

Wild Hope Center for Vocation
Pacific Lutheran University
Annual Report | Summer 2020

OVERVIEW

This was a significant year for the Wild Hope Center for Vocation marking shifts in leadership, programming initiatives, and future planning. Laree Winer began her work as a full-time Associate Director, and Sergia Hay began as Director after a sabbatical term in Spring 2019. This year, particularly prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, the Center experienced increasing demands for one-on-one vocational mentoring; although this has always been part of the Center's work, the increase in volume was exceptional. New opportunities for working in partnership with New Student Orientation, New Faculty Orientation, New Faculty Development Workshops, among other new initiatives brought greater Center visibility. Additionally, this was the first full academic year of the Center's physical presence in Nesvig. We anticipate that the ongoing pandemic and urgent need for racial justice will necessitate even more thoughtful community conversation about individual and institutional vocation, and the Center stands ready in its commitment to support and promote this important work.

1. CENTER MISSION AND INITIATIVES

In Fall 2017, the Wild Hope Steering Committee ratified the work of a writing sub-committee who were tasked to develop a statement of our understanding of vocation:

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 crisis, 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 relationship*, 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. All of these groups matter 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.

In order to further this vital work, the steering committee in conjunction with the Center's leadership team, agreed to focus their efforts on two primary initiatives for the 2019-2020 academic year. These efforts will be evaluated and assessed and brought to the steering committee for recommendations moving forward.

1. Embed and integrate the language and work of vocation throughout the university. We hope to achieve this by employing the following strategies:
 - a. Increasing collaboration between divisions and departments.
 - b. identifying avenues to integrate vocation into the curriculum and co-curriculum.
 - c. Increase the Center's visibility and social media presence.
2. Explore and pursue avenues to increase the Center's funding streams.
 - a. Identify and pursue relevant grant opportunities through partner organizations such as the Lily Foundation, CIC, and NetVUE.
 - b. Cultivate donors who would be interested in contributing to specific programs or increasing the Center's endowment.

2. LEADERSHIP

Executive Leadership

Sergia Hay (Director)

Laree Winer (Associate Director)

Marit Trelstad (Director, Vocational Reflection)

Steering Committee

Kevin Andrew (Alumni & Student Connections)

Mary Duvall (Advancement)

Ralph Flick (Business)

Joanna Gregson (Provost)

Catherine Ha (Business)

Kendall Jeske (Congregational Engagement)

Michelle John (Vocation Intern)

Rona Kaufman (English, FYEP)

Kristin Menson (Community Engagement and Service)

Patrick Moneyang (French)

Jen Rude (Campus Ministry)

Jes Takla (Campus Life)

Joanna Royce Davis (VP Student Life)

Center Leadership

In September 2019, Dr. Sergia Hay began her three year term as the faculty Director for the Center for Vocation. This follows a year of interim leadership by Dr. Hay in 2018 and is the first year of implementing a new leadership model that includes the first full time Associate Director.

- The Director position comes with two course releases.

- The Associate Director, currently Laree Winer, is now supported full time with funding from the Wild Hope budget and the Office of the Provost.
- The Director of Vocational Reflection is the Chair in Lutheran Studies, currently Dr. Marit Trelstad, and receives one course release for Wild Hope work (in addition to the two course releases that accompany the position of endowed chair in the Religion Department).
- The Vocation Program student intern receives an hourly wage. The VPI for the 2019-2020 was Michelle John, a former Wild Hope Fellow and senior social work major.

3. WILD HOPE PROGRAMS, SPONSORED EVENTS and PARTNERSHIPS

The 2019-2020 academic year provided many new opportunities for partnership and collaboration. These new initiatives are indicated below with an asterisk. In true discernment fashion, the center leadership paid attention to where vocation was rising up on campus and invested in those opportunities. It is worth noting that some programs such as EXPLORE! were retired. Consequently, Wild Hope will no longer serve on the First Year Experience Committee to represent this specific program.

New Faculty Orientation*

At the invitation of Provost Gregson, the Wild Hope Center co-sponsored New Faculty Orientation with members of the Provost's Office on August 28 & 29, 2019. This partnership provides a unique opportunity to frame orientation within the vocation of the university (its educational mission), the vocation of teaching, (scholarship and service), and each faculty member's vocational journey. This new partnership enriched the orientation process for 34 new faculty members to the university and provided a robust introduction to the PLU history and culture.

The Center will take the lead in planning for NFO on August 26 & 27, 2020 again with the invitation and partnership of the Provost's Office. This will call for flexibility and innovation as we navigate orientation in the midst of the global pandemic. The assessment data gathered at the conclusion of the orientation will also be used to inform the schedule and topics for the 2020 orientation.

New Faculty Development Workshop Series*

In addition to New Faculty Orientation, the Center co-sponsored and facilitated [two workshop series](#) for the new faculty cohorts. The 2018-2020 cohort (22 members) and the 2019-2021 cohort (34 members) met monthly in fall semester (Sept. - Nov.) A joint session was held in October on the topic of best practices in teaching. The cohorts were scheduled to meet three times in spring semester (Feb. - Apr.). The February workshops were delivered. The March and April sessions were cancelled when the university went to remote learning in early March. The consensus was that all faculty members needed time and resources to focus on on-line learning for the remainder of the academic year.

New Student Orientation

At the beginning of each academic year all new first year and transfer students are introduced to vocation or “purposeful learning” (the *PLU 2010* designation of vocation as one of three “Pathways to Distinction”). Vocation is embedded throughout NSO beginning with the President’s welcome and followed by a presentation on Lutheran Higher Education and a story telling session given by five current PLU students. Next, on September 7, 2019, Sergia Hay, Laree Winer, and student Michelle John gave a presentation to 415 of the incoming transfer and first-year students.

On February 5, 2020, Terri Farrar, Laree Winer, and student Emily Whitaker participated in NSO for 58 new transfers and presented on the value that vocational discernment adds to a PLU education. This presentation was given in the Nesvig Alumni Center and in collaboration with Alumni and Student Connections. The resources available to students in Nesvig were highlighted along with some important information regarding state and federal work study. Students gave high marks to the vocation presentation in their evaluation of the orientation program.

Chocolate Trail

Dr. Hay meets monthly with other Center Directors to plan for, collaborate and support the work of the other campus Centers. On September 20, 2019 the Wild Hope Center participated in the annual Chocolate Trail event to introduce students to Center locations and staff. Over 50 first year students came to the Nesvig Fireside room to learn about the resources available, meet the Wild Hope Fellows and the Vocation Program Intern, and center leadership. Chocolate smores trail mix was enjoyed by all and participants were the first to receive the new vocation sticker designed by the Vocation Program Intern and sign up for the Center’s new instagram account.

Residential Life*

Associate Director Laree Winer collaborated with Community Directors Dan Murray and Zac Rakke to infuse vocation content and discernment activities into the monthly all staff meetings for resident assistants. The RAs read articles, watched videos, and completed reflection activities designed to encourage both personal growth and development as well as provide tools for working with residents in their communities. Zac Rakke was also instrumental in referring students to the Wild Hope Fellows program.

Wild Hope Fellows

This is the sixth year in which the Center has sponsored the Wild Hope Student Fellows. The goal of the program is to establish a cohort of PLU juniors who would spend a semester studying the origins and meaning of vocation and then, in the second semester, work on projects to cultivate vocational reflection among PLU students. Five students were accepted into the 2019-2020 cohort, based on faculty nominations, acceptance by the steering committee, and interviews with Wild Hope leaders: Joey Grabosksi, Matthew Horton, Rayna LaFave Clark, Becca McInally and Won Shin. Marit Trelstad, Director of Vocational Reflection, and Laree Winer, Associate Director of the Center, led the yearlong program. Fellows met for an hour each week and received a small stipend distributed at the end of each semester. The

Fellows read and wrote about a series of articles, participated in robust seminar conversations, and completed related learning and reflection activities over the course of the academic year. The Fellows do not meet during the January Term.

Each cohort serves by engaging with and supporting the Center programming and Center supporting events, for example, Meant To Live, President's Scholarship Weekend, the Majors/Minors fair, and Calling All Lutes. In addition, Fellows are required to complete a final project. Unfortunately many Center events were curtailed or cancelled due to the move to on-line learning in the wake of the COVID-19 virus and the Governor's stay at home order issued in March. The Majors/Minors fair and Calling All Lutes were among those events cancelled due to restrictions on gatherings. However, the Fellows were able to fulfill the requirement of a final project by participating in the annual Wild Hope essay/video contest. Fellow Matthew Horton was awarded second place.

Here is what two of the Fellows had to say about their experience:

"I truly enjoyed the Wild Hope Fellowship. I think I got the most personalized growth out of the fellowship than any of my classes at PLU. It has made me think more about the purpose of my actions and whether that is helping me lead a more meaningful life for myself and others. It has really inspired me to try my best to live a life of fulfillment rather than just getting by." -- Won Sin, Junior Biology Major

"Not only was being with the fellows the highlight of my week, it was a place of grounding to better discern my vocation and my philosophy around vocation. The core impact being a fellow had on me was understanding the importance of community, asking big enough questions, and thoughtful inquiry." -- Rayna LaFave Clark, Junior Nursing Major

Dr. Trelstad and Laree Winer received over 40 faculty and staff nominations for the next cohort of Fellows. All nominations were invited to interview for a place in the next cohort and 31 students accepted the opportunity. Following interviews 10 students were chosen to participate for the 2020-2021 academic year and make up the largest and most diverse cohort to date. They will read a book together over the summer and begin meeting virtually or in person on September 11, 2020.

Meant to Live

Since 2006, Wild Hope has sponsored Meant To Live for students and alumni during Homecoming Weekend. A student-led initiative, the Class of 1958 funded the Meant To Live project in 2008 with a generous gift. Wild Hope leadership and students work with a PLU division or school to bring a speaker and panelists to discuss their vocational journey with students majoring or minoring in an academic discipline. This is significant in that it links one dimension of the Wild Hope charter - vigorous intellectual engagement - with vocational discernment.

The 2019 Meant To Live event took place on October 4, 2019. The Center collaborated with the Division of Humanities to cap off the first Humanities Day held by the Division. It drew an enthusiastic group of 23 alums and 21 current students to a reception on the second floor of the

Hauge Administration Building where each department was represented. Following this reception, graduating seniors in each of the disciplines represented in the Humanities were invited to have dinner with alumni who were working in various fields. Students were seated with alums in their field/major. Reflection and question prompts were provided for each table and ample time was given for discussion.

Plans to collaborate with the Division of Natural Sciences for Meant to Live 2020 have been postponed until the following academic year or until it becomes possible for the university to host larger gatherings. Instead, Meant to Live 2020 will likely focus on response to current national and global issues including the pandemic and racial injustice with the hope of bringing together current students and alumni who are engaged in this work.

Staff Seminar

The Wild Hope Staff Seminar is one of the longest running and most popular initiatives sponsored by the Center: each year more staff members apply for admission to the cohort than positions available. Were the Center to have increased funding for additional seminar leaders and stipends for participants, the seminar could be offered twice in one year (\$20,000 for two seminars). At the present, our ability to serve the large number of staff members who seek to participate in the seminar is not possible. Nearly 130 staff members have participated in the seminar to date.

A cohort of 10 staff and administrators was selected from another large pool of applicants and were led by faculty and steering committee member Dr. Patrick Moneyang and Associate Director Laree Winer. Dr. Mary Jo Larsen, Associate Dean for the Department of Education shadowed them with the intention of serving in the facilitator role in the coming academic year. The 2019 - 2020 cohort included Melannie Denise Cunningham (Campus Ministry), Sandra Hensely (Facilities), Brant McAdams (Athletics), Andrea Michelbach (University Relations), Jasen Nieves-Herrera (Residential Life), Ron Noborikowa (Student Financial Services), Elli Pippin (Alumni and Student Connections), Jessica Roswell (Athletics), Christopher Samp, (University Relations), and Sharon Templeton (Residential Life). Note that Jessica Roswell left PLU in July of 2019 and the decision was made not to replace her in the cohort.

Participants met monthly beginning in June with an all day retreat and ending in January with a final project presentation. Topics included an introduction to vocation, the Lutheran understanding of vocation, the vocation of a student, vocation and mentoring and listening, vocation and values, and vocational reflection. Each month seminar participants read articles chosen by the leaders and two members of the cohort led a discussion for the group. In addition, there were opportunities to hear from guest presenters and an intentional focus on applied learning for the monthly topic. Guest presenters included: Eva Frey, Dean of Students; Jen Rude, Campus Ministry; a student panel; a panel of faculty and staff doing diversity and inclusion work; Samuel Torvend, Wild Hope Center for Vocation, on reflection in American culture.

Peer Mentoring Cluster for Faculty of Color*

In AY 2019-2020, Dr. Agnes Choi (Religion) facilitated a Peer Mentoring Cluster for Faculty of Color that was co-sponsored by the Wild Hope Center for Vocation and the Office of the Provost. This was the second year of a program that Dr. Choi piloted the previous year with great success. Faculty members Roberto Arteaga (Library Services), Rene Carrasco (Hispanic Studies), Catherine Ha (Business), Cathleen Kim (Education), Xin Liu (Business), and Lathiena Niervo (Biology), were enthusiastic participants. This yearlong program gave participants the opportunity to examine challenges facing faculty of color at PLU and develop personal and institutional strategies to discern and navigate such challenges. Through reading, writing and conversation, members of the cluster were able to express their experience and frustrations as faculty of color in a largely white university, how the philosophy of Lutheran higher education might support faculty of color, and the support needed for faculty who frequently experience isolation. In her year-end report, Dr. Choi notes that the work of the cluster was met with considerable gratitude by participants and that applications for a third cohort have been received. Previous cohort members have expressed a desire to continue as a group in order to support each other and new colleagues. The experience has been so formative and valuable that the wish to do so even without an additional stipend. This year's financial support for the cluster was \$8,500. Unfortunately the Center does not possess adequate funding to be able to sustain this level of financial support in the coming year and can only commit to \$2500 moving forward. Our hope is that the university would continue to prioritize this work. For details on meetings, readings, and outcomes, please refer to [Dr. Choi's report](#).

Student Employment*

The Center, together with Student Employment, hosted a breakfast [workshop](#) for the supervisors of student staff on Tuesday, November 5, 2019. Over 50 campus supervisors registered and attended. An updated [student employment supervisor handbook](#) was reviewed to which Wild Hope was a contributor. Associate Director Laree Winer led the workshop in best practices for hiring, interviewing, supervising, and mentoring students through a vocation lens. Assistant Director Karen McMahon, continued with policy updates and revisions. Participants were highly complimentary in the post workshop [survey](#). Karen has since departed PLU and a new Assistant Director, Penny Craig, was hired for Student Employment. Laree has since met with Penny and plans to continue this valuable collaboration are already underway.

Wild Hope Essay/Video Contest*

The third annual [Wild Hope essay contest](#) added a new component this year. Video submissions were also encouraged and solicited. The theme of the contest, Calling All Lutes to Serve was designed to compliment the planned Day of Service as part of the Center for Community Engagement and Service's spring programming calendar. Unfortunately the Day of Service was cancelled due to restrictions posed by COVID-19. However, the contest continued and the focus shifted to a joint promotion between the Center for Community Engagement and Service and the Center for Vocation. CCES students participated as part of their learning and professional development. The Center received 8 essays and one video submission. [Sophomore Sophia Barro took first place, junior Matthew Horton earned second place](#) with Deanna Hobbs and Tess Olson receiving an honorable mention. Students were honored at the virtual

Celebration of Service on May 14, 2020 and their work was posted on the Center's web page and Instagram accounts.

Working for Change Panel

The Wild Hope Center for Vocation has historically partnered with the Center for Community Engagement and Service to host the Working for Change Panel, a dinner and discussion about service opportunities for students after graduation. The event typically centers around a panel conversation by PLU alumni who have recently had working experience with the Peace Corps, Americorps, Lutheran Volunteer Corps, or other national and international service work programs. The Wild Hope Center Director welcomes people to the event and moderates the panel. This year's event was held on Tuesday, October 29 at 6pm in AUC Regency Room.

Reflection Opportunity from WHCV and Campus Ministry*

The rapid shift to remote learning during the spring semester created a challenging and disorienting environment for many in the campus community. The Wild Hope Center for Vocation, in conjunction with Campus Ministry, offered some [resources and a series of three online conversations](#) with the purpose of creating space for reflection and group discussion. Online conversations were held on April 28, April 30, and May 5. This opportunity was shared in the Provost's newsletter.

Curriculum Integration*

Two faculty members, Dr. Neal Yakelis and Dr. Mark Mulder and one staff member, Rachel Haxtema incorporated specific vocation content into their courses this J-Term and spring.

Staff member Rachel Haxtema taught a spring seminar titled *Meaningful Work*. This seminar was designed to assist students as they experience an internship or research experience or work on campus by helping them to examine the context of their work and research, reflect on academic connections to their major and other areas of the Humanities, and explore and build the professional skills they are gaining in and through this experience. Through active engagement, critical thinking, reflection, small group discussion, class speakers and short reflection papers, students will make connections between academic questions, theories and work. Students learned about and developed the four career competencies that employers most value: Problem Solving and Critical Thinking, Oral and Written Communication, Teamwork and Collaboration, Professionalism and Work Ethic. Vocation was a thread throughout the course with a specific emphasis on storytelling and narrative writing, reflection, goal setting, and future planning and discernment. The Center assisted Rachel with course planning and resources as well as promoting the course to students.

Dr. Yakelis taught a J-term course for Chemistry Majors (Chem 410: Introduction to Research) that incorporated elements of vocational reflection and activities designed to spur thinking about meaning and purpose and a chemistry degree. The class also held one session in Nesvig where they were introduced to the Center's resources by Associate Director Laree Winer and VPI Michelle John. They also received a brief presentation on vocation as well as a presentation from Alumni and Student Connections on Career Development and Internships.

Dr. Mulder taught a spring semester course for Business majors (INOV 350: Innovation Seminar). The course used design thinking to think about end of life care. There were three group projects for this course including a team looking specifically at vocation. Dr. Mulder invited students to consider "not only "what do I want to do with my one wild and precious life," but also "what do I want to do in my one wild and precious end-of-life." Considering how conversations that make thinking about life from looking back, as well as forward, could be one possible path. Considering what a "good life" and "good end-of-life" looks like might be another. Considering how and when to have conversations, and how to allow students to become more comfortable thinking about this, is one goal. Thinking about natural paths is another, such as perhaps the path is not initially about them and their journey, but perhaps about supporting others in their journey (love, empathy, compassion, support, care) could be ways that this generation sees as 'building skills' to love others through an end-of-life journey, which then could also have ripple effects for their own thoughts and preparation. This project was labeled Vocation: University, or VOC:U to have some naming consistency amongst the projects. This project has the potential to be a national model that integrates vocation, student life, alumni, etc. and one that will be shared on a national resource website for consideration by other campus programs/staff. Dr. Hay and Laree Winer were interviewed by students and supported them in thinking about vocation as part of this process. They were present when the students presented their final projects virtually and were impressed by their thoughtful consideration and integration of vocation in their work. Dr. Mulder has since notified the Center that the *New York Times* is interested in hearing about this course and the work of PLU students!

Center for Student Success*

Associate Director Laree Winer intentionally invested throughout the 2019-2020 academic year in developing the partnership with the Center for Student Success. On August 9, 2019 she led a 90 minute Vocation 101 workshop for the academic advising staff. She provided foundational knowledge concerning vocation, updates on the center space and resources, and tips on how to incorporate vocation into advising conversations, particularly for the undecided student. New first year students received two prompts and filled out "Wild Cards" during New Student Orientation. These cards were returned to their academic advisors and served as a basis for starting the vocation conversation with advisees prior to registering for J-Term and Spring courses and/or declaring a major. Students also received the new sticker created by the Vocation Program Intern with the Center's contact info. As a result of these conversations, many students were referred for discernment sessions with Laree. Before moving to remote work, she held 23 individual student sessions. This is significantly more than the two or three sessions held in previous years. As a result of this work, Laree will manage a caseload of 50 to 60 advisees in the coming academic year. This group will be made up of first year and sophomore students who are still deciding on a major.

4. CENTER FUNDING and INFRASTRUCTURE

In its 2007 application for a supplemental grant from the Lilly Endowment, university leaders – the president, vice president for finance, and Wild Hope directors – promised the Lilly Endowment that PLU would work in its next capital campaign to endow the Program, soon to be a Center established by faculty vote. The Wild Hope Steering Committee prepared a detailed

description of every existing initiative and those it hoped to establish with additional funding from the campaign. Each initiative included a financial breakdown of the cost to support the initiative and the amount to endow the initiative. This catalog of Wild Hope initiatives was forwarded to the Office of Development (recently Advancement, now University Relations). Public literature for the campaign, *Engage the World: The Campaign for PLU*, included Wild Hope as a university initiative to be funded by the campaign. The campaign was concluded in 2012. Unfortunately, no funds were allocated to Wild Hope even though the program was included as one of three Pathways to Distinction (“Purposeful Learning”) in *PLU 2010*. Nor were funds allocated to the Center when the university received its largest gift of \$15 million, given by alumna Karen Hille Phillips.

Residual funds from the Lilly Endowment, a generous gift from Linda Knutzen Barbo and her spouse, Charles Barbo, gifts from PLU alumni John Aakre and Cynthia Michael, John Rosenberg and Nancy Farren, members of the Wild Hope Steering Committee, and the restricted gift from the Class of 1958 to fund the Meant To Live conference have thus supported Center initiatives. Wild Hope leaders and members of the Steering Committee clearly recognize that student exposure to vocational discernment supports *student retention* at PLU, staff understanding of and *commitment to the educational mission* of the university, and faculty ability to serve as *mentors of vocation in the disciplines* both in and outside the classroom. At the same time, PLU alumni and ELCA congregations request workshops on vocational discernment. The desire of the Center to broaden and deepen programming within the university and begin new initiatives external to the university is great but also hampered by limited funding. Gifts in the amount of \$4 million would establish an endowment capable of broadening this most distinctive element of university life. In 2009, Lilly leadership noted that of the 95 schools receiving Lilly funding for the exploration of vocation, the Wild Hope program at PLU ranked in the top five for its suffusion of the vocational discernment throughout the entire university, a discernment rooted in the egalitarian, democratic, and liberal arts tradition of Lutheran higher education.

We look forward to that day when such an endowment expands the Center’s ability to support student retention and vocational discernment, staff engagement with the university’s mission, faculty ability to serve as mentors of vocation, and alumni and congregational requests for workshops on vocation in a changing social landscape. In the meantime, Center leaders diligently seek opportunities for funding the work of Wild Hope and to that end spent a great deal of time working with the steering committee to identify and develop two grant proposals to be submitted for consideration by NetVUE and that if awarded would provide funding for two specific projects (see below) in the spring of 2021.

NetVUE Grants

The steering committee and Center leadership agreed to respond to the call for two NetVUE grants and split into two writing and project development groups. Each group met monthly to brainstorm and develop projects as well as develop content for each proposal. Work continues over the summer by center leadership and the Center will submit proposals for both the [Grant for Reframing the Institutional Saga](#) or GRIS and a [Program Development Grant](#) or PDG. Director Hay will lead the GRIS and Associate Director Winer will coordinate the PDG. The deadline for the GRIS proposal is August and the PDG proposal is due September 11, 2020. If

funded, the GRIS will offer \$40,000 and the the PDG \$50,000 over a two year period beginning in May of 2021.

The GRIS project focuses on producing a book with a working title of “Reflecting and Reforming: Wild Hope and Big Enough Questions for Challenging Times” that integrates Lutheran Higher Education principles, diversity, and vocational reflection. We intend for this book to serve as a resource for our university community, other ELCA institutions, NetVUE partner schools, as well as individuals who are interested in personal and institutional reflection, especially/including during international and national crises. This book will chronicle our particular historical situation during a global pandemic, national social unrest, and climate crisis. It will provide an occasion for our university members to think together about how our institutional identity and our commitments to prepare students for lives of thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership, and care are shaped by this context. The format of the book will involve a series of vocation-based questions developed and posed by university members; each question will then be addressed by 2-3 of their mentors from all sectors of the university, to include other students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni. The book will also include historical documentation and commentary about other moments of crisis faced by the university community, such as the 1918 flu pandemic, the Kent State shootings, and the economic crisis of 2008, in order to show the endurance of our institution and its calling through challenges and changes.

The PDG proposes to create a “Vocation Institute” using the frameworks of the PLUTO institute and the staff seminar. This project acknowledges and builds on the great work faculty and staff across the university are already doing. Many faculty and staff already integrate vocation into their work with students. The “Vocation Institute” seeks to formalize, deepen, broaden, and coordinate those efforts. A group of faculty members from each division and school as well as several key co-curricular staff members have agreed to serve on the project development and implementation team and would take the lead in developing the institute’s curriculum.

Vocation Program Intern*

Senior and social work major Michelle John was hired as the [Vocation Program Intern](#) or VPI for the 2019-2020 academic year. Her contributions were invaluable in getting center infrastructure up and running and developing and maintaining the student connection. Michelle worked an average of 6 - 8 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters. She transitioned to remote work along with the rest of the center staff in early march. Her end of year [report](#) details her most noteworthy accomplishments including, but not limited to presentations, administrative work, web-site and social media updates and the famous vocation sticker. Michelle earned the [Vocation award](#) from the Student Life Division presented virtually on May 23, 2020. Michelle had this to say about her Wild Hope experience both as a Fellow and then as the VPI:

"The Wild Hope Center for vocation has truly helped me define what it means to be a Lute. Because of Wild Hope, I am confident that I will be able to center care, relationships, and thoughtful inquiry as I leave PLU, and I am endlessly grateful that this has been a defining piece of my college experience." - Michelle John, Social Work Major class of 2020

The VPI position has been restructured into three different positions for the 2020-2021 school year. Applications were received and interviews were conducted and out of a competitive pool Becca McNally, a senior social work major, was selected for the Administrative VPI position. Subsequently candidate Rayna LaFave Clark, a senior nursing major, was selected for the Peer Mentoring VPI position and Emma Christensen, a junior music education major, was selected as the Meant to Live VPI. All positions start in late August 2020 and will follow the university requirements regarding remote work as necessary.

Center Office and Visibility

The Wild Hope Center was welcomed to the newly renovated Nesvig Alumni Center in Spring 2019 and now has space on the upper level with Congregational Engagement and Alumni Lifelong Learning. This is a salutary development, as Wild Hope had no office for the first 16 years of its existence at the university. We are grateful to Mary Duvall, Associate Vice President of University Relations, for her considerable work in welcoming Wild Hope to the Nesvig Center.

In January of 2020, the Center contracted with former student Josh Wiersma for a five part video series to be filmed in spring semester. The project would include four one minute short videos of students talking about vocation from a variety of different perspectives as well as identifying some of their big enough questions. Another longer 2-3 minute video of the center space, some of the staff and faculty members on the steering committee and the Director and Associate Director sharing the resources available was also scheduled. Unfortunately this project had to be tabled temporarily following the move to remote learning. The Center is currently in the process of re-imagining this project in light of social distancing protocol and hopes to resume production this fall.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sergia Hay
Laree Winer