

SPIRITUALITY, MEANING AND WORK AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS:
A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF COLLEGIATE PROGRAMS FOR THE THEOLOGICAL
EXPLORATION OF VOCATION

By

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ABSTRACT

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Developing purpose and preparing for a career are significant developmental processes that students experience in college (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Most students wrestle with questions of meaning and purpose in college, and many struggle with career indecision (Parks, 2000; Connor, 2008; Osipow, 1999). Recent studies show that spirituality, faith and religion play important roles in the lives of many students (HERI, 2004-2005). Current polls show that job satisfaction among workers in the United States is at an all time low (The Conference Board, 2010). Helping students to make connections between their beliefs and values (religious, spiritual or otherwise) and their vocational choices may set them up for a more fulfilling, stable career and a happier life. The purpose of this research was to examine Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation (PTEV), designed to help students consider how personal values, spirituality and religious faith intersect with vocational choices and plans for college students.

Four programs at four different liberal arts colleges or universities were included in this original qualitative case study. Data were collected through document analysis and interviews during campus visits with PTEV staff, faculty, and students at all four institutions. Forty total interviews were included in the data analysis. Research questions were designed to uncover the methods of PTEV programs, as well as the meaning and impact on students. The goal of this research was to discover how participation in PTEV programs impacted students' identity, values, and future vocational plans. An additional goal was to gain insight on how secular

institutions can help students make career choices that are in alignment with their beliefs and values in order to prepare them for a fulfilling career.

This study produced findings that provide insight into the impact of these programs and the process of vocational discernment for PTEV students. A visual representation of the vocational discernment process for students in PTEV programs, which can be used as a means to guide students in the process of vocational discernment, is also presented. Exploring vocation and calling in the context of spirituality and community, gaining exposure to experiences that shed light on future career options, along with reflection and discussion were helpful to PTEV students who were on a journey of vocational discernment. Exploration of vocation and calling, in and out-of-class experiences, facilitated by reflection and discussion in a community and spiritual context lead to growth in self awareness (being) and knowledge of values (meaning) which, in turn, produced a greater sense of purpose and knowledge of future plans (doing) in most PTEV students.

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Chapter One

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Developing purpose and preparing for a career are significant developmental processes that students experience in college. Many students come to college with a sense of personal values, often founded on spiritual or religious ideals. During college, these values are often explored, examined and clarified. Studies show that spirituality, expressed by some as religious faith and others as a search for meaning in life, are important components of many college students' lives (HERI, 2004-2005). Spirituality and the path to career choice are often seen as separate topics. However, for many college students these concepts may be related. Moreover, having the opportunity to explore the relationship between spirituality and vocation as part of the college experience may help students discover their purpose and make career decisions that are more connected to their values and authentic desires. The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of specific programs designed to help college students consider how religious faith, spirituality and personal values intersect with vocational choice and career goals. This section begins by providing a statement of the problem, background and rationale of the topic, and description of the programs of focus. It should be noted that the literature used in this chapter to provide evidence for the background and rationale of this study is more persuasive than empirical in nature. Definitions of important terms for this paper including spirituality, faith, religion, worldview, vocation and calling follow.

Problem Statement

In order to better prepare students for a lifelong and fulfilling career that is consistent with their beliefs and values it would be helpful for educators to know how students' sense of meaning, purpose, spirituality and personal values such as religious faith may influence their

career choice and future career plans so that higher education institutions can make room for conversation and exploration around these issues. Learning about programs designed to help students think about the intersection of faith and vocation, what these programs are doing, and their meaning and effect on students is one way to increase understanding in this area. The purpose of this research is to examine particular programs designed to help students consider how personal values, spirituality and religious faith intersect with vocational choices and plans for college students. It was the goal of the researcher to uncover how participation in PTEV programs impacted student's identity, values and future vocational plans. My intent was to discover insight into how secular colleges can help students make career choices that are consistent with their spiritual beliefs and personal values in order to set them up for a fulfilling career.

PTEV Programs

Some schools have programs in place to help students think about their spirituality and/or religious faith as it relates to their career plans. In 1999, the Lilly Foundation provided funding to church-affiliated liberal arts colleges and universities to implement programs on the theological exploration of vocation (PTEV). The purpose of these programs was three-fold: 1) assist students in examining the relationship between faith and vocational choices, 2) provide opportunities for gifted young people to explore Christian ministry, and 3) enhance the capacity of a school's faculty and staff to teach and mentor students effectively in this arena (www.ptev.org/history). The focus of this study would be on the *first* objective listed above.

Looking at the nature of these programs along with their impact on students uncovered promising practices for educators in other contexts (non-church-affiliated schools) to support students in thinking about their personal values, spirituality and religious faith as they relate to

their future career plans. Exploring the goals and outcomes of the programs, along with components such as texts and required experiences revealed promising practices that could be adapted in secular settings. Of particular interest was how some of these programs engaged students of different faiths in conversations about the intersection of faith and vocation. Interviewing students about the meaning and effects of participation in the program, including the impact of the program on their career choice and future plans shed light on how students' personal values and beliefs are impacting their future vocational plans and would give insight into what components of the program were most helpful to the students. Although three of the four programs included in this study approach this topic from a Christian perspective, many of these schools have and affirm religious diversity in their student body. Further, one secular institution (church ties were severed in the 1950s) and one institution that affirms other religions and worldviews were selected for this study in order to uncover how these themes were addressed with students from a variety of faith backgrounds or students who do not identify with any faith tradition.

Background and Rationale

Considering a career direction is a process that most students go through in college. Students come to college expecting to choose and prepare for a career (Bok, 2006). In addition, most students wrestle with questions of meaning and purpose in college, and many struggle with career indecision (Parks, 2000; Connor, 2008; Osipow, 1999). Recent studies show that spirituality, faith and religion play important roles in the lives of many students (HERI, 2004-2005). Purpose and meaning in life are related to spirituality, and although the research is scant, some studies have shown a connection between spirituality, religion and career development among college students (Duffy & Lent, 2008; Duffy & Blustein, 2004; Constantine, Miville,

Warren & Gainor, 2006). These findings and connections are expanded upon in the literature review in chapter two of this document. All students hold personal values, many of these values are derived from students' worldview. Some students and administrators lament the lack of formal opportunity in college for students to make meaning and connections between their personal values and worldviews and their future career plans.

Students may be dealing with conflicting interests between the practical and the spiritual when working through career decisions. While it is assumed that the career choices of many students are motivated by extrinsic rewards such as money, it is possible that more is going on behind the choices that students make. Dalton (2001) stated, "Despite their much publicized desire for money and status, college students express great interest in helping others, finding a guiding philosophy of life, and contributing to their community" (p. 21). HERI (2008) recently found that college seniors reported the three most important considerations when choosing a career path to be having a stable, secure future, availability of jobs, and expression of personal values. The process of deciding what to do with one's life is deeply personal and complex, yet it is also universal in the sense that many people struggle with the same questions. College students need help to explore pragmatic concerns, such as how to support oneself, with concerns of value – choosing a career that is fulfilling and congruent with their personal beliefs and values.

Students may not have the guidance or foresight to consider how their beliefs and values fit into their career decision making process. As Derek Bok (2006) stated, "It is not an easy matter for many students to know their interests and values well enough to make a satisfying [career] match" (p. 286). Similarly, Dalton (2006) stated, "There is a big difference between preparing for a job and preparing for a productive and satisfying career" (p. 28). Psychologists have found a powerful link between the pursuit of a purpose and life satisfaction (Damon,

Mention, and Bronk, 2003). Damon, Meton and Bronk (2003) asserted, “The search for meaning and purpose is key to the fortuitous end envisioned by the positive psychology movement, such as authentic happiness, flow and creativity” (p. 120). Damon (2008) found lack of compelling purpose to be a core problem with today’s college students and the difference between young people who were thriving after college and those who were not. Surveys revealed only 20% of youth to be connected to their purpose (Damon, 2008). Work is an important part of most people’s lives, and often, is deeply connected to their identity. Gini (1998) stated, “We need work, and as adults we find identity and are identified by the work we do, if this is true then we must be very careful about what we choose to do for a living, for what we do is what we’ll become” (p. 17).

Encouraging students to consider their spirituality, beliefs and values would benefit students in their general development and career planning. Exploring identity and diverse possibilities in both ideology and work are central to development during emerging adulthood; a period of development during ages 18-25 (Arnett, 2006, 2000; Arnett & Jensen, 2002). Some feel that higher education hasn’t done enough to help students think about and explore the areas mentioned above. For example, in the *Wingspread Declaration on Religion and Public Life* (2005), higher education leaders urged colleges and universities to “be intentional about how they facilitate students’ search for public purpose, self-understanding, and spirituality” (p. 2). Astin (2004) believed that higher education is out of balance, focusing too much on outer development (science, medicine, technology, commerce, and the pursuit of money) and neglecting inner development (values and beliefs, emotional maturity, moral development, spirituality, and self-understanding). Dalton (2006) lamented, “there are, sadly, too few occasions during their college years when students are intentionally helped in connecting their

learning and development with their sense of spiritual calling” (p. 17). Bolles (2000) cited “the main obstacle in finding your mission in life: job hunting compartmentalized from our religion or faith” (p. 5). Damon (2008), who found a lack of purpose of be prevalent among today’s youth through his research, asserted,

Young people are rarely encouraged to identify a life calling for themselves. Rather, in a misguided attempt to be realistic, [young people are often counseled] to seek a vocation that will merely secure them a living, leaving the ideal of a calling as a figment of romantic fantasy (p. 42).

Damon believed that finding purpose is important for everyone. He wrote, “Every religious tradition advances the notion that the closer we come to God’s purpose for us, the more satisfied we shall become with our daily lives” (Damon, 2008, p. 45). Encouraging students to consider their beliefs and values in light of their future career plans may help them to connect to a compelling purpose, and therefore lead a more satisfying life.

Bok (2006) warned, “Denying vocational concerns any place in the curriculum will diminish the chance to help undergraduates think about their careers in terms broader than simply making money” (p. 282). He also stated that fundamental questions about personal values and priorities should be carefully considered in college—before making career decisions (Bok, 2006). Damon (2008) found that focusing on the “surface features of vocation” (such as fame and money) to be the root problem explaining why many young people are drifting and lacking purpose (p. 47). Dalton (2006) argued that institutions need to do more than provide professional training, and the emphasis on “empirical rationality and on professional and vocational preparation indeed can work against encouraging authenticity and identity, integrity and spiritual growth” (p. 29). Whyte (2009) stated that to find happiness, “We must at the beginning fall in love at least a little with our work. We can choose work on a mere strategic, financial basis, but then we should not expect profound future happiness as a result” (p. 73).

Integrating the consideration of personal values and passions into the career discovery process would be helpful in preparing students for a fulfilling career.

Perhaps a real life example would be appropriate. I have a friend with both a bachelor's and master's degree in engineering from a large research university, as well as an MBA from a highly ranked program at another research university. He currently does financial benchmarking for a large company. In a recent conversation, he expressed a desire to run for political office, but is not sure he can handle the pay cut that he would have to take to switch careers. I suggested he continue in his current line of work, build up his savings that so he can retire early, and pursue a political career at that time. He stated that he is bored in his current position, and wants to do something exciting and meaningful. I responded, "Oh, I get it, you want to feel like God is in it?" His response was yes, that is exactly what he is looking for. I wonder if his vocational path, and subsequent sense of fulfillment in his career, may have been different had he considered his passions, values and spirituality before choosing his career – and if he would possibly be more fulfilled in his career now.

Helping students to consider the intersection of spirituality and vocational plans would benefit not only the student, but society as well. Dalton (2001) argued that helping students to integrate their beliefs and values with their career plans would lead to more social engagement by students after college,

College students who are able to develop their moral convictions and integrate their beliefs into career choices and lifestyle patterns are likely to be active participants in social and civic communities...Higher education that ignores the spiritual dimension of learning and development not only inhibits students' quest for the good life but it makes it less likely that graduates will be engaged citizens willing to do the long and arduous work of creating a good society (p. 24).

Therefore, understanding how to aid students in their development of their beliefs and values would help educators in higher education who seek to graduate students who are civically

mindful and socially responsible. Further, helping students to make connections between their beliefs and values (religious, spiritual or otherwise) and their vocational choices may set them up for a more fulfilling, stable career and a happier life. To be clear, I am not advocating that higher education teach values to students, Rather, I believe it would be beneficial to provide a context to students to explore, discover, clarify and discuss their beliefs, values and sense of purpose and give students opportunities to think about how their beliefs, values and purpose connect to and are congruent or incongruent with their future career plans. In this way, educators can help students thrive in careers that will not only support them financially, but will also fulfill them.

Frameworks

Chickering and Reisser's *Seven Vectors of Identity Development* is a foundational theory useful in understanding the complex journey that college students take toward individuation. Individuation is defined as "the discovery and refinement of one's unique way of being" (Chickering & Reisser, 2005, p. 181). Initiated in 1969 and updated in 1993, Chickering's theory "suggested that the establishment of identity is the central developmental issue during the college years" (Evans, 2003, p. 181). The theory addresses both "intellectual and ethical development" and "feelings and relationships, which seemed to occupy center stage in the lives of students" (Reisser, 1995, p. 506). Chickering and Reisser proposed seven vectors that students move through as they are forming their identity: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity (Reisser, 1995).

This theory is not a stage or linear theory, but rather a map that can aid in determining "where students are and which way they are heading" (Chickering & Reisser, 2005, p. 181). Although not rigidly sequential, the vectors do build upon each other and movement from lower

to higher vectors brings greater skill, complexity and integration (Evans, 2003; Chickering & Reisser, 2005). The vectors are common to all in that they describe “major highways” in the journey toward individuation, yet are unique to one’s “way of being” and movement along any one of the vectors can “occur at different rates” and can also “interact with movement along the others” (Chickering & Reisser, 2005, p. 181).

According to the theory, educational environments, including programs and services, exert a powerful influence in moving students through the seven vectors of development (Evans, 2003). Chickering and Reisser (2005) stated that college will likely move students along the first four of the seven vectors. Therefore, college will naturally push college students to develop competence, learn to manage their emotions, move toward interdependence, and develop mature interpersonal relationships. Chickering and Reisser (2005) stated that in addition to movement along the first four vectors, college students “also experience greater clarity about purposes, values and ways of thinking” and “will expand their awareness of who they are” (p. 182). This theory is particularly salient to this study because it addresses the development of purpose as it relates to personal values and individual identity in the context of the college environment.

Participation in PTEV programs is likely to aid students in moving along the fifth, sixth and seventh vectors. The fifth vector, establishing identity, involves finding roles and styles at work that are “genuine expressions of self” and include defining oneself as part of a religious tradition (Chickering & Reisser, 2005, p. 188). Developing identity in college will enable graduates to find their place in work and the world and “bring fourth their best talents and contribute to the greater whole” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 208).

The sixth vector, developing purpose, is especially applicable to this research. According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), developing purpose involves assessing interests and options,

clarifying goals, and formulating vocational plans and aspirations. They also stated that “a strong commitment to a value or belief can determine purpose” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 234).

Vocation is used here to denote “a specific career” or a “broad calling” and is explained as “what we love to do, what energizes and fulfills us, what uses our talents and challenges us to develop new ones, and what actualizes all our potentials for excellence” (Chickering & Reisser, 2005, p. 188). Chickering and Reisser (1993) also asserted,

In clarifying purpose, we must therefore go beyond what is merely interesting and find an anchoring set of assumptions about what is true, principles that define what is good, and beliefs that provide meaning and give us a sense of our place in the larger world (p. 234).

Participation in PTEV programs is likely to help students discover and clarify their sense of purpose as well as vocational plans, and aims to help students integrate their values into their career planning.

The seventh and last vector, developing integrity, involves humanizing values (balancing self interest with the interests of others), personalizing values (affirming core values and beliefs) and developing congruence (aligning personal values with socially responsible behavior).

Developing integrity is “closely related to establishing identity and clarifying purposes. Our core values and beliefs provide the foundation for interpreting experience, guiding behavior, and maintaining self respect” (Chickering & Reisser, 2005, p. 188). Participation in PTEV programs will likely help students develop along these lines by providing them space and time to examine and clarify their values and beliefs and align them with future goals and behavior.

In addition to the understanding that can be gleaned from Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) theory concerning the development of identity, purpose and values among college students, Brewer’s (2001) *Vocational Souljourn Model* also provides an important framework for understanding the variables involved in considering spirituality and career choice together.

Brewer (2001) developed a model to express spiritual wellness in work. Although this model is based on years of observation and counselor experience rather than empirical research, and is not specific to college students, it nonetheless can aid in expanding one's understanding of the intersection of spirituality and work. Brewer's (2001) *Vocational Souljourning Model* explains how dynamic interactions of *meaning*, *being*, and *doing* can influence vocational paths. She stated, "intentional and deliberate effort on behalf of a personal sense of life's meaning (*meaning*); and unfolding, deepening sense of self (*being*); and purpose that drives action (*doing*) are what define the connection of work and spirituality" (Brewer, 2001, p. 83). Moving along a spectrum from a job to an occupation, then to a career and ultimately a vocation (work not for monetary reward, but in service to creation and in alignment with one's true self) depends on growth and balance in meaning, being and doing. The three variables of meaning, being and doing are parallel concepts of Chickering and Reisser's (1993, 2005) fifth, sixth, and seventh vectors of establishing identity (being), developing purpose (doing) and developing integrity (meaning). This model was intended to be used by career counselors to gauge where clients are in relation to a job, career or vocation and whether meaning, being and doing are in balance. It is not my intention to use Brewer's model to rate where students fall in the model. This model is used as a framework for understanding the variables involved in the intersection of spirituality and work and to further illustrate development along the lines of Chickering and Reisser's fifth, sixth, and seventh vectors. Asking participants in PTEV programs what they learned about their values (meaning, integrity), themselves (being, identity) and their purpose (doing) in relation to their future career plans can shed light on the impact of these programs in helping students intersect their spirituality with their career plans.

Two additional theories serve to illuminate the process of vocational discernment revealed by the findings of this study. Both Palmer (1990, 2000) and Waterman (1990, 2004), explained the importance of finding one's true self in developing purpose and finding direction in life. These theories, and how they illuminate the findings of this study, are explained in detail in Chapter 5. In addition, a brief description of each theoretical perspective is provided here. According to Waterman (2004), connecting with one's true self can bring about direction, meaning, and purpose. Growth in identity, as explained by Waterman (1990), "provides directionality to behavior because it embodies the goals, values, and beliefs deemed worthy of being pursued" (p. 64). Palmer (2000) illuminated the spiritual dimension of finding one's true self by explaining that it is God who plants the true self within us. Palmer (1990) described direction in life, or expressive acts, and those that emanate from one's true self (including one's convictions). Therefore, according to both Waterman and Palmer, finding one's true self, which includes one's beliefs and values, can lead direction and purpose in life. Both Waterman (1990, 2004) and Palmer's (1990, 2000) theories provide additional explanation into the dynamic interaction of meaning, being and doing, as originally described by Brewer (2001). The dynamic interaction of meaning, being, and doing, as they relate to the findings of this study, is explained in detail in Chapter 5 of this document.

The literature review in chapter two reveals that there are many factors that impact career choice among college students: relationships, professional experiences, personal values, interests, learning experiences and even self-reflection. In addition to the factors that impact career choice for college students, there is also much that is known about the factors in college that impact students. Relationships with peers and social communities are known to influence students' identity, psychosocial and faith development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Pascarella

& Terenzini, 2005; Kegan, 1994; Parks, 2000). Relationships with faculty and staff are known to positively impact academic achievement (Kuh, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Academic and social engagements on campus are known to impact retention and success (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993). Experiential, active and out-of-classroom learning are known to contribute to student learning and success (Steffes, 2004; Kuh, 2005; Bar & Tagg, 1995). Reflection and discussion are also understood to contribute to learning in college (Chickering & Gamson, 1994; McKeachie, 2002). These variables also impact the frameworks of this study as they are components of PTEV programs and were cited by students as factors that impacted their sense of identity, values and purpose.

Definitions

Many of the terms used in this document are quite vague and difficult to separate and define, such as spirituality, faith, religion, vocation, purpose, meaning, and calling. In this section, I attempt to situate these terms in the literature and illuminate my perspective on them, as well as provide definitions that are appropriate for this study. This attempt, however, does not negate the lack of clarity of these terms, and these definitions come with the caveat that study participants may have different ways of thinking about and defining these terms.

Spirituality, Faith and Religion

The lack of formal definitions for the terms religion and spirituality is a common problem addressed in much of the literature on these topics. Higher education scholars have acknowledged the lack of and need for common definitions in the literature on religion and spirituality (Lawrence 1999; Mayhew, 2004). Johnson, Kristeller, & Sheets (2004) noted that “One challenge facing researchers in these areas has been how to define and measure spirituality and/or religiousness. There are close to 200 published measures of constructs related to

religiousness and spirituality (Hill, 2003), many of which have seen only limited use (p. 4).”

Each study tends to define these terms differently, and these terms often hold different meanings for different people.

Love (2001) defined religion as a “shared system of beliefs, principles, or doctrines related to a belief in and worship of a supernatural power or powers,” and spirituality as “a search for meaning, transcendence, wholeness, purpose, and ‘apprehension of spirit’” (p. 8).

Rogers and Dantly (2001) described spirituality as the sense of being connected with oneself, others, the universe, and a higher power. Mayhew defined spirituality as “The human attempt to make meaning of the self in connection to and with the external world” (Mayhew, 2004, p. 647).

The role of the supernatural in defining spirituality is debated in the literature. Johnson et al. (2004) stated that for some, “A concept of the sacred is essential in defining spirituality...while others argue that spirituality can be completely atheistic and separate from any organized religious context” (p. 4). Helminiak (1996) believed that spirituality is a component of the human mind, therefore a basic part of the human condition. To Helminiak, spirituality is a psychological rather than theological topic and is not dependent on belief in God. However, Helminiak did not discount the role of belief in spirituality, but stated “this is not to say that belief in God is not or should not be part of the picture” (p. 6). On the other hand, Speck (2005) criticized attempts to separate spirituality from religion, stating,

...to make that work, spirituality is often defined in terms of personal commitment to “something”. However, personal commitment does not exactly fit the definitional bill because the *telos* of spirituality, according to those who ascribe to personal commitment to something, cannot result in that something being merely individual fulfillment (p. 6).

Dalton (2001) argued along similar lines when he stated,

The argument that spirituality is a kind of inner-directed feel-good movement that makes no moral claim on students, nor links them to some sense of sacred, is an important warning against using spirituality as a kind of ubiquitous self-serving therapy for students.

A spiritual quest that focuses primarily on self-definition and self-understanding fails to consider equally serious about relationships with others and the search for transcendence that are central to that quest (p. 23).

Terms such as transcendence, purpose, and meaning are often cited in definitions of spirituality, as well as the idea of a connection to oneself, others, and something larger than ourselves (Speck, 2005). While some believe that spirituality can be divorced from the supernatural, it is not the intent of this author to address spirituality as a purely secular concept that is separate from the transcendent or supernatural. However, this view may not be consistent with the views or experiences of all participants. I see spirituality as a broad concept that encompasses faith and religion, and is also related to authenticity, meaning, and purpose. For some, spirituality is expressed through faith and religion. For others, it is not. In order to accommodate both those who express their spirituality through faith or religion and those who do not, spirituality is defined here as a search for meaning and purpose as it relates to a connectedness with oneself, others, the world and beyond.

Faith is a term that was used by Fowler (1981) and Parks (2000), but is generally less common in the higher education literature. Fowler and Parks distinguished faith from religion and belief, yet Fowler's use of the term sometimes overlaps with religion and belief.

Parks described faith as how people make sense of the world and organize meaning, and explained how it differs from religion and belief. She stated, "Faith is often linked exclusively to belief, particularly religious belief. But faith goes far beyond religious belief... Faith is more adequately recognized *as the activity of seeking and discovering meaning in the most comprehensive dimensions of our experience*" and "faith is not simply a set of beliefs that religious people have; it is something that all humans do" (p. 7, p. 18).

In his stage theory of faith development, Fowler distinguished faith from religion and belief, claiming that faith is ultimately about how people make meaning of their lives. However, Fowler does seem to attach faith to some kind of higher power, given how he describes faith. Fowler describes faith as active and relational. Faith, therefore, involves alignment of the will and commitment of loyalty and trust, and there is always another in faith. Quoting Smith (1963), Fowler described faith and religion as reciprocal, and stated, "Faith is the most fundamental category in the human quest for relation to transcendence" (p. 14). In a later publication, Fowler (2004) said that "Faith is deeply related to the human need to find and make meaning, and to do so in a trusting relation to the divine Being and Spirit from whom creation issues" (p. 412). Given Fowler's explanation of faith, it is difficult to see how it can be only about meaning making, without some sort of connection to the spiritual. Further, Fowler states that in his earlier stages of faith development religion is not necessary, but faith in the highest stages of development (five and six) needs religion.

Critics of Fowler's theory question if it may be too heavily focused on the cognitive (Parker, 2006) and some have noted confusion concerning the term faith in Fowler's work. Ford-Grabowsky (1987) believed that Fowler's concept of the person was narrowed by "cognitive bias," focusing only on interviewee's thoughts and ignoring expressions of feelings (p. 80). Ford-Grabowsky (1987) believed that Fowler ignored the deeper self and was actually studying something other than faith.

To summarize, Fowler believed that faith is not necessarily religious, but stated that faith and religion are reciprocal. Faith at its highest stages needs religion. Faith at lower stages does not. Fowler's theory focused on the cognitive, not affective or emotive elements of faith.

For the purpose of this study, it was not my intention to separate faith from the spiritual or religion. However, one can indeed have faith (if it is defined in terms of trust, loyalty, or even belief) in anything. Although Parks defined faith as the way people make meaning, I would argue that the way people make meaning is more consistent (although not equal) with the term spirituality. I believe faith is often an expression of spirituality and/or religion demonstrated as trust in a higher power. Fowler discussed faith as trust, loyalty, and vision, an orientation of the total person, what or whom one sets their heart on. For purposes of this study, I will set faith within a spiritual or religious context. To elaborate, I define faith as a personal connection between a person and what or whom they put their trust in. Faith is defined here in terms of one's belief or trust in and sense of connection to God, a higher power or other as defined by the participant.

In providing definitions of spirituality, faith and religion, it is not my intention to address these terms as purely secular concepts that are divorced from God, a higher power, or the supernatural. Although religion and faith are not separate from the supernatural, spirituality, while encompassing the supernatural/vertical dimensions for many people, does not encompass supernatural dimensions for everyone. Therefore, I see spirituality as a much broader concept that encompasses faith and religion for some, but not necessarily for everyone. I do not want to intellectualize such terms and squeeze the meaning, emotion or even the personal out of them. Speck (2005) discussed spirituality as being natural or supernatural, individual or external. Ultimately, he described spirituality as being vertical, horizontal, or both. My view, to quote Pesut, would be grounded in a natural-supernatural worldview, "spirituality is conceptualized as having vertical and horizontal dimensions. The vertical dimension reflects the relationship to God or Supreme Being. The horizontal dimension reflects both our connectedness to others and

nature, and to our interpersonal connectedness...” (Pesut (2002), as cited in Speck, 2005, p.11). However, for some, spirituality has only horizontal dimensions. Given that spirituality can encompass one or both of these two dimensions depending on one’s perspective, I would define spirituality as a search for meaning and purpose as it relates to a connectedness with oneself, others, the world and beyond.

Temkin and Evans (1998) believed that religion is a subset of the broad concept of spirituality, and I tend to agree with this view. These terms involve some overlap and although they are different, they are sometimes used interchangeably. Stamm (2006) stated that religious authors believe that spirituality and religion are “inherently interrelated” and Americans often describe their religious experiences as spiritual (p. 47). She also explained that religion used to be more broadly defined, but now spirituality is taking that place and religion is becoming a more narrow definition (Stamm, 2006,). Spirituality was described as “a central an essential function of religion” but also something that can be experienced outside of the context of religion, and therefore a separate phenomenon (Stamm, 2006, p. 47). Merriam-Webster defines religion as “a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices” or “a cause, principle, or system of beliefs held to with ardor and faith” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/religion>). I believe that religion can give form to expressions of faith and provide a context for spirituality for those who choose to participate in it.

Since common definitions are not established in the literature, I provide my own definitions for the purpose of this study. These attempted definitions come with the caveat that there sometimes will be overlap between these terms as they are related, and that these terms may hold different meanings for study participants. **Spirituality** is defined as **a search for meaning and purpose as it relates to a connectedness with oneself, others, the world and**

beyond. Faith is defined in terms of **one's belief or trust in and sense of connection to God, a higher power or other as defined by the participant. Religion** is defined as **a set of shared beliefs, doctrines or practices, such as a particular tradition, denomination or sect.**

Worldview

Worldview comes from the Greek word for outlook. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition, 2000 defines worldview as “The overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world” and “A collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or a group.” Whutnow (1987) described worldview as consisting “of all the beliefs that an individual holds about the nature of reality” p. 45. In Mayhew's (2004) phenomenological study of student expressions of spirituality, he chose to use the term worldview instead of spirituality for students who were not comfortable describing themselves as spiritual or were not comfortable using faith-based or theological terms. This term is difficult to define, as it is vague by nature. I see worldview as a universal term that can be used to describe spirituality, faith or religious beliefs – one's foundational belief system or guiding perspective that influences how a person views, understands, and interacts with the larger world.

Vocation and Calling

Purpose in life, calling and vocation are also closely related terms that are not clearly defined in the literature. Both Moran (2001) and Molasso (2006) used Frankl's definition of purpose in life as “will to meaning.” Bolles (2000) stated that calling and vocation “are the same word in two different languages, English and Latin” (p. 6). Duffy and Sedlacek (2007) defined calling as an “external pull.” Hall and Chandler (2005) defined a calling as work that a person perceives and his or her purpose in life. Hall and Chandler (2005) believed that “A calling can arise from a set of religious beliefs or from an individual's sense of self and meaningfulness” (p.

163). Weiss, Skelley, Hall, and Haughey (2004) stated that vocation is what people believe they are called to do with their lives. They also stated that it has strong religious or humanitarian connotations, is determined by the individual and the community, and provides for the common good. Parks (2000) stated that “vocation conveys ‘calling’ and meaningful purpose” (p. 148). And Palmer (2000) believed that vocation is a calling that one hears, not a goal that one pursues. In reviewing the definitions of these terms presented in the literature, it is clear to me that these terms are related and often used in ways that are connected to the Divine or the supernatural.

Vocation and calling are often used interchangeably, and vocation is also used as a synonym for occupation. Chickering and Reisser (2005) use the term vocation to denote a “specific career” or a “broad calling” (p. 188). Merriam-Webster defines **vocation** as “a summons or strong inclination to a particular state or course of action; *especially*: a divine call to the religious life” and “the work in which a person is employed” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vocation>). Another enlightening definition of vocation includes, “the function or career toward which one believes oneself to be called” (<http://www.yourdictionary.com/vocation>). **Calling** is defined in a similar way as, “a strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action especially when accompanied by conviction of divine influence” and “the vocation or profession in which one customarily engages” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/calling>). Another useful definition includes, “one's occupation, profession, or trade” and “an inner urging toward some profession or activity; vocation” (<http://www.yourdictionary.com/calling>).

Parks (2000) discussed the importance of purpose and even destiny when advising those who mentor young people,

Vocation conveys “calling” and meaningful purpose. It is a relational sensibility in which I recognize that what I do with my time, talents, and treasure is most meaningfully

conceived not as a matter of mere personal passion and preference, but in relationship to the whole of life. Vocation arises from a deepening understanding of both self and world, which gives rise to moments of power when self and purpose become aligned with eternity (p. 148).

Palmer (2000) echoed a similar sentiment,

Vocation does not mean a goal that I pursue. It means a calling that I hear. Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am. I must listen for the truths and values at the heart of my own identity, not the standards by which I *must* live – but the standards by which I cannot help but live if I am living my own life. (p. 4-5).

Although the terms calling and vocation are often used as synonyms for one's occupation, they also hold deeper meaning for some people. Bolles (2000) believed that calling and vocation are really the same word, and that there is a divine influence involved in the discovery,

These, of course, are the same word in two different languages, English and Latin. Regardless of which word is used, it is obvious upon reflection, that a vocation or calling implies *Someone who determined the destination for us* (p. 6).

This research illuminates how both authors and students are wrestling with these concepts. I use the term vocation broadly to mean both career choice and/or sense of calling. The meaning of these terms is subjective and depends on how a person views their own career. In this study, the term vocation includes career choice and future vocational plans because these two variables are not always consistent. I asked participants to distinguish between their immediate after college plans and their future vocational plans. Asking students to take a long-term perspective of their career choice is an attempt to circumvent the potential conflict that an economic recession or other factors such as plans to attend graduate school may have on short term career plans. This approach provides space to hear from students who view their career plans as a job and for those who view it as a calling.

This study was guided by the following questions.

Research Questions

1. How did PTEV programs engage students in examining the relationships between spirituality or faith and vocation (both career choice and future vocational plans)? (Method)
 - i. How did they engage students of different faiths or of no religious perspective (if applicable)?
2. What changes do students perceive in their identity, values and career choices/future vocational plans as a result of participation in the PTEV program? (Impact)
 - i. What did they get out of participation in the program?
 - ii. How do students understand and make sense of their experiences in the PTEV programs? (Meaning)
 - iii. What did they perceive as most helpful?
3. How does the process of vocational discernment happen for students exploring the intersection of faith and vocation in PTEV programs?

Chapter Two

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

Literature on the intersection of spirituality and career choice is scant. However, in the research that does exist, connections between the two have been made. The literature that is available on topics of spirituality, religious faith, purpose, meaning, and career choice is a mixture of research and advocacy pieces. This review will utilize both types of literature. In addition to the literature cited in the definitions and rationale, this literature review will focus on career decision making; developing purpose; job dissatisfaction; spirituality and religion among college students; meaning in life, purpose, and values; the engagement of faculty and staff with these issues; student affairs values; meaning in work; careers of the future; and the connection between spirituality, religion and the career decision making process.

Literature Review

Career Decision Making

Career decision making is a process that most students wrestle with during college. The National Academic Advising Association reports that “undecided/exploratory students represent a significant proportion of the entering student body at most colleges and universities. Many other students (between 60% -75%) who begin university studies as declared in majors, change their majors at least once before they graduate” (NACADA, 2008). Career indecision is something that most adolescents face, and is thought to be a normal phase of the career decision making process (Osipow, 1999). Young adults have to make complex decisions at a time when their core personality is not fully developed (Feldman, 2003). In a society with an increasing amount of choice, young adults are often left overwhelmed and confused (Cote and Levine, 2002). Coupled with the idea that career indecision is developmental, it makes sense that many

students do not have the knowledge, experience, or self-awareness to make career decisions that will set a directional course for their future. Connor (2008) described two big questions that college student's face, "what should I do with my life?" and "what does 'higher' education have to do with my life?" (p. 1). Work affects everyone, as Gini (1998) pointed out, "Work, for 95% of us is an entirely non-discretionary matter" (p. 17). Whyte (2009) stated, "There is not shelter from the calls of work.The refusal to contribute, to find a work, a *métier*, a marriage of self and necessity, is seen as a deeply ingrained taboo by almost all societies" (p. 24). In summary, most college students engage in some process of deciding and choosing a career.

Factors of Career Choice and Career Decision Making.

There are many factors that influence students' career decision making process and their career choice. Brown (2004) stated that "Students' career decision-making processes can be influenced by a variety of people and experiences, in and out of class, on and off campus" (p. 375). HERI (2008) recently found that college seniors reported the three most important considerations when choosing a career path to be having a stable, secure future, availability of jobs, and expression of personal values. How personal values were defined in the study is not clear. Some of the factors known to influence choice of major, career decision-making and career choice include: family influence, relationships and social supports (Beggs, Bantham and Taylor, 2008; Berrios-Allison, 2005; Brown, 2004; Lent et al, 2002); interests (Tang et al, 2008; Lent et al, 2002); skills and abilities (Russell, 2001; Lent et al, 2002); experiences such as first jobs, other learning experiences, serendipity or chance events (Tang et al., 2008; Larkin, LaPort, Pines, 2007; Brown, 2004; Bubany, Krieschok, Black, McKay; Krumboltz), barriers that may close off one choice (Fouad, 2007; Lent et al, 2002), and work values and outcomes expectations (Tang et al, 2008; Lent et al, 2002). In addition to values and goals, peer interaction, learning,

and professional experiences, Gross (2004) found self-reflection to be an important part of the career development process of Latino American college students.

Research articles looking at spirituality, religious faith, or even personal values as factors related to career choice are scant. For many students, the process of career decision making leading to career choice is a very individualized process. Few studies sought to uncover the unique experiences or stories of career decision making and career choice from an individual standpoint. Some authors note that contextual factors, background, and unique experiences affect everyone's careers. Savickas (2005) stated that careers are constructed by past experiences, future dreams, and the active process of making meaning. The role of chance, unplanned events, crucibles and momentous events are all said to influence career paths (Bright et al; Krumboltz; Bennis and Thomas; Pillemer, 2001) but these details get missed by large, quantitative studies. In one study focusing specifically on chance events, the role of chance was found to influence the career decisions of 69.1% of high school and college students (Bright, Pryor, Harpham, 2005). Brown's (2004) study did seek to uncover, from a qualitative standpoint, how students might integrate the many factors of the post college decision making process through his wisdom model of development which includes one's orientation to learning, experiences, interactions with others, and environment. The orientation to learning condition of Brown's (2004) wisdom development model does include personal values such as a commitment to help others; however, the model does not seem to specifically probe spirituality or religious faith as they may relate to career decision making and career choice.

Developing Purpose

Developing purpose and preparing for a career are important developmental steps in the lives of college students (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Erikson, 1968). Students come to college

expecting to gain preparation for the world of work (AAC&U, 2002). Derek Bok (2006) stated that “undergraduates today are more likely than ever to feel that they must not only choose a career but also prepare themselves for a job while still in college” and three-fourths of entering freshmen regard preparing for a good job as “the *most* important reason for going to college” (p. 294, 281). Studies show that the number of college seniors enrolled in vocational programs has grown to 60 percent in recent years (Bok, 2006). However, studies also show that college students today are concerned with the meaning and purpose of their lives. For example, the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA surveyed over 112,000 freshman students from over 200 colleges and universities across the nation in 2003, and found that three fourths of these students say that they are “searching for meaning/purpose in life” (HERI, 2004-2005). Topics concerning spirituality and the search for meaning and purpose in life are salient issues for today’s college students. Parks (2000) described the twenty-something years of young adulthood as the time when most are making formative life decisions, asking questions of meaning and faith, and looking for place and purpose in the world. Dalton (2001) also believed that college students have faith in personal destiny and are looking to make a connection in college with their ultimate life purpose.

Job Dissatisfaction

Unhappiness in one’s career, or job dissatisfaction, is something that many people struggle with. Americans typically change employers every 3.5 years (Baumgartner, 2009). A 2008 Gallup study of 4.5 million employees in 12 industries found that “17 percent are *actively disengaged and trying to sabotage the company that pays them*. Another 54 percent are *passively disengaged*—feeling no emotional attachment to their jobs. The same poll found that one of every two wants to change jobs” (Harkness, 2008, p. 12). A recent survey conducted by The

Conference Board (2010) found that only 45% of Americans are satisfied with their jobs, and employees under the age of 25 expressed the highest numbers of dissatisfaction, which is an all time low for the survey. John Gibbons, a director of research at The Conference Board, stated “Challenging and meaningful work is vitally important to engaging American workers” (2010). Helen Harkness (2005), a career counselor who has worked with over 6,000 clients, stated that she talks “...daily with talented, successful adults who see themselves stalled in a meaningless, unchallenging, and sometimes even abusive work situation. They feel they have no choice but to stay put, regardless of the poor fit” (p. 143). Bok (2006) stated that “several professions long esteemed by college graduates are experiencing rising levels of discontent. From publishing and journalism to law and medicine, one hears complaints of diminishing autonomy and growing economic pressure to sacrifice professional values to the bottom line” (p. 287). When executives were asked about their career regrets, their number one lament was that they didn’t follow their dreams, “They went for money, prestige and lost the passion. It’s like they spent their lives on the corporate ladder and realized at the top that it was leaning against the wrong house” (Baumgartner, 2009). Damon (2008) recounted a meeting with a group of teacher education graduate students in their 30s and 40s who had left lucrative careers in law, medicine, and business. The main complaint was among the group was that “they never acquired a sense that they were doing something that really mattered to them. They felt empty and inauthentic” (Damon, 2008, p. 20). Clearly, evidence exists that a significant number of Americans are making misguided decisions when it comes to choosing a career.

Many are leaving lucrative careers to pursue options that are more meaningful and consistent with and personal values. A recent survey found that up to 8.4 million Americans between the ages of 44 and 70 have “already launched ‘encore careers,’ positions that combine

income with personal meaning and social impact” and of those surveyed who have not launched encore careers, 50 percent are interested in doing so (Hannan, 2008, p.1). Clergy positions are also comprised of many engaging in second careers. One survey conducted by Duke University found that 56% of current senior or sole pastors are in their second career (<http://www.pulpitandpew.duke.edu/careercomparison.html>). These statistics on career dissatisfaction highlight the importance of thinking about meaning, satisfaction, and even passion when choosing a career.

Spirituality and Religion

Spirituality in higher education, specifically its role in the lives of college students, is a research area that is gaining popularity in higher education literature. Chickering, Dalton and Stamm (2006) noted, “In recent years, at colleges and universities around the country, an expanding and increasingly vigorous dialogue has begun, centered on examining personal values, meaning and purpose—including religious and spiritual values—as part of the educational experience” (p.2). Although spirituality has become a topic of increasing interest in higher education circles, overall the higher education community has ignored the topic in the past. Chickering (2006) stated that higher education has neglected issues concerning spirituality, authenticity, identity, integrity, purpose and meaning. The role that spirituality plays in college student development has been largely ignored by student affairs professionals (Love & Talbot, 1999).

Statistics illustrating the saliency of religion and spirituality among college students abound. Participation in religious groups on campus has soared in recent years, and enrollment in religion courses at Harvard has skyrocketed (Kiely, 2001; Mahoney, Schmalzbauer, & Youniss, 2001). Mark Taylor (2006) noted in a recent New York Times editorial that, “More

college students seem to be practicing traditional forms of religion today than at any time in my 30 years of teaching.” The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA has studied spirituality in higher education on a national scale since 2003. They found that 58% of students surveyed in 2003 placed a high value on incorporating spirituality into their lives and 71% of students surveyed found religion helpful and claimed to trust in a higher power (HERI, 2004-2005). They also found that nearly half of students surveyed consider it “essential” or “very important” to seek opportunities to help them grow spiritually, and close to three-fourths report that they have discussions about the meaning of life with friends (HERI, 2004-2005). A 2004 poll by the Harvard Institute of Politics found that 35% of college students call themselves “born again” Christians (Calhoun, Aronczyk, Mayrl and VanAntwerpen, 2007). In a recent study of sixty-six introductory theology and religion courses at various types of institutions, a majority of students listed spiritual or religious development as their reason for enrolling in the course (Walvrood, 2008). Leaders in Higher Education recently composed the *Wingspread Declaration on Religion and Public Life* (2005) and stated, “Students want to use their time in college partly to find meaning and purpose in their personal lives and their academic studies” (p. 5). These statistics seem to show that exploring spirituality and religion and searching for meaning and purpose are important to many college students.

Meaning in Life, Purpose and Moral Values

It is the opinion of this author that meaning in life, purpose and moral values are related to spirituality. Whitmer and Sweeney (1992) believed that meaning in life and moral values are the building blocks of healthy spirituality. Young, Cashwell and Woolington (1998) found that many writers suggest purpose and meaning in life as a component of spirituality. Dalton and Crosby (2007) stated that “because religion and spirituality embody the personal search or quest

for meaning and purpose, they are aspects of students' lives that matter deeply to them. Religion and spirituality are, in fact, gateways to students' inner lives and reveal the things that they care about most" (p. 2). Further, Young et al (1998) found spirituality to be positively related to purpose in life and moral development among 152 undergraduate students surveyed. Royce-Davis and Stewart (2000) stated that the undergraduate years are a significant time for both career and spiritual growth. They also argued that when spirituality is included in the career development question, the outcome of career counseling shifts from making a decision to defining how career choice will satisfy an individual's expression of purpose (Royce-Davis & Stewart, 2000).

In sum, students are seeking to grow spiritually and discover meaning and purpose in college. Spirituality, the search for meaning in life and the path to career choice are often seen as separate topics. However, for many college students these concepts may be related. Moreover, having the opportunity to explore the relationship between these concepts as part of the college experience may help students discover their purpose and make career decisions that are more connected to their values and authentic desires. As of yet, the question of how college students go about discovering their purpose and future career plans in light of their beliefs and values has not been addressed. Constantine et al (2006) stated that "Few studies have explored the unique role of religion and spirituality in the career development process of the general college population" (p. 227). The role of spirituality, religion and faith in the career decision making process for students is only beginning to be explored. This research will uncover insight into the relationship between these concepts through examining the impact of specific programs designed to help students consider how religious faith, spirituality and personal values intersect with vocational choice and career goals.

Engaging Faculty and Staff

Studies show that many faculty and staff are interested in engaging in these questions and topics with students, but the academic culture hinders involvement along these lines. Astin (2004) believed that academia has encouraged faculty to lead fragmented and inauthentic lives, and to act as if they are not spiritual beings, or as if their spiritual side is irrelevant to their work. He felt that this imbalance leads faculty to discourage students from engaging in discussions of meaning, purpose, and authenticity with faculty and peers. Astin (2004) conducted personal interviews with 70 faculty members from four colleges and universities and found that they are eager to discuss issues of meaning, purpose, and spirituality. Stamm echoed Astin's views, stating that student affairs professionals, campus leaders, faculty and students are "calling for an exploration of ways to better integrate students' search for meaning and their spiritual quests with their academic preparation in the classroom and through campus activities" (Stamm, 2004, ¶ 1). Citing Astin, she pointed out that faculty are not given opportunities or encouragement from their institutions to engage in spiritual discussion with students, even though they are "enthusiastic about discussing issues of meaning, purpose and spirituality in their lives," (as cited in Stamm, 2004, ¶ 16). Miller and Ryan stated that student affairs professionals are "seeking an acknowledgement from faculty, administrators and staff that spiritual questions and concerns of students should be integrated with academic concerns as part of the learning environment, not excluded on campus as is generally the case" (as cited in Stamm, 2004, ¶ 17). These arguments and evidence demonstrate the desire of educators to incorporate spirituality into their professional lives and their work with students.

Student Affairs Values

Instilling ethical values and promoting social responsibility among college students are central values of higher education. In *Good Practice in Student Affairs* (1999), Dalton asserted, “Colleges and universities must play a greater role in helping to solve major societal problems by reaffirming their historic mission of character development and citizenship training” and “Concern for students’ values and ethical standards is as essential to student affairs practice as responding to fire alarms in the residence halls or confronting underage drinking at fraternity parties” (p. 46). He also stated that it is the responsibility of higher education to “teach values and behavior that prepare students for responsible membership in a democratic society” (1999, p. 50). Similarly, Derek Bok (2006) stated that “education is the obvious means to foster the civic commitment and intellectual competence that citizens need to participate effectively in public life” (p. 172). Dalton (1999) provides 13 recommendations for how colleges and universities can promote character development among students, one of those recommendations is to “support students’ religious expression and development” (p. 66). Furthermore, authors of the Wingspread declaration (2005) urged “colleges and universities to be intentional about how they facilitate students’ search for public purpose, self-understanding, and spirituality” (p. 2).

Supporting students in spiritual pursuits is not inconsistent with the values of higher education. Love and Talbot (1999) stated that failing to address students’ spiritual development is inconsistent with the concept of holistic development, as it ignores an important aspect of their development. They also argued that a failure to engage in discussions of spirituality and spiritual development may impede critical thinking, and contribute to foreclosure on the exploration of value-related issues and matters of spirituality (Love & Talbot, 1999). Dalton, Eberhardt, Bracken & Echols (2006) also made a strong statement regarding the importance of spirituality

in higher education. They stated, “any serious educational effort to foster the holistic learning and development of students in college must include serious attention to the religious and spiritual lives of students” (p. 16). In sum, spirituality and religion cannot be separated from holistic student development.

Meaning in Work

Meaning in work is something that many adults are searching for. Harkness (2008) stated, “From my decades of experience in career counseling, I can quickly verify that there is a growing demand from individuals for workplaces that offer meaning as well as money.” Seligman (2003) found that making money does not have much of an impact on personal happiness. In addition, a recent US survey found that “More than three out of five adults believe a greater sense of spirituality would improve their own workplace” (Pink, p. 215). Since 1995, Csikzentmihalyi, Damon, and Howard (2001) have studied “good work” in American professional life. “Good work” is explained as work that is both socially responsible and high in quality. Wax’s (2005) study investigating the ways in which professionals express their spirituality at work is featured as part of Csikzentmihalyi, Damon, and Howard’s good work project (<http://www.goodworkproject.org>). Given that researchers are investigating intersections of meaning, spirituality and work among those in the workforce, it makes sense to attempt to understand the spiritual dimensions of career choice among college students. Helping college students to integrate their spirituality and values into their career plans may aid them in making more satisfying career choices.

Careers of the Future

We are living in times of rapid change and a rapidly changing economy and workforce. Linear, left-brained approaches to career choice and planning may not continue to work for

many. A new approach to careers is needed for survival in the new economy. Harkness (2008) stated,

In this era of rapid change and uncertainty, our conventional, traditional career planning for success is archaic—as outdated as the slide rule or typewriter. The customary paths to career success—the linear corporate (go to college, get a job, move up the ladder and stay for forty years, retire to die!) and the steady-state path of the professional specialist (the doctor, lawyer, teacher, or engineer)—are absolutely over. Today the average career will likely include two or three occupations and multiple employers. Millions will spend time in self-employment, and 12 to 17 million will be in microbusinesses with four or fewer employers (Peters, 2003, p. 239). The spiral career path with significant changes about every seven to ten years—non-traditional and somewhat frowned upon in the past—is rapidly becoming the necessary new norm (p. xix).

Pink (2005) described the change in the type of mind and skills needed to survive in the future market. Rational, left-brained approaches are no longer sufficient to navigate the future world. He explained,

The last few decades have belonged to a certain kind of mind—computer programmers who could crank code, lawyers who could craft contracts, MBAs who could crunch numbers. But the keys to the kingdom are changing hands. The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind—creators and empathizers, pattern reorganizers, and meaning makers.... Today—defining the skills in the previous era—the “left brain” capabilities that powered the Information Age—are necessary but no longer sufficient. And the capabilities we once disdained or thought frivolous—the “right-brain” qualities of inventiveness, empathy, joyfulness, and meaning—increasingly will determine who flourishes and who flounders (p. 1, 3).

Pink (2005) described Meaning as one of six senses needed to survive in the new economy he calls the *Conceptual Age*. He offered two ways to pursue meaning: taking spirituality seriously and taking happiness seriously. Harkens also believed that surviving in the new economy demands knowledge of one’s authentic self, including spirituality:

Since a successful career on the edge of chaos must be based first on our authentic self, it is essential to gain insight into its qualities. The concept of the authentic self is holistic and includes the *intra-physic*—the soul, mind, spiritual aspect, and the unique, individual characteristics of the whole person. Without this personal integration and the insight eventually matched with the opportunities and challenges of the world we live in now and in the near future, careers run a high risk of never being really satisfying or successful (p. 26).

Moreover, Pink (2005) stated that spirituality is a fundamental part of modern life, the new economy, and the human condition. He stated,

Across many different realms, there's a growing recognition that spirituality—not religion necessarily, but the more broadly defined concern for the meaning and purpose of life—is a fundamental part of the human condition. Indeed, our capacity for faith—again, not religion per se, but the belief in something larger than ourselves—may be wired into our brains (p. 212).

If, as Pink believed, the capacity for faith is “wired into our brains,” it seems logical to help students integrate their capacity for faith into their future plans (Pink, 2005, p. 212). Even the fields of medicine and business have started to take spirituality more seriously. More than 50 medical schools in the U.S. have incorporated spirituality into their coursework, and companies that aligned their goals with acknowledged spiritual values outperformed those that did not (Pink, 2005). Pink (2005) even predicted that the future will “see a continued rise in spirit *as* business—commercial ventures that help a meaning-seeking population slake its craving for transcendence” (p. 215). Seligman (2003) stated that enjoying one’s job will soon “overtake material reward as the principal reason for working” (p. 166). The new economy will demand a different set of skills and values from those seeking both success and fulfillment.

What does all of this mean for higher education? It means that educators may want to consider implementing ways to help students think about their faith or spirituality, values, purpose, and meaning as they are planning their future in order to prepare them to navigate a rapidly changing world. Connor (2008) stressed the importance of not marginalizing religion in higher education,

In an age of intensifying religion, at home and abroad, non-sectarianism may be fine, but secularism provides a very inadequate basis for finding our way in the world in which we live. By secularism I mean the systematic marginalization of religious thought, language, insights and practices from the intellectual and educational functions of a college or university (p. 4).

Work is an important and consuming part of life, and it is important to help students consider it holistically. Whyte (2009) stated, "...work and life are not separate things and therefore cannot be balanced against each other except to create further trouble" (p. 12). Helping students discover their purpose in light of what they value would be a worthwhile effort in preparing them for life after college.

Spirituality, Religious Faith and the Career Decision Making Process

Spirituality, and/or religious faith are likely to play a role in the career decision making process for many students because these concepts are connected to the discovery of meaning, purpose, and calling for many people. Some researchers have confirmed the link between spirituality, religion and the discovery of purpose among older cohorts. For example, Mattis (2002) found that religion and/or spirituality helped African American women in their 30s discover their life purpose or destiny. In a study on the influence of spirituality of career behaviors, spirituality was found to influence the ongoing process of sense-making and career purpose for men and women between the ages of 40 and 50 (Lips-Wiersma, 2002). Spirituality and religion, then, have been found to impact meaning making and purpose for people in their post-college years.

There have also been some connections made between religion and spirituality and career development among college students. Duffy and Lent (2008) found that religious support may convey messages that influence the formation of values and vocational interests and inspire a sense of calling in college students involved in religious organizations. Through interviews of 12 African American college students, Constantine, Miville, Warren, and Gainor (2006) found that many of the students interviewed believed God had a unique plan for their lives though career choice. Duffy and Blustein (2004) found that undergraduate students who "have a strong

spiritual relationship with a higher power and are religious due to intrinsic motivation tend to be more confident in their ability to make career decisions and are open to exploring a variety of career options” (p. 429). When asked to respond to an open-ended survey question about the role that religious beliefs and values have played in their selection of a major and potential career choice, about 60 percent of college students from both a religious and secular institution indicated that there was a relationship between the two (Browne, 2001). Students in Browne’s study were selected in a way that would purposely gather students who might be influenced by religion. The few empirical studies published on the intersection of religion, spirituality and career development among college students do confirm a link between these variables. To my knowledge, the role of religious faith and spirituality in the career decision making process has not been thoroughly explored in an in-depth manner among college students. One way to begin this research is to look at programs, and their impact on the students who participate in them, that are designed to help students actively explore the relationship between spirituality or religious faith and vocation.

Chapter Three

CHAPTER THREE

Problem Statement

Students come to college with particular beliefs and values. Many desire to discover their purpose and choose a future career. In order to better prepare students for a lifelong and fulfilling career that is consistent with their beliefs and values, it would be helpful for educators to know how students' sense of meaning, purpose, spirituality and personal values such as religious faith may influence their thoughts about vocation and their career choices so that higher education administrators can move towards making room for conversation and exploration around these issues. Learning about programs designed to help students think about these issues, what these programs are doing, and how participation in these programs affects students would aid in gaining this understanding. The purpose of this research is to examine particular programs designed to help students consider how personal values, spirituality and religious faith intersect with vocational goals and choices for college students. My goal in conducting this research was to uncover how participation in these programs influenced students' identity, values and future vocational plans. I also aimed to discover insight into how secular colleges can help students make career choices that are in line with their spiritual beliefs and personal values in order to prepare them for a fulfilling career.

This study was guided by the following research questions.

Research Questions

1. How did PTEV programs engage students in examining the relationships between spirituality or faith and vocation (both career choice and future vocational plans)? (Method)
 - i. How did they engage students of different faiths or of no religious perspective (if applicable)?
2. What changes do students perceive in their identity, values and career choices/future vocational plans as a result of participation in the PTEV program? (Impact)

- i. What did they get out of participation in the program?
 - ii. How do students understand and make sense of their experiences in the PTEV programs? (Meaning)
 - iii. What did they perceive as most helpful?
3. How does the process of vocational discernment happen for students exploring the intersection of faith and vocation in PTEV programs?

Methodology

Research Design: Multi-Case Study

A qualitative case study approach fits the design of this study because it involves clearly identifiable cases and I sought to provide an in-depth understanding of the cases or a comparison of several cases (Creswell, 2007). In addition, this approach fits with the research questions and the context. According to Yin (2003) "...case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a "contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (p. 1). This research design includes a bounded system that examines a specific phenomenon, the PTEV programs at liberal arts colleges and universities (Merriam, 1998). In addition, Merriam (1988) stated that qualitative case study research "is an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena," particularly educational programs and "innovations" that can improve practice and inform policy (p. 2; p. 32). Multi-case studies are often preferred over single-case studies because they have the potential to lead to more robust findings or replication of findings (Yin, 1993). For these reasons, a multi-case study was chosen as the design for this research study.

Context

The context for this study (and the unit of analysis) was programs for the theological exploration of vocation (PTEV programs). A more detailed explanation of these programs is included in Chapter 1 (page 9).

Participant Selection and Sampling

Purposeful sampling techniques were used to select institutions for this study. Merriman (1998) described purposeful sampling as the most appropriate sampling strategy for qualitative case studies. Liberal arts colleges and universities that still have active PTEV programs were selected for participation in this study. Programs for the theological exploration of vocation were funded by the Lilly Endowment at 88 colleges and universities across the United States to implement programs designed to help students examine the intersection of their faith and vocational choices.

Creswell (2007) recommended no more than 4 or 5 cases for multiple case study research. Five total cases were chosen for this study. One program was chosen to pilot the study, and four were chosen as study participants. Four programs provided adequate information for both within-case and across-case analysis. Stake (2005) recommended choosing programs from which one can learn the most, stating “that may mean taking the one most accessible or the one we can spend the most time with.” (p. 451).

Programs were chosen from schools that represent different religious or denominational perspectives in order to gain a variety of perspectives from participants. Almost all of the 88 schools that received grant money from the Lilly Endowment for PTEV programs are church-affiliated institutions. Although these schools have all been founded by churches from the

Christian religion, I aimed to choose schools that are inclusive of other faiths and religious perspectives in their student body and in their interactions with students.

Institutions were chosen based first on their ability to represent a variety of religious and/or denominational perspectives for this study. A second criterion for inclusion in the study was that the programs address the first objective of the Lilly Endowment: assist students in examining the relationship between faith and vocational choices. A third criterion was to find programs that were robust and diverse in their offerings to students. I also tried to limit my choices to programs that had an identifiable set of students who had participated in a significant and diverse amount of program offerings and experiences. In addition, I aimed to choose schools that would offer diverse educational and cultural perspectives. Accessibility to the researcher was also considered in choosing programs, as were recommendations from various PTEV directors and administrators consulted as I was researching programs. This set of criteria offers both redundancy and variety in the cases, both of which are important in choosing sites in a multi case study (Stake, 2005). Initial research was conducted by examination of individual PTEV and college or university websites to determine whether or not they had the potential to meet the above criteria. Phone meetings with directors were then conducted to gain more information about the mission, goals and participants in the program to determine fit with the study objectives.

I initially selected two programs and waited until site visits were complete before choosing the second two programs. This strategy was suggested by the dissertation committee so that I could pick the last two programs in a manner to best satisfy the sampling criteria, fill out my study, and answer my research questions. The first program selected for study takes a pluralistic approach to faith by embracing all religions and faith perspectives (as well as atheists

and agnostics). This program was selected for the study in order to gain participants from various faith traditions and backgrounds. The second program chosen is a Catholic-Jesuit institution. This program was chosen based on recommendations from other PTEV directors, and to represent the Catholic tradition, with which many Americans identify. After visiting the first two programs, I felt I needed more diversity in the spiritual, religious and/or faith perspectives of the students. Therefore, the third school was chosen because of its very loose church ties (the campus is considered secular) which was different than the previous two schools. The fourth school was chosen because it is a completely secular institution (it severed their church ties in the 1950s) and the institution does not approach its programming from any faith perspective (whereas the other three are all anchored in a Christian perspective of some sort). A detailed description of each program is included in chapter four. To collect data for this study, I personally visited each school, spending three to four days at each one. Below is a brief summary of the data collection sites:

- Quaint College: Liberal Protestant, large metropolitan area, almost 3,000 students
- Jesuit University: Catholic-Jesuit, urban area, almost 12,000 students
- Elite University: Mainline Protestant, very loose church ties (considered secular), but vibrant religious life, highly selective, academic area, 13,000 students
- Eclectic University: Secular, both liberal arts and vocational education are offered, metro area, approximately 4,500 students

Data Collection

Data collection for a case study must involve multiple sources of information, therefore interviews and review of program websites and documents such as course syllabi, brochures, and other documents were used to collect data (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003).

Websites, documents, syllabi, interviews

Websites and documents such as brochures were used to gain descriptive and background information on schools and programs. Interviews were used to gather in-depth information and to hear the stories and experiences of participants. The same interview protocols were used for each site and each participant. Syllabi, student reflections, student papers, program assessments, program brochures, publications and other documents were used when available to provide both descriptive and in-depth information about the programs and the experiences of the students. Because each program was unique, with the exception of the individual interviews, the data collected at each school differed depending on what was available from that program. For example, at Quaint College, I was able to attend a session of an academic course offered by the program. At Jesuit University, I was able to review student essays for a final exam (with identifying information on the student removed beforehand). Some schools had publications that included student reflections; some did not.

Interview Participants

A combination of purposeful and snowball sampling methods was used to recruit interview participants for the study. I asked program directors to identify traditional undergraduate students who were either juniors or seniors and had experienced significant and diverse involvement with the institution's PTEV program. I also asked them to identify additional staff members and faculty members (if applicable) who were involved in the PTEV

program. Participants were recruited by email invitations sent out by the PTEV program directors on my behalf and copied to me. I then followed up with each potential participant to request a time to interview them at their convenience. I was able to recruit a significant number of students at each school who fit the above criteria. In addition, I did interview one or two students in the total sample from all four schools who were either sophomores or may not have had as much involvement in the respective PTEV program as the other students interviewed. After reviewing my interview notes, I determined that these interviews were not significantly different from the others and decided to leave this small number of students in the sample.

At Elite University, a substantial number of current undergraduate students declined the invitation to participate in the study, but three students (included in the invitation email sent by the director and copied to me) who had graduated the previous May and were either in their first year of graduate school at the same institution (two participants) or living and working in the area (one participant) volunteered to participate in the study. Upon reviewing my interview notes and transcripts, I determined that these interviews were also not significantly different than the others and leaving these voices out of the study would detract from the depth of information gathered. Therefore I determined that including these interviews would enhance the study, and decided to do so. Elite University also offered a one year live-in program for recent graduates designed to help them discern their vocation. I interviewed three of these students, and although their interviews were incredibly deep and rich, I decided that their experience was different enough from the experience of the undergraduates to potentially leverage the outcomes of the analysis away from the true undergraduate experience (which is the focus on this study). Therefore, those three interviews were not included in the data analysis for this project. Interview participants were given an information form and asked to self-identify demographic information,

which is summarized below. Participants were also asked to choose a pseudonym, which I have used in place of their real name in the presentation of the finding in order to protect their identity.

Interview participants:

- **Quaint College:** 10 interviews total (7 students, 3 staff), 6 female, 4 male, 4 persons of color, all Christian – Protestant (4 matched denomination of school, 6 total denominations represented)
- **Jesuit University:** 11 interviews (7 students, 3 staff, 1 faculty member) 6 female, 5 male, 8 Catholic, 1 Christian (non-Catholic), 1 Unitarian Universalist, 1 Spiritual
- **Elite University:** 9 interviews (7 students, 2 staff,) 5 female, 4 male, 3 persons of color, all Christian (5 different denominations listed, 2 identified as just “Christian”)
- **Eclectic University:** 10 interviews (7 students, 2 staff, 1 faculty member) 8 female, 2 male, 1 person of color, 5 Christian (1 Catholic), 2 Buddhist, 1 Jewish, 1 no religion practiced

Data Analysis

I compiled and analyzed data from website, documents, and interviews to provide a background and description of each individual case. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Once all of the data were collected, I compiled a case record of the raw data collected from each site, and organized the data from each case into topical categories (Merriam, 1998). After each site visit, I composed a summary of my field notes and initial impressions from each school (Huberman & Miles, 1994). Creswell (2007) recommends both within-case analysis (a detailed description of each case and themes within the case) and a cross-case analysis (thematic analysis across the cases). Yin (2003) recommends treating each individual case as a separate study and aggregating findings across the individual studies. Therefore, I organized and analyzed the data within each case first. Once each within-case analysis was complete, I conducted a cross-case analysis.

Rossmann and Rallis (2003) defined analysis in qualitative research as a “process of sorting, categorizing, grouping, and regrouping the data into piles of chunks that are meaningful” (p 271). In analyzing the interview and other data, I looked for common themes regarding the meaning, methods and impact of participation in PTEV programs both within the cases and across cases. I also looked for commonalities both within and across cases as to what provoked thought, conversation, change, growth or reflection regarding students’ identity, values, and purpose. In addition, I looked for common practices within and across the programs that impacted students’ sense of identity, values and purpose as well as their career choice and future vocational plans.

To determine the themes, I read through the data from each case to get a sense of the case as a whole (Merriam, 1998). I then re-read the data from a sample of transcripts from each case,

making notes in the margins to identify repetitive words, themes and meaning units. In doing this, I made sure to set aside any pre-conceived notions on what I might find. I was careful to stay close to the data, and not let my views or knowledge from conducting the interviews interfere with the data from the transcripts. From these notes I compiled a list of meaning units, small pieces of information that were then sorted into categories into which subsequent data were then sorted both within and across cases (Merriam, 1998). Once the common themes and practices were organized into meaning units, I analyzed and sorted them into categories, which became the themes I used to code the rest of the data. An initial list of codes was developed inductively, from the raw transcript data (Boyatzis, 1998). Additional codes also emerged during the coding and analysis process. This process is consistent with qualitative research, as “the traditional approach in the social sciences is to allow the codes to emerge during the data analysis” (Creswell, 2009, p. 187). Qualitative coding software (NVIVO) was used in order to keep the coding and subsequent themes organized and easily accessible.

Once the data were coded and the themes were organized, I conducted an additional analysis in order to best determine how to arrange and present the findings into a narrative account (Merriam, 1998). I also conducted an additional level of analysis to interpret the data by stepping back from it to form larger meanings of the impact of participation in PTEV programs and the implications for higher education in general (Creswell, 2007). The final phase of the analysis and interpretation focused on the meaning of the case study, or the “lessons learned” from the case study (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Trustworthiness

Creswell (2007) listed eight validation strategies used in qualitative research, and recommended using at least two of them. Triangulation was one method I used, which involves

gathering evidence from multiple and different sources to confirm findings (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1988). I took detailed field notes and recorded and transcribed all interviews, thereby enhancing reliability. In addition, a peer reviewer was used to discuss interpretation of transcripts and other data and to discuss the findings as they emerge (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). A peer reviewer with a faith perspective that is different from that of the primary researcher was used in order to provide a diverse and critical perspective on coding and interpreting the data. When writing the institution and program description, I contacted PTEV representatives to verify accuracy of any details that I was not clear on. I have also used participant quotes and rich, thick description to represent the findings (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). By utilizing this strategy I hope to let the participants' voices be heard and understood by the reader and enhance the reader's ability to identify with and understand the participants. Lastly, Merriam (1998) suggested conducting a cross-case analysis to enhance external validity, which I have done.

Clarifying research bias by commenting on past experiences, prejudices and orientations that may shape the study is also recommended as a measure to enhance trustworthiness in qualitative research (Merriam, 1988). My interest in this research comes out of my own struggle and experiences with career choice and vocational discernment. As a person who identifies strongly with the Christian faith, I started to wonder in college if God might have a plan for my career, a "calling." This led to a period of personal reflection on some of the "big questions" of life, such as "Why am I here?", "What is my purpose, my destiny?", "What do I value?", and "Who do I want to be in the world?" My subsequent career choice of campus ministry (which I did for 8 years at two different secular research-intensive universities), followed by the realization that campus ministry would not be a practical career for me (I could not support myself financially) led to confusion about the idea of vocation (and how it applied to me) and

therefore, much more reflection on the big questions. As a result of processing through my career confusion, I decided to pursue a master's degree in student affairs administration in order to continue working with college students and then a Ph.D. in higher, adult and lifelong education to explore my research interests in college student spirituality and career choice. Through six years of graduate school, I directed a program called the MSU Student Food Bank (a campus food bank that serves students and is run by students). From my perspective, my role as director of the Food Bank and my graduate studies have been every bit as much of a "Divine calling" as campus ministry seemed to be when I was starting my career over 14 years ago. Hence, as a result of my own struggles and experiences, I have both questioned and learned a lot about faith, vocation, calling and career. It is these questions and lessons that sparked my curiosity about the questions that others ask, the answers they find, and the ways in which they come to those answers.

Although I present my own interpretation of the findings and themes here, I have been cautious to not let my own experiences and ideas interfere with the voice of the participants, a process that Creswell calls reflexivity (Creswell, 2007). In interviews, I made sure to ask the students to clarify the meaning of their answers, rather than assuming that I knew what they meant because of our similar faith perspectives. I also used very broad questions in the interview protocols (leaving out words like calling, purpose, vocation and God) (See Appendix A). I was also careful not to lead the participants into saying something I was expecting to hear through my questioning in the interviews.

Limitations

As with every qualitative study, this exploratory research presents a few limitations. The size of the sample was limited to four institutions, thereby limiting the diversity of the sample.

The four institutions visited are not representative of Higher Education Institutions in general as they are all private institutions, and three have church affiliations. In addition, I requested to interview students who were heavily involved in PTEV programs, which makes the sample of students particularly distinct. Although I attempted to visit PTEV programs that offered religious diversity in their population of students, the resulting sample of students represented less religious diversity than I had hoped to obtain. All but three of the students interviewed identified a Christian faith perspective. I had hoped to interview students from a broader selection of faith perspectives. Although there is some religious diversity in the sample, the majority of perspectives are monotheistic and western in nature.

This research was conducted from a strictly qualitative research paradigm. Therefore, the ability to generalize the findings is limited as the intent and value in qualitative research is not to generalize but to uncover “the particular description and themes developed in context of a specific cite” (Creswell, 2009, p. 193). This study provides an in-depth look at particular students involved in specific programs. Erickson (1986) believed that generalizability is not an appropriate goal for qualitative research. That being said, Erickson (1986) believed that the general could be found in the particular. Erickson (1986) stated that “concrete universals” can be found “by studying a specific case in great detail and then comparing it with other cases” (p. 130). Although each student and each PTEV program in this study is unique, the reader may find that concrete universals (or concepts that can be universally applied) are discovered through the presentation of the findings.

Chapter Four

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

The findings of this study are divided into two sections. The first section will focus on the four PTEV programs visited, including their missions, goals, and methods. How these programs handled diversity is also addressed in this section. The second section of this chapter is devoted to the student experience in PTEV programs. The conditions of PTEV programs that facilitated development and impact as described by the students in interview data are addressed in the first part of this section. Next the impact of involvement in PTEV programs as described by the students is addressed. To aid the reader in navigating this chapter, a brief outline is provided.

Findings

- a. Institution and Program Descriptions
 - i. Individual Descriptions
 1. Quaint College
 2. Jesuit University
 3. Elite University
 4. Eclectic University
 - ii. Collective Descriptions
 1. Common Offerings
 2. Distinctions
 3. Religious Diversity
- b. Students
 - i. Environment of PTEV Programs
 1. Exploration and Discernment
 2. Community
 - ii. Impact
 1. Spirituality
 2. Learning
 3. Identity
 4. Vocation, Values and Passion
 5. Future Plans

Glossary of Terms

Because the vocabulary used by these programs, and the staff and students involved in them, is quite particular, I will attempt to define some terms in an effort to help the reader follow the descriptions of both the programs and the findings. **Discernment** is a term that arose frequently in investigating these programs and talking to students and staff members. This term is frequently used in the Christian world, but may not be familiar to all readers. Merriam-Webster defines discernment as “the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discernment>). Jesuit University provides a useful definition of discernment on its website, “A process of the heart through which you define your personal response to God's call. You sense your vocation” (Jesuit.edu). For the purpose of this study, I define **discernment** succinctly **as a discovery process**. Discernment is referred to by most of the students who used this term in their interviews as both a process and an outcome of finding one’s purpose and vocation.

Vocational discernment is another term used frequently in this document. I define this as **the process of discovering one’s purpose, calling or vocation**.

Later in this chapter, how students are defining and thinking about vocation and calling is explored. These terms are difficult to define and subject to the view and values of the individual providing the definition. I provided extensive explanations of these terms in chapter one; therefore I will revisit those definitions only briefly here. **Vocation** and **calling** are often used interchangeably, and vocation is also used as a synonym for occupation. Although the terms calling and vocation are often used as synonyms for one’s occupation, they also hold deeper meaning for some people. I used established definitions for these terms in chapter one, and will revisit those briefly here. One useful definition of vocation describes it as, “the function or career

toward which one believes oneself to be called” (<http://www.yourdictionary.com/vocation>). Calling is defined in a similar way as, “a strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action especially when accompanied by conviction of divine influence” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/calling>). The definition of these terms is very personal and therefore subject to the opinion of the participant. Later in this publication, I provide insight into how PTEV students are defining these terms.

I use the term **vocation** broadly to mean both career **choice and/or sense of calling**. For purposes of this research, I define **calling** broadly as a vocational pull in a certain direction. The meaning of the term depends on how a person views his or her own career. In this study, the term vocation includes career choice and future vocational plans because these two variables are not always consistent.

Institution and Program Descriptions

This section provides a description of each institution and PTEV program. The researcher chose pseudonyms for the schools. Due to the distinct culture of each school and personality of each program, these descriptions are not equal in their content. These descriptions are intended to convey relevant information about each institution as well as give insight into the mission, goals, and methods of each PTEV program. Following each description is a section explaining the methods and programmatic offerings common to each program. Next, important distinctive attributes of each program are briefly explored. Last, how these programs deal with religious diversity and interfaith activities and exposure is also addressed.

Before embarking on a description of each institution and PTEV program, there are a few important factors to note. For each program, different levels of engagement are available to each student. Put another way, PTEV programs are open to any student on each of these campuses.

The programs attract and retain students at different levels of involvement. Some students are involved in a majority of the programming and services offered by each program, while others may only attend an occasional event or get involved in a limited level of programming. When I visited each school to collect data for this study, I requested to interview students who had a significant level of involvement in each program. For the most part, my sample was consistent with this request. In order to convey a thorough description of these programs to the reader, I attempt in this section to explain how these programs engage students at different levels. At the same time, the data collected from interviewing the PTEV students is based on their experiences, which are largely based on a high level of involvement in multiple dimensions of the PTEV programs.

Each PTEV program was given complete freedom by the Lilly Endowment in designing their program (as long as they remained consistent with the goals of the Lilly funding). Lilly's goals were to: 1) assist students in examining the relationship between faith and vocational choices, 2) provide opportunities for gifted young people to explore Christian ministry, and 3) enhance the capacity of a school's faculty and staff to teach and mentor students effectively in this arena (www.ptev.org/history). The focus of this study was on the *first* objective listed above, however, in presenting the themes of the students' experience, the reader will likely gain insight into the second and third objectives as well. Although each program had complete freedom and autonomy in designing its goals, objectives, and methods, there are many similarities among the programs. These similarities are addressed in this chapter; yet it is important to note that each program still maintains its own personality and approach, even with similar methods such as course offerings, discussion groups, lecture series, and advising sessions. As much as it is possible, I attempt to convey the personality and distinctiveness of each program and at the same

time, aim to protect the identity of each school. There are similarities and differences among the multiple ways that institutions are addressing the exploration of faith and vocation among college students. Each PTEV program approached this task in a way that is consistent with the heritage and values of its institution.

Individual Descriptions

Quaint College

Quaint College is a small, private liberal arts college affiliated with a liberal protestant denomination. The pseudonym was chosen to describe the charm of the small campus. The denomination and the school value personal faith and religious freedom, as well as social justice. The mission of the college affirms “the spiritual basis for living a meaningful and purposeful life” (Quaint.edu). Slightly fewer than 3,000 traditional-aged undergraduate students as well as about 500 adult and graduate students attend this school, which is located in a busy suburb of a large metropolitan city in the Midwest. The college ranks in the top 15 among Master’s granting institutions in its region (U.S. News & World Report, 2010).

The PTEV program is housed organizationally under Academic Affairs, but has its own space on campus, including a small common area with couches and chairs for students to study or gather for discussions between classes. During my campus visit, I found that having an area for students to congregate facilitated friendships and community among the students involved in this program. The topic of community is explored more fully in the next section of this chapter, which is devoted to the student experience in PTEV programs. Three full time staff members administer Quaint’s PTEV program: a director, assistant director, and an administrative assistant. All three staff members were interviewed for this study.

Both the college and PTEV program are open and welcoming to people of all faiths as well as those who do not identify with any faith. Dr. Bee, the director of the PTEV program, described the open nature of the PTEV program at Quaint College when he stated, “We value who you are and what you believe.” However, the students that I interviewed (most of whom were heavily involved in the program, per my request) identified with the Christian faith. Within the broad scope of Christianity, there was some diversity among the students interviewed. The PTEV program as a whole interacts with a more diverse and larger group of Quaint College students than the small, heavily involved, group of students that I interviewed. For example, a broader and more diverse group of students attend the lecture series, which addresses issues of faith, passion, and vocation. Dr. Bee described the religious diversity of the students he encounters in the PTEV program, “We have students who are agnostic here; we have students who are atheists in the program, so you're talking people that are questioning faith. Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim. You know, we have them all.” For example, 140 students were involved in the program during the school year in which I visited (2009 – 2010). Spreadsheet data provided by the program revealed that of those 140 students, 34 students identified with a faith perspective (or lack thereof) other than Christian: Muslim, Atheist, Agnostic, other, or they left the field blank. From taking in the culture of the campus and talking with administrators and students, I found that the program itself attracts a more spiritually-minded group of students than what is representative of the Quaint student body as a whole.

The mission of the PTEV program at Quaint College is to support academic and field experiences for faith-motivated students from a variety of religious backgrounds and majors. The intent is to help students explore their vocational calling to socially-engaged service, ministry, or a life’s work for the common good. When asked to describe the goals of the program, Dr. Bee,

the PTEV Director, stated, “to get them ready for a career of their choosing. We talk about it [in the PTEV program] as vocation.” He defined vocation in the following way,

I would say ... that it is an opportunity for them to find their passionate heart’s desire, a place to live outside of their home for the next 35 to 40 years of their life. How would you choose or select the place that you would like to be for the next 35 to 40 years? And I always talk about: where is your passion? Because passion will overcome or override [money]. In ministry there is no financial reward, this is about service. If you go to a not-for-profit agency, this is not [about] financial rewards, this is service.

The program offers a speaker series, courses on vocational ministry and serving society, individual advising, internships and field experiences (such as ministry placements), and financial support for international travel. Students that are heavily involved in the PTEV program apply to take part in a program specifically geared toward vocation exploration for students who are considering careers in service or ministry (the name of this program is omitted to protect the identity of the institution). Involvement in the PTEV program at Quaint at this level has some requirements. These include: an application (which includes a personal essay on the student’s spiritual journey, purpose in applying to the program, and future goals), one PTEV-sponsored course, mentoring meetings with a staff member, regular involvement in PTEV events, completion of an internship, field placement, or international travel experience, a reflection journal, an essay summarizing the value of their experiences in the PTEV program, as well as presentations to the campus community about their experiences in the PTEV program. Students can also be involved in this PTEV program on a lesser level, which does not have the same requirements described above. Some programmatic offerings, such as the speaker series, service opportunities, and a few internships in social justice are open to all students on campus, thereby reaching a broader population than the students who have applied to be part of the vocational discernment program described above.

In visiting this PTEV program, I was able to learn the values of the program, as I heard them repeatedly from the staff and the students. Many of the students I spoke with at Quaint described their future career plans in terms of a calling. This program also places a strong emphasis on service and social justice. Molly, the PTEV administrative assistant at Quaint, estimated that 98% of the PTEV students are involved in the service or social justice programming in some way. Students and staff members often referenced the importance of passion over money when considering one's career. If I had to summarize the values of the PTEV program at Eclectic succinctly, the following words come to mind: God, calling, service and passion.

To summarize, the focus of this program is on helping students find a vocation that aligns with their passions. For some students, their passions culminate in what they describe as a life's calling. How PTEV students are thinking about vocation and calling is explored in more detail later in this chapter. The focus of much of the programming at Quaint is on service, ministry or non-profit work. Both the school and the denomination value social justice, an evident ideology that is communicated to the students through the PTEV courses and PTEV programming. Although the program is open to students from all faith perspectives, there is an emphasis on Christianity throughout much of the programming. This is consistent with the liberal Protestant affiliation of the school. This program offers a focused vocational discernment track with required elements to students who apply as well as broader options, such as the speaker series, which are open to all students on campus.

Jesuit University

Named for its Jesuit identity, this Catholic institution is a mid-sized urban University in the Midwest. The Jesuit mission is founded on the principles of Ignatian Spirituality, which play

a large role in the spiritual basis of the PTEV program at this school. In addition to the Jesuit identity, the components of the University's mission are excellence in all things, faith, leadership and service. Just over 8,000 undergraduate students and 3,600 graduate students make up a combined total of almost 12,000 students.

It is important to note that although the tenants of Ignatian spirituality are the foundation of the Jesuit mission, and a foundational component of the values of the PTEV program at Jesuit University, Ignatian Spirituality is not something that is generally understood by the average student who attends a Jesuit school. Many of the principles, values, and tools that make up this PTEV program are influenced by Ignatian spirituality. Therefore, many of the students interviewed for this study addressed the influence of Ignatian spirituality on their personal values. This may not be typical of Jesuit students who are not involved in the PTEV program. In order to understand the values of this PTEV program, I provide a brief summary of the salient tenants of Ignatian spirituality for the reader. The average student at a Jesuit school is likely familiar with two tenants of Ignatian spirituality: finding God in all people and all things and "men and women for others." These two principles make up the strongest tenants of the guiding ideology of Jesuit institutions and the PTEV program at this school. The PTEV Director, Dr. Matthews, aims to see the Jesuit values of men and women for others become part of the students' identity.

Ignatian spirituality is based on the life and teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Catholic movement. Ignatian spirituality can best be described (based on conversations with students and staff members as well as Jesuit University's website and printed publications) as a way of serving Christ that relies on tools called Spiritual Exercises, which include prayer, reflection, and discernment (most easily defined as a discovery process). The

Daily Examen of Consciousness is a guided reflection or prayer that is often used in this program to facilitate the Spiritual Exercises of reflection, discernment and prayer. The PTEV program uses a more religious version of the Examen for religious programming and a less religious version for programs aimed at a broader groups of students (see the Appendix B for examples of the two Examens).

Over 60 percent of the students at Jesuit identify as Roman Catholic. The majority of the students that participate in the PTEV program at this school are Catholic. However, the program does provide programming aimed at a larger and broader audience, such as PTEV-sponsored courses and a lecture series open to all students at the University. Six of seven students interviewed for this study, all of whom were heavily involved in the program, identified as Catholic, the other student identified as Christian. Similar to what I found at Quaint College, talking with staff members and students of the PTEV program at Jesuit revealed that the students interviewed for this program tend to be more spiritually or religiously-minded than the general student body at Jesuit University.

The goals of the PTEV program at Jesuit are to help individuals discover how to use their gifts and talents to meet the needs of the world and also to discern their life goals in light of Ignatian spirituality. Ignatian spirituality asks key questions such as, “What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? And what will I do for Christ?” (Jesuit.edu). Ignatian Spirituality plays a salient role in the values of the program and the way that staff members engage students in examining the intersection of faith and vocation. The program aims to engage both the individual and the institution in exploring the many ways that Christians are called to lead faithful lives in a variety of careers and at every stage of life. Dr. Matthews, the PTEV Director, described the questions they want students to ask of themselves, and leave with

answers to, “Who are you and what are you going to take with you? What’s important to you?” PTEV leaders want students to explore their identity and their values in light of their vocational choices.

PTEV staff members described this program as a three-legged stool, which includes an academic component, a student component, and a ministry component. Organizationally, the program had undergone a recent change to transition out of funding from the Lilly grant. Originally one cohesive unit, the program now functions in three components housed in different areas. At the time of my visit, the academic component was housed under the department for teaching and learning, the student component was housed under the student development office, and the ministry component was housed under campus ministry. The staff included one person responsible for each area and an administrative assistant. The staff members responsible for the academic and student development components were interviewed for this study, along with two faculty members who teach courses affiliated with the program. The ministry staff member was a new addition to the PTEV program, and therefore was not interviewed for this study.

The academic component of the PTEV program is focused on helping faculty members incorporate opportunities for vocational discernment into their courses. There are 37 courses in 17 different areas of the university that have been PTEV courses. The PTEV Director, Dr. Matthews, explained the academic component,

...we have worked with various faculty members on campus in different departments to develop courses or enhance courses that they’re already teaching using [the] vocational discernment component. Readings, speakers, and assignments, you name it. Something that would help the students connect what they’re doing in the academic area with their own life journey.

The ministry component is designed for juniors and seniors who are contemplating parish or church ministry as part of their future. Many of the students interviewed for this study were

involved in the ministry programming. However, this component was not a particular focus of this study because I wanted to focus on how these programs were helping a broader range of students (who do not necessarily have aspirations of vocational ministry as a career choice) think about the intersection of their faith and vocation.

The student development component focuses on leadership development and broad-based programming around vocational discernment. The aim of this part of the program is to reach all Jesuit students with the concepts of vocational discernment. Their approach to this is to act as “supporters and collaborators” with others on campus. Dr. Matthews described it as infiltrating existing programs rather than initiating new programs,

So for example, there’s a student leadership program that our assistant director has been part of planning over the years and that program has really been transformed I think by [PTEVs] connection with it. For example, I think in the initial stages of that program it was more focused on student officers, how to run meetings, be efficient and things like that. Now it’s transformed to ‘what’s your purpose?’ and meaning in life and ‘who are you called to be and why?’ ... Just a really powerful deepening I think of what has happened on those leadership events ...

Some offerings in this program are more religious than others. Often, the language is different for non-religious activities, but the principles are the same. As Sarah, the assistant PTEV director of student development, explained, “These are concepts and questions that everyone’s interested in asking really. Everyone wants to know ... ‘Who am I?’, and ‘What am I going to do with my life?’ So, how do we take that to a broader audience?” She gave an example of broader language usage, “Instead of asking them ‘what time of day do you pray?’ Asking them more generally whether you take some time out for yourself.” Sarah described PTEV’s goal to reach all students at Jesuit by, “taking the concepts of vocational discernment and taking it to the masses outside of the choir.” In other words, they would like all students at Jesuit to

reflect upon and explore their values and passions in light of their career goals and choices, not just the students who are actively involved in the PTEV program.

The Jesuit PTEV program offers classes, a first-year reading program (in collaboration with other departments on campus), and a speaker series, all of which reach a broad audience. In addition, leadership development and ministry opportunities are available to interested students. A retreat is offered to incoming freshmen students who showed Christian leadership potential through their University application materials. About 100 students are very involved in the student development and ministry components of the program, with the broader academic components reaching much more of the campus (an internal 2009 survey provided by the program revealed about 35% of the campus interacted with the PTEV program in some way).

In comparing the scope and reach of this program to the other three that I visited, this program seems to reach more of the campus than the others. This is primarily done through the many classes that have integrated PTEV values, the first-year reading program (which reaches all freshmen students), and the lecture series. Not all of their programming is advertised as PTEV sponsored programming, therefore, students may take a PTEV-sponsored course or participate in the first-year reading program but not specifically know that they are interacting with a PTEV-sponsored activity. Because the religious language is changed when addressing a broader audience, the program is able to communicate the importance of exploring your values and passions in light of your career goals to the broader campus community.

I heard much about the importance of reflection when I visited this program. Reflection was used not only as a tool to help students discover their values, passions, and ultimately, vocation, but was also a deep value communicated through their programming and interactions with students. Helping others and social justice were also salient values that were communicated

to the students, and in turn, the students often communicated this back to me as important components of their career goals and values. These values are addressed in more detail later in this chapter.

In summary, many of the students that are heavily involved in this program are Catholic or Christian. The Jesuit identity of the school is very present in this program, and Ignatian spirituality is a large part of the guiding ideology of the program. Reflection is a prominent tool and value of vocational discernment in this program. I spoke with students who were heavily involved in the program, some of whom are contemplating full-time vocational ministry as a career choice. The student development component of the program aims to help all students engage in vocational exploration by using language that is broader and less religious. Many faculty members have incorporated some of the PTEV values into their courses and some broad programs, such as the first-year reading program, incorporate values of vocational discernment to reach a broad audience.

Elite University

Elite University is a mid-sized, world-class, highly selective research university located in the southeast region of the United States. Over 6,000 undergraduate and 7,000 graduate students make up the total 13,000 student population. The pseudonym was chosen to describe the highly selective, research intensive, competitive nature of the school. Considered by most to be a secular institution (there is no mention of any religious affiliation on the institution's website); the university still has loose ties to its founding mainline Protestant denomination. The University houses a chapel and divinity school and there is a vibrant religious life on campus. The Chapel is Christian, but there is also a vibrant Muslim community and a Jewish life center on the campus. This institution was originally chosen as a research site because its PTEV

program offered a live-in opportunity for summer interns and because I thought it would offer a secular perspective on exploring purpose, faith and vocation. However, although the program is open to students of all backgrounds and faith traditions, it is distinctly Christian in its approach to faith and vocational exploration. The program is staffed by a director and assistant director, both of whom were interviewed for this study, as well as a part-time administrative assistant. The administrative assistant was not interviewed for this study because she was not involved with mentoring or programming for the students.

The mission of the university is to apply “knowledge in service to society” and “provide real leadership in the educational world” (Elite.edu). The mission of the PTEV program is to journey “with students as they discover the heart of life, by listening to the heart of God” (Elite.edu). This is done through a community “dedicated to listening to God’s call through theological reflection, community engagement, and vocational discernment” (Elite.edu). One can see from comparing the two missions that the PTEV program is much more religious than the institution as a whole.

Dr. Thomas, the assistant director of the PTEV program, explained Elite’s approach to exploring vocation as incorporating education, relationships and service into vocational exploration. He described their approach to vocation as,

...you can say vocation is...your calling and, I think, that's a good way to talk about it. But for a lot of students...what they're wrestling with is, "What am I going to do?"...And part of what we do is trying to shift that question into, "Who am I going to be?"...."What is my life going to look like?"

This program takes a communal approach to exploring vocation, and that approach came out as a very strong theme through the student interviews. This theme is explored in more detail later in

this chapter, but it is important to touch on it here, as community is a large part of the approach that this program takes to exploring vocation. The PTEV Director at Elite, Rev. Tony, explained their community-based approach to exploring vocation:

It is exploration, some intentionality...we're here...because we believe God is calling all of us to a specific way of life and things to do and how to use our gifts and our passions. And we want each other to figure that out together. ... It's very much like a communal act. This is not somebody going off into the woods and you tell them "Tell me what you find when you come back." It's like "No, we're going to walk together, whether it's on a mission trip together, or you're somewhere [in an] internship program and you're living in a house, and we'll talk about what's going on."

For this program, students are not sent out on their own to embrace questions of vocation, calling and purpose. The mission and goals of the program are very much exercised in dyads and groups: discussion groups, one-on-one advising, live-in communities, etc. This PTEV program also offers an intentional live-in community. During the academic year, recent graduates participate in a live-in vocational discernment program. In the summer, students who are doing PTEV-sponsored internships live in the house. This experience was very impactful for the students who had the opportunity to spend a summer in the house. The impact of this experience is explored more later in this chapter.

Although this University is considered secular, and therefore has a very diverse student population, the PTEV program has a strong Christian emphasis. All students interviewed identified as Christian, although there were a variety of Christian backgrounds represented. Similar to Quaint and Jesuit, I found through talking with staff members and students that this PTEV program seems to attract more religious students compared to the overall campus population. When comparing this PTEV program to the other three, I found it to be the most religiously conservative in its approach to vocation and the most exclusive of the three schools in

its population. For example, there seemed to be less of an effort or opportunity to engage a broad group of students in conversations about vocation. Even programs that were designed to draw a large group of students were exclusively Christian in nature: one asked the question of whether a good Christian can be in politics. Another asked a similar question about the Presidency. The exact titles of these programs cannot be shared in order to protect the identity of the institution.

Organizationally, this program is housed under the University chapel and partners with various campus ministries (some are affiliated with the chapel, some are not) on some of its programming. A prominent example of partnerships between the PTEV program and campus ministries is the facilitation of small discussion groups led by campus ministers around topics of vocational discernment. Many students interviewed for this study started their involvement in the PTEV program with a discernment group led by a campus minister. There is a strong emphasis on discussion and reflection in this PTEV program as well. This happens in the discernment groups as well as other communities such as the PTEV house and PTEV retreats.

One unique feature of this program is a house that is rented in the nearby urban community for PTEV students who are doing internships in the summer or a one-year vocational discernment program after graduation. These students are encouraged to integrate into the community through building relationships with neighbors and serving in community-based organizations. The concept of “being with” others is a value that the leaders of the program espoused to students. Students interviewed communicated that integrating into a community (and many were considering moving into an inner city or under-resourced urban community in order to build relationships with the people there in order to serve them) was an important value to

them in considering their future plans. Encouragement to engage in the surrounding community was prevalent at Elite. Dr. Thomas, the assistant director explained,

I also think they get in [the PTEV program] an opportunity to have hands-on experiences that they would not otherwise be able to have. This is particularly true of the work that we do in [Elite's surrounding community], whether through summer programs, year-long fellowships, or even the off-campus events in the [PTEV] course...many students 'get' a clearer sense of the significance of the world immediately around them through our life in [Elite's surrounding community]. Many learn that they do not have to look to a foreign country to see a world crying out for help.

In addition to serving the nearby community, this ministry also embarked on international service trips in groups (whereas international travel in the other programs was mostly individualized according to the interests of each student). Each of the two PTEV leaders took a group of students to serve in another country each year, such as working with schools or building houses in places like Belize and Costa Rica. The fact that international travel is done in groups, rather than individualized, shows the commitment to exploring vocation as part of a community. They both experienced and processed these international service trips together. When I visited the PTEV house for dinner, processing and reflecting upon their recent spring break service trips was part of the dinner conversation.

In addition to joint offerings with campus ministries, classes (serving society, ethics and world affairs, and the intersection of faith and politics are examples of PTEV course topics at Elite) along with scholarships for international travel and internships, small discussion and reading groups and dialogues with campus and community members and leaders, a scholar's community (which was not thoroughly developed at the time of my visit – students apply to be a scholar and once accepted, they have access to funding for internships and trips), mentoring and friendships with peers and leaders are among the offerings of this PTEV program. As with the

previous two programs, seminars (an example is questioning the role of Christian faith in politics) and classes (such as serving society, world ethics, faith and politics) reach a broader group of students while the offerings that require application and/or commitment such as internships and live-in experiences, scholars programs, and funding for internships and international travel involve a smaller group of committed students.

In summary, this PTEV program embraces a strong Christian perspective on exploring the intersection of faith and vocation. God is very much a part of the conversation in this PTEV program. It also places a very strong emphasis on service and community (both Christian community and serving under-resourced communities by integrating into that population). The program partners with a variety of campus ministries to facilitate small groups focused on vocational exploration, allowing students to situate their discussions in their own religious or denominational tradition. This program had the narrowest perspective on religion and spirituality when compared to the other schools, and offered the least number of options to appeal to students of other faiths or students who do not have a personal faith perspective.

Eclectic University

Named because it seems to offer a little bit of everything, Eclectic University has a varied curriculum that offers both liberal arts and professional programs. This small university has just over 4,000 undergraduate students and about 500 graduate students. This institution is located a short distance from a metropolitan city in a residential community in the Midwest. It is ranked among the top five regional universities in its class (U.S. News and World Report, 2010).

This school officially severed its church ties in the 1950s, and is now completely secular. Therefore, it was chosen to represent a pluralistic approach to exploring faith, purpose and

vocation. At the time of the PTEV grant, the school was lacking in religious outlets for students. Its president described Eclectic as “resolutely secular” and he felt that the school could not be “a self-respecting 21st century university without realizing that religion and spirituality are part of the human experience.” He stated, “Being on a secular campus is not a reason to not have faith.” He explained that there were not many spiritual outlets, such as campus ministries, for students on campus. Therefore, according to the PTEV Director, Angela Campbell, part of the purpose of the PTEV program at the school was to provide a place on campus for a variety of religious traditions and groups, and to “convene the clergy,” or recruit professionals and students to start student ministries of all varieties on the campus. Two professionals staff this program: a director and a program coordinator. Both were interviewed for this study, along with the University president and a faculty member who has worked with the PTEV program.

This program approaches faith and vocation separately instead of together. It therefore has a dual purpose: to provide an outlet for religious expression and exploration as well as vocational exploration. These objectives are approached separately. Because it is a secular school, this PTEV program has no religious affiliation or identity and a broad guiding ideology. It takes a multi-faith approach to spirituality and religious expression. In the words of the president, their approach was to reach “hands of friendship across religious boundaries” and support “religious distinctions,” rather than minimizing them or watering them down. Angela described the religious dimension of the mission, which involves partnering with the campus ministries on a lot of their programming, “I don't have an M-Div. Our job is not to endorse or promote any one religion, but, in fact, I would say our jobs are really about helping students in their distinct and diverse perspectives on religion and spirituality.”

The written mission of Eclectic emphasizes offering a high quality intellectual environment of both liberal arts and professional education. Although not stated directly in the published mission statement, the PTEV Director conveyed that helping students make a life of purpose is something that the institution's president often cites as part of the mission of the University. The mission and purpose of this PTEV program are to help students "discover a life of purpose, meaning and contribution" by providing a place where students are able to think and discuss "what they are called to do by using tools of reflection and engaging in spiritual questions – no matter what their faith, doubts, or philosophies might be" (Eclectic publication). According to Angela, they are "intentional about taking vocation beyond religion." She explained that they are "helping the students understand what their unique life of purpose, meaning, and contribution is going to be across the disciplines that they're studying." Tapa, the PTEV program coordinator, talked about their efforts to reach a diverse and broad group of students,

I think the word that we're putting out is that you don't have to be religious to be at the [PTEV program]. We really want students to know that it's not just about religion; it's definitely not just about Christianity. It's about multi-faith and it's about being a genuine human being and how we can help people to discover what that means to them.

The Eclectic PTEV program is located in a house on the edge of campus and provides office space for a variety of campus ministries (including Catholic, Jewish and Muslim) as well as space for students to gather and talk, a prayer and meditation room, and a space for yoga and other classes. Center publications advertise information on a variety of campus and local faith communities.

As with the rest of the PTEV institutions in this study, I requested to interview students who were heavily involved in the program. The students at Eclectic were the most religiously diverse group of the four schools. I met with one Muslim, one Jewish, one Buddhist, one student

who does not affiliate with any religion, and three Christian students, only one of whom listed a denominational affiliation.

This PTEV program is very individualized, which “makes sense for the Eclectic culture,” Angela stated. This program engages the student where he or she is and helps them to find opportunities to fit their unique interests. Some students are involved in the campus ministries, some are involved in vocational exploration endeavors such as internships, and some are involved in both. The program offers a scholarship program for incoming freshmen students who are interested in careers in service, ministry or interfaith activities, internships, individual advising, meditation instruction and yoga classes, and a seminar series on world religions and workshops for faculty and staff members. Interfaith activities and involvement were more popular here than at the other three schools. Similar to the other three programs, the seminar series reaches a broader group of students than the rest of the PTEV activities. Because the students that engage with this program are so religiously diverse, I found that the students I interviewed displayed less similarity in their personal values when compared to the students at the other three schools. For example, there was not a guiding ideology to this program, like there is at Quaint (“it’s about passion, not money,” service), Jesuit (reflection, helping others) or Elite (community, “being with” others) that was strongly communicated or passed down to the students. Although this program is the most diverse of the four schools, I found that much of what the students at Eclectic had to say in their interviews is in support of the main themes that came out of this study (these will be addressed later in this chapter).

In summary, Eclectic is now completely secular, yet the PTEV program offers a chance for students to explore their vocation or their faith, and if they wish, they can explore these variables together through ministry or other experiences. This program engages students from a

variety of faith perspectives, and had the most religiously diverse group of students out of all four schools in this study. It therefore provided some useful insight into methods for exploring issues of meaning, purpose, and even faith and vocation, at a secular University.

Collective Descriptions

Common Elements

Although each of the four PTEV programs included in this study has individual distinctions, there are some elements that are common to each program. These are explained in this section.

Courses. Course offerings are different for each program. Usually, they are credit-bearing courses housed in a given academic department. Some courses are taught by PTEV staff members and some are taught by university professors who are infusing PTEV principles of meaning, purpose, faith or vocation into their course. Some examples of PTEV course topics include ethics, religion, ministry, and courses on politics and service learning. At some institutions, professors from any department could write a proposal or go through training to link their course to the PTEV program. This was very prominent at Jesuit University, and enabled professors from a variety of disciplines to infuse vocational discernment themes into any courses. Psychology, Philosophy, Education, Communication, Business, Health and Theology are examples of some PTEV-sponsored or related courses at the four schools. To protect the identity of each school, actual course titles are not included in this document.

Dr. Talbot, a psychology professor at Jesuit, teaches two PTEV-related courses in psychology and provides an example of integrating vocational exploration into a secular course. He stated in his Adult Developmental Psychology syllabus,

The [PTEV Program] is a campus-wide endeavor to facilitate student self-reflection concerning vocation. This class has been chosen as one component of this project. Although we study the entire spectrum of topics regarding Adult Developmental

Psychology, we will pay particular attention to the intersection of personal ideology and vocation. We will examine research in this area and will establish a context for discernment so that each student might reflect upon past and future vocational decisions.

Dr. Talbot takes a broad approach to examining vocation in his courses, using language such as self-reflection and personal ideology (instead of prayer, faith or religion). Dr. Talbot spends a week of his course examining vocation as part of Adult Development. He uses texts designed to help students reflect upon their own vocation. For example, articles about finding a life's calling and making good career matches are part of a week devoted to the intersection of values and vocation in his course.

Dr. Talbot's approach of encouraging vocational reflection as part of his course is consistent with the goals of Jesuit University's PTEV program to take vocational discernment to the whole campus and provides a great example of how vocation could be explored in a secular course. Later in this chapter, Dr. Talbot explains how he facilitates meaningful discussion among diverse students in his courses.

Speaker/lecture/seminar Series. Each PTEV institution offers some sort of speaker or lecture series. These series are open to all students of the institutions and are designed to reach a broad population of students, not just students who are directly involved in the PTEV Programs. Some schools include meals as part of the series; some do not. Topics vary from school to school. Some topics are religious in nature, others address issues of world peace and violence; some address social issues such as hunger, poverty or the environment, and others directly address issues of vocation by bringing in speakers to serve as examples of people of faith who are following their passions in their career or by addressing "big questions" about meaning, purpose or identity. To protect the identity of each school, seminar titles and speakers are not included in this document.

Mentoring, advising. One benefit that all four PTEV programs offered was direct access to PTEV leaders for one-on-one mentoring or advising of students. Some programs required students to meet with PTEV staff members on a regular basis (Quaint College serves as an example), and some do not. Usually students desiring to get involved with the PTEV program end up in some sort of advising relationship with one of the PTEV staff members as a result of their involvement in the program. Mentoring and advising are addressed in more detail later in the student impact section of this chapter.

Field Experiences. Field experiences include internships, ministry placements, volunteer and service opportunities, and international travel. Field experiences were a large component of each PTEV's programs offerings and afforded the students an opportunity to explore future career options through practical experiences. Students were able to gain valuable experiences in churches, service organizations, and other non-profits. Some students participated in international travel experiences that were service-related or educational. For example, one student from Quaint College participated in an international program in Europe designed to compare health systems between different countries. A student from Eclectic took a trip to Africa, and while there, explored the faith traditions of the country he visited. Two groups from Elite University traveled to different South American cities during their spring break to serve in under-resourced areas.

Distinctions

It is important to note that institutions had complete freedom in designing their PTEV programs. Therefore, there are some unique features of the programs that are useful to gain an understanding of the different ways that institutions approached the PTEV mission. Some of the PTEV differences among the four schools I visited are addressed in the school and program

descriptions above, but a few are explained in more detail in this section because these distinctions provide important examples of methods that could be adopted by other institutions, both church-sponsored and secular institutions. For example, Jesuit University and Quaint College have focused options or tracts for students exploring full-time vocational ministry. Students at other schools can certainly explore ministry as a career option, but at these two schools there is a focused program for ministry careers that requires an application and at least a year-long commitment. These programs offer internships at churches, and ministry opportunities such as preaching, teaching, and leading worship activities at the school or at local churches.

One unique feature of Elite University's program is that it offered a live-in opportunity for students doing summer internships. Each school had the freedom to decide how to use their grant money. Because of their strong commitment to Christian community, Elite used some of their grant money to rent a house for students. During the academic year, recent graduates live in the house that is rented by the PTEV program for a 9-month program focused on discerning one's vocation, purpose or calling. During the summer, students who are placed in service and other local internships are offered the opportunity to live together in the house. During the live-in time, the PTEV program emphasizes intentional Christian community (in addition to vocational discernment). Students living in the home share times of prayer, reading, reflection and evening dinners. I was fortunate enough to attend one of these dinners during my visit and found it to be a time of reflection and dialogue over common experiences such as recent international service trips or internships. The experience of a close-knit community, emphasis on reflection and discussion, and resulting lessons that come with shared living space, was communicated to me in my conversations with students as having a distinct impact on those who had this opportunity.

Another unique feature of the PTEV program at Elite is the small discussion groups about vocation that were lead by campus ministers. This is one way that students were recruited into the PTEV program through starting in a small discussion group housed in their own religious tradition. The unique feature of this set up is that the local campus ministers were used to lead the discussion groups, instead of the PTEV leaders. Breaking the discussion groups down by religious tradition was also a unique approach. This is a useful implication for practice as any institution could partner with or utilize campus ministers to facilitate discussions around vocation with students. Lee, a student at Elite, explained how his discernment group helped him to think about the kind of life he wanted, rather than a specific career,

The discernment group...allow[ed] me to think through some of the things that were going through my mind and... [think about] some of the things...that I wanted to have in my life in the future, and not necessarily did I want to become an attorney, or did I want to become a doctor, but did I want to live in this kind of lifestyle. So that was very useful. I mean, over the last four years I've bounced from career path to career path. So it was interesting to see kind of the similarities between the career path and kind of the life that I would lead.

Lee's explanation is similar to the Elite PTEV Director's earlier explanation about how they approach vocation – focusing more on who you want to be rather than what you want to do.

Teresa, also a student at Elite, explained her Catholic discernment group that met on Sunday nights over dinner. Sometimes they would discuss an article, and sometimes visitors would join them to share how they were living out their vocation in light of their Catholic faith,

Sometimes, Father Joe would bring an article or ... we would have visitors. Sometimes, we would have priests come or we've had a nun come a couple of times, or sometimes, we would just have Catholic people in the community come and kind of talk about their vocation and how they live as a Catholic.

The student's testimonies of what their discernment groups were like give insight into methods that can be replicated at other institutions.

A program that was unique to Jesuit University is a retreat before the start of the academic year for incoming freshmen students. Invitations are sent to incoming students who exhibit leadership experience and potential, especially within the Christian community. Over 50 students attend this retreat every year, and from talking to students, I found that it serves as an introduction to the PTEV program, and the mission and opportunities that the Jesuit PTEV program offers students. Every student interviewed at Jesuit University cited this retreat as highly impactful to his or her college experience. The new student retreat brought almost all of the students I interviewed into the PTEV program, and provided them with a community of like-minded students with which to start their college experience. Students mentioned this retreat as very impactful to their time both in the PTEV program and at Jesuit U. The focused time before the start of the school year seemed to be successful in bringing new students into the PTEV program. Other PTEV programs offered retreats (Quaint and Elite), but I did not hear much from the students about the impact of these retreats. Whereas at Jesuit, every student I interviewed mentioned the impact of this retreat on some aspect of his or her experience in the PTEV program.

The most dramatic difference among the PTEV programs I visited is in the purpose of Eclectic University's program. The difference is that vocation is addressed separately from faith, whereas the other programs tended to put these together. Time and again, Angela, the PTEV Director, reminded me that at Eclectic University, the focus is on faith and/or vocation, rather than faith and vocation. Katy, a faculty member who has taught PTEV-related courses at Eclectic, stated that although a goal of the program is to explore faith and vocation separately, there is still room for spirituality to be addressed in a way that is not linked to a particular religious discipline,

And I know its part of what [the PTEV Director] wants to happen is that it also becomes a place where we talk about vocation and that that can be separate from faith. Especially for those people who don't want faith to be something they discuss on a college campus.... They can go together, they can be separate, but that there's this opportunity, even if faith for you is not an established religion. It can still be a spiritual or a non-practiced...it doesn't have to be Catholic or Jewish.

Although this PTEV program allowed students to explore faith and vocation separately, I did interview students who were exploring faith and vocation together. This was done through internships at churches and faith-based or spiritually minded (and example would be a Buddhist temple) organizations, academic projects (such as a thesis or research paper on spirituality and vocation), and service opportunities. Some students were exploring their personal passions through these opportunities, even if they were not directly tied to a certain faith tradition or religion.

I asked how an approach such as this differs from the types of vocational exploration that would be available through a career services office on campus. The difference, as staff members described, is the focus on purpose and motivation for one's career, rather than just focusing on what one wants to do. Katy explained Eclectic's approach to vocational exploration as being deeper than just exploring one's career interests,

I'm looking at what kind of contribution I want to make, what purpose I have for my life. And it may be that teaching is the way to do that or it may be that ... nursing is the way to do that. So, it's not that I get a job, but it's what – what's driving me to make a contribution...So, vocation to me is more about that part of it and less about how much are you going to be paid to do [a job].

It is important to comment here on how PTEV programs differ from career services. A few of the students interviewed at the four schools commented to me that although traditional career services may help them to discover some of their professional interests, it does not address their

personal values, purpose, or faith in the way that they would like to be thinking about their vocation.

Meditation instruction is offered by Eclectic's PTEV's program coordinator, another unique feature of this program. Yoga classes are also offered at the PTEV house, something that was not an offering at the other three schools. These offerings fit with the pluralistic approach to religion embraced by Eclectic. Quaint, Jesuit, and Elite each had a Christian emphasis, with Quaint being the most diverse in its approach to faith and religion, and Elite being the least diverse, among the three Christian schools.

Religious Diversity, Interfaith Activities and Exposure

At each school I visited, I specifically asked each director and staff worker how their PTEV program embraced students of other faiths or of no religious faith at all. This question was intended to answer part of my first research question: How did programs engage students of different faiths (if applicable)? Religious diversity ranged from ecumenism (diversity within Christianity) to interfaith (different religions) exposure. Some exposure to diversity was present at each school, at least in the form of ecumenism, and exposure to Christian or religious diversity was a salient part of the PTEV experience for most of the students I interviewed. The question of how these programs embraced students of different faith perspectives or of no faith is addressed here.

As a result of their mission to convene the clergy on campus, interfaith exposure was a strong theme at Eclectic University. Given that the PTEV program serves to house a variety of campus ministries, staff members have a solid grasp on how they handle religious diversity and interfaith. Angela, the PTEV director at Eclectic, explained how PTEV workers embrace religious diversity without promoting that students dilute their religious convictions in order to

fit into a diverse environment, by promoting listening and authenticity among students. She explained their approach to religious diversity,

We honor the diverse and distinct ways in which students bring this aspect of the human experience to campus. So, for example, if you're Catholic or you're evangelical, you're Pentecostal, you're Muslim, you're Jewish, you're Hindu, you're Sikh, you're not sure, you're an Atheist, you grew up this, you're curious about that, you've had a crisis of faith, you didn't have any religion growing up, but now this kid in your dorm is really excited about Bible study and you don't know what to do. The question is: How can we be a place on our campus that thinks *all* of that is fine? We don't judge a student or say, well "that's not valid." I mean, anything beside of out and out hostility or bigotry against someone else's religious view ... we're going to honor. One of the ways we try to contain or nurture that variety is by listening to people and encouraging them to listen to one another and not be judgmental against each other. But that also means letting people be authentically themselves. This isn't about attempting to somehow, you know, dilute or somehow make everybody into one soft, politically correct way of seeing the religious or the sacred or the holy or the spiritual.

It's important to note that students are not encouraged to water down their own beliefs, but are encouraged to listen to others and refrain from judgment. Many of the students at Eclectic discussed the impact of the interfaith exposure they had through Eclectic's PTEV program. This will be explored later in this chapter.

In my conversations with staff members of Quaint College about how they embrace students of other faiths or students of no faith, "be open" was a typical response. For example, Dr. Lucy (assistant director at Quaint College) explained their approach to religious diversity:

We modify the programs by always making sure that the students know that they're welcome and that we're open. We're not here to judge. We're here just to help the students figure out their journey and their vocational calling, and what path they're going to take, and what resources and guidance we can give them. We really emphasize we're not here to judge. We're just here to try to help, listen, and guide...

Refraining from judgment and encouraging listening and openness to difference are the ways that these programs are promoting interfaith activities and religious diversity among their programs and students.

One of Quaint College's offerings is a yearly interfaith retreat. Dr. Lucy explains how this retreat is used to embrace religious diversity and teach tolerance among students,

But our retreats are probably the biggest time to also share and educate other students about other faiths as well, to ensure that they understand more than just Christianity, how to respect all the other ones, and to find the commonalities amongst them regardless of what one denomination may call something... A lot of times we will make reference to a higher being rather than saying a specific name so that it covers all faiths or divine purpose.

Similar to what Sarah at Jesuit University said earlier in this chapter about using broader language for non-religious groups of students, Dr. Lucy talked about modifying their language to make the conversation more broad and inclusive of religious diversity.

Another approach that Quaint College takes is to promote exposure to other religions and the breakdown of religious stereotypes through specific programming. Molly, the administrative assistant at Quaint College, talked about some of the programming they have provided to promote exposure to religious diversity and the breakdown of religious stereotypes,

We hosted a Muslim dance troop... We went to a Jewish temple at one time... When we look at our programming, we try to make it as inviting to everybody as we can, and plus it's also enlightening. The whole world is not Christian.... So we have to make sure that our programs are such that other people can come. When we do that kind of stuff, we always want to say, "This isn't just for Muslims," if we're having [a] Muslim program. We want our students to come to it to give them a chance to see what it's like. Some people have that old, "Muslims are terrorists" [perspective]. Well no, you're wrong.

Through providing programming on other religions, staff members at Quaint are able to expose PTEV students to diversity. This practice may not be possible at every university, but in certain situations it provides a good example of how to promote diversity and education around differences.

Although PTEV programs exist mainly to explore the intersection of faith and vocation, they also provide valuable service and social justice opportunities for students. Providing service opportunities and education around service and social justice issues is one way that the programs

are able to serve a broader and more diverse group of students than just those who are involved in the programming that is focused on vocational discernment. Molly, the administrative assistant from Quaint, talked about emphasizing the service component of their programming, rather than ministry to impact a broader group of students,

We do focus quite heavily on the ministry end of things. But we have found that when you open the door up to more service-based students that people aren't quite as ...put off...So we found that if we don't say that "this is strictly just spiritual, it's service also," we can hit a lot more of the student base.

Similarly, staff workers from Jesuit University emphasized that social justice is a topic of interest to all students, no matter what their religious identity. Dr. Matthews explained that the Jesuit commitment to social justice is something that all students can embrace,

...because the Jesuits are so focused on social justice that often times is the entry point for students to think about others, to think about the larger world. We have that language already because we're Jesuit. It's where the students' hearts are. That's what gets them on fire, gets them excited to be involved in just these things.

Service opportunities and education around social justice issues are substantial components to the four PTEV programs I visited. At some of the schools, service and social justice opportunities were a way to bring a broader selection of students into the program. For example, Quaint College does regular service projects with students, staff and faculty in the inner city. They visit soup kitchens, shelters, and offer food, clothes and education about safety in under-resourced parts of the city. Across all four schools, students embraced service and social justice as part of their own personal values. This theme is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Although Quaint College and Jesuit University have a religious identity and values, their PTEV programs are open to diversity and do interact with a broad group of students through some of their programming. These institutions, especially Quaint College, are interested in engaging in conversation around meaning, purpose and contribution with a diverse group of

students. The program at Elite University differs from the other three programs in that it was more overtly Christian in most of its programming. Although interfaith discussion is something that the Chapel leaders on campus desire to embrace, they have not reached their goals in that area yet. Dr. Thomas explained that the individual religious groups are strong, yet interfaith interaction is weak on campus,

The...Center for Jewish Life is very strong, the Wesley Fellowship [on] campus. And so, individually these different religious life groups are very strong. But as a kind of interactive whole, there leaves a lot to be desired...the chapel does a good job of supporting individual groups, but it doesn't, as of yet, do a fantastic job of having a cohesive interfaith connection...

Interfaith interaction and programming is an area that Elite can grow into, should they desire to move in that direction.

Interfaith interaction and broad conversation around vocation is definitely strongest at Eclectic University. Angela, the PTEV director at Eclectic, talked about the importance of meeting students where they are at, and working in sectors to address questions of meaning, purpose, and vocation (the big questions),

But [the way] we have to do it at Eclectic to reach students beyond religion is to work in sectors... So, student athletes, community arts school, the pre-physician or pre-pharmacy majors. We have to reach them where they are. And invite them in. Big questions: target those conversations around things that students in non-religious student groups... [are] dealing with - like the study abroad experience. That's not about religion.

Angela's example illustrates the belief at Eclectic that conversations around meaning, purpose, and contribution are applicable to all students, not just those who aspire to ministry and service related fields. Another useful example given by a faculty member at Jesuit University, Ted Talbot, is a show and tell activity that he does in his PTEV-related class, designed to get the students talking about things that are meaningful to them. Each student has to bring in a symbol of something that is meaningful to him or her. Dr. Talbot discussed how he facilitated interfaith

conversations and conversations about meaning and values in his courses by setting an example of being accepting of what students value,

I think with interpersonal skills, I mean like warmth, you've got to demonstrate to students [that] we're not going to laugh at anything, as bizarre as it might be. We're going to accept all the values as equally worthy.

The importance of these illustrations is that conversations around meaning, purpose, contribution, and even faith, can happen, and are happening, in diverse environments. Dr. Talbot teaches psychology courses at Jesuit, and students from a diverse array of backgrounds and perspectives enroll in his courses. Sarah at Jesuit University talked about changing the language, making it more broad, to embrace students of different faiths or no religious faith. This example is also consistent with some of the ways that the other schools also approach these issues in a way that makes room for a variety of students.

Some of the PTEV programs also mentor faculty and staff members around the topic of vocation and how to help students grow and develop in their understanding of their meaning, purpose and contribution. Angela, the PTEV director at Eclectic, shared some helpful specifics behind the reasoning and methods for training faculty and staff members to be versed in this arena.

...honor the vocations of the men and women who teach here and are [on the] staff of the university. Help them understand what calling and purpose is in their own lives. Help them deal with the place of religion or spirituality or religious values or ideas...

Angela believes that when faculty and staff members are in touch with their own purpose and once they have some practice in listening to others views, they are then better prepared to listen to students who are struggling with issues of purpose, vocation, or spirituality,

...each of these people can listen to students talk about switching a major or having had a life changing experience studying abroad and having new questions about who they are and what they want to do professionally and you can listen to them because you've had colleagues listen to you here about your own calling ... [and] students discover what to

do with their lives or begin to practice that discovery. And they do it ... because the faculty and staff who are around them all the time can also help them through it.

Angela helps faculty and staff members to get in touch with their own spirituality, calling, and sense of purpose in order to help students with these issues. This is an important point for those interested in helping students with questions of vocation, meaning, purpose and contribution as well as spiritual and religious questions. It is difficult to help others with something you don't understand yourself.

Students

This section illuminates the student experience in PTEV programs. The findings below represent the main themes that emerged from the student interviews. Themes were determined based on their frequency in the data and salience to answering the research questions. First, conditions that facilitated impact on the students are addressed. These include exploration and discernment and community, subthemes are included under each topic. Second, the impact of participation in PTEV programs and the resulting changes to students are explored. These include spirituality, learning, vocation, values and passion, and future plans, as well as subthemes under each topic.

Students: Environment of PTEV Programs

Exploration and Discernment

Having the opportunity to explore potential career options and participate in processes that facilitate discernment of values, meaning, purpose, contribution, and ultimately vocation, were extremely helpful to the students interviewed. This exploration often happened through both in and out of class experiences, reflection, and dialogue. All of the students cited at least one of these processes, and most cited more than one, as being useful in facilitating vocational discernment. Students expressed that PTEV programs provided a safe space on campus to

explore questions of vocation and spirituality that they could not find elsewhere.

Earlier in this chapter, I defined discernment as a discovery process. Discernment is referred to by the author and by several of those interviewed as both a process and an outcome of finding one's purpose and vocation. There are many components of exploration and discernment that came out of the data that are discussed in this section, including in class and out of class experiences, reflection, listening to God, discussion and questioning, and having a safe space to explore questions of spirituality and vocation. For some students interviewed, exploration of one's vocation or calling often led to acceptance of something that they knew or suspected, but needed confirmed. This section highlights the process of exploration and discernment as experienced by the students interviewed for this study. It begins with a look at the students' perspective on exploring vocation and calling, and then looks at exposure to experiences, reflection, discussion, and finally, how exploration and discernment led to confirmation of future plans for some students, and changes in plans for others.

Exploring Vocation

Many students expressed the value in having the opportunity to explore the meaning of vocation. Dinah, a student at Elite University, gave an example of how the PTEV program there encouraged her to think in a unique way about what she was going to do after college. She described how her involvement in the PTEV program allowed her to think about the meaning behind her pursuit of a particular career, “[The PTEV program] provides an opportunity for ...anybody to think about ... ‘why am I pursuing this career?’ ‘Is this career my vocation, if not ...what is my vocation? How can I use my education well?’” Teresa, also an Elite student, explained the importance of the discernment process to her personal understanding of her vocation and gives us a glimpse of her own personal discernment journey,

... we talked so much about... just defining what vocation is and what discernment and what calling are. So, it's helped me to really think through those questions so that I can not only have my own definition of vocation, but also say, "Okay. So, what is my vocation? And is it going to change? Is it always going to be the same? How do I discern [it] and...what the process is for that?" which has been really helpful.

Emma, a student at Quaint College, explained the difference between the support she received for her spiritual discernment process and the professional development offered through traditional career preparation programs. The support she received in exploring the spiritual aspect of her vocation was particularly helpful for her. Emma explained the components of her discernment process through the PTEV program at Quaint that were important to her,

Everything from internships to having the people here who would support my call and help me to discern that, where in most schools, you see more of a professional development type area and not so much as spiritual discernment type of area. Especially spiritual discernment for your vocation.... I think spiritually I've grown in definitely knowing where my vocation is going and what I want to do, what I don't want to do.

For Emma and other students, spirituality was important to the process of discerning her vocation. Emma felt that most schools limit exploration of future plans to only the professional nuts and bolts. The PTEV program at Quaint offered her the ability to incorporate her spirituality into her thoughts about her future plans and life calling.

Exploration of Calling

Exploration of one's calling is a topic that also came up a lot in the interview process with students. Many students are thinking of their career in terms of a calling. For some, that calling is to vocational ministry as a career. For others, it is not. Beth, a student at Eclectic University, talked about her involvement in the PTEV program and how the different interactions and experiences she has had there have helped her to think about her vocation. Beth stated that her time in the PTEV program "...helped me to think about calling and vocation in like a very thoughtful way...." Eva, a student at Jesuit University, explained that many in the

academic world do not understand the idea of calling, and therefore are often not able to help students explore their calling or help them to find their true selves. She talked about how the PTEV program at Jesuit helps students to connect with their true selves and calling, and essentially drown out other influences that might impede that discovery process,

I think that [the PTEV program] provides a good support system for...students to be themselves, essentially...which is not necessarily a spiritual or religious thing, but a human attribute, ...for ...people to feel like they can express their true desires or true callings which in the academic world can easily get covered up. So when there are programs like [PTEV], they kind of can erase all the gobbledygook [other influences].

For Eva and those she knows in the Jesuit PTEV program, she was able to gain support to find her authentic self and place in the world. Emma, a student at Quaint, explained how her time in the PTEV program shaped her understanding of her calling,

I would say that before I came into the [PTEV program], I knew I had a call but I didn't know what that meant, or how it was going to work out. In leaving, I know that I'm confident in wanting to go into ordained ministry..."

Emma gives us a glimpse of the story that was common to many of the students I interviewed. Her experiences and relationships with people in the PTEV program helped her to discover her calling, and gain confidence in pursuing a career in full time ministry. For some students, exploration and discernment led to full time ministry as a career option. For others, exploration and discernment led them away from it. John, a student from Jesuit University, talked about how exploring his calling led him away from pursuing a ministry career,

...the whole [PTEV] scholars program is about just discerning, you know, is the ministry life a vocation? Something that you're called to? And for me, it's done two things: it's affirmed that well, ministry itself is a vocation; it is a career. But, at the same time, maybe I'm not ready for that right now. Maybe I'm not called to it yet. I'm still a little too free-spirited, I suppose.

John's journey of exploration and discernment of his calling led him away from vocational ministry as a career. Ashley, from Quaint College, described how her involvement in the PTEV

program helped her to accept her calling to vocational ministry, by exposing her to other students who understood both her desire and struggle with ministry as a future career,

I mean, knowing that other people are called into ministry too and it's not just me. And there are people that believe me when I say... "I feel called to ministry. It's not just because my dad does it. It's not just because I'm doing what I know because I've grown up in it." ...So...since the [PTEV program] exists, it became okay for me to think about ministry and talk about ministry. So I was able to explore accepting that call, whereas, if the [PTEV program] wasn't around, I probably would've found something else to do.

Ashley struggled with her sense of calling to work as a church pastor, thinking she would not be good at it. The exploration and experience she was able to gain through her involvement in Quaint College's PTEV program helped her to explore different ministry options, which led her to ultimately accept her calling,

There are so many different kinds of ministry. And so that's really helpful to have learned as well. I mean, for a long time, I was like, "I don't want to be a pastor in a church because I would suck at it" – excuse the language. But I was always convinced that...I shouldn't serve a church and I wouldn't be good at it.

But then through like the readings from the book [in her PTEV class] and then talking with my friends and my colleagues [in the PTEV program]... it became okay. And it became okay to explore tons of different things and see the ministry as more than just serving a church. I guess I just learned a lot more of what it means for me to explore my life rather than having it explored for me.

For Ashley, exposure to a variety of future options helped her to see that ministry was indeed a right fit for her future career plans. Drew, also a student at Quaint College, described how a class offered by the PTEV program designed to help students explore careers in ministry helped him explore his calling,

I felt pretty torn between, "Do I do the practical or do I go where I feel God is calling?" That class really challenged me to really think about that critically, and really to make sure that as I am thinking about my life's path and what I want, and what God wants me [to do]...I'm not going to find peace until I go with God and follow that. That was the biggest challenge of that course...being open to the idea of not necessarily having total control.

Although John was led away from ministry as a career option, Teresa was led towards ministry as a result of exploring vocation and calling in the PTEV program. For Teresa, the process of discernment led her to conclude that her original career direction, physical therapy, was not her true calling. Through exploring her own vocation, Teresa came to the conclusion that, "Yes, being a physical therapist would be really great, but that's not what I feel called to right now. And that's not where I think that my strengths are." She has since decided to spend a year serving with her Catholic campus ministry after she graduates. Emma, Ashley, and Drew were able to work through the uncertainty and confusion of feeling a vocational call to full-time ministry, and ultimately, came to accept ministry as a viable career option for their future. At the same time, exploration led John to decide that ministry, while a valid career for some, was not the right choice for him. Teresa was led towards ministry and away from physical therapy. The outcomes of involvement in PTEV programs, in terms of student's thoughts about their future plans, are explored in more detail at the end of this chapter. This section focuses on the process of vocational exploration and provides a few examples of that process for students.

In and Out-of-Class Experiences

Gaining exposure to a variety of field experiences, such as internships, volunteer or service opportunities, or ministry experiences such as participating in a church service, was important for students in exploring their vocation. Having the space and opportunity to explore different career options was helpful for many students interviewed. Ashley, the same student quoted above from Quaint College, provided a good example of how exposure to different experiences has shaped her thinking about her future plans:

So, I guess, all of the experiences I've had just, again, continue to affirm [my] ... choices in life – because I see other people succeed and I see other people be fulfilled by the stuff that I want to do with my life, too. So ... I know it's something that can be done, which is really helpful.

There were a variety of different PTEV experiences that were helpful for students. Field experiences such as internships and ministry experiences were popular. Other experiences include in-class experiences, attending lecture series (where professionals share their paths of vocation), travel opportunities (both domestic and international), retreats, and living with others in a PTEV sponsored community (at Elite). Overall, these experiences provided opportunities for students to explore future options and further hone in on their goals, values and future plans.

Diana, a student at Jesuit University, explained the variety of experiences she had through the PTEV program,

I would say that the [PTEV] Program has been... really a good fit for me this year... in that it is allowing me to... experience archdiocesan work and work with nonprofits and parish life and just a variety of experiences...

Emma, a student at Quaint College, explained the value of the professional experiences she has gained in the PTEV program,

I've been applying to grad schools, and every grad school I walk into tells me I'm walking in with more experience than most people walk out with. The amount of field education that I already had, most people don't have going into seminary. So I mean, that's been the biggest thing I could put on paper, to say look at these experiences I've had and been able to do.

Experiences through the PTEV programs were not limited to only ministry-related options. Some students worked for non-profits, others participated in local and overseas service experiences such as working with the poor, in healthcare, or building homes.

Learning from experiences

For many students, the experiences they had in the PTEV programs led to future direction. For some, experience confirmed future options, for others, it ruled them out. For example, Carolynn, a student at Eclectic, learned through working at a non-profit that she does not like administration and board meetings. On the other hand, Teresa, a student from Elite,

learned that she likes non-profit work when she spent the summer working at a homeless shelter. Diana, a student at Jesuit, learned that she is very talented in information technology (IT) skills, but also has a heart for social service. Gaining experience in both fields, and using her IT skills in an internship for General Electric, led her to realize that service or ministry is where she wants to be in her future career. However, Diana also realized that her practical IT skills may be helpful in a social service or ministry career – essentially, she learned that IT and ministry, in her words, are not “mutually exclusive.”

Dallas, a student at Quaint College, originally aspired to be a youth minister. Through an internship at a church in youth ministry, he learned that youth ministry is probably not the right career choice for him. A trip to Haiti to build houses helped him to see that he wants to do something tangible, where he can see immediate results, something he did not get through his youth ministry experience. Dallas explained the impact of his experience in Haiti as leading him to consider some kind of service work, possibly using his carpentry skills,

I want to be able to... get up in the morning ... and build a house or something. At the end of the day - see the studs in the walls... So I'm kind of looking into that. I think Haiti really turned that around for me just 'cause I never really considered it before, but after going to Haiti I was like 'wow that would be amazing'....

Emma, also a student from Quaint, learned from her experiences that a career in ministry is what she wants to do with her future. She also learned that she has the skills to pursue her career goals,

...I've learned that this really is right and it's what I'm supposed to be doing...In terms of everything, in terms of what I want to do with the rest of my life, how I'm planning my life...where I'm going to school next, what I'm studying...I've learned that not only am I called to do it, but I'm called to do it because I have the abilities to do it and the skills to do it and so maybe I fit there.

Emma was able to see what her career might be like in the future, through internships and field experiences, before committing to years of graduate school. She explained further,

It's been through experiences and being able to have hands on experiences of what it would be that I would spend the rest of my life doing, and being able to do them before committing to 4 or 5 years of education.

In summary, exploring a variety of experiences were an important and influential part of the PTEV experience and process of vocational discernment for students.

Reflection

Reflection was an important tool for students from Quaint, Jesuit and Elite in the exploration and discernment process. Reflection was a method used by most of the PTEV programs to help students process their thoughts and experiences. Reflection became an important processing agent for about half the students interviewed. Reflection took many forms in the different PTEV programs. Sometimes reflection was guided through one-on-one conversation or as part of a group discussion, other times it was individual. Examples of questions used to guide both individual and group reflection are included in the Appendix C of this document. For many of these students, the reflection they learned in the PTEV program became a natural part of their orientation to the world. Lee, a student at Elite University, explained how reflection helped him to process his experiences in order to come to an understanding about their personal impact and meaning,

So it was a good opportunity to kind of explore the world. The [PTEV] program provided that opportunity and also kind of a way to come back and discuss what happened and ... reflect... I have a tendency to just accumulate experiences and never really go back through and think about what happened in these experiences and what that means to me. So it was nice to kind of almost be forced to do that sometimes and have the opportunity to do it if I wanted at other times.

Diana, a student from Jesuit University, also discussed the importance of reflecting upon her experiences. For Diana and many other students interviewed, learning to reflect upon her experiences allowed her to be impacted and changed by them,

I guess the biggest thing I've gotten out of [the PTEV program] or that which I appreciate the most out of my [PTEV] experience is the opportunity and the challenge to really process all of the experiences that I've had... And allow them ...to affect my life...not just to be like, "Okay, I had this experience." But to ask the questions, like, "What does this mean to me?" and like, "How will I move forward having had these experiences?"...So, being involved in [the PTEV] Program has pushed me to really sit with those questions rather than just kind of glaze over them and... not really, like, truly take the time to answer them as honestly as we need to or I need to.

Through learning how to reflect, and recognizing the impact of reflection on their ability to learn about themselves and the impact of their experiences, many students integrated reflection into their way of life. Nathaniel, a student at Elite, stated, "a major...tenant of [the PTEV program] is reflection, ... being able to... set aside time and think about...what's really going on...And so that's definitely ... something that I learned but has [also] become [something] that I just inherently do." John, a student from Jesuit University, explained how the PTEV program at his school has taught him to become a more reflective person in every part of his life,

... [the PTEV program] has just cultivated within me kind of a seeking mentality; a questioning mentality; a looking beneath and beyond mentality that I didn't necessarily have in high school and I think deep down... the [PTEV Program] itself offers me...a lot of time to reflect and go deeper just about things. But, that's really encouraged me to do that in other; in everything else in life.

Listening to God was a component of the discernment and reflection process that some students discussed in interviews. When students mentioned this, I would ask them to explain what listening to God was like to them. Although this was not something mentioned by every student, I think it adds an important element to provide a full picture of the discernment and reflection process as it relates to the student experience at Elite, Jesuit, and Quaint. I include two student explanations of listening to God here. I asked Teresa, a student at Elite University, to explain how she listens to where God is calling her and what that looks like for her. She explained that being directed by God happens in different ways for her: through prayer, following her interests, and listening to the feedback of others. Teresa explained,

That looks different in all ... different parts of my life... sometimes, it is like you're praying and God says, "I want you to do this." But sometimes it's just people talking to you. I think that one of the first ways (when I was talking about like picking my major) was just having this realization that I was much happier ... in my Religion classes and looking towards being a Religion major. I think that that was God speaking to me just through like my work and through looking through course catalogs. When we did summer internship, we did a lot of theological reflection and talking about discernment and vocation. So, that summer, I think I was able to learn – hear God a lot through other people and kind of what they said and the gifts that they saw in me... Sometimes, it is just praying and when things just keep coming up ... saying, "maybe I should pursue this because it hasn't gone away, and I've been thinking about it for awhile." And then ... sometimes, people just asking the tough questions or people bringing something up that you'd never thought about before, "Hey, have you ever thought about this or have you ever considered this?" I think that God definitely works through people that way.

Ashley, from Quaint College, explained a reflection activity designed to help her listen to God from one of her PTEV religion classes, and the result of that activity for her. For Ashley, listening for a still, small voice led to an important conclusion about her future,

In class the other day, at the [PTEV program] course, we went outside and sat on the bleachers. And – the instructions were to listen to God for 15 minutes. Just sit in silence, don't pray, don't think about anything, just try and – try and listen to God. Listen for a still, small voice speaking to you... Rather than the thunderous whirlwinds that we've been expecting in our lives... and so, we were sitting around. And after that, we came back in the classroom and [Dr. Bee] said, "Ashley, what is the small voice telling you?" And I was like, "I think I need to be a pastor." It just sort of came out.

Ashley and Teresa shared some of the ways that they attempt to listen to God, or be directed by God. Being directed by God can happen through a variety of avenues. Turning to God for direction, for some of the students interviewed, is an important part of the process of discovering their vocation.

Reflection was used in the PTEV programs as a tool to help students gain insight and direction regarding their values, purpose, and future plans. Many students discussed the impact of reflection on their discernment process and some even adopted reflection as a tool to help them in other parts of their lives. A list of suggested questions for reflection is included in Appendix C.

Discussion, Questioning

Having the opportunity to talk through their thoughts and feelings as they relate to vocational discernment and the importance of asking and answering questions were also themes that were central to the exploration and discernment process for the students interviewed at all four institutions. Discussion and questioning lead to clarity of values and new ideas for future plans for many of the students interviewed. Many students talked about how PTEV programs offered them the only place or group of people on campus with whom they could question and discuss issues around faith, spirituality, meaning, purpose, and vocation.

For example, Lucy, a student from Eclectic University, described how through discussions and feedback from her PTEV peers, she came to the conclusion that she wanted to follow the example set by her parents and do something meaningful with her career. Lucy stated,

Both of my parents have worked in nonprofits since I was three, so I've always seen that your job is more than your paycheck in that you'll be happiest when you're doing something that you really feel is important to you, aside from just the money you earn. ... Another part of it was talking to people and just letting me talk and them saying, "I hear you saying a lot about writing or I hear you saying a lot about peace or social justice and how that relates to your faith and maybe you should pay attention to that."

Talking with others about what is important to her, and gaining feedback from others through discussion, helped Lucy to discern that social justice and faith are important values that she wants to incorporate into her career plans. Similarly, James, from Jesuit University, explained how having an outlet to discuss what is important to him helped him to process and discover what he values,

I can't say that freshman year, I came in knowing everything that I do today in terms of the sense of what I really value and what is important to me and what I want do. But it provided an outlet to talk about those things and think about those things.

Stan, also from Jesuit University, talked about how discussing vocation helped him to see that vocation is not limited to ministry careers. Talking to others helped Stan open up to new views of what God could be calling him to, and to new possibilities for his future career,

But having an environment to talk about vocation has been absolutely valuable. Being raised ... Catholic, being an altar boy and stuff like that, the word vocation can have a very specific mindset like being a priest or nun. That's it. So, being able to talk about the word vocation and that God can be legitimately calling you to things that are not [the] priesthood - It's very, very exciting. Then, even putting [the] priesthood back within that context because that's something that I've discerned as well, figuring out that that's probably what God is calling me to. Realizing that the call to priesthood is just one of many that can happen has been really, really good.

Asking and answering questions was a component of discussion that the students often mentioned as important to their PTEV experience. Asking and answering questions lead to answers along the way in the discernment journey for students. Diana, a student at Jesuit University, described her experience in asking and discussing questions about her vocational goals and plans,

...it's really reassuring and affirming to be asking those questions with peers and discussing those with...like-minded...seniors in college that are asking and struggling with the same questions. But asking the question is the first part and, I think, [the PTEV program] does a good job of asking the questions and providing an outlet for either hearing other people's stories or sharing your own story.

Teresa, from Elite University, described how asking questions can trigger new ideas and stimulate thought about one's calling. She explained that just asking questions about potential career options can open up new possibilities that people may not have previously considered. Teresa also pointed out that these types of questions, specifically questions about ministry as a career option, are not questions you will find being asked at a typical university career center. She gave an example of asking her fellow students in the PTEV program if they have considered the priesthood or vocational ministry as a career option,

But some people will say, "I've never thought about it. And oh, maybe I should." And that can be really scary, I think, for some people. But sometimes, it just takes that first question to get people thinking about it, because it's not a traditional choice and you're not going to go to the career center at [Elite] and have them ask you that type of question.

John, a student at Jesuit University, found himself as a pre-medical student, being led in a different direction because of life questions he wanted answers to. He eventually switched his major from pre-med to theology (with philosophy and psychology as minors) so that he could spend his time pursuing answers to the life questions he was struggling with. He described how the "big questions" prompted him to change his major,

... the big questions just totally called me...everybody has this craving for answers. Everybody has these questions that they need answered in life whether it's like, 'why did this happen in life' or "why is this this way in life?" or even like "why am I blessed in this way?" or "what is life?" All of those big questions were just things that I couldn't, I couldn't run away from and I figured, you know, the only way that I'm ever going to make progress or get beyond this...position I'm in is to just face them head-on and that meant taking the classes.

A few students also commented in interviews that their involvement in the PTEV program helped them answer questions about who they want to be. When they were able to shift their focus from what they should do after college to who they want to be in the world, they were able to make progress in figuring out what they want to do. Eva, from Jesuit University, talked about the questions that her PTEV experience helped her to answer,

And I think the [PTEV Program] ... has helped me to not ask the question of, "So, what are you going to do after you graduate?" but rather, "who you are going to be?" And, the doing comes after being.

Sometimes having time and space to ask questions and discuss one's values and goals can open up a whole new world of discovery and direction for students. And, for some students, discovering who they are or who they want to be in the world led them to potential career options. This process is explored further in the identity and self-awareness section of this chapter.

Safe Space

A lesser, but still important part of exploration and discernment is the space that PTEV programs provided. Some students at Quaint, Eclectic and Jesuit cited the importance of having a place to explore questions about vocation and spirituality or to practice their religion on campus. This was not mentioned at Elite. Students at Eclectic University described the PTEV house as a safe place that they used to study, meditate, pray, and explore questions about spirituality and vocation. Carolynn, a Buddhist student from Eclectic University, explained how the PTEV house was a home away from home for her. For her first few years of school, she could not meditate or study at her apartment,

... it is a home away from home for me...I mean my apartment now is really peaceful, I can meditate there, but before...it was just like impossible for me to have a meditation practice there, so I pretty much lived here, I did my studies here, meditate here, whatever.

Mairah, a Muslim student from Eclectic describes how the PTEV house provided a safe place for her to pray when she was on campus, "I can always go to [an] empty room on campus but...I know that I feel safer to pray here. I feel it is quiet, serene and...I do not have to explain to anyone [what I am doing here]." Ashley, from Quaint College describes the PTEV program as a safe place to question her beliefs, "[it's a] safe space to talk about tough theological questions, and to explore things where it might not be safe, otherwise. You know, it's okay that I'm not sure about, you know, believing in God someday." John, from Jesuit University, describes how the PTEV program provided space to explore his spiritual questions. He was in a leadership position with a Christian student organization on campus. He described how he had to keep his questions quiet during that time because he didn't want to "freak people out and make them think I'm an atheist or something after being the head of a religious group on campus..." He described how

the PTEV program at Jesuit provided him a safe place to explore his questions, and a community of peers that were asking similar questions and having similar struggles,

...I had to keep all those questions really under [my] thumb and the [PTEV Program] this year ... has given me the opportunity ... to be vulnerable; to be intimate with people about these questions. And, ... there's other people in our group that are totally struggling with the same questions and I'm seeing in them the same struggles and the same heartache and the same fears that I had last year and at times I still have... the reason that there's been renewal this year is because there's been that community to really just investigate these feelings and these questions with.

Having a safe space to question and a community of peers also exploring the same questions, ultimately led to spiritual renewal for John. PTEV programs provided space, time, and a safe place for some students to practice, question, explore and discuss their spirituality.

In summary, exploration and discernment were important processes for students in the four PTEV programs studied. Exploring vocation and calling, exposure to different experiences, reflection, and discussion in safe environments all added to the process of discovering one's vocation and calling for students. The outcomes of these processes are explored later in this chapter.

Community

Community was an important part of the process of discerning one's purpose and vocation for students in the four PTEV programs studied. Many students formed close relationships with peers who were also exploring spirituality, vocation, and their intersection. Authentic, substantive relationships with peers and advisors were a salient part of the vocational discernment process for students and contributed greatly to some of the outcomes that are presented later in this chapter. In addition to the close community of peers and advisors, a sense of responsibility for others and desire to connect with the greater community (local, domestic, and international) in order to serve others is also part of the theme of community. Therefore,

there are two aspects of community that came through the interviews with students that will be addressed here: the supportive PTEV community experienced by the students and the sense of responsibility that the students feel towards the larger community. In addition, PTEV communities provided exposure to diversity – particularly religious diversity. Therefore, I address PTEV communities (including peers and mentoring relationships), diversity (including interfaith exposure and ecumenism), learning from others, and responsibility to others in this section.

PTEV Community

For the students interviewed, discerning one's vocation was often a group effort. Developing relationships with other students who were exploring similar questions of calling and purpose was important to students. Ashley, a student from Quaint College, explained that participating in the PTEV program made her feel that she was, "...part of something. I felt included and I felt like I was contributing in making a difference..." Eva, a student at Jesuit University, explained the importance of discerning one's vocation as part of a community, "it makes the process a lot easier when you know there [are] other people who are struggling with their majors or other people who don't know what they're doing. You don't feel as ...different or behind." Carolyn, a student from Eclectic University, explained that discerning her vocation was a community experience, "you're not just an individual trying to figure out your vocation; you're with a whole center of people who are both mentors and teachers and other students looking for that." Students expressed that they were looking for community when they came to college. For example, Lucy, also from Eclectic University, explained her excitement to branch out on her own in college, and her later realization that what she really wanted was a community,

You graduate from high school and... you're going to go to college and you're going to learn new ideas and then you're going to be this individual... You come looking for this

individual experience, what you want is community. In the end you want people who you can talk [to]...

Mackenzie, a student from Elite, described how community has become important to him as a result of his participation in the PTEV program. Mackenzie is one student who had the opportunity to live in the PTEV house during his senior year of college. This experience impacted his view of what is important. For Mackenzie, having a community to support him through his failures and successes is important to him,

... I have, from my own perspective, come to see the importance of living with other people. And your failure isn't just your failure but people are standing with you and your success is not just your success but there are people who are supporting you...I think it's important to have community around us to pursue when we need it and to keep us humble.

Caroline, also a student from Elite University, explained how the community fostered by the PTEV program influenced her thoughts about vocation. As a result of her interactions with the PTEV community, she now views her vocation as more than a job, but as a way of life that is congruent with her religious faith,

... the [PTEV] program did a number of things,...[it] did a really good job at least for me and my experience in forging friendships and connections with people who were on one hand different, as in they came from different places, had different traditions, but also had the sense of questions and desire for ... vocational discernment. It really changed what I thought about what vocational discernment meant from being what job are you going to do for the rest of your life to what does it mean to live your life in a faithful way, and then what jobs will come out of that along the way...

The PTEV programs provided a community experience in vocational discernment that was impactful for most students.

Peers. Many students discussed how the PTEV programs provided a means for them to build relationships with like-minded friends and integrate into the campus culture. Although having friends on a similar path was important, students also expressed the importance of being challenged by students who came from different traditions or held different beliefs.

Jesuit University offered a retreat for incoming freshmen students who demonstrated leadership potential in their application materials. All seven students interviewed from Jesuit had attended this retreat, and all seven of them cited this retreat as being particularly helpful to their experience in the PTEV program and their integration into the Jesuit University community. Meeting like-minded students who exhibited an interest in service, leadership, and Christian living was very important for these students. Eliza, a student at Jesuit University, discussed how the freshmen retreat helped her to meet like-minded peers and overcome her homesickness,

... I was very homesick my freshman year and I didn't think I was going to be, but I made so many friends on [the freshman retreat]. I immediately had 50 friends who had strong morals and good desires and interests and didn't want to go crazy in college. So that was like perfect for me.

Caroline, a student at Elite, described the quality friendships she formed through the PTEV program, which was in stark contrast to her experience in a sorority during her first two years of college. The friendships she forged through the PTEV program were long lasting and substantial. Caroline stated, "...there's a sense of sticking with people through their really tough times." Her friendships through the sorority, in Caroline's words, were "shallow." Through the PTEV program, Caroline found people to serve with and process life with. She described the PTEV community as the most significant part of her experience there,

I think the most significant thing I would say that I got from my time in the [PTEV] program was the importance of community and the importance of being a part of a community that holds the same or holds similar desires and values as you do. In a sense that in your differences, you grow together and you hold each other accountable and you love each other, in a sense that you aren't an individual as much as you are the sum of the people who have formed you and shaped you.

Carolynn, a Buddhist student at Eclectic University, described that her friends in the PTEV program are the only ones she can talk to about her spiritual path,

I would say that the people I met at the [PTEV program] are pretty much the only people I can talk to on this campus ... about spiritual path, they are the only people who [understand what] I am talking about... I am talking about the students mainly, because

they are all sort of on their own individual paths...one of my best friends here is [a] Muslim student and we can really relate, but I have also been able to relate to a lot of people, mainly more open-minded Christians, Catholics here, they all can relate to this concept of path ...

Charles, a student from Eclectic who does not identify with any faith perspective, also talked about how the people he met through the PTEV program were like-minded in that they were exploring their personal beliefs and values, even though they may have come from different faith perspectives,

One thing that I haven't said is that it was a center of like-minded people...I don't mean that only the same type of person went to the center, a lot of different people went there actually. But I sort of mean that even how different the people were that went, they were always exploring in some way, their personal beliefs and values in conjunction with their studies at [Eclectic]. It was sort of nice to have a place where I could relate on some level to other people who are searching or exploring....

John, a student at Jesuit University, also explained the importance of finding a community of peers that are on a journey of discovery together, even if they hold different opinions,

... all of my experiences have definitely allowed me... to find a community of people that are like-minded but, also not like-minded in certain specific topics and issues and stuff. But, the one thing that we all definitely have in common is that we're all on a journey together and we're all seeking... life together ...

In summary, almost all students across all four schools found that having a community of people who are exploring faith, values, purpose, and vocation to be extremely important to them, regardless of their faith perspective. Many students discussed that although the students in their community were different, and often came from different faith perspectives, they were all like-minded in the fact that they were on a journey of exploration. I explore more about the exposure to difference later in this section.

Mentoring. Mentoring relationships were a salient part of the community experienced by students in PTEV programs. PTEV leaders provided individual support, guidance, and

counseling that helped the students in their discernment process. Mentors allowed student experiences to be uniquely tailored to their interests. Students received personal guidance from one-on-one meetings with mentors, and often discussed the impact of having the opportunity to reflect upon and process their experiences with PTEV advisors. Advisors worked with students not only to process their experiences, but to help them find experiences that would serve to confirm or deny their thoughts about their future plans.

The individualized opportunities that the mentors in PTEV programs could offer to students, based on knowledge from their one-on-one interactions, was important to students. Charles, a student at Eclectic University, talked about the personal guidance he received from the staff members of the PTEV program,

...when I went to the center looking for something...it wasn't like "what are you looking for, maybe you'll fit in to this thing that we already have going on." It was more like "who are you and what can we do for you?" ... [Angela] and [Tepa] allowed it be tailored [to] what students ... need or want to get out of it...

Lucy, also from Eclectic University, stated that the mentoring relationship she developed with the PTEV director was the most useful component of her experience. Her relationship with Angela offered her an outlet to talk about the vocational pull she was processing. Lucy discussed that relationship as the most important part of her PTEV experience,

Having a mentor, having someone I can talk to about classes or thesis or internships, who understood that it was not just about a grade in a class or an internship experience. Someone who understood that it's coming from something bigger, there's this vocational pull that's moving me in this direction. So, getting to know [Angela] and having her at this point as a friend but also a mentor. I think that [has been] the most important [component of the PTEV program].

Grace, a student at Quaint College, developed such a close relationship with the PTEV director that she was able to forgo required advising meetings (called discernment meetings at Quaint) because she was receiving so much guidance through their everyday interactions,

The meetings that we always have to have with [Dr. Bee] have also been valuable. And I talk to him so much every day that I'm at the point where I don't have discernment meetings. Every day is sort of a discernment meeting...It's also because I'm so involved in campus that I need – well, I need to process things. I know that he's going to be there to help me process and to give me advice...

The individual mentoring relationships that PTEV students developed with staff members were very meaningful to them. Students could talk to a mentor who understood their exploration of personal values, faith, and vocation and could help them process all of their experiences and thoughts along these lines.

Diversity

Exposure to diversity, especially religious diversity in the forms of interfaith exposure and ecumenism, was a component of PTEV communities and an important conduit of learning for students. Earlier in this chapter, I addressed how these programs sought to embrace a religiously diverse group of students. This section highlights the impact of ecumenism and interfaith exposure through PTEV program involvement on the students interviewed for this study.

In general, building relationships with other students in the PTEV program exposed students to diverse views and helped them to appreciate others, even if they are different. This was a substantial growth area for many students. Eva, a student at Jesuit U, described how her time in the PTEV program there influenced her ability to relate to others. She stated,

And I think it's probably given me an appreciation for respecting other people and loving people where they're at...So although people may not see the world like I see it, that's okay, then I can just respect people for their individuality, you know, that we're each one piece of the larger puzzle.

Isabella, a student at Quaint College, echoed a similar sentiment, “I have learned more about other faiths. And I have respect. I think I have far more respect for people.” Drew, a student at

Quaint College, described how he learned to respect those who hold beliefs that are different from his,

The [PTEV Program] has definitely given me some great difference of perspective and great difference of view to be able to understand that, "No, not everybody's going to agree. But we're all part of the community of God. We're all [part of] God's creation. So we all need to be treated with respect regardless of if we agree, or disagree...." That was, I think, one of the key experiences.

The students above have described how they learned to respect others even if they are different. Some students spoke more specifically about interfaith exposure and ecumenism. The theme of interfaith exposure was the most salient at Eclectic University, given the nature of their religiously pluralistic program. However, students at Quaint College and Jesuit University also learned from interfaith exposure. Ecumenism was a bigger theme at Elite University, with students at Quaint and Jesuit also mentioning the impact of exposure to other forms of Christianity.

Interfaith. Interfaith exposure through PTEV programs was impactful for students in a variety of ways. Making friends and being exposed to different religions helped students to learn about other religions and grow in their own faith. Norm, a Jewish student from Eclectic University, explained how as a religious minority, he was able to find common ground with other students and find a place of acceptance and inclusion on campus, despite religious differences among the PTEV students. He stated,

I feel, growing up in a very religious country, that I've always been a minority and there are others as well, we come together here and this is a safe place. It is a haven...and even with groups in the religious majority from here, you learn their side... and you see where you're not so different. This place really shows that above all we live in the United States together, we're Americans, we came to the same university and share the same ideals. So, it's a good place of inclusion in that division....

Charles, also a student at Eclectic, described how the PTEV program there makes it okay to be a person of faith or someone who is exploring spirituality, and yet excludes no one based on their

beliefs. As a person who was searching spiritually, this was important for Charles. He explained,

I mean, if there's anything that I would reinforce is that the [PTEV Program] has been ...so open to different traditions or beliefs or goals or path. It houses religion, it makes it possible to be very *about* faith, whether it's in Islam or Buddhism or Catholicism, it makes that possible. But it doesn't...exclude anyone regardless of their choices and their faith or spirituality. I think that that has been one of the most ... important things for me being someone who's searching for something.

Mairah, a Muslim student from Eclectic studying to be a physician's assistant, talked about how

interfaith exposure led her to explore other religions by adding a religion minor to her studies,

... this is my first time working with interfaith events and I think I learned a lot, like, personally and that motivated me to do a religions minor...it is an educational experience, because we learn a lot from other people's perspectives about religion...our interfaith events really help us see people for who they are - not categorize them by their religion...I would not make an effort to learn about other people's religions...I personally would not have done that on my own.

John, a Christian student from Jesuit University, cited his exposure to religious diversity through

the PTEV program as a spiritually enriching experience,

But, I think the [PTEV] program itself just allowed me to...understand and enter into deep spiritual conversations with Catholics or with; not just Catholics but, just other folks that want to talk about religion and spirituality...I've visited a mosque and a Buddhist center and took [a] couple classes on Hinduism, Buddhism, ...I don't think I would have done or at least wouldn't have done [it] intentionally if I wasn't given that opportunity in the [PTEV] program... So... my experience here at [Jesuit] ...has really enriched my spiritual life as a non-Catholic and the [PTEV Program] has been a huge part of that.

For some students, interfaith exposure meant finding inclusion. For others, it was a learning experience. And, for some, interfaith exposure was a spiritually enriching experience.

Ecumenism. The term ecumenism comes from the ecumenical movement, which promotes “worldwide Christian unity or cooperation” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ecumenical>). In addition to interfaith exposure, interaction with peers from different Christian denominations was another form of diversity that was impactful for students. Dinah, a student from Elite University, described how exposure to other forms of

Christianity through living in the PTEV house over the summer impacted her,

...exposure to Christian diversity was big... I came ... from a... liberal Methodist background. And so... I had never been to a contemporary worship service or never witnessed someone speaking in tongues, which one of my summer [PTEV] roommates did frequently, which was fun... having people, like, disagree with things that I thought were really obvious or basic to my faith that I came to understand maybe weren't so integral to being a Christian...

Dinah's experience with Christians from different backgrounds and perspectives caused her to loosen a bit in what she viewed as essential Christian views. Teresa, a Catholic student from Elite, was also impacted by living with a diverse group of Christians in the PTEV house during her summer internship. She described that there were six of them living in the house: a Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, Evangelical, and non-denominational Christian. They often shared meals together and frequently met for Bible studies, theological reflection, and worship times. Teresa cited that experience as very meaningful for her, stating, "being able to live with those people and bond and grow with them, and learning a lot about other forms of Christianity than just Catholicism was really good for me." In general, students in the four PTEV programs experienced exposure to difference in a number of areas including exposure to those with different religious beliefs or perspectives. This exposure caused them to learn about and respect other perspectives.

Learning from others

In addition to learning from those whose religion or spiritual perspective is different, learning from others also manifested in other ways. For some students, learning from others happened through social interactions or community experiences, such as live-in experiences (which were only available at Elite and Eclectic). Dinah, a student at Elite, shared the impact of living in the PTEV house during her summer internship,

...to live with five other people for a summer, and we were doing Morning Prayer together and meals together and all kinds of stuff together - just figuring out how to learn with others, how to live with others and being in close quarters and learn from their different experiences.

Students often learned from their peer's experiences, and from interacting with a close group of peers – either through a live-in experience, as Dinah described above, or through a discussion-based group or PTEV-sponsored course where they could share their experiences and learn from each other.

Other students learned about themselves or their careers through seeing the example of others – either learning from their friends' experiences, learning from reading or hearing the stories of others, or learning from the example set by professionals in the field that they are contemplating. For example, Ashley, from Quaint College, feels that the combination of her many experiences in the PTEV program and seeing others succeed in the career she aspires to affirmed her future plans,

So, I guess, all of the experiences I've had just, again, continue to affirm [my] choices in life – because I see other people succeed and I see other people be fulfilled by the stuff that I want to do with my life too. So I know that – I know it's something that can be done, which is really helpful.

Drew, also a student at Quaint, talked about how learning from the example of professionals that have shared their stories through the PTEV seminar series helped him to explore his calling,

So, the other experiences have given me a different taste of what vocation can be and what calling can be through different people's stories. I've gone to some of them that have involved healthcare... There was one that was work for justice...hearing these people doing what they feel that they're called to, but doing it in such different ways, has been motivating for me to make sure that I'm in touch with my own call and making sure that enjoying the satisfaction that they're getting out of their lives that I'm getting that same thing. That's what I want actually...

Learning from others was an outcome of PTEV programs for just over half the students interviewed. That learning came through interactions with peers, professionals they met through

field experiences, and even stories that students read in books or heard through lectures.

Responsibility to Others

In addition to building close, authentic relationships with both peers and mentors, some students also expressed a sense of responsibility to others, even those who are not in their close community of peers. Showing solidarity with those who are suffering through “being with others” is part of the sense to responsibility to the larger community that came out through the interviews with students. For example, Norm, a student at Eclectic U, explained how he now has more understanding of others and advocates for oppressed groups as a result of his experiences with diverse students in the PTEV program, “... Now I’m a bigger advocate for oppressed groups and for minorities...this place gives you a better ... understanding [of] others.” This sense of responsibility for the oppressed is a value that Norm seemed to adopt on his own, through his experience in the PTEV program.

For some students, this theme seemed to be a product of the ideology of those leading the PTEV program. Responsibility to others was a strong value that was communicated by the PTEV programs at Quaint, Jesuit and Elite and was internalized by many of the students. For example, Caroline, a student at Elite U, described how her views of the world were challenged by her participation in one of the PTEV courses, and how her experience in living in the PTEV house (which was located in a nearby low-income community) impacted her. She explained that what she learned about service through her experience in the PTEV program challenged the way she sees the world,

... our call to service, isn’t call to service, but primarily...learning to sit and be with and be friends with people...people that aren’t necessarily like you, which is part of the [PTEV] house, is being a part of the [lower income city near Elite, where the PTEV house is located] community which mostly I wouldn’t have had a chance to do. So yeah, I think that’s what I mean by...challenging the way you view the world.

Mackenzie, also a student at Elite, explained a practical example of “being with” people in a low-income neighborhood. Mackenzie explained the importance of moving there and living life with them, rather than implementing services from a distance. He stated,

[rather than]...trying to go [into] a neighborhood and throw services ... money or projects ... rather, maybe moving to the neighborhood and becoming friends with some of the people there and learning from them and trying to see [them] with different eyes. Folks become more the objects of our mercy...rather than friends. So I think that [the] “being with” model of service really encourages us towards friendship...

Caroline and Mackenzie were challenged to see the less fortunate as equals and friends rather than objects of service. The concept of “being with others” was a value that was strongly communicated to students from the PTEV leadership at Elite.

In addition to Elite, students at the other three PTEV schools echoed a similar commitment or responsibility to others and to community. Their terminology was often different, but the sentiment was the same. For example, students at Jesuit University explained that they had learned that relationships and people are more important to them than things. They explained how they had learned to take time for people, and not get distracted by other, less important pursuits. John, a student at Jesuit University, described how loving people has become important to him as a result of his participation in the PTEV program,

Just at the most humane, basic level; just loving people... the [PTEV] programs have affected me in that ... it's not like I didn't love people before, obviously, but it's just been a renewed importance - like this is more central to who we are as people; who I am as a person than, than just about anything else there is in my life...So, through the various ...[PTEV] programs; it's just been a continual reminder that oh yeah, it's about the people; it's about people; it's about others; about loving others..

Diana, also a student at Jesuit University, described how her view of service has changed as a result of her experience in the PTEV program,

In high school, I did a lot of service, like direct service ...but I very much went into [it] with the mindset of “I am giving of my time to help these people” versus “let me walk with you in these times of need, so that, together, we can, like, we can serve each other.”

James, a student from Jesuit University, discussed the importance that community service now plays in his life, as a result of being exposed to the values of the Jesuit institution and the PTEV program, “So I think one thing that I’ve realized is the importance of community service; that idea of ‘men and women for others.’” Eva, also a Jesuit student, explained that she feels a sense of responsibility to defend people’s dignity, and that her awareness of the importance of the human experience has increased,

I just have a real problem with when people's dignity or human rights, when people don't feel special...And ... especially in this city, the marginalized and the oppressed, whether it's people of poverty or women or, you know, whoever it is. I've just come to have such an appreciation for seeing the spirit of God and all...so my awareness has probably increased...of the human family.

Responsibility to community wasn’t limited to just students at Elite and Jesuit. Students at Eclectic and Quaint expressed similar values. Carolynn, a student from Eclectic, talked about the influence that practicing meditation had on her responsibility to the community,

I did not see the need to take care of the rest of the community as much as I do now. I did not see the need to extend beyond my own personal motives and I think that...the meditation has been the main catalyst for living beyond that self-centered thing.

Ashley, a student at Quaint College, discovered a similar sense of responsibility or desire to help others through her vocational discernment journey. She discussed the role she sees herself playing in the world,

I don't like to see people give up on themselves...Especially when everything around them tells them they should. When family life is tough, when society tells them they're not good enough because they're gay, because they're black, because they're... disabled or, I'm not sure there's a politically correct term for that – but when someone tells you you can't, it's really discouraging...And I like to be there for people...When everything else says, "You can't," I want to be the one to tell them they can.

The deep sense of responsibility for the good of the world, and the desire, not only to help others, but to genuinely be there for others -- to experience life with them and to lift them up, was a

theme that lingered with me long after conducting these interviews. This desire is consistent with the values of the institutions and PTEV programs, and is something that was often communicated to the students from the program leaders. However, it is clear from hearing the voices of the students, that they have internalized these values as their own. The students' commitment to service and helping others is explored more in the next section of this chapter when I discuss their future plans.

Students: Impact

Whereas the last section described the processes and environment that facilitated exploring vocation through involvement in PTEV programs, this section describes the impact of involvement in the PTEV programs on the students interviewed for this study. Themes in this section include spirituality, identity (or self-awareness), vocation, values and passion, and future plans.

The themes are presented in this order because for many students, their spirituality was the foundation for their identity, thoughts on vocation, values and passions, and ultimately, their future plans. Spirituality was also one of the largest themes to come through the student interviews, and therefore was very salient to personal development and the vocational discernment process for many students. Also, development seemed to unfold in the following way for many students: they learned from others and through their experiences about themselves. Their experiences and increased self-awareness informed their views about vocation and their understanding of what they value and what they are passionate about. These values and passions, along with spirituality and their knowledge of self, were motivators for their future plans.

Spirituality

Spirituality was directly addressed as an interview question. Students were asked if there

had been any change in their spiritual beliefs or values as a result of their participation in the PTEV program. However, some of the students talked about spirituality earlier in the interview process when asked broader questions about the meaning and value of their participation in the PTEV programs. Therefore, some of the students addressed the impact of participation in the PTEV program on their spirituality or personal faith without being directly prompted. As stated above, spirituality was one of the largest themes to emerge from the student interview data. Spirituality as a theme is not a surprising one, given the goals of this study, the goals of the PTEV programs, and the particular population of students interviewed. There were two main areas of impact along the lines of student's spirituality: students reported being more open to other forms of faith and diverse perspectives on faith and spirituality, and they also reported growing stronger in their spirituality or faith.

More Open

Many students reported being more open to beliefs that differed from their own, and some even reported a change in their own beliefs as a result of exposure to diversity. Dinah, a student from Elite University, described how she is less quick to judge someone's Christian faith based on his or her theological beliefs,

My beliefs haven't changed but my...list of... what you have to believe to be a Christian I think has gotten shorter...I used to be pretty quick to call something heresy ... but now I'm much more able to see a different practice or different approach as ... something that ... doesn't make you less Christian than me ...

Lucy, a Christian student from Eclectic University, found herself deviating from the religion she was raised with as a child and embracing a broader view of Christianity. She explained that growing up in an evangelical church exposed her to a very narrow view of Christianity and that after much reflection and questioning, she now embraces a broader view of Christianity. Lucy has found that "right believing" has become less important to her,

I came from a very evangelical, nondenominational background ... there's a very narrow perspective there about what is [and] isn't Christian. I'm leaving college with a much broader perspective ... It's not just our church versus...those Methodists or Lutherans ... I'm not okay with that. I'm coming away with a bigger sense of it's all part of church; it's all part of what it means to be Christian... coming into college I thought in regards to faith and vocation, it was very narrow, and there was definitely one clear thing to believe. There's this very rigidly defined "Here's my religion...this is right believing." I think that's become less important.

Some students also talked about changing their doctrine, and how that was a difficult process, but they learned that is it okay to change what you believe. Lucy stated that it was very hard for her to change what she believed, especially since it meant deviating from the beliefs she was raised with,

It's hard to leave a tradition in which you've been raised or to see it differently. That might even be the hardest. It might be easier I think to change from "I believe nothing and now I believe something" than to "I used to believe something and now I believe something different about the same thing." That's a very hard change to make.

John, from Jesuit U, explained how he learned to be more open to other views and that changing his doctrinal beliefs is okay,

... just being more open to different ways of thinking about life and particularly religious doctrine and spirituality and that sort of stuff... also... it's okay to change your doctrine. It's okay to change what you believe a little bit ... or a lot. And, I definitely have changed a lot doctrinally since being at college and since being in some of the [PTEV] Programs.

Drew, from Quaint College, explained how he is now more open-minded, and that he has learned to value processing ideas that are different from his own,

As far as the change question, being more open I think...Just being more open-minded to any and everything, any thought, any new idea that comes across your way, and not to shut it down or not to close it out immediately, and to process it, to talk about it. "What does this mean? What could it mean?"

Mairah, a Muslim Student from Eclectic, described how she has learned about other religions through her time in the PTEV program and subsequent religion classes she has taken at the suggestion of her PTEV mentor. She is now more open to diverse perspectives and defends other

religions to her family. She explained,

I am more open minded ... I sometimes defend other religions with my family on topics, because I know more about them and I know that they have been ignorant in the sense that they do not know anything, but they are just saying it, because that is what they hear...

In summary, many of the students have grown in their ability to be open to other views and perspectives. Some students have even learned to value close examination of their own beliefs.

Others have made some changes in their beliefs or doctrine.

Growth

For some students, their exposure to other beliefs and the ability to be open to diverse perspectives has led to more security or clarity of their own beliefs. Other students reported spiritual growth as an impact of involvement in the PTEV program in general (not necessarily as a result of being exposed to diverse perspectives). Isabella, an evangelical student at Quaint College, stated “I’ve become stronger in my faith by learning through others – about other faiths.” Mairah, from Eclectic University, described that explaining her religion to others and seeing the perspective of others on her religion has made her a stronger Muslim,

...I knew that we pray five times a day, but then explaining it to somebody else... like talking about my own religion and looking at it from another person’s perspective is a different story and ... what I have learned is that it just increased my own faith ... it just made me believe it even more, ... it just made me [a] stronger Muslim.

Emily, a Christian student from Elite U, explained how interacting with others who have different beliefs has caused her to become more proactive about investigating her own beliefs,

I think it's also been a way for me to be exposed to Christians who might believe a little different than I do, we might share the basic foundations, but the way that they talk about it is different. In some ways it's really helped me solidify what I come from, what I believe...it's been an opportunity to analyze what I think. Is it based on the Bible? And what does the Bible say? Therefore, actually, I'm probably a lot more rooted than I was before.

Norm, a Jewish student from Eclectic University, explained that the PTEV program allowed him

to get in touch with his religious identity, an experience that he didn't get through other parts of his college life. He explained,

When I come here ... I feel more in touch with my personal belief ...my relationship with God. I don't get to practice that that much outside. Being a Jew here on campus, there aren't very many of us, there are two in my fraternity out of 80 guys...

Charles, also a student at Eclectic, discussed how learning to meditate through the PTEV program there helped him to incorporate his spirituality into his everyday life, and live his life in a way that is more connected with his spiritual values. He stated,

I think [meditation] has helped me sort of be a little more intuitive with what I consider to be spiritual and sort of that everyday application of my spiritual values...It became less and less easy to sort of hide from myself and my – any sort of disconnect that was going on between my everyday life and my spirituality. So the flipside of it even though it felt harder it made it easier to incorporate my spirituality into my everyday life.

As is evident from the diverse perspectives presented here, spiritual growth was not limited to the Christian population, but students from a variety of backgrounds reported becoming stronger in their faith perspectives as a result of their participation in the PTEV program. Jamal, a student at Quaint College, described how the interfaith retreat had a significant impact on his own spiritual life. It led him to explore his own religion, get baptized, and he now reads the Bible and attends church regularly (he did not before). Eliza, a student at Jesuit U, described how the PTEV program (along with some other factors) played a role in her spiritual growth. Attending mass is now an important part of her life and imperative to her well-being. She stated,

I think one thing that I haven't really hit on is my faith. I think it has totally deepened. ...Now, I totally want to go to mass and I go a lot more often than just on Sunday. But I will hopefully never miss a Sunday mass again...I feel faith is just so crucial to ...my sense of peace ... I feel like totally drained if I have not gone to mass in a while...

James, also a student at Jesuit U, described how having the opportunity to explore and reflect upon his faith has helped him to work through questions and come to a better understanding of his faith. When asked is anything has changed in terms of his spirituality, beliefs, or values,

James replied,

I kind of [touched on] this before, I think. But in terms of really having the time to think about that and examine those things, and then providing the outlet into other opportunities to explore faith. But I wouldn't say, my faith has changed but I come to a degree of understanding of it. And that has been through the process of leading retreats and directing retreats and really having the time to sit back [and] say,... 'What does my faith mean to me? How do I practice my faith? How do I live my faith?' et cetera.

In summary, spiritual growth along a variety of dimensions was an outcome for most students who participated in PTEV programs. Being exposed to others who are living faith centered lives, even if their perspective is different, and having the opportunity to explore and reflect upon their own beliefs led to spiritual growth for many of the students interviewed.

Self-awareness, Identity

Students talked a lot in the interviews about growth in their understanding of themselves. Hence, participation in PTEV programs impacted many students' sense of identity. Caroline, a student at Elite, felt that connecting with the PTEV program, helped her to become the person she was looking to be. She had been involved in a sorority, and spent her first two years of college on the party scene. However, she really wanted to be involved in Christian service. Finding and becoming involved in the PTEV program at Elite helped her to redefine her friendships and priorities. About her involvement in the PTEV program, she stated, "...it has meant redefining myself.... made me leave behind in a lot of ways... what I had been becoming my first two years of college." Drew, a student at Quaint, stated that his participation in the PTEV program has "definitely meant a lot for me as far as me being able to get to know myself better. It's definitely forced me to confront who I am." Nathaniel, a student at Elite University, explained that the PTEV program helped him to explore who he is and who he wants to be in the world. Before his involvement in the PTEV program, he did not know himself,

Let's say that I wasn't myself before, but...I've had the time and space to really figure

out who I am and who I want to be and become, and ... if you asked me before I came here ... I wouldn't have known...

Nathaniel later explained that getting to know himself better, through his experiences and the feedback of peers and mentors in the PTEV program, put him in a position to serve others more, and helped him connect to his purpose,

...I've had a host of conversations and experiences and relationships and lessons learned and time that has brought about a notable amount of growth and has led me to achieve and confirm who I am in a very refreshing, authentic unique way that is me. And...having that enables you to serve others and enables you to do things with a certain freedom.

Nathaniel learned that he enjoys serving others, even when is it inconvenient, because he knows that serving others is part of who he is, "...I'm going to understand this is me serving, this is me in my purpose, this is me doing what I'm supposed to do and that's what brings life..."

Similarly, Ashley, from Quaint College, has learned that she is good at supporting people, and that knowledge has informed her understanding of her life calling and future career options,

So, I guess, my main call, in general, is just to support people and be there for people and to encourage people to follow what they love and to do what they love, or to comfort... I like to be there for people. I feel like I know how to just be with somebody. Sometimes, if someone is having a bad day, just going and sitting with them could be enough...so I guess that's the overall thing that brought me to all of those professions I've splattered off a few minutes ago.

Some students learned about themselves and gained perspective on their future plans by paying attention to their gifts and talents and the experiences that gave them joy and energy, as opposed to draining their energy. For example, Teresa came to Elite with the goal of pursuing a career in physical therapy, but later decided that her talents were not in the hard sciences, and ministry is closer to her heart. She explained,

I probably could be happy as a physical therapist and it'd be a great job. But I was not willing to take the organic chemistry and the physics and the other biology classes, so that kind of closed those doors... I've been really, really happy and found a lot of joy and energy in the ministry work that I've done at [Elite]...I've enjoyed those experiences so

much. I want to keep them going and see if it's something that I want to do for the rest of my life.

Tom, a student at Jesuit University, explained how he deals with the uncertainty of his future by focusing on what his gifts are, rather than what he is going to do,

I stress about, “Oh, what am I going to do? What am I going to do?” But, you know, I shouldn't be asking that question...the question I should be asking is... “What are my gifts and how can I use those?” So, it's first identifying gifts before you...look at how you're going to apply them.

Eliza, a physical therapy student from Jesuit University, learned about the kind of professional she wants to be. She learned that how she interacts with people as a physical therapist is important to her,

I'm confident that I will learn the scientific information, but I feel like the way I treat my patients and how I interact with my coworkers, and hopefully the parents of my patients (because I want to do pediatric), I think that that is just so much more important. I think that the [PTEV] program...has kind of showed me that that's what's more important to me.

In essence, it seems that as many of these students take the time to learn about themselves, and reflect upon what they value, what brings them life and joy, and who they want to be in the world, they are able to discover what they want to do in the future. Their growth in their knowledge of self led many of them to an understanding of their purpose and calling.

Vocation, Values, and Passion

Along with learning more about themselves, who they are in the world, and who they want to be, many PTEV students also learned about what they value. Students had much to say about their views on vocation, their calling, their motivation for their career and future choices, and their purpose. These themes are presented in this section.

Vocation and calling

Vocation is a term that is very hard to define, and often subjective to the person providing the definition. The purpose of this section is to shed light on how many of the PTEV students are defining vocation for themselves. The overarching theme that was communicated from the students is that vocation is more than just a job. For most, there is a spiritual component to vocation. For many, that spiritual component is directly linked to their religious faith. Caroline, a student from Elite University, explained that participating in the PTEV program helped her to see that the process of discerning her vocation comes from living a life of faith. She stated,

It really changed what I thought about what vocational discernment meant from being “what job are you going to do for the rest of your life?” to “what does it mean to live your life in a faithful way?” and then “what jobs will come out of that along the way?”

For Caroline, living her life in a way that is consistent with her faith will lead her in directing her future. Emily, also from Elite University, described her perspective that her calling comes from God, and is not necessarily the same as what she is good at. She explained,

I think for me the calling is coming from God... It doesn't come in the form of an actual call or ...letter and I've never had the experience where I feel like I can actually hear God talking tangibly with my ears. The Holy Spirit guides our thinking, and it gives me the ability to make decisions and make them wisely. It's interesting because I don't think your calling is necessarily the same thing as what you're good at.

Future direction, for many PTEV students, is directly linked to faith. Some students expressed a desire to live holistically. They don't want to limit their spirituality or their faith to only their extra-curricular life. Eva, a student at Jesuit, learned that she does not have to separate her faith from her vocation, that she can bring the whole of who she is into her career, even if her career takes her to the business world. She said,

...you can be a professional and still be spiritual or holistically-minded.... So, it allows me to think that you can bring this into the business world and that it doesn't need to be something that stays within the limits of your own thoughts or your family or your friends ...

John, also a student at Jesuit U, learned that although he may not be pursuing a career in ministry, his work and his spirituality can exist together, he does not have to view his job as just a means to get paid, but he can be spiritually enriched by work, even if it is something as simple as flipping burgers. He stated,

I may not become a minister, a pastor or something along those lines. But, whatever; there are other jobs and other professions. I can use this stuff in those jobs, in those professions, and I may not just make a living at it but, feel enriched and grow through my work in spiritual ways and not just feel like I'm going to work and getting paid, you know, ten dollars an hour flipping burgers or should that be... your work can pertain to your spirituality...

It was not just the Christian students who attested to the spiritual component of vocation, the students who embrace other worldviews attested to this as well. Charles, a student from Eclectic University who does not identify with any religion, explained the realization he came to in terms of his vocation. For Charles, and others, vocation is the intersection of his career, and his personal and spiritual lives,

It's not just a job or career, then your personal, spiritual life; they're both pretty much the same thing. You can't really separate [them], which I'm pretty sure is what vocation means - it's, you know, the connection between those two things.

Lucy, also a student at Eclectic, stated that she thinks many students, not just those in the PTEV program, are looking for more than just a job, but something that is meaningful, "...I feel like a lot of students at [Eclectic] but even people I know outside of [Eclectic] - they don't just want a job, but they really want something that speaks to them, that is meaningful..." Carolynn, a Buddhist student from Eclectic, explained how practicing Buddhism made her aware that there is a spiritual component to everything in life. Her experiences in the PTEV program and in exploring Buddhism have helped her to embrace her spirituality in every area of her life. She explained what she has learned about life and spirituality, "...the whole concept of becoming

aware of the spiritual life, ...there is more to us than achievement or getting jobs, there is more to us than family building, there is more to, you know, there is more there..." In summary, for most of the students interviewed for this study, vocation and spirituality go together.

Although students attested to the spiritual or faith component of vocation, they also believe that anything can be a calling or vocation, not just ministry-related careers. Teresa, a student at Elite, described how she realized that anything can be a ministry,

You can kind of make anything into a ministry. I think that I've learned that ... whatever my gifts and talents are, I can use them in a number of different fields, and still make it into a ministry...It's about... the approach you take, and listening to God and... letting him work through you. No matter what you're doing -- lawyer or doctor, executive, teacher, preacher, it doesn't matter.

Eva, from Jesuit University, explained that the concept of vocation is not limited to only the religious community. She discussed her wish that her peers could understand vocation in the way that she has come to understand it,

...people are just so afraid of...doing what they love ... their true vocation...I think they so often associate it with...becoming a priest or becoming a nun. But you just need to realize that vocation is for everybody...and it's not exclusive to religious vocation.

Many of the PTEV students believe that vocation applies to everyone, and anything can be a calling.

Many students also explained that their definition of vocation is now broader than it was before they came into the PTEV programs. A few students have also learned that vocation and calling are fluid, meaning that they can change over time. Teresa, from Elite, described how her definition of vocation has become broader,

So, I think before I got to [Eclectic], I had the idea of what vocation is, and a lot of the time, in the Catholic Church, vocation means vocation to priesthood or religious life. But [the PTEV program] has helped me to see that vocation is much broader than that, and vocation is just whatever God is calling you to. There's one definition that [the PTEV program] uses a lot that I really do like where it says, "Vocation is where your gifts and your deepest desires meet the world's greatest needs."...Which I think ... is very true, and

I like that because it can be fluid, because your gifts can change over time and the world's needs are going to change over time.

This view of vocation, as something that is consistent with the world's needs and therefore may change over the course of one's life, was shared by a few of the students, who repeated this same quote in interviews. The original quote is from Frederick Buechner (1993) "the place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet" (p. 119). James, a student at Jesuit University, described how vocation goes beyond what one does for their job. For James, and certainly other PTEV students as well, what he does in his free time is also part of his vocation. He stated,

...what I do at work isn't the end, but also in terms of looking at after graduation, how I approach involvement with different organizations, whether it be related to hunger and [the] homeless or it be related to educational institutions and different things that I just do in my free time and how those are very much part of vocation...

Stan, a student at Jesuit, emphasized the importance of motivation in vocation. He talked about how anything can be a sacred calling, provided your heart is in the right place. He stated,

"The place where God's calling you is the place where the world's deep hunger and your deep desires meet" ... So, realizing that that's what vocation means, for some that means priesthood, for some people that means newspaper writer or something like that. Realizing that it is no less sort of sacred a calling to be called to journalism or something like that, provided you're doing it for the right reasons...

For Stan and many of the students interviewed, the motivation for what one is doing is an important part of having a sacred calling. Values, passion, and motivation for one's career or vocation were salient topics related to calling and vocation that came through the student interviews.

Values and Passion.

Values and motivation for one's future plans, as well as passion, were topics that came up repeatedly in interviews. Many students expressed the importance of following their passions,

and not being led by money when choosing a career path. Caroline, from Elite University, explained her values in following her calling. She has learned that she values,

...living in a way that reflects the love and abundance that God has and being able to enjoy people and just slow down and to not necessarily be gunning for, to be cliché, the things of the world... such as money, such as prestige, such as education...

Eva, a student from Jesuit University, defined passion as one's "heartfelt desire." She explained the importance of finding her passion,

... it's... all about what your passion is about and you don't do things for money or for fame or for what your family wants you to do. You have to do what's going to allow you to be happy when you get up in the morning...finding what you're passionate about is really helpful in a business world that is driven by self-interest and power and all sorts of things. And to be able to know that you're not weak or vulnerable for doing what you love... I'm happiest when I do – when I do what I'm passionate about. I want to do the things I'm passionate about.

Some students also recounted stories of changing their future plans to follow their passions, rather than money. Drew, a student at Quaint, switched his major from education to religion in his junior year of college. He explained his reasoning for the switch, saying "I can't do this. I don't have any motivation. I don't have any drive. I'm not doing this for the right reasons. I'm doing this because I want a paycheck after I graduate.' I wasn't okay with that."

Jamal, also a Quaint student, switched his major from computer science to physical education. He realized that he was only pursuing computer science for the money, and found that he was much more passionate about teaching young people about sports. He explained the reasons for making the switch by stating, "...money isn't everything if you don't have a passion for it." Many students in PTEV programs learned that passion was an important factor in determining their future plans.

Service. Helping others, in the forms of service and social justice, were strong values for many students and played a substantive motivating role in their thoughts about their future plans.

Service is both a value that students held and an outcome of students' discernment process in that it was a draw for future career options for students in these four PTEV programs. In the earlier section on community, I explored the commitment and responsibility that students expressed to both their community of peers and to the larger community of the world. Across the board, PTEV students at all four schools expressed a commitment to community and to service. This commitment to service revealed itself in a variety of ways including wanting to be involved in service activities, and a desire and passion to help others. Caroline, a student at Elite, explained that her involvement in the PTEV program "...gave a framework and a structure for service, and for Christian service in particular." Students expressed their desire to make a difference in the world. Ashley, a student at Quaint stated, "I like to make a difference.... I can't see myself doing something that doesn't help somebody else... I just can't envision doing something for the money or for, you know, status... that just doesn't fit for me." Eliza, a Jesuit student, described her hope to impact people as a pediatric physical therapist, as she learned that life is "...about being more than just an ordinary person going through life, [it's about] reaching out and really trying to leave a mark on people."

In addition to service as a common value and motivator for career plans, social justice was also a strong value held by some students. A few students expressed a desire to make a difference in the world through social justice work, which students explained, entails alleviating the causes of oppression and poverty. James, from Jesuit University, explained the difference between social justice and service stating, "...social justice isn't the process of serving, it's not going out, and like just serving in a food line, but figuring out ... how can you change those things..." The value of social justice was strongest among students at Jesuit University and

Quaint College. James learned that he values social justice, and explained that he wants to make a difference by,

...not only serving others but finding ways to make changes to those things that are unjust. The importance of ... living out your values and ... practicing what you preach. I think just that overall idea of wanting to do the difference.

Diana, also a Jesuit student, explained that she was learning about social justice and “the reality of the injustice in our world...” through the PTEV program and her courses at Jesuit. Once pursuing a career in information technology, she explained that this newfound knowledge regarding social injustice across the world was compelling her to respond. She started thinking about what she could do after graduation to contribute to alleviating injustice in the world. She stated,

... as a person of faith, I cannot passively sit by and live comfortably with this new awareness.... So, how do I really internalize it and allow it to affect my life?... So those are the questions, the really big questions that I've been asking this semester, which manifest itself in, "Okay, so what do I do next year after graduation?"

Eva, another Jesuit student, described how her involvement in the PTEV program inspired her to “create a more compassionate world...” She desires to do something to help in the area of human rights, “this idea of human rights and human dignity, they're very important to me. And if people have experienced displacement from their own countries or genocide on the basis of race, gender, class, religion...I think that's horrible.”

In summary, values and motivation are important to students in thinking about their place in the world and their future plans. Growth in the knowledge of these areas was an outcome of participation in PTEV programs. God, spirituality, passion, service, and justice are some of the factors that are informing students’ future plans. Diana, Drew, Jamal, and Teresa all serve as examples of students who changed direction to follow their heart’s desires or calling. The future plans of the students interviewed are explored in more detail next.

Future Plans

Overall, just under half of the students interviewed described a change in their future plans as a result of their PTEV experiences. Some of these changes were recounted in student's stories of following their passions in the previous section of this document. For example, Jamal switched from computer science to physical education; Eva moved away from information technology; and Drew explained that education was not in line with his passions. Drew explained his realization that education was not where he felt his calling was in more detail,

I realized that I wasn't going to be whole or completely happy and satisfied with my time here. I wasn't being honest with myself and with God as far as what I felt my call was. I just couldn't be in the education program anymore because it wasn't fulfilling those needs.

Teresa also made an important, but controversial switch in her career plans. She explained how the support she received in the PTEV program at Elite helped her to make the switch from physical therapy to ministry work, even though others did not approve of her choice,

I think that the biggest ways [the PTEV program] has impacted me ... is it supported me in my choices, in my decisions to take [an Elite] degree and go do ministry with it. Whereas, some people say... "You're going to go be a youth minister on [an Elite] degree?"

Teresa's friends thought she was wasting her expensive Elite degree by going into ministry instead of physical therapy.

In addition to Diana, Drew, Jamal and Teresa, there are other stories of discovery that led to changes in career plans or future possibilities. I shared John's testimony earlier about how the "big questions" lead him away from pursuing a career in medicine. Stan, a student at Quaint, originally wanted to pursue a career in youth ministry. After completing an internship as a youth minister, he realized that it would not be the right career for him. He explained how he came to that conclusion through a particularly demanding stretch of experiences in his youth ministry

internship, “I got really burned out...there [was] one stretch of nine weeks when I led eight retreats...It was ridiculous, I would never ever do that again.” The culmination of experiences in the PTEV programs led some students away from their original thoughts about their future plans.

Other students did not express drastic departures from their original plans, but were more open to a broader range of career options as a result of their participation in the PTEV program.

Lucy, a student at Eclectic, did not see how she could use her faith in her career before her involvement in the PTEV program. Now, she sees the possibility. She explained,

I wouldn't have thought there might be a place for me to use faith in my future work plans because it seems like a very narrow thing...In college... my perspective on what faith actually means has opened up. So it did seem plausible that this could be something I would pursue in a future job...

Similarly, Dinah, a student at Elite, is open to more possibilities than she was before. She explained,

I wanted to be an ordained elder in [the] United Methodist Church. So I just wanted to be a pastor of a church and be sort of your normal preacher. And now I feel like I could do youth ministry, I could do children's ministry...worship planning ...

In addition to change, some students became open to a broader range of options for their future plans.

The other half of the students interviewed found that their future plans were confirmed or reinforced by their experiences in the PTEV program. For example, Eliza's desire to work as a pediatric physical therapist was confirmed through volunteering with children in a medical setting. In addition to confirmation, many talked about gaining confidence in their calling. A few students, such as Ashley at Quaint, knew they had a “calling” to vocational ministry, but struggled to accept it. I shared Ashley's testimony earlier in this chapter about how she would have found something else to do without the guidance she received from her experiences in the PTEV program at Quaint. Ashley stated, “I'm more sure of my profession and where I want to be

and, sort of, knowing the steps to get there.” Emma referred to the confidence she has received through her PTEV experiences. She stated, “Confidence has been the biggest thing that I’ve gained and come out with.” Stan, a student at Jesuit U, described the confidence he gained as a result of his participation in the PTEV scholars program at Jesuit,

...having that community of five scholars plus a couple of the directors, binding us together ... in turn gives me confidence ... because I’ve been able to talk about different things with them and discuss various theological issues in ministry and stuff like that. Because we’ve had those discussions, I now feel confident to go on to do ministry outside in the field, like I can be effective in doing that.

Reassurance and confidence in future plans were significant outcomes of involvement in PTEV programs for many of the students interviewed.

For almost all of the students interviewed, their career path was made clearer through the discoveries they made in the PTEV programs. Their experiences, growth in self awareness, understanding of vocation, values, passions, and motivations were all factors that shaped their thinking about their future plans. Future plans fell into three areas for the majority of students interviewed: service or helping professions, religious professions, and graduate school. Many students are pursuing a combination of these three areas.

Service

As stated earlier, most of the students interviewed in this study expressed a strong commitment to service. Many students are pursuing long-term service careers or are planning to do a few years of service work before moving onto graduate school or pursuing other options. Carolynn, an Eclectic student, went from not knowing what she wanted to do with her life to knowing that her career choice has to involve some kind of service. She explained,

When I first came [to Eclectic], I did not know what I was going to do. I did not even know what my major is going to be, but I sort of assumed that I would like do something creative... I did not know... I did not see the need to take care of the rest of the

community as much as I do now... I think any job I do now [will be] in the mentality of service...

Carolynn is planning to do a one-year monastery retreat to pursue her Buddhism practice after graduation. Eva, from Jesuit U, described her short and long term career goals in service related fields, "... I'd probably like to spend a year doing... volunteer work ...in a developing country ...and then [come] back for graduate school in international social work or something along those lines." Eva wants to eventually do something to help refugees overseas,

Well, someday, what I'd like to do is like psychoanalytical healing in refugee camps.... So rather than maybe asking for food or money, which the United Nations and humanitarian groups often do, I think there needs to be more of an emphasis on the holistic, intrinsic wellbeing...of people who've experienced trauma...

Many students are planning to apply to the Peace Corps or another one to three-year service opportunity before pursuing graduate degrees or other options. Diana plans to use this time to continue to reflect upon what she wants to do in the long term. She stated,

I'm going to do a year-long volunteer program...It will allow me to continue to do work in the community... dealing with social issues, which I want. It will also give me experience if I choose to continue to pursue that.... it will also give me more time to just kind of sort through all of the questions that I'm asking...So some of the programs are like the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and the Saint Joseph Worker Program and really like direct service-oriented year-long volunteer programs.

Whether short term, long term, or both, it was clear from the interview data that most students interviewed have a strong commitment and plan to serve through their future work plans.

Faith and Work, Ministry

We heard from some students in earlier sections of this chapter about their intent to pursue ministry as a full-time career option. Some students are also doing shorter-term ministry excursions before attending graduate school. For example, Carolynn, a student at Eclectic, is going to a Buddhist monastery for one year before going to graduate school, "I am going into a

monastery for a year, doing a one-year retreat.” Teresa plans to work with her Catholic campus ministry at Elite before doing more volunteer work or graduate school. She explained,

I’m actually staying at [Elite] next year and working for the Catholic Center in a peer ministry coordinator position...And then after that, I’m thinking I’ll probably either do another year or two of... a volunteer type program or go to grad school.

Dinah explained that she wants to do something in the church for her long-term career, and plans to pursue ordination (which would require a graduate degree). She stated,

I’m still on track to be ordained... I really do feel strongly called to work in the church. I thought for a while about working in a non-profit or something like that but I do want to work in the church, I just don’t know exactly what my title will be ...

Grace, a student at Quaint, plans to do volunteer work before attending seminary to pursue a career with the church,

After college, I plan to be part of the Lutheran Volunteer Corps for a year, perhaps even two. I do not want to go to seminary right away, but I have always wanted to do volunteer work for an extended period of time and this will be my chance...I’ve always sort of felt pulled towards parish ministry, working in a church ...

Ministry was a significant component of the future plans for just over half of the students interviewed.

Graduate School

A majority of the PTEV students interviewed had aspirations to attend graduate school, and many plan to do so after taking some time off to serve. Many are planning to pursue religion, ministry, or theology degrees. Stan explained, “I really, really want to go to grad school in theology and I really would like to get a PhD in theology.” Lucy, from Eclectic, wants to take some time away from academia before she decides between religion and writing for graduate school,

I’m not going right to grad school; I’m taking the year off. I want more experience; I want more connection with the world.... When people ask me ...“what are my vocational goals?” I say I’m going to do this gap year thing, live outside of the academic world for a

year... Then I see myself after that going back in.

A few students interviewed do not know their exact next steps. However, they expressed that their time in the PTEV programs helped them learn more about what they want to do and they now have a better idea of where they might want to go. Charles, an Eclectic student, explained his thoughts about his future work plans, “I still don’t know what my future work plans are... I think that the experience that I have will definitely help me discern what I want to do. [The PTEV program] has helped me out already in sort of thinking about it.”

The students who were not planning to pursue full-time careers in vocational ministry expressed a desire to serve in some way outside of their chosen careers. Tom, a student at Jesuit, has always wanted to pursue a career in medicine, but expressed his commitment to keep in touch with his spiritual side and desire for service. He stated,

I know that [Medicine is] where my heart is taking me... that's where my gifts are. But at the same time, I want to remain very grounded in Catholic social teaching... And trying to, you know, figure out how I could help the poor, help those in need, while still being able to provide for myself, and hopefully a family.

James also talked earlier about his plans to pursue service outside of his job working in investments for a philanthropic organization, through serving on non-profit boards and choosing to work for organizations that make a difference. Mairah desires to serve in the local Muslim community in her spare time, once she becomes a physician assistant, “...I always want to volunteer at the mosque and ... help [her city] become a better Muslim community...”

Although some students desire to serve in their spare time, other students are combining their interests into career plans that encompass more than one area. For example, Emily, an Elite student, desires to combine her aspirations to be a doctor with mission work by possibly practicing overseas or in an inner city. She stated, “...I wanna be a doctor, and I probably wanna do mission work... [I’ll] probably the two put together...” Drew, explained his bi-vocational

plans to pastor a church and teach theology, by pursuing graduate degrees in Divinity along with his plans to pastor a church,

I want to pursue my M-Div., but then eventually do a PhD. I'd like to actually teach theology in some capacity, in any way, shape or form, college, university, or seminary level, but then also pastor a church, and kind of do both. Some may call that bi-vocation.

Emma, from Quaint, wants to find a way to combine service and ministry,

I know I want the service...but with worship experience and leadership...I think it would depend on the church... I think I would consider looking into being an associate minister ... someone who could head up missions and just make that my soul purpose within a church, to do that, and then I could see myself there, I really could.

Service and graduate school were common components among the future plans of the students interviewed for this study. Actual career possibilities ranged from secular to ministry careers. Passion and service were two common motivators for students when making their future plans. Even for those who were not pursuing ministry as a future career, spirituality was a common denominator for most in how they are viewing their vocation or future plans.

Conclusion

This chapter began with an explanation of the four PTEV programs visited and their missions, goals, and methods of helping students from a variety of backgrounds explore their purpose, values, future plans, and the intersection of faith and vocation. Conditions that facilitated impact on students were then presented. The findings revealed that exploration and discernment, out of class experiences, reflection and discussion in the context of spirituality and community acted as facilitators to vocational discernment for PTEV students. Involvement in PTEV programs impacted the students' spiritual development as well as their knowledge of self, their thoughts on vocation, their values and passion, and their future plans. I have provided a visual representation of the discernment process as revealed by the findings of this study in

Chapter 5. The meaning and implications of these findings are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Chapter Five

CHAPTER FIVE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of specific programs designed to help college students consider how religious faith, spirituality and personal values intersect with vocational choice and career goals. My goal in conducting this research was to uncover how participation in Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation (PTEV) impacted students' identity, values and future vocational plans. I also hoped to discover insight into how other institutions can assist students in making future plans and career choices that are consistent with their spiritual beliefs and personal values in order to set them up for a fulfilling career. Four PTEV programs at four different institutions were included as data collection sites for this study. Data were collected through document and website analysis as well as interviews with program staff, faculty members, and students involved in each PTEV program. The methods, meaning, and impact of participation in PTEV programs were studied, as well as the process of vocational discernment for students in PTEV programs.

The findings from this study revealed the methods utilized by PTEV programs in helping students examine the intersection of faith and vocation. In and out-of-class experiences, (including field experiences such as internships and volunteer opportunities as well as exposure to and testimonies from professionals in a variety of careers), mentoring relationships, discussion, and reflection were some of the components of PTEV program offerings that were beneficial to students in discovering their purpose, values, and vocation. It was discovered that exploring vocation through both in and out-of-class experiences, discussion, and reflection resulted in growth for students in their knowledge of self, their values, and their purpose and future plans. Exploring vocation and calling as part of a community was also impactful for

students. In addition, students were impacted spiritually as a result of exposure to diversity and the focused attention on their views and values through discussion and reflection. The findings revealed that PTEV students perceived a significant role of the Divine in the process of vocational discernment. In addition, spirituality and service were perceived to be significant motivators for and outcomes of students' future career plans. PTEV students are pursuing service, graduate school, and a combination of faith and work when making their future plans.

This chapter begins with a visual representation and discussion of the findings as they answer the research question of the how process of vocational discernment happened for students exploring the intersection of faith and vocation in PTEV programs. Next, the findings are discussed in light of the theoretical frameworks used for this research. Connections to additional theories are addressed next, followed by a discussion of the meaning and value that emerged from the findings of this research. This chapter concludes with implications of the findings for research and practice.

Discussion

The process of vocational discernment for students in PTEV programs was impacted by spirituality, community, experiences, exploration of vocation and calling, as well as reflection and discussion (Figure 1). These factors will be explained in detail followed by a description of how these factors worked together to impact vocational discernment for students.

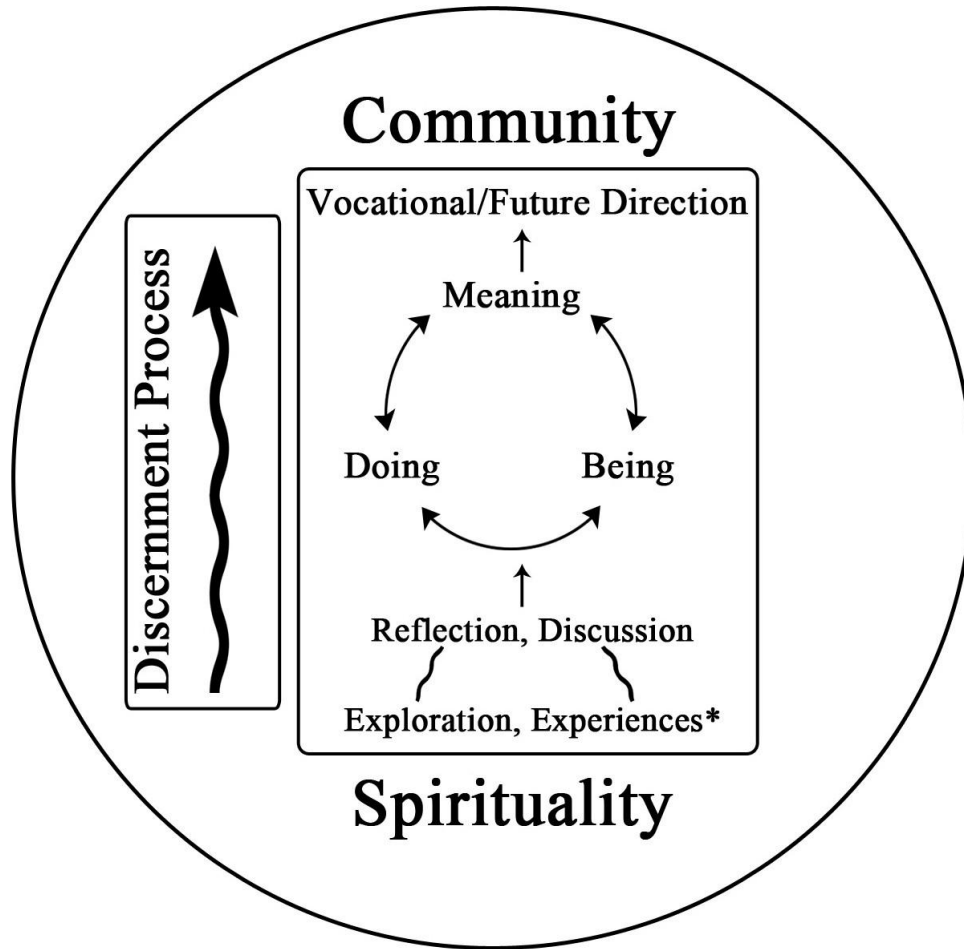


Figure 1

For most of the participants, spirituality was expressed in terms of faith in God. For a few, spirituality was expressed more broadly. Most students referenced God from a Christian perspective, with the exception of four students. One student was a committed Muslim, another identified as Jewish. One student expressed a commitment to Buddhist philosophy; the other student had not committed to a particular religion but expressed a dedication to spirituality. The role of the Divine in the process of vocational discernment was referenced by most of the Christian students, and the commitment to spirituality also played a role in the vocational discernment process and future plans of the other four students. The role of spirituality in the vocational discernment process manifested itself in two ways for PTEV students. For about half

of the PTEV students, personal faith or spirituality influenced vocational discernment in the form of a sense of calling. For most, this was explained as the influence of a personal God on their vocational choices. These students either felt that God was leading them to a specific career, or their personal faith or spirituality impacted the contribution they want to make in the world, and what they will do in terms of a career or vocation as a result. For example, Ashley described how she was able to discern and accept her calling after reflecting upon her experiences and ultimately, hearing the still, small voice of God that confirmed her choice to pursue ministry as a career. For others, their personal faith or spirituality was the precursor or foundation for their values and therefore, their commitment to service, which in turn influenced their vocational choices or thoughts about who they wanted to be in the world. Some students are choosing secular careers that have a service or humanitarian focus. Others explained that they intend to remain committed to service outside of their careers. Students also explained how their faith or spirituality informs how they view themselves as professionals or what they will do in their spare time. James provided the example of using his financial management skills in working for a philanthropic foundation and also expressed a desire to donate his finance skills to non-profit organizations in his free time. Mairah was pursuing a career as a physician's assistant, but discussed her plans to help build and unite the Muslim community in her spare time. To summarize, for about half of the students, the combination of their experiences, reflection, and God resulted in a sense of personal calling which impacted their future career plans. For the other PTEV students, spirituality or personal faith informed their values, which influenced their sense of purpose and direction for the future.

Community also played a salient role for most PTEV students in their process of vocational discernment. Community impacted vocational discernment in a few ways. Many

PTEV students described the importance of discerning their vocation as part of a community, through peer and mentoring relationships. Students learned about potential career choices through the experiences of others, and they learned about themselves from the feedback of others. Experiences, exploration of various career options, and reflection upon the meaning of vocation as well as one's personal vocation or calling often happened through group interactions and discussions. Many PTEV students processed everything related to vocational discernment together. This included their beliefs and values, the meaning of the terms vocation and calling, as well as the impact of their experiences on their personal identity and their subsequent future plans. This processing happened through formal and informal interactions including focused discussions and reflection sessions and informal interactions between the students and mentors. These PTEV programs created a culture of community and reflection.

Exploration refers to the examination of personal faith, spirituality, values, vocation and calling, as well as future career options. Experiences ranged from in-class experiences, such as reading a biography of someone whose career inspired a student, to out-of-class experiences such as lecture series, internships, service, and other field experiences.

Reflection and discussion were facilitators of impact resulting from the deep exploration and various experiences of the PTEV students. Reflection and discussion around topics of faith, spirituality, meaning, purpose, and vocation became a natural part of the four PTEV communities. Reflection and discussion were both formal and informal in PTEV programs. Some reflection was required as a follow-up to PTEV-funded internships and travel in the form of required essays and journals. Reflection was also a natural part of mentoring and advising meetings as well as informal peer interactions. Students described how they would often discuss

and reflect upon their experiences, beliefs, values, and identity in meetings with their advisors and mentors as well as in informal settings with their PTEV peers.

In describing the meaning and impact of these concepts (spirituality, community, exploration, experiences, reflection, discussion), it is difficult to offer a detailed individual description of each because of the close relationship and synergy of these terms. Reflection and dialogue are closely related as reflection often happens through discussion. For example, Eyer, Giles, and Schmiede (1996) listed discussion as one way for reflection to occur. Even individual reflection can be conceptualized as a conversation with oneself or a conversation between a student and God (therefore prayer is also closely related to reflection and discussion). Ultimately, it was not only the exploration of vocation or the gathering of experiences, but exploration and experience coupled with reflection and dialogue, in the context of a spiritually-minded community that impacted growth in values (meaning), sense of self (being), and purpose that drives action (doing). Personal faith (in God) or spirituality informed the values and sense of personal meaning for most PTEV students. Exploration of vocation and career related experiences lead to a growth in identity (being) and knowledge of values (meaning). The growth in knowledge of values and identity lead to purpose that drives action (doing) for most PTEV students.

This does not seem to be a linear process. It is possible that one or more of these factors would have impacted meaning, being and doing for PTEV students. However, for the participants of this study, spirituality, community, exploration, experience, reflection and discussion worked together (as described in the previous paragraph) to impact growth in meaning, being and doing for PTEV students. This growth resulted in a stronger sense of vocation or commitment to a vocational or future direction for most students.

Meaning, being and doing dynamically interact to facilitate continued growth in values, identity, and purpose that drives action. The idea of the dynamic interaction of these concepts was suggested by Brewer (2001) as a result of her personal interactions with counseling patients. I am expanding on this idea here, as the findings of this study seem to indicate support for the dynamic interaction of meaning, being and doing. Students learned about who they are (being) by reflecting upon the impact of their experiences (doing). At the same time, who they are also informed their actions (doing). The findings revealed that students learn about who they are (being) and what they value (meaning) through their experiences (doing), and also choose their experiences (doing) based on who they are (being) and what they value (meaning). Therefore, meaning, being, and doing work in somewhat of a continuous, synergistic cycle to promote growth in knowledge of values, self and purpose (see Figure 2).

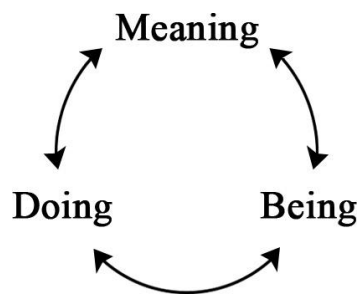


Figure 2

A Connected Life

This section describes the researcher's thoughts on the broader value of this study. The findings presented in Chapter four provided insight about the intersection of faith and vocation, the learning that came through community and spiritual exploration, the discovery of self, values and passion and how the combination of these factors led to future direction for PTEV

participants. For these students, the path to discerning their calling, or their future plans, did not happen in a vacuum or through a collection of random, disconnected events. The interviews indicate that the path to discernment was a mix of community, spirituality, both in and out-of-class experiences and exploration. Reflection and discussion were important facilitators of impact. The connectedness of these elements was an unexpected but important finding of this research. This connectedness is relevant for understanding the path to vocation for the students interviewed, and may be useful for those wishing to facilitate vocational reflection among students.

The students interviewed for this study were looking for an opportunity to explore their purpose and their future plans in light of their spirituality, values, or faith perspectives. They expressed a desire to connect their beliefs, values, identity and passions. Many of the PTEV students do not want to live a disconnected life where their career is separated from their identity or their faith and values. For example, I provided Charles's explanation of vocation in the last chapter. He sees vocation as the intersection of his career and his personal and spiritual lives. Charles explained, "...it's not just a job or career, then your personal, spiritual life; they're both pretty much the same thing." Eva, a student at Jesuit, learned that she does not have to separate her faith from her vocation. Even if her career takes her to the business world, she desires to bring the whole of who she is into her career,

...you can be a professional and still be spiritual or holistically-minded....So, it allows me to think that you can bring this into the business world and that it doesn't need to be something that stays within the limits of your own thoughts or your family or your friends ...

For students who want to explore their sense of purpose and their future plans in light of their spirituality, faith and values, PTEV programs provided a worthwhile opportunity through community, experiences, and exploration. Given the chance to connect with their values and

passions, many of the students interviewed made a choice to follow their hearts, which was a unique path to service for many, ministry for some, and a combination of work, service and faith for others. Many PTEV students are embracing their spirituality or faith, and their values, such as a commitment to service, when making their future plans.

The life that many students interviewed for this study desire to live is a more connected, less compartmentalized, life. Put another way, ‘Who I am’ and ‘what I do’ are not two separate things for many of the students who participated in this study. ‘Who I am’ is connected to ‘what I do’. For example, Eva explained that what she would do after graduation was an outflow of discovering who she is. She explained,

And I think the [PTEV Program] has helped me to not ask the question of, "So, what are you going to do after you graduate?" but rather, "Who you are going to be?" And, the doing comes after being.

For Eva, and many others, growth in their knowledge of self led them to clearer purpose and thoughts about their future plans. In addition to being (who I am) and doing (what I do), spirituality and community are also parts of the equation for most PTEV students. Add to these reflection and discussion and a recipe emerges for a deeper understanding of self and purpose, and a more connected life. Many of these students are striving to build a life where self, job, purpose, community and spirituality are all connected. For example, Diana, a Jesuit student, explained that her faith is made more complete by community. She acknowledged that she experiences God and her faith more fully when she is in relationship with others. She explained,

...my faith is different and ... I'm ... different – it's more – it's less about me and God and more about God and us. Like, as a community and [I] really understand the community aspect and the need for the community within my faith experience.

Caroline, a student from Elite University, explained how the community fostered by the PTEV program influenced her thoughts about vocation. As a result of her interactions with the PTEV

community, she now views her vocation as more than a job, but as a way of life that is congruent with her religious faith. Caroline said,

... the [PTEV] program did a number of things,...[it] did a really good job at least for me and my experience in forging friendships and connections with people who were on one hand different, as in they came from different places, had different traditions, but also had the sense of questions and desire for ... vocational discernment. It really changed what I thought about what vocational discernment meant from being 'what job are you going to do for the rest of your life?' to 'what does it mean to live your life in a faithful way?' and then what jobs will come out of that along the way...

For Caroline and other PTEV students, vocational direction comes from community and spiritual connectedness.

As said above, for many of these students, a growth in self awareness and knowledge of values led to a greater understanding of their purpose. Caroline and Diana are just two of many examples. This knowledge was often discovered in the context of God and community, through experiences and exploration, and facilitated by reflection and discussion. Nathaniel gave a glimpse of how his experiences and connection to community led to growth in his identity, which helped him to discover his purpose. He explained,

...I've had a host of conversations and experiences and relationships and lessons learned and time that has brought about a notable amount of growth and has led me to achieve and confirm who I am in a very refreshing, authentic, unique way that is me. And...having that enables you to serve others and enables you to do things with a certain freedom.

The mix of PTEV experiences, community, reflection, and feedback encouraged Nathaniel to become a more authentic version of himself. This growth in understanding himself, in turn, gave him the freedom to serve others. Stan, a Jesuit student who was struggling with feeling a call to the priesthood, came to understand that he did not need to struggle to mold himself to that vocation. He explained his discovery that God would fashion a vocation that was a unique fit to who Stan is,

I feel like I keep saying this, but looking back to something we talked about earlier, again talking about vocation and expanding that beyond just [the] priesthood, ... recognizing that I don't have to necessarily change every single aspect about who I am to fit into that vocation of [the] priesthood, that God will change every aspect of vocation and make that fit to me.

Stan came to realize that staying true to himself and having faith in God will lead him to his true vocation, whether that is the priesthood or not. For Stan, and many of the other students interviewed, self, vocation, community and God (or for some, spirituality) are all connected.

Parker Palmer (2004) discussed the importance of living a connected life. He explained the difference between a divided life and a connected life. Palmer discussed the "divided life" as a "failure of human wholeness," when one lives in a way that is removed from their own knowledge and beliefs (p. 7). He explained one of the forms of a divided life that is applicable to this study, when "we make our living at jobs that violate our basic values, even when survival does not absolutely demand it" (p.6). Palmer explained that a life divided is dangerous because it causes us to live separately from ourselves. It is in this separate living that a breakdown of integrity occurs. The outcomes of this study show growth in the ability to navigate life in a way that is connected with oneself and consistent with what one values.

The findings of this study revealed insight into the values that are shaping students' thoughts about their future plans. The importance of community, a commitment to service, and personal faith or spirituality are the main values motivating PTEV students in their search for meaning, purpose, and future plans. This study demonstrated that one of the outcomes of exploring one's values and searching for meaning and purpose, in the way that PTEV students are doing, is the ability to live a more connected life. The students interviewed for this study have explained a deeper knowledge of self as a result of their exploration, and an ability and

desire to find work that allows them to connect the whole of who they are, their values, and their work lives.

The students' experiences in PTEV programs: exploring vocation, gaining a variety of in class and out-of-class experiences, reflection and discussion, in the context of spirituality and community all leads to a more connected life. The connected life, for many PTEV students, results in a deeper knowledge of self, a deeper sense of values and purpose, and a stronger connection to others. These outcomes resulted in a desire to serve the world for many PTEV students. For some of the PTEV students, a connected life results in living life with others, for others.

Designing and living a connected life is consistent with the goals of liberal learning and the historical values of higher education. These goals involve helping students grow in their knowledge of self, their respect for others, and their personal and social responsibility. For years, many in higher education have encouraged a separation between spirituality the academic experience (Astin, 2004). This study sheds light on the value that embracing the whole self, including meaning, values, spirituality, and personal faith along with academic and career pursuits can have for students in their college years.

Applying the Frameworks

It is important to note that the findings for this study were analyzed inductively from the data, without the lens of the theoretical frameworks. Consistent with qualitative research methods, I wanted the data to drive the findings and the true voice of the students to be heard. However, important connections to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks are present in the findings. This section addresses where the findings are consistent or inconsistent with the theoretical frameworks that influenced the design of this study. The frameworks include

Chickering and Reisser's (1993) last three vectors of college student development, Brewer's (2001) *Vocational Souljourn Model*, as well as Waterman's (1990, 2004) research on the true self and Palmer's (1990, 2000) writings on authentic selfhood . In addition to the frameworks used to conceptualize the study, connections between the findings and additional theories as well as liberal learning goals are also addressed. A broader view of vocation and calling is addressed next, followed by implications for research and practice.

Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors of identity development were used as a framework for this study. Chickering and Reisser proposed seven vectors that students move through as they are forming their identity: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity (Reisser, 1995). According to Chickering and Reisser, college will naturally move students through the first four vectors. Due to the nature of PTEV programs, it seems likely that involvement would facilitate movement through the last three vectors of establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. The findings from this study appear to be consistent with movement along Chickering's last three vectors.

Chickering and Reisser (2005) stated that in addition to movement along the first four vectors, college students "also experience greater clarity about purposes, values and ways of thinking" and "will expand their awareness of who they are" (p. 182). The fifth vector, establishing identity, involves finding roles and styles at work that are "genuine expressions of self" (2005, p. 188).

There is evidence from this study's findings that PTEV students did indeed develop along the fifth vector. Through exploration of vocation and the various experiences in the PTEV

programs, many students learned about their talents, their work preferences, and how they want to contribute to the world. Many students were able to make discoveries about the kind of work they were suited for through their PTEV experiences. For example, Carolynn, a student from Eclectic, learned that she does not like administration. Teresa, a student at Elite, learned that her desires and talents were pulling her away from physical therapy towards a ministry career. Stan, from Quaint, learned that youth ministry was not a right fit for him through a PTEV internship in that field. A few students talked about discovering their gifts and talents, and the direction that came from that knowledge. Some students also discussed paying attention to what brought them joy and energy and what drained them. These were all tools that helped students to learn more about who they want to be and what they want to do and ultimately contributed to movement along the fifth vector of establishing identity.

Students also described experiencing growth in self-awareness and in their understanding of their identity through their involvement in PTEV programs. Caroline talked about becoming the person she was looking to be through the community she found in the PTEV program at Elite. Nathaniel discussed how he had the opportunity to figure out who he is, whereas he explained that he did not know himself before the PTEV program. He said, “Let’s say that I wasn’t myself before, but...I’ve had the time and space to really figure out who I am and who I want to be and become...” Nathaniel learned that serving others is an important component of his identity. The desire that many of the PTEV students have to serve the world was a major theme of this study. Learning about how they want to contribute to serving the world is a growth area of development along the lines of identity. Chickering and Reisser (1993) explained that as students develop a firmer sense of their identity, it becomes a “framework for purpose and integrity” (p. 181). The students’ growth in their understanding of themselves, their values, and

their gifts and talents, all contributed to their sense of purpose. For many students, their personal faith and the desire to serve the world in some way were driving forces behind their development of purpose.

This growth in self-awareness described by the students can be further explained by examining the role of the true self in finding one's vocation. Both Palmer (1990, 2000) and Waterman (1990, 2004), address the importance of finding one's true self in developing purpose and, ultimately, finding one's calling. Waterman (1990) discussed the role of the "daimon" or true self in attaining actualization of ideal potential for each person (p. 52). Connecting with one's true self brings "meaning and direction to one's life" (Waterman, 1990, p. 53). Waterman expressed that knowing one's true self,

"...requires that a commitment be made both to the principles by which one chooses to live and the goals toward which one's life is to be directed. This commitment involves a conscious recognition and acknowledgement of personal truths already known intuitively" (Waterman, 1990, p. 52).

Waterman's prescription for purpose aids in understanding the path to purpose for PTEV students. PTEV students are discovering what they value, making a commitment to those values, and also discovering their true, or authentic, selves in the process of vocational discernment. However, Waterman's research deviates from the PTEV experience in that it leaves out the role of the Divine in discovering one's true self and how that discovery can motivate one toward a life purpose.

Palmer's writings are useful in understanding the role of the Divine, both in the discovery of the true self, and in the vocational discernment process. Palmer (2000) advocated for the importance of finding one's true self in the process of vocational discernment – not the self that conforms to social norms or the expectations of others. Vocation, in Palmer's view, is not an act of one's will, it is not something that can be forced upon a person, but it must grow from within

as vocation is consistent with the true self planted in us by God. According to Palmer, our true self is who God made us to be – our “birthright gift of self”– it is sometimes called the image of God in which we are created, the true self, or identity and integrity (in the humanist tradition) (2000, p. 10, 11). The true self is within every human being, and is “the seed of authentic vocation” (Palmer, 2000, p. 9). The authentic self that the PTEV students are discovering seems to be consistent with Palmer’s explanation of the true self.

The sixth vector, developing purpose, involves assessing interests and options, clarifying goals, and formulating vocational plans and aspirations. Chickering and Reisser (1993) also expressed that “a strong commitment to a value or belief can determine purpose” (p. 234). Students frequently attested to the values and passions that helped them to discover their place and purpose in the world and motivating their vocational plans and aspirations. Most of the students interviewed value service and helping others. Many students also discussed the importance of helping people and building relationships with those they serve. Their commitment to serving society and/or others is consistent with growth along the sixth vector. Chickering and Reisser (1993) stated that students would “bring forth their best talents and contribute to the greater whole” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 208). Therefore, as students develop along the sixth vector, they desire to use their skills and talents to contribute to the good of the world in some way. Many PTEV students described their plans to use their skills and talents to contribute to making the world a better place.

Student’s exploration and experience in PTEV programs contributed to shaping their vocational plans and aspirations. Some students discovered their passions, and in turn were led away from some career options and towards others. In addition, some of the students interviewed explained how they are embracing their whole selves when they are considering their future

plans. These students want to be authentic and bring their whole selves into their career – including their spirituality. When thinking about their career plans, students are interested in more than just money; they are following their passions and values and desiring to combine their skills and interests with their spiritual perspective in some way. Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) theory asserted that “a strong commitment or belief can determine purpose.” The strong spiritual values that most of the PTEV students hold as well as their commitment to helping, service, and the importance of people are shaping their purpose, and in turn, their future plans. Some students were more specific than others about their future plans, but all students who participated in this study attested to some growth in their knowledge of who they wanted to be and where they wanted to go. Most students knew something about their immediate plans – volunteer or service work and/or graduate school. Many also had a good grasp of where they were going in the future, although some were more specific than others.

Chickering and Reisser (2005) used the term vocation to denote either “a specific career” or a “broad calling” (p. 188). They explained vocation as “what we love to do, what energizes and fulfills us, what uses our talents and challenges us to develop new ones, and what actualizes all our potentials for excellence” (Chickering & Reisser, 2005, p. 188). Most students embraced vocation and calling along broader lines – making sure they were choosing career paths that were consistent with their values, their faith, and their passions (rather than money, material things, or what they may have been expected to do). For some, this knowledge resulted in a specific career choice such as physical therapy, medicine, or ministry. Others had a sense of their broad calling (for most it was service or ministry related) but may not have known the details of how their future would unfold beyond initial plans after college to serve or attend graduate school. Also, a

few students discussed the realization that their calling may change over time, given the needs of the world that may pull them in another direction.

Waterman (1990, 2004) and Palmer (1990, 2000) provide additional insight into the role of the true self and personally expressive activities in finding one's true calling. Waterman (2004) studied activities that are personally expressive of an individual's true self. He defined personally expressive activities as those that impress the feeling that "this is what the person was meant to do" (Waterman, 2004, p. 47). Activities that are personally expressive of an individual's true self, can lead to self actualization. Waterman used Maslow's (1968) definition to explain self actualization, "fulfillment of mission (or call, fate, destiny, or vocation), as a fuller knowledge of, and acceptance of, the person's own intrinsic nature, as an increasing trend toward unity, integration, or synergy within the person" (p. 25). Therefore, Waterman explains that when individuals find activities that are consistent with their true selves as lead to a feeling of "this is what I was meant to do", they reach a state of self actualization, defined by Maslow as calling, fate or destiny. Waterman's explanation seems consistent with what many of the PTEV students explained concerning their journey's of vocational discernment. PTEV students learned about their true selves, and engaged in a variety of activities to explore potential career options that would be consistent with their true selves, beliefs and values.

Waterman does not address the role of God or the Divine in this process, but Palmer does. Palmer (2000) explained that we find our callings by "claiming our authentic selfhood, by being who we are..." (p. 15). Palmer (2000) also asserted that, "one dwells with God by being faithful to one's own nature" (p. 51). For Palmer, and I believe for most of the PTEV students interviewed, the authentic self is a self that is created and formed by God. Similar to Waterman, Palmer also discussed expressive action as emanating from one's true self. He wrote,

“Only when we act *expressively* do we move toward full aliveness and authentic power. An expressive act is one that I take not to achieve a goal outside myself but to express a conviction, a leading, a truth that is within me. An expressive act is one taken because if I did not take it I would be denying my own insight, gift, nature” (p. 24).

Expressive acts are actions that are consistent with the true self that God created and placed in us.

Parker explained, “We need a spirituality that affirms and guides our efforts to act in ways that embody the vitalities God gave us at birth...” (p. 9). The findings of this study seem to reveal that PTEV programs are helping students to connect with their true selves (and for most, God’s uniquely designed purposes) and the potential vocations are in alignment with their true selves.

The seventh and last vector, developing integrity, involves humanizing values (balancing self interest with the interests of others), personalizing values (affirming core values and beliefs) and developing congruence (aligning personal values with socially responsible behavior).

Developing integrity is “closely related to establishing identity and clarifying purposes. Our core values and beliefs provide the foundation for interpreting experience, guiding behavior, and maintaining self respect” (Chickering & Reisser, 2005, p. 188). I suspected that participation in PTEV programs would likely facilitate development along these lines by providing them space and time to examine and clarify their values and beliefs and align them with future goals and behavior.

It is apparent from the findings that growth in knowledge of their own values was an outcome of participation in PTEV programs for the students interviewed. Growth in spiritual beliefs or faith perspectives, sense of responsibility to the world, and commitment to service are all examples of the values that students came to understand and embrace as a result of their discernment journeys as PTEV program participants. I did not see any evidence that the personal values the students held were unaligned with socially responsible behavior, a growth factor that Chickering and Reisser (1993) described as a component of the seventh vector. It appears that

their strong commitment to serving others and responding to the needs of society is consistent with growth along the seventh vector, developing integrity.

Students also described growth in their spirituality as a result of their participation in the PTEV program. For some, this meant a greater commitment to a particular religious tradition. Chickering and Reisser (2005) did not write about commitment to a particular religion in their 1993 book, but they do cite it briefly in a 2005 publication as a component of establishing identity. Some students cited growth in their religious faith or established themselves as part of a particular religion as a result of their PTEV experiences. For example, Jamal shared his testimony of getting baptized and committing to Christianity after attending the interfaith retreat at Quaint. Eliza became more committed to her Catholic faith as a result of involvement in the PTEV program. Mairah also explained that learning about others' religions made her a stronger Muslim. Charles learned to incorporate his spirituality into his everyday life by learning to meditate.

Other students became more open to diverse views. Most students were able to explore and reflect upon their beliefs, and come to some sort of conclusion about their personal religious perspective. Some students became stronger in their faith and commitment to a particular religion or denomination. Others embraced broader spiritual views or reported a change in their beliefs. It appears from the findings that the focused reflection and attention paid to their personal beliefs along the lines of religion and spirituality in the PTEV program is consistent with growth in this vector. This type of development is consistent with Chickering and Reisser's (1993) explanation of "humanizing values" as it relates to growth in the development of integrity. The authors report that "most students do experience changes in their values during college" (Chickering and Reisser, 1993, p. 237). A couple of students in this study experienced

significant changes in their spiritual perspectives, but most made small changes that are consistent with Chickering and Reisser's (1993) description of humanizing and personalizing values. The authors describe that "tempering rigid beliefs" and "becoming open to other interpretations" as well as "claiming ownership of a meaningful set of principles" contribute to humanizing and personalizing values, and thus, the development of integrity (p. 264). Many students described becoming more open to other views and/or more respectful of people who hold religious views and values that are different from their own as a result of the exposure to diversity that they had as a result of their PTEV experiences. This type of growth is also consistent with cognitive development, as college students often move from dualistic thinking to more relative thinking as they develop cognitively (Perry, 1970). In addition, most PTEV students cited ownership of a meaningful set of values (such as relationships, community, service, or passion) as a result of their participation in the PTEV program.

For many students, these values were described as a spiritual basis for a commitment to serving others. For many, their faith perspective played a significant role in the formation of their values. For example, Diana, a student at Jesuit U, explained how, as a person of faith, she could not be passive about the reality of injustice in the world that she was learning about through her PTEV courses. She explained how learning about Catholic social teaching (which was part of the PREV program at Jesuit U) changed her life,

This is changing my life...Generally speaking, Catholic social teaching. More specifically, the reality of the injustice in our world... as a person of faith, I cannot passively sit by and live comfortably with this new awareness.

Lucy, a student at Eclectic, explained how she did not see how her faith could fit into her vocation before her involvement in the PTEV program.

...I wouldn't have thought there might ... be a place for me to use faith in my future work plans because it seems like a very narrow thing...In college, ... my perspective on

what faith actually means [has] opened up. So it did seem plausible that this could be something I would pursue in a future job, . . . using your faith and your vocation might not mean working in a church.

For Diana, Lucy, and others, their faith perspective played a large role in forming their values and future plans. PTEV programs helped students to not only discover their values, but to make connections between their faith, values, and future plans. Chickering and Reisser (1993) also stated that developing integrity involves the application of meaningful beliefs to the “good of all” (p. 264). The strong commitment to service expressed by many of the students interviewed, whether as a full-time vocation or as an extracurricular commitment, shows evidence that the beliefs and values these students hold extend to the good of all.

The theoretical perspectives provided by Waterman (1990, 2004) and Palmer (1990, 2000) also provide insight and explanation for the motivation for service described by PTEV students. Waterman explained that “The individual’s sense of identity provides directionality to behavior in that it embodies the goals, values, and beliefs deemed worthy of being pursued” (p. 64). For PTEV students, the beliefs that are worthy of being pursued are connected to their personal faith and spirituality, which informs their values and goals. The values and goals they are pursuing are service related, for most PTEV students. Palmer (1990) joined authentic selfhood and service. He explained that part of what God planted in us, our true selves, is a spirituality that guides our efforts to “serve the world with justice, peace, and love” (p. 15). Palmer (2000) explained,

“Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic selfhood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we *ought* to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks – we will also find out path of authentic service in the world. True vocation joins self and service. . . .” (p. 16).

Waterman and Palmer provide insight in understanding how identity impacts purpose and action for PTEV students, and Palmer illuminates the role of God or the Divine in that process.

It is also important to note that spiritual growth looks different for each individual in the PTEV programs. Although some may become more committed to a particular religious tradition or set of theological beliefs, others may find that for them, spiritual growth means being more open and reflective concerning diverse views and opinions. Nonetheless, most of these students seemed to know where they stood in terms of their spirituality or faith perspective, whether or not that stance was different or the same as it was before their participation in the PTEV program allowed them to explore, reflect upon, and entertain views that differed from their own.

This study's findings support the conclusions that growth occurred along all three of Chickering and Reisser's last vectors: establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. Participation in the PTEV programs seems to have provided a context and means for growth in all three areas through gaining self awareness and increased knowledge of their purpose, values, and place in the world. Waterman and Palmer provide an in-depth understanding of the role of one's true self in determining purpose that can lead to a sense of vocation, mission or calling.

Brewer's (2001) *Vocational Souljourning Model* is an additional framework useful in understanding the intersection of faith and vocation. Brewer explained how dynamic interactions of *meaning*, *being*, and *doing* can influence vocational paths. She explained, "intentional and deliberate effort on behalf of a personal sense of life's meaning (*meaning*); and unfolding, deepening sense of self (*being*); and purpose that drives action (*doing*) are what define the connection of work and spirituality" (Brewer, 2001, p. 83). Moving along a spectrum from a job to an occupation, then to a career and ultimately a vocation depends on growth and balance in meaning, being and doing. Brewer (2001) explained vocation as work not for monetary reward, but in service to creation and in alignment with one's true self. The three variables of meaning,

being and doing are parallel concepts of Chickering and Reisser's (1993, 2005) fifth, sixth, and seventh vectors of establishing identity (being), developing purpose (doing) and developing integrity (meaning).

I explained earlier in this chapter how this research provides more information on the dynamic interactions of meaning, being and doing, originally conceptualized by Brewer. Palmer (1990, 2000) also provides depth of insight into the interactions of meaning, being and doing. As explained earlier, students learned about who they are by reflecting upon the impact of their experiences. Similarly, Palmer (2000) explained how people learn who they are and receive guidance by reflecting upon their experiences,

If we learn to read our own responses from our experience...we will receive the guidance we need to live more authentic lives....The greatest risk in action is the risk of self-revelation, and that is also action's greatest joy. No one can know us fully, not even ourselves, but when we act, something of our inner mystery often emerges ... (p. 6, 22).

Palmer's explanation of how people learn about themselves from their experiences, and therefore are able to lead more authentic lives aids in understanding the experience of PTEV students. I also explained earlier that students choose their experiences based on who they are and what they value. Therefore, there is a reciprocal interaction between who we are and what we do. Palmer (1990) also addressed this reciprocal interaction,

Through action we both express and learn something of who we are, the kind of world we have or want....But as we act, we not only express what is in us and help give shape to the world; we also receive what is outside us, and we reshape our inner selves. When we act, the world acts back, and we and the world are co-created (p. 17).

Palmer's words illuminate the dynamic interactions of meaning, being and doing that I explained earlier in this chapter. PTEV students learned about themselves (being) and what they value (meaning) through their actions (doing), and were also motivated to act (doing) based on who

they are (being) and what they value (meaning). Hence, meaning, being and doing are cyclically connected.

Palmer also discussed the importance of reclaiming one's true self. He asserted that this often happens in the second half of adulthood (Palmer, 2000). The findings of this research seem to reveal that participation in PTEV programs is helping students connect with their true selves in college. Palmer explained that we are born with the gift of our true self, but are encouraged away from it by communal, parental and social pressure of conformity to external expectation in the first half of life. He asserted that those who are awake and aware will spend the second half of their lives trying to "recover and reclaim" our birthright gift or our true self (Palmer, 2000, p. 12). Many of the PTEV students interviewed for this study talked about finding their authentic selves as a result of their experience in the PTEV programs. Nathaniel and Caroline, mentioned earlier in this chapter, serve as two examples. PTEV students are learning about who they are in order to reclaim their true selves in an early stage of life. In this way, it is my hope that participation in PTEV programs may aid students to find a vocation that is consistent with their true selves, and therefore, result in a happier and more fulfilled life than without their PTEV experiences.

Palmer (1990) also discussed the importance of contemplation and action in revealing reality to find one's true self. I believe Palmer is discussing contemplation and action in a manner that is very similar to the reflection, discussion and variety of experiences that are part of the student experience in PTEV programs. Palmer (1990) explained contemplation as the act of discovering truth, and action as contemplative when it brings us closer to reality. He stated,

I understand contemplation to be any way that we can unveil the illuminations that masquerade as reality and reveal the reality behind the masks....At the same time, contemplation can become a form of action, a movement of expression, discovery, re-creation" (p. 17, 18).

Reality, according to Palmer, is to be honored because it is Divine. PTEV programs seem to be helping students reclaim their true selves through action, reflection and dialogue. The experiences, reflection and dialogue explained by students as impactful, seemed to help them discover who they are, what they believe and value, and the contribution they want to make in the world.

Moving Beyond Theory

Chickering and Reisser (1993, 2005), Brewer (2001), Waterman (1990, 2004) and Palmer (1990, 2000) all provide meaningful insight into vocational discernment as it relates to identity, values and purpose. However, there are some findings from this research that reach beyond what these theories are able to explain. The first is the role of God or spirituality in the vocational discernment process for PTEV students. The role of the Divine in the vocational discernment process for PTEV students is more pronounced, and more external, than any of the theories utilized here can explain. Chickering and Reisser did not directly address the role of the Divine in choosing a career. Brewer discussed the role of spirituality in vocation, but did not go into detail. Waterman found that identity drives purpose, but he did not address the role of the Divine in this process. Further, Waterman's theory is based on an internal locus of control by the individual. That is, the connection between identity and purpose happens exclusively within the individual. Palmer's writings offer more insight into the role of the Divine, yet his view is still very focused on an internal process within the individual. Palmer (2000) wrote,

Vocation does not come from a voice 'out there' calling me to become someone I am not. It comes from a voice 'in here' calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God" (p. 10).

According to Palmer, vocation and calling are not "out there" experiences. However, some PTEV students described an "out there" experience as part of their journey of vocational

discernment. One example is Ashley's testimony of hearing the still small voice telling her to be a pastor. Students also discussed the importance of listening to God in discerning their vocation, which also denotes the influence of an outside force. I am not proposing that these theories are not valid for PTEV students, as the role of the true self was very prominent in the interview data. However, for about half of the students interviewed, there is a perception of an external component, an external pull in a particular direction or towards a particular career that seemed to happen in tandem with connecting with one's true self. Therefore, for some PTEV students, connecting to one's true self along with an external, Divine pull in a certain direction work together to bring vocational discernment. This is one area where this research extends current theory.

This research serves to amplify understanding about the role of God in the vocational discernment process for PTEV students. The role of God, or the Divine, in vocational discernment happened in two ways for PTEV students. Growth in beliefs, values, and self-awareness led to a greater knowledge of and connection to one's authentic or true self (which Palmer called a birthright gift, designed by God). For some, there is an external pull, and outward call, that leads the person toward a vocation and is in alignment with their authentic or true self. In both of these descriptions, the role of the true self is foundational. It is assumed, by Palmer, myself and most likely, the PTEV students, that the true self is designed by God (or the Divine). Therefore, PTEV students grow in their knowledge of their God-given true self. Their connection to their true self, when coupled with exploration, experiences, and reflection, ultimately leads them to a vocational fit. Or, students both grow in their knowledge of their true self and are lead (by the influence of God or the Divine) to a vocation that uniquely fits that individual. As explained earlier, this research also adds explanation to the dynamic interactions

of meaning, being and doing. These terms seem to be cyclical and connected, as revealed by the findings from the student interviews, where Waterman (1990, 2004) and Chickering and Reisser (1993) take a more linear approach to the development of identity, purpose and vocation. In addition, the salience of community, as well as reflection and discussion, are more pronounced in the PTEV experience than in any of the frameworks. Waterman and Palmer both attest that community can play a role in finding one's true self. However, the role of community is not central to either Waterman or Palmer's perspectives. Community, along with reflection and discussion, were essential factors in the formation of identity, beliefs and values, and the vocational discernment process for most PTEV students.

In conclusion, some PTEV students discussed their need to find out who they are before determining what they will do. As explained earlier, their discovery of self seemed to lead many of them to a deeper and clearer understanding of their purpose. This sense of purpose, in turn, informed their future plans. PTEV students, like many adults, are in a process of finding the balance among meaning, being and doing. This process of seeking balance is potentially a lifelong endeavor that is rarely completed. The process of seeking this balance seems to have influenced the vocational plans of many of the students, either by prompting change away from one path and towards another, or by reinforcing or confirming the direction that the student already sensed. The latter seemed to be especially true for students who had sensed a calling to vocational ministry in high school or early college. Students also talked about their motivations for their future plans. Service or passion rather than money were the primary motivators for their choices, which are consistent with Brewer's (2001) definition of vocation (service to creation in alignment with one's true self). As discussed in Chapter one, being, meaning, and doing mirror Chickering and Reisser's (1993) last three vectors. As with these three vectors, students

exhibited growth in their discovery of who they are (being), what they value (meaning) and who they want to be in the world (doing) as a result of their participation in the PTEV programs.

Waterman (1990, 2004) and Palmer (1990, 2000) provide an in-depth explanation of the role of identity and values in determining purpose and action. Palmer also illuminates the role of the spirituality, or God for most PTEV students, in the process of vocational discernment. This research serves to provide additional insight into the role of the Divine and community in the process of vocational discernment for PTEV students.

A Broader view of Vocation and Calling

An additional valuable outcome of this research is a broader look at the terms vocation and calling, and how the students interviewed are thinking about these terms. For most of these students, anything can be a calling, provided you are being led by your purpose, values and authentic self. More than half of the students interviewed used the term calling when discussing their career or future plans. Half of the students interviewed expressed a desire to pursue vocational ministry as a career. In addition, the commitment to service and the testament of a vocational pull that is larger than themselves was present for most students interviewed. For most of the students, that vocational pull came from God, in connection with their true self, or a sense of responsibility to serve the world in some way. Vocation, passion, and purpose are terms that can apply to anyone, whether they feel their future plans involve the sacred or the secular.

In terms of the future plans of the students interviewed, I have discussed the remarkable commitment to service on behalf of the PTEV students. For many students, that commitment to service came out of the discernment process, which included various in and out-of-class experiences, exploration of vocation and calling, reflection, and discussion in the context of community and spirituality. Perhaps more students might adopt a commitment to service if given

the chance to experience and explore service opportunities as a career option. This question could be an area for future research.

For most of the students interviewed for this study, there is a spiritual basis for their commitment to service. As said earlier, vocation and calling are difficult terms to define and understand. “Vocational pull” was a term used by one of the students when discussing her future plans. This term provides a broader alternative to the word “calling.” It denotes the idea that there is something bigger than oneself involved in the process of discerning one’s career or future plans, but does not box the term into a Christian ideology. The data from the student interviews revealed that personal faith (for most, expressed as the role of God) and spirituality played a role in the process of discerning one’s calling or future vocation for most PTEV students. However, the view expressed by students that ‘anything can be a calling’ leaves room for the exploration of such by any student. The concept of having a calling is something that can apply to anyone. Anyone can have a calling, and any career can be a calling. I think that broader definitions of these terms are important to helping a diverse group of students explore the intersection of their values and their vocation.

Additional Theoretical Connections

Transformative Learning.

For some students, their experience in the PTEV programs and the knowledge they gained about themselves, their faith, their values, their talents, their purpose, and ultimately their future plans, was a transformative experience. According to Cranton (2006), learning becomes transformative “when people critically examine their habitual expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets), revise them, and act on the revised point of view (p. 19, 23). Through reflection and dialogue, many students examined their values and perspectives both

spiritually and vocationally, and described changes in both their views (becoming more open to diverse perspectives, growing in respect for others) and their plans (changing their future career plans to follow their passions, expressing a desire for service based on its importance in their lives). According to Mezirow (1997), transformative learning makes up the essence of adult education, with the goal being “to help the individual become a more autonomous thinker by learning to negotiate his or her own values, meanings, and purposes rather than to uncritically act on those of others” (p. 11). Mezirow (2000) also described transformative learning as,

the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning, perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action (p. 7-8).

Mezirow’s (2000) explanation of transformative learning is consistent with growth in cognitive development, where thinking becomes less black and white and more relative over time (Perry, 1970). Some of the growth in this area described by PTEV students would happen as the natural process of cognitive development unfolds through college experiences. However, some PTEV students described some specific PTEV experiences that encouraged cognitive development and lead to experiences that were personally transformative for them.

For some students, their experience in the PTEV programs was a transformative one. Students described being more open to diverse faith perspectives and more open to a diverse array of future plans as a result of being exposed to diverse perspectives and reflecting upon and disseminating their views on vocation. The exposure to diversity caused some students to adopt a broader faith perspective. For example, Lucy from Eclectic discussed in Chapter four how she has changed her perspective from what she was taught growing up. She explained,

I came from a very evangelical, nondenominational background ... there’s a very narrow perspective there about what is [and] isn’t Christian. I’m leaving college with a much broader perspective... of what it means to be Christian....it’s hard to leave a tradition in

which you've been raised or to see it differently....

Dallas, a student from Quaint College, described how he is now more open minded as a result of his PTEV experiences,

I came to school and to the program with more of like a close minded [perspective], "if you are not like me then you are not going to be right" ... [now I'm more] open to ... different faith traditions, different denominations

Many other PTEV students described becoming more open to diverse perspectives as discussed in Chapter four. These students became more inclusive and open to those who held different views and faith perspectives. Some students even described a change in their own beliefs, such as John, who said, "I definitely have changed a lot doctrinally since being at college and since being in some of the [PTEV programs]." These students are demonstrating that they have the ability to form their own beliefs and are capable of change.

Other PTEV students became open to a broader selection of future career options. The growth in knowledge and understanding of themselves, their values, and their purpose as a result of their PTEV experiences caused some students to change their view of vocation and calling to a broader one. For example, Lucy from Eclectic explained how she could now see the possibility of combining her faith and her career because her perspective of faith is now broader. Teresa, from Elite, talked about how she now understands that vocation is more than vocational ministry, and can change over time. She explained,

So, while I do think with that, we all have a vocation: to follow God and to listen to God and to be faithful Christians. I think that your – the results of your vocation or like the career aspect of your vocation is going to change over time. It's probably not going to be the same always.

Ashley, from Quaint, discussed how she feels more confident about what she values and where she is going. She knows she wants to go to seminary and into some kind of vocational ministry,

and yet she understands that her future is not necessarily a linear path. She explained how she is uncertain of exactly where her future will take her,

... I still feel assured in what I'm doing. I still feel like I'm doing the right things. I still feel confident...I don't feel lost, like, "I don't know what to do and what I'm going to do with my life...Because I just – I've become more okay with trusting God, and trusting myself, and trusting where... that might take me...So, I guess it's a winding road...I just feel like my path could go wherever, and that's become okay with me.

Some students also described a change in their view of themselves and their beliefs about themselves as a result of their experiences in the PTEV program. For example, Ashley described how she did not think she could be a church pastor because she “would suck at it.” After gaining experience and exposure to that role, Ashley learned that ministry was a good fit for her. She explained,

There are so many different kinds of ministry. And so that's really helpful to have learned as well. I mean, for a long time, I was like, “I don't want to be a pastor in a church because I would suck at it” – excuse the language. But I was always convinced that...I shouldn't serve a church and I wouldn't be good at it.

But then through like the readings from the book [in her PTEV class] and then talking with my friends and my colleagues [in the PTEV program]... it became okay. And it became okay to explore tons of different things and see the ministry as more than just serving a church. I guess I just learned a lot more of what it means for me to explore my life rather than having it explored for me.

Ashley's story is an example of changing her habits of mind, and exercising autonomy in exploring her future, rather than letting someone else tell her what she should do with her life.

These examples and others described in Chapter four demonstrate how some students changed their habits of mind, to act upon their uniquely formed beliefs and values rather than conforming to the view or plans of others without introspection or reflection. As a result of their broader views on vocation, they are open to change in their future plans, depending where their values may lead them.

A Unique Population, Time and Space

In some ways, PTEV students may be unique when compared to what is known about the characteristics of traditional aged college students. The students interviewed for this study expressed a strong commitment to personal faith and/or spirituality, which informed their knowledge of self, and ultimately, their thoughts about their place in the world. Some of the participants in this study were drawn to PTEV programs because of an interest in vocational discernment or a preliminary sense of vocational calling. These students certainly do not represent all college students and diverges from popular descriptions of millennial students.

Some researchers describe millennials as team oriented, and committed to service (Howe & Strauss, 2003). In light of this view, the commitment to service described by these students may not be unique. However, the passion with which they spoke, and the choices they are making in their careers may be unique when compared to the greater millennial population. This is an area for future research. Other studies point to a growing narcissism among college students and the millennial generation in general (Twenge and Foster, 2008). Researchers conducting a meta-analysis of Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) scores found more narcissistic traits among recent generations (Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, and Bushman, 2008). However, critics of this literature claim that data from these studies were not collected through scientific sampling methods, and that generalizations are based on a very small number of items and a scale that is controversial to interpret (the NPI) (Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2009). Further, the slight increase in NPI measurements among the current generation (women more than men) could be explained by an increase in self-esteem (Twenge et. al., 2008) or confidence, leadership, and self-sufficiency rather than narcissism (Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2009). Given the conflicting literature, the prevalence of narcissism among the millennial generation appears to be unclear. Nonetheless, critiques of the millennial generation do exist. This research sheds

light on a sample of PTEV students who are concerned with the welfare of others and dedicating their time and professional energies to make the world a better place. PTEV students may be less concerned with self and more concerned with others when compared to other college students. Consistent with growth along Chickering and Reisser's (1993) vectors, this research may reveal that the PTEV population of students is developing normally in the areas of identity, integrity, and purpose.

Palmer (2000) provides a potential explanation for the strong sense of responsibility to the world expressed by PTEV students. Palmer explained that connection with one's true self results in a connection to and responsibility for the world. He stated,

Go far enough on the inner journey...go past ego toward true self – and you end up not lost in narcissism but returning to the world, bearing more gracefully the responsibilities that come with being human (Palmer, 2000, p. 73).

In light of Palmer's explanation, PTEV students could be dedicated to serving the world because of the work they have done on their inner journey to find their true selves. As explained earlier, the transfer of values from the PTEV programs to the students could have also contributed to the strong sense of responsibility to the world expressed by the students. However, it is important to note that Eclectic did not have a guiding ideology to transfer to students, yet the PTEV students there also expressed a similar, although less passionate, sense of responsibility to the world. It seems that the ideology transfer from some of the PTEV programs (with the exception of Eclectic) could be a contributing factor in explaining this finding, along with the connection that PTEV students are making to their true selves.

Another unique feature of PTEV programs is that they seem to be reversing the professional socialization process. Professional socialization can be defined as a process by which students "acquire the knowledge, skills and disposition that makes them ... effective

members of society” and a “subconscious process” where students internalize “norms and standards and form a sense of identity and commitment to a professional field” (Weidman, Twale, and Stein, 2001, p. 4, 6). Professional socialization seems to be happening for some PTEV students before they actually enter a particular profession. They are gaining knowledge, learning skills, and internalizing norms to form a sense of identity around their future career plans. This early professional socialization appears to result from the early exposure to professions that PTEV programs provide, as well as the focused reflection and discussion around vocational fit, future plans, and calling.

The PTEV experience was certainly unique as it comprised a specific set of people, values and goals in a unique environment. Three of the four PTEV programs included in this study had a strong religious identity. The findings of this study emerged from distinctive environments in which God, spirituality, community, passion, and calling were emphasized and explored. The emphasis on God, spirituality, and community is not typical to the college experience of all students. Therefore, interventions based on these findings may result in different outcomes when applied in a different environment comprised of different values and people. However, although other institutions (which may have different goals, values and people) may not reap the same results in all areas found in this study, I believe that beneficial information and insight gleaned from this study could be utilized by a variety of institutions. Although these programs are distinctive, other institutions can learn from the methods that were impactful for students. Further, although the sample of students represented in this study is limited to those that are not put off by the religious or spiritual exploration of vocation, universal questions relating to identity, meaning, and purpose can be explored in a similar fashion in other contexts as in the PTEV programs. Although the results may not mirror the results found in this study, I believe

that growth in meaning, being, and doing would still emerge in other contexts.

Higher education institutions are often committed to the holistic development of students and desire to help students gain a sense of civic responsibility. PTEV programs shed light on interventions that can be useful fostering the holistic development of students (growth in identity, meaning, and purpose) as well as a sense of civic responsibility. Exposing students to a variety of experiences (particularly service-based experiences), coupled with exploration of their identity, beliefs and values, and experiences through reflection and discussion, are likely to result in growth in meaning, being, and doing and a stronger sense of vocational direction for college students.

Consistency with Liberal Learning Values

The outcomes of this research are consistent with the liberal learning goals for students shared by many institutions of higher education. Bok (2006) lists preparing students for citizenship, living with diversity, and preparing for a career as important purposes of higher education. In addition, the Association of American Colleges and Universities lists personal and social responsibility as one of four clusters of learning outcomes essential for college students in the 21st century (Colby & Sullivan, 2009). The commitment to service expressed by many of the PTEV students provides a striking example of the development of citizenship values and social responsibility that emerged from their participation in PTEV programs and exploration of their values and future plans. Colby and Sullivan (2009) believed that to support the development of personal and social responsibility among students, higher education needs to support identity formation, the development of purpose, and putting knowledge to responsible use by, “paying attention to questions of meaning, purpose and personal identity,” “incorporating experiential, active and collaborative learning” and “having a campus culture that supports students in

thinking about their values and who they want to be professionally and personally” (p. 29). The outcomes of this research are consistent with the goals and actions listed above, and show that developing identity, purpose, and civic responsibility can happen through exploration, in and out of class experiences, service, questioning, reflecting, dialogue, and quality relationships with peers and mentors. Giving students time, space and means to explore, gain a variety of experiences and reflect on identity, values, and purpose has resulted in the development of personal and social responsibility among many of the students interviewed for this study. The findings also revealed the growth that came through exposure to diversity as well as the career preparation that came through PTEV experiences and exploration. These outcomes contribute to the ability to live with diversity and prepare for a career.

In addition to the consistency with liberal learning goals, this research demonstrates that PTEV programs are consistent with the historical purposes of higher education, and provide valuable insight into how institutions can reconnect with those purposes. Kronan (2007) explained that faculty in the early (antebellum) years were committed to helping students grapple with moral and spiritual questions, and particularly, the meaning of life. He believed that the modern research ideal has made the question of the meaning of life “unprofessional” and has diverted “our attention away from the whole of our lives and requires that we focus on some small aspect of them instead” (p. 125, 127). Studley (2004) believed that although institutions of higher learning testify to the connection between higher education and preparation for work and service, that connection is often not made for students as part of their educational experience. He explained,

College mission statements testify to the integral connection between liberal education and preparation for work, leadership, and service....The problem is that these career development processes are not woven into students' central educational endeavors where they could provide powerful material and expand motivation for learning.... (p. 1-2)

Although secular institutions certainly cannot and should not dictate what students should value or believe, they can provide experiences and opportunities for students to integrate their beliefs and values into their educational experiences and reflect upon how they relate to their future plans. Studley (2004) advocated for the importance of helping students integrate purpose into their educational processes,

Welcoming students' vision, concern, and questions about vocation, work, and careers can reveal their passions and interests and motivate their hunger for further learning.... Those of us in midlife know that finding our vocation(s) and meaning in our work, and linking them to our values, knowledge, and capacities, is a lifelong challenge. Understanding that, we should give our students a strong foundation for conducting that process of exploration, reflection, adaptation, and learning—and we should seize the chance to do it as they make the critical early choices of their college years (p. 2-3).

The PTEV programs studied here have set an important example for how educators can help students discern their values and passions and link them to their future career plans. The discernment and reflection tools that students have learned through their participation in these programs should serve them throughout their lives as they navigate their personal and professional lives and plans. With the knowledge and tools gleaned from this research, educators can help college students build a life, rather than just make a living, from their career.

Implications for research

The following two sections address the implications for future research and practice that came from the findings of this study. Implications are taken directly from the findings: both the program descriptions and the PTEV staff and student interviews. Implications for research are based on the findings, frameworks, and limitations of this study. Although all four schools visited for this study were different in their approach to exploring the intersection of spirituality and vocation, similar themes nonetheless emerged from the data collected at each school. Therefore, it is my belief that the methods of these programs could be applied at other

institutions to facilitate exploration of spirituality, meaning and purpose among college students. The implications for practice are based on evidence that supports the transference of useful methods found in this study to other institutions.

Implications for research are drawn from the findings and frameworks of this study, and its limitations. One limitation of this study was that only four PTEV programs were included. Looking at a broader selection of currently active PTEV programs would be a logical next step in future research. There are likely other institutions doing similar work with students that were not part of the PTEV initiative. Looking at the methods, meaning and impact of similar programs would be useful to add to these findings on how to help students explore their faith, values and vocation. While I attempted to choose schools that would diversify my sample, the majority of the students I interviewed identified their religious affiliation as Christian. This is another limitation of this study. More research on how to address issues of spirituality as it relates to meaning, purpose and vocation among a broader sample of students from a variety of spiritual perspectives would be beneficial to helping a broader sample of students in this area.

Further research on identity as it relates to purpose and vocation, as well as the role of spirituality in this process would be beneficial. More research on the role of the Divine in this process, especially from an external stance, for people of faith would be useful in adding to existing research. Given that service was both a strong value held by the students and a substantial motivator for career choice, more research on the impact of service on students' identity, values and career choice would be a beneficial addition to current research. As I stated earlier, it would be interesting to know if early exposure to service draws students into service-related careers at a higher rate than students who do not participate in service activities.

I also noted that the ideology transfer present in three of the four schools concerning a

sense of responsibility for the world may have been a partial factor in PTEV student's commitment to service. Research on the impact of service experiences on student's sense of altruism and commitment to service in other contexts (especially non-religious contexts) would be beneficial. In addition, research on identity (particularly one's connection to true self) and its influence on narcissism and altruism would be useful in understanding how to promote altruistic growth among college students. Further, research on how PTEV students differ or relate to students who are not in PTEV programs (including a sample that could be categorized as "traditional millennial students") would be beneficial in understanding this population of students in light of literature on the characteristics of the millennial generation.

Given the salient role of community, reflection, and discussion on PTEV students' sense of identity, values, purpose and vocation, it makes sense to conduct more research on the impact of community, reflection, and discussion on identity, values and purpose in contexts other than PTEV programs.

PTEV programs were situated in a unique context of spirituality and community. Research on the impact of exploration, reflection, and discussion in growth of meaning, being, and doing as well as vocational discernment in other contexts would be a logical follow-up to this research. In addition, this research revealed that PTEV programs were resulting in a type of reverse professional socialization. Research on the professional socialization process that can happen before actually entering a profession, through either PTEV or other career exploration programs, is another potential area to be explored in future research.

This research was conducted from a purely qualitative paradigm. Quantitative researchers could measure sense of purpose in life, values formation, and career assuredness (meaning confidence in one's choice of a career) of students who have participated in PTEV or similar

programs and compare them to students who have not participated in such programs.

Given the strong commitment to spirituality and/or personal faith of the students interviewed, more research on the spiritual perspectives of students would be useful. Further, current studies on the spirituality and faith perspectives of college students often do not separate those who have a strong belief in God (in the way that PTEV students described) from those who identify as spiritual (HERI, 2004-2005). Learning about the role of God in college students' lives would be a beneficial addition to current research. Understanding more about the role of God of the divine in the lives of college students would aid in the knowledge and understand of college students populations like those included in this study. Interfaith and ecumenical exposure was also impactful for students. More research on the impact of interfaith and ecumenical exposure on beliefs, values, and perspectives of students would be useful. Qualitative research that illuminates understanding of students' stories of faith and spirituality as well as how these values impact their lives and future plans would be interesting additions to the research that currently exists on this topic. More research on what college students' value and what is missing from the college experience to aid students in the discovery of their values would also be beneficial in the further exploration of this topic. Research on whether students' values are congruent or incongruent with their future plans and on college graduates satisfaction with their careers would also be beneficial to discover more information about how educators can assist students in making better life choices.

This research presents a step in the direction towards devising a model of vocational discernment for spiritually-minded students or students of faith. Expanding on this research towards an empirically-tested model of vocational discernment, and the role of the Divine in that process for students of faith is an additional suggestion for future research.

Implications for practice

There are a number of lessons that can be learned and methods that came from the PTEV program descriptions and the interviews with students, PTEV workers, and faculty that could be adapted at other institutions. Methods that were successful in helping students develop in their knowledge of self, purpose, and future plans could be applied at others institutions.

Given the salient role of spirituality and values in the future planning of the students interviewed, it makes sense to provide opportunities for a broader selection of students to explore, process, and reflect upon their personal beliefs and values as they relate to their future plans. In choosing institutions and PTEV programs to visit, the aim was to choose schools that would take a pluralistic or broad approach to exploring the intersection of faith and vocation, or purpose and meaning and vocation among college students. Therefore, it was surprising to find how much the students interviewed talked about God, faith or spirituality as it relates to their sense of purpose and their thoughts about their future plans. The findings did demonstrate that the role of spirituality in the discernment process for students was not limited to the Christian students (although Christian students did make up a majority of the total students interviewed). Nonetheless, there were helpful practices and methods used by some of these schools to reach a broader population of students that could be adopted at secular institutions. Similar findings were found from all four PTEV programs visited, even though each had their own unique perspective on faith, spirituality and their intersection. Given the similar findings, I believe that there is evidence that many of the components of these programs can be applied at other institutions to promote growth in knowledge of self, purpose, and future plans. Although the findings presented in this document can not be generalized to the greater college student body, given the similar findings among four different schools regarding the impact of these programs, it can be

concluded that some of the methods used by these programs to engage students could be useful in other contexts to promote growth among students along the lines of meaning, being, and doing. Examples are provided in increasing order of specificity and complexity. I also discuss the timing of interventions, based on what I learned from my site visits and interviews with students.

Embrace Diversity

Any institution or professional could follow the example set by Jesuit and Eclectic of using broad language to reach a diverse audience around topics of meaning, purpose and vocation. Instead of using terms such as faith, God, calling, prayers and beliefs, broader terms such as meaning, purpose, vocational pull, passion, values and reflection are more inclusive to a diverse group of students. PTEV staff members at Quaint and Eclectic talked about the importance of being open to diverse perspectives, not judging people based on their beliefs and values, and not expecting students to abandon their own distinctive beliefs and perspectives in the name of diversity. Individuality was valued and respected along with and appreciation of difference at these institutions. Working with students where they are by listening to them and refraining from judgment, and letting students be themselves was the focus taken by professionals who work with students from diverse faith perspectives. Those who wish to help college students explore their beliefs, values and purpose can follow the example set by Jesuit, Quaint, and Eclectic and encourage students to explore these topics without sacrificing their own beliefs and values.

Students were also encouraged to learn about other religions and faith perspectives, and educational opportunities to do so were provided by some of the institutions such as Quaint and Eclectic (For example, having students give presentations about their religion, visiting places of worship, and encouraging interfaith activities such as group service projects). Service projects

are a great way to bring diverse groups of students together around a common cause.

PTEV staff workers also discussed the importance of knowing your own values and purpose when working with students to explore these ideas. It is difficult to lead someone in something you do not understand yourself. Therefore, it is important for professionals to set an example for students around areas of meaning, purpose, spirituality and vocation they should be familiar with their own values, beliefs, passions, purpose and vocational path. If you are not in a position to talk with students around these issues, the best thing to do is refer them to someone who can. Exploring values, meaning and purpose can be deeply personal and sensitive areas for some individuals. It is important to take steps to make sure that students will be treated with respect and care. Eclectic University, for example, has published information about campus ministries and local places of worship available at their office for students.

Reflection

Most students mentioned reflection and discussion as significant conduits of learning from their experiences and discerning who they are, what they value, and the impact they want to have on the world. PTEV students mentioned journaling and reflective writing, discussion, and asking and answering questions with peers and mentors are useful reflection tools. Advisors and mentors who work with students could also help students to process whether their future plans are congruent or incongruent with what they discover about their identity and values through dialogue, questioning and reflection activities such as journaling. Asking questions that encourage students to reflect upon their personal values and passions as they relate to their future plans would be useful to college students at any institution, religious or secular. Providing these opportunities, either as follow-ups to formal programming, or as part of an advising session or mentoring relationship may be beneficial for students. Reflection question examples that could

be used at church-sponsored or secular schools are provided in the appendix of this document.

Community

Providing space and opportunity for discussion around topics of meaning, purpose, values and vocation would be helpful to students who want to explore these topics. This could happen through peer groups and mentoring or advising relationships. Discussions around these topics would be a logical follow-up to service learning and career exploration activities at any institution. Both secular and religious institutions could follow the example of Elite in partnering with campus ministries to provide discussion groups around these topics. Mentors and advisors could also provide the opportunity to discuss these topics with students, if these topics are ones they are comfortable addressing with students.

Connect with Existing Programs

Similar to what was done at Jesuit, topics such as vocational discernment, spirituality, meaning and purpose could be infused into existing programs already offered at institutions such as first-year reading programs, career services programming, and others. Discussion groups following larger programs to promote discussion around purpose, meaning, values, and vocation, were beneficial to students in promoting reflection and introspection around these issues.

Exploration and Field Experiences

Encourage students to gain field experiences that would allow them to explore different career options. Professionals who work in areas that connect students to out-of-class experiences such as career services and service learning should encourage students to reflect upon and process the impact of their experiences. PTEV students talked about the importance of reflecting upon their experiences in order to understand their impact.

Service

Given the impact that service experiences had on students' formation of identity, values, and future plans, students should be strongly encouraged to participate in service experiences. Academic administrators may want to consider making service learning experience a requirement of academic programs. Service experiences help students learn about diversity, develop empathy and caring for others, and connect with their values and gain clarity about who they want to be in the world.

Real Life Examples of Vocation

Providing examples of individuals who are following their passions in their careers, whether mainstream or innovative, could be inspiring to students. All four PTEV programs provided some sort of speaker or lecture series focused on vocation and spirituality. At some schools, alumni and friends of the institution were asked to share their journey of vocation and how they are either reconciling their faith with their vocation or following their passions. These speakers were often based on existing relationships and therefore, were not expensive to bring in. Some institutions offered more formal lecture or speaker series on different religions and they relate to world affairs or vocation. These were bigger programs designed to be educational for students, and were often followed by a discussion session to give the students a chance to reflect and process their views in groups of both peers and PTEV or institutional staff workers. Learning from others through programs such as this was impactful for students.

Providing examples and testimonies of people who have followed their passions or even switched careers to follow their passions was a practice that at least half of the students cited as insightful and inspiring and can be done at any school. For example, a career services department at any institution could sponsor a seminar series highlighting service careers or people who have

followed unusual career paths. Providing access to real world examples of a variety of career paths for students does not have to be costly, or a big production. Such examples could be provided through guest speakers, reading biographies and autobiographies, and even video testimonies or movies as part of an academic course or specific course focused on vocational discernment. Providing time to question, reflect, and discuss in conjunction with a real life testimony would be an additional resource to students as almost all students mentioned reflection and discussion as beneficial to discerning their values, purpose and future plans.

Courses

Courses were connected to PTEV programs in two ways: courses offered by the PTEV programs that directly addressed vocational discernment and, like Jesuit, incorporating vocational discernment into existing courses already offered at the institution. These two approaches could be adopted at other institutions. Career services, service learning, and/or student affairs could offer courses specifically focused on vocational discernment. Or, faculty members could incorporate vocational discernment into existing courses. The goal of these course offerings should be to facilitate learning about career paths and options, and to help students connect their academic studies and future plans with their own life values, passions, and goals.

Timing

Through my discussions with many PTEV students during my site visits, I found that exploration of values, meaning and purpose tended to be broader in the early years of the college experience and more focused and intentional in later years. Therefore, I recommend that interventions aimed at promoting exploration of students' beliefs and values in conjunction with their future plans progress from general to specific as students develop and mature through their

college experiences. General exploration earlier in college could include out-of-class experiences such as volunteering and part-time jobs. More focused reflection could include research and experience in potential careers and interventions that help students make connections between their interests and values and their academic studies and future plans.

Conclusion

Preparing for a career and exploring personal beliefs and values are part of the college experience for many students. Often, students are not encouraged by the higher education institutions they attend to think about the intersection of their beliefs and values with their future career plans in college. Helping students to make connections between their beliefs and values and their vocational choices may prepare them for a more fulfilling, stable career and a happier life.

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of collegiate programs designed to help students consider how their religious faith, spirituality, and personal values intersect with vocational choices and future plans. Four PTEV (Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation) programs and four institutions were included in this multi-case qualitative study. This study produced findings that provide insight into the impact of these programs and the process of vocational discernment for students in PTEV programs. Exploring vocation and calling in the context of spirituality and community, gaining exposure to experiences that shed light on future career options, along with reflection and discussion were beneficial to PTEV students who were on a journey of vocational discernment. Exploration of vocation and calling, in and out-of-class experiences, facilitated by reflection and discussion in a community and spiritual context lead to growth in self awareness (being) and knowledge of values (meaning) which, in turn, produced a greater sense of purpose and knowledge of future plans (doing) in most PTEV students (Brewer,

2001).

Helping students explore their values, discover their passions, and connect to their purpose is consistent with the liberal learning and historical goals of higher education. Preparing for a career, developing personal and social responsibility, and living with diversity are examples of the values that many in higher education wish to uphold. Students involved in PTEV programs are exhibiting growth in these three areas. Many PTEV students expressed social responsibility through a strong commitment to service. Exposure to diversity through involvement in PTEV programs produced growth in respect for and appreciation of difference in many students. Most students also attested to a greater knowledge of their purpose and confidence in their future career plans as a result of their involvement in PTEV programs. Encouraging students to explore who they are, what they value, and who they want to be in the world is consistent with the liberal and historical values of higher education. Some scholars argue that institutions of higher education have strayed from these historical values (Studley, 2004; Kronan, 2007). This study sheds light on steps that institutions can take to help students grow in their understanding of themselves and their values and how these connect with their unique purpose.

Many PTEV students explained that vocational calling is a concept that can apply to any job or any person, provided one is connected to their values and following their passions. The findings from this research revealed the multiple dimensions that impact the discovery of purpose and life calling in many students. Spirituality or personal faith, knowledge of self, discovery of values and passions, and community are some of the factors that are influencing PTEV students' in discovering their callings and making their future plans. The findings revealed that spirituality and a commitment to service are powerful motivators for PTEV students' career choices. PTEV students are pursuing service opportunities, graduate school, and a combination

of spirituality and work when making their future plans.

The visual representation of the process of vocational discernment for students in PTEV programs (Figure 1, p. 151) presents a step towards a model of vocational discernment that could aid educators in helping students' development of self awareness (being), knowledge of values (meaning), and sense of purpose (doing). This study further sheds light on the dynamic interactions of meaning, being and doing as they relate to the process of vocational discernment (Figure 2, p. 155). The visual presented here could be used by educators at any institution as a guide to planning interventions with college students, such as in and out-of-class experiences and focused discussion or reflection, designed to help students explore their passions and progress in their development of being, meaning and doing.

The findings from this study suggest that there are multiple PTEV methods that can be adapted to the distinct mission and culture of individual institutions. Opportunities for reflection and discussion around topics of meaning and purpose, field and service experiences, exposure to professionals that can set an example of connecting meaning, purpose, and vocation, and courses that incorporate vocational exploration are some examples of the methods that could be adopted by any institution to assist students in exploring and discovering their values and unique purpose in the world. The implications for practice and other PTEV program methods described in this document could be adopted at any institution to aid students in their development of values, purpose, and ultimately, vocational discernment.

Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Protocol: Program directors

1. Tell me a little about yourself (warm-up question).
2. Please describe your PTEV program.
 - History
 - Goals
 - Role of Spirituality in the program? How does your program define spirituality?
 - In what ways is your program similar to other PTEV programs? In what ways is it different?
 - What does “program for the theological exploration of vocation” mean to you?
3. Can you tell me what the students who participate in your program are like?
 - What is your sense of their knowledge of their future work plans/future direction?
 - How would you describe their religious affiliation? Their spiritual commitment?
4. How does your program help students examine the relationship between faith and vocational choices?
5. What knowledge and skills are needed to teach and mentor students in this area?
 - How do you develop these among your faculty and staff?
6. What do you think the PTEV program means to your students?
 - Why do they participate?
 - What does it do for them?
7. What do you think your students are getting out of this program?
 - In what ways are they different after vs. before?
 - What do students learn about themselves?
 - Their spirituality, beliefs, and/or values?
 - Their future work plans?
8. What aspects of your program do you think were most important for students? Why?
9. What components were the least important for students? Why?
10. Is there anything you would like to add regarding the nature or impact of your program?

Interview Protocol: Faculty

1. Tell me a bit about yourself, what do you teach/study?
2. Please describe how you came to be involved in the PTEV program.
3. What was the nature of your involvement?
 - What were the aims of your teaching/program/activity?
 - How did you set out to meet your goals?
 - What knowledge and skills are needed to help students in this area?
4. Can you tell me what the students who participate in your class, activity are like?
 - What is your sense of their knowledge of their future work plans/future direction?
 - How would you describe their religious affiliation? Their spiritual commitment?
5. What do you think your class, activity has meant to your students?
 - Why do they participate?
 - What does it do for them?
6. What do you think your students are getting out of your class/activity?

- In what ways are they different after vs. before?
 - What do students learn about themselves?
 - Their spirituality, beliefs, and/or values?
 - Their future work plans?
7. What aspects of your class/activity do you think were most important for students? Why?
 8. What components were the least important for students? Why?
 9. Is there anything you would like to add regarding the nature or impact of your program?

Interview Protocol: Students

1. Tell me a bit about yourself (Warm-up question)
 - Background, hometown, what you are studying
 - How did you choose this institution?
2. What influenced your decision to participate in the PTEV program?
 - Who, what?
3. Can you describe your experiences in the PTEV program?
 - What was it like to be in the program?
 - What did you do? Activities, classes, internships?
 - What were these like? What did you get out of them?
 - What was most helpful to you?
 - Least helpful?
4. What did participation in the PTEV program mean to you?
5. Picture yourself before you entered the PTEV program and then after. In what ways did participating in the PTEV program change what you consider to be important?

Prompts:

 - Any change in your future work plans (then and now)?
 - Your spirituality, beliefs and/or values? Has anything changed?
 - Have you learned anything new about yourself? What?
 - Values, beliefs, skills
6. Was there anything else that was going on during this time that contributed to how you have changed?
 - Probes: relationships, experiences, reflection, discussions
7. What will you do after college?

Prompts:

 - Your future work plans?
 - How did you come to that decision? What influenced you?
8. Is there anything you would like to add about your participation in the PTEV program or your future life and work plans?

Questions for document analysis: Websites, syllabi, assessments (if available)

- Looked for background information on schools and programs
- How these programs engaged students in examining their faith and vocational choices
 - Readings, assignments, experiences

Appendix B

Below is an example of two versions of the Examen, a religious version (on left) and a broader version (on right) aimed for a more diverse audience (adapted from publications provided by Jesuit University). These are used by the PTEV program at Jesuit to encourage reflection.

Praying the Examen

Take 10 minutes each day to reflect in the following way:

- Become aware of God's presence
- Thank God for the blessings of the day
Review the past 24 hours and ask yourself:
"What were the gifts in the day?"
"How was I a gift to someone today?"
- Notice the different feelings in the day
As you review the day, ask yourself:
"Where was God in the events and persons of the day?"
"Was my heart divided – wavering between helping and disregarding, scoffing and encouraging, listening and ignoring, rebuking and forgiving, speaking and silence, neglecting and thanking?"
"What moved me to act in the way that I did?"
"What habits helped or hindered me?"
"Did these feelings move me towards God's peace or away from God's peace?"
"Did I act on these feelings in a way that seemed 'of God' or 'not of God'?"

A Simple Daily Examen

- Two basic questions to ask yourself at the end of each day:

For what moment today am I most grateful?

For what moment today am I least grateful?

- Other ways to ask the questions:

When did I give and receive the most love today?

When did I give and receive the least love today?

When did I feel the most alive today?

When did I feel the life draining out of me?

When today did I have the greatest sense of belonging to myself, others, God and the universe?

When did I have the least sense of belonging?

When was I happiest today?

When was I saddest?

What was today's high point?

What was today's low point?

- Choose one of those feelings and pray from it

That feeling is a sign that something important is going on. Simply express spontaneously the prayer that surfaces as you attend to the source of the feeling.

- Look forward to the future with hope

Ask yourself:

“Where might I expect to find God in the events or persons of tomorrow?”

“If I am going to be in a situation again that I did not handle well today, how do I want to handle it next time?”

- End with the Lord’s Prayer

(Jesuit’s publication, which this example is modeled after, was adapted from the 19th Annotation in 24 weeks for the 21st Century by Cornell Bradley, SJ, and from Hamm, Dennis, SJ “Examen of Consciousness”, America, May 14, 1994)

Appendix C

The following is a list of reflection question examples. These were taken from Jesuit U's publications for participants and from interview data. The Researcher has also added a few.

Questions from Jesuit University Publications:

Getting to know yourself:

- What do you really enjoy?
- What do you really NOT like?
- What do you do especially well?
- What do you struggle to do well?
- What values are important to you?

Reflecting on your experiences:

- What experiences have given you energy and life?
- What experiences have drained the energy and life from you?

These questions can be helpful to students in choosing a mentor:

- Who knows you best?
- Who do you admire?
- Who speaks honestly to you?
- Who listens really well?

Reflecting on the day:

- For what moment today am I most grateful?
- For what moment today am I least grateful?
- What experiences in your life have drawn you closer to God?
- What experiences have pushed you further from God?

Questions from interview data:

- Who are you and what are you going to take with you?
- What's important to you?

Reflection questions suggested by the researcher:

- What do you care about?
- What is important to you?
- What kind of contribution do you want to make in the world?
- What do you want your life to look like, be like?
- What would a future career in (student's chosen field) be like, look like?
 - How would you feel about that?
 - What are the values of the profession?
 - How are the values of your potential profession congruent or incongruent with what you care about, value?

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