to our largest endowed account. The award allowed us to offer a robust seminar experience, including stipends for both participants and presenters, a new mentoring component with compensation for mentors, and hospitality through coffee, snacks, and lunch at seminar sessions. The 2024–2025 Wild Hope Staff Seminar on Vocation convened eight staff members from various university departments to engage in monthly, three-hour sessions from

September 2024 through May 2025. The goals of the program were to introduce, define, and foster vocational reflection, build community among university staff, and explore how staff roles contribute to PLU's educational mission and the mentorship of undergraduate students. This grant served as a vital bridge year, allowing us to rebuild and reimagine the seminar while increasing momentum for future years. The project was a huge success, and the [narrative report](#) submitted to NetVUE includes intended outcomes, an assessment of the outcomes and successes, recommendations for the next iteration of the seminar,, and a photo of the 2024–2025 cohort.

The second year of the NetVUE [Reframing the Institutional Saga](#) Grant marked a significant and celebratory milestone in our ongoing exploration of PLU's mission through the lens of institutional vocation. Led by Dr. Samuel Torvend, Director for External Relations at the Wild Hope Center for Vocation, the project culminated in the creation of three major artifacts: a published book titled *Purposeful Learning in a New Era*, [a virtual timeline](#) now hosted on the University Archives website, and an engaging video for Admissions that tells the PLU story from the student perspective. Together, these pieces thoughtfully examine, explore, and uplift the university's identity, purpose, and calling in this new era of higher education. Each component required a deep investment of time to write, edit, film, and curate, and the resulting materials are already being used to deepen understanding of PLU's mission internally and externally.

To celebrate and share this work with the wider campus community, the Wild Hope Center hosted an event following the February University Assembly to distribute copies of the book and preview both the virtual timeline and the student video. Copies of *Purposeful Learning in a New Era* will also be gifted to new faculty upon their arrival to PLU as a way to welcome them into the university's story and mission. Though this project was ambitious in scope, it was also carefully managed, with some grant funds (\$18,000) remaining unused. These funds will be returned to NetVUE—a practice the organization views favorably as a sign of responsible stewardship. The final report has been completed and submitted, and we are deeply proud of the collaborative effort that brought this meaningful initiative to life.

Pacific Lutheran University hosted a [NetVUE Regional Gathering titled Vocation for All from April 3–5, 2025](#). Funded through our third and final NetVUE grant project, the gathering brought together 63 participants from across the region to explore the intersections of vocational discernment, equity-based project design, and meaningful assessment practices. The goal of the conference was to dismantle the false dichotomy that often separates these conversations in higher education. Typically, assessment and equity work are seen as disconnected from vocational reflection—sometimes even in opposition to it. Some educators worry that assessment reduces the complexity of discernment to transactional data points, while others may find it difficult to envision how vocational exploration can serve equity-centered goals. Through keynotes, concurrent sessions, and shared guided reflection, this gathering proposed vocation as a compelling framework that intuitively connects these seemingly disparate efforts through the shared pursuit of meaning and purpose in education.

Participants engaged in sessions that spanned both curricular and co-curricular contexts, reflecting on how to design and implement assessable, equity-minded practices that promote

vocational discernment for all students. Originally budgeted for 45 attendees, the gathering ultimately hosted 62 participants in some sessions. Due to increased food and transportation costs and expanded participation, our total expenses came to \$25,166.96. NetVUE originally awarded \$21,414 for the event, and graciously agreed to cover the \$3,752.96 overage. The [final report](#) has been submitted to NetVUE, and we are deeply grateful for their ongoing support of this impactful and timely convening.

*The What's Next program*, a collaboration between the Wild Hope Center for Vocation and Campus Ministry, completed its second year in Fall 2024 with final assessments conducted in Spring 2025. Funded by the Knutson Foundation at St. Olaf College, the project aimed to integrate a DEI-informed lens into a five-week vocational discernment curriculum for college seniors. Designed around faith-based reflection and spiritual practices, the program successfully introduced students to tools such as mentoring, values clarification, and reflective listening. Students demonstrated increased confidence in discerning post-graduation paths and reported stronger connections to mentors and peers. A key goal was to engage a diverse group of participants reflective of PLU's student demographics—36% of participants were first-generation college students, 36% were students of color, and 27% identified as trans or non-binary, exceeding the project's equity participation benchmark.

Year two was designed to pilot the curriculum within an academic capstone course, and we partnered with Dr. Tom Smith, whose class takes place in the fall semester. This allowed for full integration of the What's Next framework into an existing academic structure. However, moving forward this may pose a challenge, as Dr. Smith retired at the end of the academic year, and identifying a new faculty partner for future cohorts will be essential to sustaining this model. The program also had a broader, unintended impact. Participants regularly shared their learning and tools with peers outside the cohort, extending the program's influence to siblings, roommates, and classmates. In the second year, an additional 12 students engaged informally in discussions around vocation, despite not being part of the formal curriculum. The project also strengthened cross-campus collaboration with faculty and staff, particularly around DEI and assessment, helping to deepen institutional understanding of vocation and build support for future programming. In addition to achieving its stated goals, the project surfaced important insights into the barriers seniors face in vocational discernment and offered strategies for continued improvement. The final report has been submitted to the Knutson Foundation.

### **Program Development and Collaboration**

In August 2024, the Center Operations and Executive Directors played a key role in planning and facilitating PLU's *New Faculty Orientation*, which welcomed over 30 visiting and tenure-track faculty members. In close collaboration with the Office of the Provost, the Center helped design the day-and-a-half program, coordinated logistics, and secured speakers who could meaningfully introduce new faculty to PLU's mission and values. Our involvement ensured that vocational reflection and a sense of purpose were woven into the early experiences of these new colleagues, setting the tone for a thoughtful, mission-centered, and engaged start to their work at the university.

The Center collaborates meaningfully with Campus Life and Campus Ministry on two key rituals that bookend the PLU student experience: *Convocation and Baccalaureate*. In fall 2024, the Center's Operations Director worked closely with the Convocation Committee to shape a welcoming and reflective opening to the academic year—identifying speakers, coordinating faculty participation, and contributing to the program's design. In spring 2025, the Center partnered with Campus Ministry to co-create the Baccalaureate service, a student-centered celebration of transition and meaning-making distinct from, yet connected to, Commencement. Together with student leaders and the campus pastor, the Center helped discern the theme, select speakers, shape the ritual, and preside at this sacred moment of vocational reflection and communal blessing.

As part of a *new faculty development* initiative led by the Office of the Provost, the Wild Hope Center's Operations Director facilitated a *faculty learning community* during the 2024–2025 academic year. These small cohorts, designed to foster meaningful conversation around teaching, scholarship, and service, offered a fresh approach to faculty support and engagement. Our cohort of six members met seven times—once a month during the fall and spring semesters—to explore themes of vocational reflection and discernment through the text of *Slow Productivity* by Cal Newport. Our discussions focused on Newport's core principles: doing fewer things, working at a natural pace, and obsessing over quality. We also wrestled with questions of autonomy in higher education and the concept of pseudo-productivity, examining how these ideas intersect with our personal callings and professional responsibilities. This learning community provided a valuable space for intentional conversation and connection across disciplines.

In 2024–2025, the Wild Hope Center for Vocation launched [\*Vocational Vistas\*](#), a new program designed to engage PLU alumni and external constituents in meaningful conversations about purpose, identity, and calling in today's changing world. After a successful pilot in late Spring/Summer 2024, the program expanded to offer a full slate of events—livestreamed and in person—throughout the academic year. The fall series featured compelling talks on a range of topics, including *Dag Hammarskjöld: Servant of Peace* with Dr. Don Johnson in September; *Luther's Surprising View of Political Engagement* with Dr. Michael Artime in October; a November conversation on religious pluralism and Christian vocation with Dr. Marit Trelstad and Dr. Erik Hammerstrom; and *More Than Blonds with Candles: The First Santa Lucia* in December with Dr. Samuel Torvend. These fall events were generously supported by our newest endowed account, the Edgar and Betty Larson Swedish Heritage Fund.

The spring series continued the momentum with three virtual sessions: *Navigating PLU Through a Changing Tide* with Provost Joanna Gregson; *Exposing the Untold Story of PLU* with Dr. Samuel Torvend; and *The Changing Spiritual Lives of University Students* with University Pastor Jen Rude. Each session addressed timely issues with depth and care, creating space for learning, dialogue, and connection. Registration regularly exceeded 50 individuals, with 20–25 typically attending live, demonstrating strong and consistent engagement. *Vocational Vistas* has proven to be a valuable way to extend the Center's mission beyond campus, strengthen alumni relationships, and broaden our reach to a wider public interested in questions of meaning, purpose, and vocation. The program will continue in the 2025-26 academic year.

The Wild Hope Center for Vocation's Operations Director co-instructed one section of an FYEP 102 course titled *Purposeful Living*: with the University Pastor Jen Rude during the spring semester of 2025. This four-credit course, now in its second year, invites first-year students to explore the intersection of meaning and purpose with the university's core commitments to diversity, justice, and sustainability (DJS). Through a combination of readings—including the textbook *How to Navigate Life*—guest speakers, interactive activities, and reflective assignments, students engage deeply with the concepts of vocation and DJS, defining each using both university language and their own evolving understanding. Informal course evaluations collected through a Google form indicated strong student engagement: 19 of the 23 students responded, all of whom found the course helpful. Their feedback included thoughtful suggestions for improvement and overwhelmingly affirmed that they would recommend the course to other students.

## **Program Review**

### **Internal Program Review of the Wild Hope Fellows Program**

As part of our ongoing commitment to program assessment and growth, the Wild Hope Center for Vocation initiated an internal review of the Wild Hope Fellows program during the 2024–25 academic year. The review was conducted by Dr. Stephanie Johnson, Dean of the College of Liberal Studies, and included interviews with current and former Fellows, the campus pastor, guest presenters, the Operations Director, and the Director for Vocational Reflection, who convened this year's cohort. The outcome of the review is still pending as we await formal recommendations. However, several recurring themes and concerns emerged during the review process, including the relatively high cost per student (\$1,000), challenges in securing firm commitments and managing scheduling, and a lack of clarity around the final project or culminating outcome. We anticipate that future recommendations may include incorporating a service component to encourage outward-facing engagement, and clarifying expectations for how Fellows can actively share and practice vocational reflection across campus. In order to thoughtfully redesign the program in response to the review, we decided to pause the Wild Hope Fellows program for the 2025–26 academic year.

### **Activities of the 2024–25 Wild Hope Fellows Cohort**

This year's cohort of eight Fellows began to address some of these anticipated areas by incorporating both service and peer engagement into their experience. In the fall semester, the Fellows volunteered together at the weekly community meal hosted by Campus Ministry and Trinity Lutheran Church—an opportunity to live out vocation in service to others. In the spring, they extended their vocational exploration outward by organizing and leading “vocation drop-in hours” for fellow students. Working in pairs, each team hosted two sessions designed to create welcoming spaces for conversation around meaning, purpose, and discernment. During these gatherings, they shared insights from their own journey, facilitated discussion, and offered tools and resources for reflection. More than 50 students participated in these peer-led sessions, marking a significant step toward embedding vocational conversation within the student community.

### **Internal Program Review of the Wild Hope Essay/Video Contest**

As part of a broader effort to strengthen student engagement, the Center conducted a review of the Wild Hope Essay and Video Contest during the 2024–25 academic year. A subcommittee of the Wild Hope Advisory Committee—Jes Takla, Karmen Taylor-Brown, Bridget Yaden, and Amy Stewart-Maihiot—led the review, with input from FYEP Director Paul Sutton on how to better involve first-year students. The committee made several thoughtful recommendations, including renaming the contest to the [\*Student Voices on Vocation Contest\*](#) to better reflect its purpose and appeal. To lower the barrier to entry and encourage wider participation, they proposed a two-step process: students would first submit a brief proposal for a project and, if accepted, would then complete the full submission and receive prize money upon completion. This year, we challenged students to explore the theme of sustainability and ecological flourishing and express how their sense of vocation (meaning, purpose, or calling) shaped and inspired them to engage with these critical issues. The range of accepted formats was expanded to include essays, videos, and art projects. Funds were set aside to ensure equal opportunity for first-year and returning students, with four prizes designated for each group. While only two students submitted proposals this year—both first-year students—their work was exceptional. [\*Mahnoor Iftikhar submitted an essay, and Christian Georgi\*](#) contributed an art project. Both students were honored at the Wild Hope Banquet, and their projects were showcased on the Center’s website.

### **Other Center Sponsored Events and Priorities**

July - VLHE conference

As part of its ongoing engagement with the broader landscape of Lutheran higher education, the Wild Hope Center for Vocation participated in the 2024 *Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education Conference*, held July 8–10 at Augsburg University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This annual gathering convenes staff and faculty from across the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities to explore the unique role Lutheran institutions play in the world of higher education. The 2024 conference theme, “*Educational Access: Lutheran Roots, Contemporary Practices,*” invited participants to reflect on how historic commitments to equity and inclusion continue to shape contemporary institutional priorities.

The Wild Hope Center sent a five-person team, including the Director for External Relations, the University Pastor, the Operations Director, faculty member Dr. Michael Artime, and staff member Austin Beiermann, Director for Accessibility and Well-Being Resources. Also in attendance were the Director for Vocational Reflection and the Assistant Vice President for Diversity, Justice, and Sustainability, both of whom served on conference panels highlighting PLU’s work at the intersection of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Lutheran higher education. Austin Beiermann led a well-received workshop on access for neurodiverse students, adding a vital dimension to the conversation on educational inclusion. The Operations Director served on the conference planning team and, during the wrap-up meeting, proposed the theme of *ethical leadership* for the 2025 conference. Participation in this event strengthened PLU’s connections across the ELCA network and reaffirmed the Center’s leadership in shaping vocational and justice-oriented learning in higher education.

### **August Open House**

During the faculty fall pre-conference workshops at the end of August the Center hosted an open house to uplift one the relocation of the Wild Hope Center to a new, dedicated space in the University Center. This was one of the most visible and symbolic initiatives completed this year.. Now centrally located and adjacent to Campus Ministry, the Center is both more accessible to the campus community and better positioned to collaborate with key partners whose work aligns with our mission. This move represents a significant step forward in institutional visibility and Integration.

### **May Wild Hope Banquet**

The Wild Hope Banquet serves as a celebratory culmination of the year's work. Students, staff, and faculty come together to recognize and honor the shared commitment to vocational exploration, with donors invited to witness the transformational impact of their support. This annual event reflects the pan-university nature of Wild Hope initiatives, drawing together voices and stories from across campus. At the 2025 Banquet, we honored the contributions of the Wild Hope Fellows, members of the Wild Hope Advisory Committee, the *Student Voices on Vocation* contest winners, and the Center's generous donors.

New this year was the presentation of the inaugural *School of Business and Wild Hope Scholarship*, which recognizes students who embody PLU's values of developing a global perspective and the Wild Hope Center's commitment to human and ecological flourishing. The scholarship supports students who demonstrate a passion for personal growth, intellectual curiosity, and vocational exploration. Two \$2,000 awards were given—one to a transfer student and one to a student who entered PLU as a first-time, first-year student. This year's recipients were Bao Ngoc Nguyen and Hiro Nagahama-Sequera. They were recognized at the Banquet on May 7, 2025, adding a meaningful new dimension to the celebration and affirming the importance of vocational discernment in action.

### **Drop-In Sessions for Faculty**

The center hosted two drop-in sessions for faculty in their second year at PLU. The first was an in-person session on November 5, and the second was a virtual one on November 8, 2024. They were attended by very few faculty (3 total) even though more faculty had responded positively to the invite. This led us to think differently about our programming for AY 25-26. (Please look at bullet point 2e below).

### **NetVUE Partnerships**

We are very intentional in cultivating and strengthening our relationship with NetVUE since such partnerships can be mutually beneficial. Thus, we pursued several opportunities for collaboration. For example:

- We approached Emily Davidson and encouraged her to join the team working to transculture the NetVUE cards for Vocational reflection for Spanish speakers. The final

product will be available in Fall 2025. Dr. Davidson found her work with the team both professionally enriching and inspiring.

- We offered virtual consultations to colleagues across the country who work on Vocation initiatives for their Universities (e.g. Furman, Bethel University, etc.,).
- Tony applied to a colloquy on writing vocation to which he was not accepted (however campus pastor Jen Rude was accepted to it). Tony also applied for a seminar on Leading Vocational Exploration on campus, to which he was admitted.

## **PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR AY 25-26**

The following initiatives are being proposed by the Center's Leadership. These initiatives will be reviewed by the Provost during one of our standing meetings in the Fall-term followed by the advisory committee. Once reviewed, revised and approved by the Center leadership, they will be posted on the Center's website.

### **1. Fundraising and Fiscal Stewardship**

- a. We are preparing for Bjug Day of Giving in October 2025. We are increasing our donor base among those who have frequently participated in Vocational Vistas. We will be inviting friends of the Center to consider the inclusion of the Center in their wills.
- b. We remain in communication and close collaboration with NetVUE for new grant opportunities for Ay 2025-26 and beyond.

### **2. Program Development and Implementation**

- a. WH Fellows - We hope to redesign this program based on Dean Johnson's review and recommendations and in consultation with the WH advisory committee.
- b. Meant to Live - We hope to relaunch this program for AY 25-26 based on Katie Hay's review and ideas.
- c. Faculty Seminar - We will bring back the WH Faculty Seminar for AY 25-26. Tony attended the NetVUE seminar on Leading Vocational Exploration and will lead the PLU seminar, Laree will serve as a co-facilitator.
- d. Scriptural Reasoning - Scriptural Reasoning is a Vocational discernment practice deployed by NetVUE across the country. PLU will serve as a Scriptural reasoning hub for NetVUE from June 3-5 2026 and we will train scholars and clergy from the region. This initiative is launched in close partnership with the Religion Department and Nick Adams from NetVUE.
- e. Three FLCs
  - i. 2nd year TT faculty - focused on preparing for a 3rd year review
  - ii. 2nd year visiting faculty - focused on creating a teaching philosophy
  - iii. Open to all faculty - focused on the book *Life After Doom* by Brian McClaren

### **3. Collaborations and partnerships**

- a. ELCA congregations - In the absence of a dedicated congregational engagement or church relations staff member, the Wild Hope Center for Vocation and Campus Ministry will collaborate to support ELCA congregations through shared programming, resource development, and relationship-building. Together, they offer workshops, pulpit supply, and vocational discernment opportunities that connect the university's mission with the needs of local churches. This collaboration helps sustain PLU's longstanding commitment to the church while fostering meaningful connections between congregations, students, and campus leaders.
- b. NetVUE collaboration - Tony agreed to participate in a NetVUE working group with faculty across the country in order to develop resources for new institutions on the topic of Inclusion and Belonging. This work is scheduled to happen over the Summer and Fall of 2025.
- c. NetVUE training - We are in contact with several colleagues (both staff and faculty) whom we encourage to apply for and attend seminars designed by NetVUE.