

1-1-2001

Grant promotes study of faith and calling

Furman University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine>

Recommended Citation

University, Furman (2001) "Grant promotes study of faith and calling," *Furman Magazine*: Vol. 43 : Iss. 4 , Article 15.
Available at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol43/iss4/15>

This Regular Feature is made available online by Journals, part of the Furman University Scholar Exchange (FUSE). It has been accepted for inclusion in Furman Magazine by an authorized FUSE administrator. For terms of use, please refer to the [FUSE Institutional Repository Guidelines](#). For more information, please contact scholarexchange@furman.edu.

Grant promotes study of faith and calling

How do college students choose a career? Should faith play a role in the process? And, if so, how can students apply their faith to their chosen professions?

With the help of a \$2 million grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc., Furman will establish a Center for Theological Exploration of Vocation, which hopes to answer these and other related questions by focusing on issues of faith and calling. The center will offer programs for students, faculty and the community and will provide seminars and courses, student-led service projects and a summer theology institute for pre-college youth. Elaine Nocks, professor of psychology, and Jeffrey S. Rogers, associate professor of religion and associate academic dean, will be co-directors of the center.

Nocks says, "We tend to associate 'calling' with the clergy, but calling can be understood theologically to apply to all of us. Any of us who consider ourselves people of faith need to consider what living that faith in the world may mean for the choices and decisions we make. This generous grant will allow us to further explore such questions of vocation."

Specific programs to be sponsored by the center will include:

- A two-week theology institute for rising high school seniors. Offered through the Furman Summer Scholars Program, it expects to include participants from diverse religious backgrounds and will emphasize how to better understand the relationship between faith and action.

- Seminars and international service learning. Faculty will attend programs designed to better enable them to discuss vocational issues with students without shying away from matters of faith. A sophomore seminar will allow students to reflect on two primary questions: "Who am I?" and "What should I do with my life?" The international component will involve nine students, two faculty members and three individuals from the community who are interested in exploring a career in ministry, missions or international humanitarian projects.

- Adult education and outreach. The program will connect members of the community with students and faculty in an effort to assess and respond to community needs. It will include an annual seminar for alumni, an annual public colloquium with a nationally known speaker, and an interdisciplinary course to be offered in the university's Evening Division.

The Lilly Endowment is an Indianapolis-based private family foundation that supports the causes of religion, community development and education.

North Village III set; senior residency requirement added

In an action designed to fully restore the residential nature of the campus, the Furman board of trustees voted during its fall meeting to approve the construction of two new apartment buildings in the North Village residential complex.

At the same time, after considerable discussion and despite protests from a small but vocal group of students, the board voted to require students to live on campus all four years, beginning with the Class of 2005.

"It has been our goal to restore the residential character of the undergraduate experience at Furman, and the new buildings in North Village will complete that process," said John Cothran, chair of the board. "The trustees' decision reflects the intense student demand for additional on-campus apartments and the fact that most seniors are already choosing to live on campus."

Located across from the Dan A. Ellis Band Practice Field, North Village borders Highway 25 and extends to the fence at the north (Roe Ford Road) entrance to the campus. When the third phase is completed in August, the complex will have 11 units with a capacity of 1,026.

The new units will be financed through bonds that will be paid for by student housing fees. This year, the cost to live in a four-bedroom North Village apartment is \$3,368 per occupant.

North Village apartments house four students. Most have four bedrooms, two baths, a kitchen and a living area, as well as connections for cable television and the Internet.

After the first phase of the complex opened in 1998, the overwhelmingly positive response from students, and especially from rising seniors, led to the addition of three new buildings for 1999-2000. Before the complex opened, only 58 percent of the student body lived on campus. Today, more than 90 percent live on campus. Construction of the third phase will bring campus housing capacity to 95 percent, or all but approximately 100 of the university's 2,600 students.

The percentage puts Furman on equal footing with other national liberal arts colleges with four-year residency requirements, such as Amherst (97 percent), Davidson (93) and DePauw (94). A student committee will work with the housing office to develop criteria for granting off-campus exemptions.

Research has shown that college students reap substantial benefits from



living on campus. Their involvement in social and cultural activities is greater, as is access to campus facilities and equipment, and retention and graduation rates are higher. In addition, a residential campus provides the opportunity for increased interaction between all four classes.

The board of trustees emphasized that the senior residency requirement is a fiscal necessity. Because the additional buildings will be financed by long-term construction bonds, the units must be occupied so that the university is able to make the interest payments.

Despite the popularity of North Village and the decision not to impose the senior residency requirement on currently enrolled students, some found fault with the plan. Students expressed reservations during meetings of the student government, and a group of about 50 staged a noisy protest on the university's main mall during Parents Weekend. Among their arguments against the plan:

- They could pay less for housing and enjoy more amenities at nearby off-campus apartment complexes;

- The student body would become more homogeneous than it already is if all students were required to live on campus;

- Student choice and autonomy would be limited.

"The trustees shared many of the student reservations," Cothran said, "but when it became obvious that the new buildings could not be added without a residency provision, the board saw no other option."

When the new apartment units are completed, 40-year-old Montague Village, the housing complex located outside the south (Duncan Chapel Road) entrance to the campus, will be converted to administrative office space.