

# **Helping Students Navigate Parental Expectations and Vocation**

**A SERVE grant funded  
lunch discussion series**

**January – March 2015**

## **Participants**

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## **Discussion Contributors & Topics**

Doug Koskela: Theology of Vocation  
Susan Okamoto Lane: Cultural Considerations  
Carla Orlando: Vocational Discernment  
Lynette Bikos: Vocational Disappointment  
Group: How to Prepare Students for Conversations  
with their parents

Alison Howard  
15 April 2015  
Reflections on SERVE Grant Experience

It's been just eight short months since I joined the academic counseling team, and I can only compare my experience so far to that of trying to drink from a fire hose. Except my particular fire hose is gushing Yerba Matte, Fanta, or another uniquely global drink; I'm the lone international student academic counselor. And although my responsibilities can, at times, feel quite distinct from those of my colleagues, participating in winter quarter's SERVE programming has proved that "my" international students have so much more in common with our domestic population of students than I'd previously realized. In reality, many of them are functionally first-gen; the American system of higher education is vastly different than anything most of them (or their families) have experienced before. Indeed, many of the circumstances that I'd understood to be so unique ("My government sponsorship only covers pre-med," or, "my parents need me to major in something that I can take home to China") are rather commonplace by college student standards. Collaboration with my colleagues from the Center for Career and Calling, the Center for Learning, and Multi-Ethnic Programs during our SERVE lunches confirmed that they're fielding many of these same questions, and are walking alongside other SPU students who are searching for these same answers. It seems that many of our students are asking those same core questions: how can I honor my responsibilities to my family/government/culture/heritage while being both academically successful and emotionally/spiritually fulfilled?

When faced with a question of this magnitude, I can't give my students the black-and-white answers they so often think they want from me. So much of an academic counselor's role is to provide the facts, figures, and policies that (in theory) should help students make these decisions. But in addition to these traditional advising roles, I've been inspired by our SERVE discussions to "invite the grey" – to acknowledge the emotions that influence students' academic decisions, and to explore their usefulness in the discernment process. I feel so much more confident in dealing with the theoretical; topics of missional calling and the role of communal reflection feel approachable in a way that they previously didn't. Because I've accepted these tools as an integral part of the advising process, I'm able to invite my students into a more holistic space.

I've been working recently with a student that I'd label as a "high utilizer;" we meet often, yet she still seems to flounder. Each quarter she's moved deeper into the hole, advancing to the next step of academic probation until we've come to a crisis point; she must succeed this quarter in the classes we've selected together, or face being dismissed from SPU. During winter quarter (in the week following Susan's genogram demonstration, I think), we met once again to talk about her plan. She's taken and retaken most of the prerequisite classes for her intended major with little to show for it but poor grades and a discouraged heart. As she spoke of the pressure that she felt from her parents to "be successful" in the major that they'd very obviously selected for her, I felt at ease as I heard myself prompting her for more – what did this major mean to them, and what would this major mean for her future once she returned to her home country? Together, we made space for the personal, the intimate, and the grey. We still made a to-do list, as academic counselors are wont to do, but we'd used the majority of our hour discussing *the student* – not her grades, not her major, not her five-year plan. We balanced the black and white with the grey, reviewing the concrete resources available to her (degree planning sheets, Center for Learning study tables, the online Time Schedule) while honoring the circumstances in her life that have brought her to this crisis point. Just weeks ago, she hit the major milestone of selecting a new major – one that she's passionate about and that her parents approve of. Apparently, she presented them with some of the same tools we'd reviewed together, and prepared a presentation of sorts about the future of her newly-chosen field. By allowing ourselves the time and space for discernment – space for grey – we've made room for hope, a beautiful color.

## SERVE Grant

### A Brief Summary of Best Practices for Developing Skills to Help Students Navigate Parental Expectations and Vocation

#### 1. Intentional institutional investment/and coordinated efforts

- There needs to be intentional institutional investment/and coordinated efforts to bring faculty and staff (educators) from various sectors on campus to engage and have discussions about best practices, policies, pedagogy that shapes a student's success and support network.
- Intentional efforts ought to be consistent, coordinated, and culturally relevant advice/approaches given to students by University employees and services.

#### 2. Unveil the hidden curriculum

- Educators are responsible for unveiling the "hidden curriculum" to students—especially underrepresented students who may have limited exposure to higher education. We must make students aware of the hidden curriculum that exists on SPU campus by explicitly acknowledging it.
- After acknowledging the hidden curriculum, we must provide students with practical tips and tools that will allow them to successfully navigate campus in "interactions among students, faculty, staff, and administrators" (Tyson, 2014).

#### 3. Contextualize parental/ family expectations

- In conversations with students about parental/ family expectations we should remind students to be mindful as "to attempt to understand where our parents are coming from in their perspectives on our career choices" (Cho Van Riesen, 59). One practical tool we can utilize is the genogram as a method to get students to think about how their family structure and history impacts their vocational and academic expectations.
- We must remind students that this is a time of negotiation and "governance transfer" between students and parents/ families as it pertains to their decision making process and skills development. Governance Transfer refers to "transferring responsibility over different domains from parent to youth" (R. Young, S. Marshall, J. Domene, M. Graham, C. Logan, A. Zaidman-Zait, A. Mart, and C. Lee, 301). During this time of negotiation and "governance transfer" conflict is a normal and necessary part of the students developmental process.

#### 4. Support resilience in the storm

- We must acknowledge "Despite the American myth, I cannot be or do whatever I desire" and the same is true for the students we work with (Palmer, 44). With that being said we must be attentive to the impact of failure, realization, coping habits, and holistic healing as it pertains to students coming to terms with their academic and vocational limitations. One relevant illustration that some students can identify with is the example

of the high school/college athlete who has to cope with the reality of never becoming a professional athlete and the implications of this reality on the athlete's identity formation.

- “Exploration in work sometimes result in a failure to achieve the occupation most desired or in an inability to find work that is satisfying and fulfilling” (Arnett, 474). As students explore various vocational opportunities failure and disappointment are real possibilities.
- Vocational frustration (the storm) is normal. As educators we must normalize vocational frustration as we advise students.
- We must recognize how failure impacts a student's identity. Negative implications of failure include shame, blame, pain, grief and frustration. Positive implications of failure include increased ability to reflect, empathize, adapt, improve cognitive understanding, and develop resilience.
- Vocational calling happens in a variety of ways; as educators must shatter the misconception that “calling” only happens one way. We ought to help students expand the frame work by which they understand their vocational calling and connecting them to campus resources that will support these efforts (i.e. Center for Career and Calling, General studies classes, and informational meetings).

#### **5. Expose the why, behind the why**

- Whether in conversation about vocational exploration or life in general as educators we are responsible for ensuring that the students we work with are heard—so we must listen well.
- We have to help students distinguish between a direct calling and a missional calling. We must utilize the helping skills systems techniques when advising and supporting students. For example, educators must provide approval, reassurance, challenge, support, restate the student's comments, and ask for more information in discussion.
- It is important for educators to ask students discernment questions about their vocational or academic discernment process. For example, we must ask students questions such as “(1) When did you have the greatest/lease sense of belonging to yourself, others, God, Creation? (2) When did you have the greatest/lease sense and expression of your gifts and skills, or meaning and purpose today?” (Dennis and Shelia Linn—Adapted by Carla Orlando).
- As educators we must plan and prepare for the road of helping students navigate parental/and family expectations and vocational decisions. This road can be short, but more often than not the road of helping students develop skills that will allow them to navigate vocational expectations can be long—either way it will require attentive advisors who help students think critically about “the why behind the why”. More eloquently stated, “My gift as a teacher is the ability to “dance” with my students, to teach and learn with them through dialogue and interaction.” (Palmer, 52).

# **SPU SERVE Grant Lunches**

Christina Longcor

The purpose of the SERVE grant was to explore how staff and faculty work with students to navigate through the hurdles of parental expectations in order for them to freely explore their calling and vocation.

## **Theological Reflections on Vocation and Parental Expectations**

This session was really helpful because it summarized different categories of calling. Most of our students will focus on discerning their missional calling. A good question to ask students to ponder during self-reflection is: What breaks your heart? It was also great to discuss the difference between a genuine limit and a temporary setback.

## **Parental Expectations and Cultural Considerations**

Forces in family and cultural differences were discussed during this session. For many cultures being different equals danger. The genogram is a really useful tool for helping students see who the star and who the struggler is in their family. A great question to ask students after they are finished creating their genogram is: "In my family success is....In my family money is..." This will help the student see what their family values.

## **Vocational Discernment**

The focus of this discussion was using reflective tools to help students discern their vocation. In this session, we participated in the simple examine exercise which helped us reflect on what makes us feel alive, brings us joy and sorrow, how we give and receive love. We were encouraged to practice this exercise on ourselves and with our students as it helps to point out patterns and what is meaningful in our lives.

## **Vocational Disappointment**

Emerging adulthood is a new developmental phase focused on 18-14 year olds. In this stage, the individual is forming their identity and often conflicted in their interactions with their parents. It is important to let our students know that conflict with others, especially their parents is healthy and normal in this phase of human development. All parties involved must strive to remain respectful and mature in conversations knowing that this too shall pass.

## **The 10 commandments for students talking to their parents**

- 1) Thou shall prepare by conducting research and practicing questions
- 2) Thou shall not drop a half-baked bomb and leave

- 3) Thou shall be prepared physically, emotionally and spiritually
- 4) Thou shall not be defensive, angry or blame others
- 5) Thou shall seek to be emotionally neutral and objective
- 6) Thou shall not speak in absolutes or use the God card
- 7) Thou shall demonstrate responsibility in other areas of your life
- 8) Thou shall not play your parents against each other
- 9) Thou shall ask and find the appropriate time
- 10) Thou shall not neglect the financial realities

Jim Kim

SERVE Grant

15 April 2015

### What I Learned

Before participating in the SERVE Grant sessions that examined vocation and calling in light of parental expectations, culture, and other factors, my response to a student who stated that they did not know what to do when faced with those types of issues would have been: “Go talk to the Center for Career and Calling.”

My response now would be: “Go talk to the Center for Career and Calling.” But, I now have some follow-up questions.

I may ask about if the student has given serious thought about vocation or calling. Are they aware that missional calling may not necessarily coincide with a specific employment field? Have they allowed themselves significant time in self-reflection? Have they involved others in the process? Have they tried an examen or sacred reading to quiet distractions and allow for spiritual guidance? Are they aware of how their cultural and familial background might be playing a role in their scope? Is there a fear of making the family look bad or looking bad within the family? Are they aware that, when moving from adolescence to adulthood, the transition may affect the process as well? The support, or lack thereof, from their parents or guardians could be a help or hindrance when moving through said transition and determining a career path? Or that anxiety and nervousness during this time is normal? And that trying and failing is actually a good thing?

I found the SERVE Grant sessions to be incredibly useful in adding more implications and nuances to a question that we, the academic counselor, will encounter frequently. And, while we will always defer to the Center for Career and Calling as the place where students can more fully investigate those questions, it helps to have an underpinning of understanding so that students can understand better why we will recommend consulting CCC and why they should continue on this investigative path.

SERVE Grant Lunch; Theological Reflections on Vocation and Parental Expectations  
Take-Aways/Brain Dump - Karen Altus - 5/1/15

My goal in my work at the CCC/SPU is to help guide students to find exciting careers that will impact not only their life, but the lives of those around them in meaningful ways that will bring joy to the world. I try to do this by helping students understand who they are, what choices they have, and how they can take steps towards their career and calling.

Although vocation is often thought of as synonymous with “career”, as Doug Koskela said, “one can live out their missional calling in areas of life beyond their employment, and many people do not have the opportunity to make choices about their employment.”

This is encouraging, as I sometimes find myself working with students who are pursuing a career path based on “outside forces” such as scholarships that dictate a certain major, family expectations, or income-driven ideals. These influences are even greater from students of marginalized populations, low-income, first generation, or ethnic minorities. In addition, navigating the “culture” of college is often more difficult for these students, making it even harder to succeed. They have to learn a new way of interacting with the world without their parent’s aid, and even to distance themselves from family or cultural norms in order to build relationships at college.

- Mentors must be intentional about affirming and validating a student’s background and culture while inviting students to integrate with SPU’s culture, and that of higher education.
- First generation students are less likely to develop relationships with faculty and other students, yet more likely to benefit from such connections – we must encourage it!

Ex: Recently a colleague shared that a Muslim student was struggling in UFND, and that other Muslim students have shared the same concern but they end up using a work-around and barely passing the class. The counselor encouraged the student go meet with their professor, with this result:

“First of all, thank you for giving me some of your time and for hearing me out on Monday. I did talk to my professor and she was more than understanding. She offered a much easier option for the assignments, and even said she would change that in the future if I felt is still too much work. I wished I had talked to her before. I’m really glad I talked to you.” Providing a safe space to be heard and validated had a huge impact on this student, as did encouraging her to advocate for herself (which may not have typically been culturally encouraged). The success she experienced will likely encourage her in the future, and may even inspire her peers.

- Liberal arts may be less valued than vocational preparation. Therefore, “we must advise first-generation students in ways that allow them to understand the wide range of academic, experiential, and career options, including those to which they may have had little exposure or that they may not have been encouraged to pursue- often unaware of the broad range of educational and career-building options available to them”.
- Students may feel a sense of panic that they need to know right now what they will do with their lives.
- Our Major & Career Exploration class is an excellent way to introduce the vocational options as well as tools to discern direction and encouragement to try new things.
- Some cultures don’t value self-understanding and self-acceptance, so we need to be culturally sensitive when encouraging exploration.

It was interesting to note that “Students tend to view colleges and universities”... as a whole, not with the “artificial boundaries between academic affairs and student affairs, in-class and out-of-class learning”... that faculty and staff sometimes do.

- It is important for us to work across departments and to collaborate on student education and the college experience and to develop innovative, comprehensive efforts that could add value to the student experience and provide holistic student learning.
- Students need to feel a sense of belonging on campus.
- Successful transition out of college means more than receiving a degree.

Finally, I liked this quote as a summary of what we do: “Facilitate exploration, insight, and action.”



SERVE Grant: Developing Skills to Help Students Navigate Parental Expectations and Vocation  
Perspectives and Tools Gained from Participation  
**Kimberly Petersen – March 27, 2015**

It was a great privilege to join the SERVE Grant lunch group for presentations and discussion during winter quarter, 2015. Following are highlights of my learning experience.

In the first week, Doug Koskela presented some of his work from Calling and Clarity, his recently published book. I found his distinctions between Missional Calling, Direct Calling and General Calling to be very helpful in the work I do with students and alumni. Many of the students I interact with are committed to finding a direction (college major and/or career) that aligns with God's calling in their lives. The idea that they can live into their calling in multiple ways, not only through their career, is freeing.

Susan Okamoto Lane presented excellent information on how culture influences parental expectations for students. Helping students become more conscious of the cultural influences that inform their parents' expectations, and exploring some of these expectations by using a genogram was useful. Of particular interest to me was the concept of a "hidden curriculum" that is unconsciously known by students who have parents who attended college in the U.S. Culturally diverse students, refugee and immigrant students, and first generation students are unaware of this hidden curriculum which can limit their success in college. Exploring strategies that can help these students discover the hidden curriculum was helpful.

Having an opportunity to experience two discernment tools, facilitated by Carla Orlando, was incredibly valuable both for the work I do with students and for me personally. Finding a quiet, meditative space in which guidance and wisdom can be found is powerful.

Lynnette Bikos shared research on the developmental stage of Emerging Adulthood offering insights on where our traditional-aged students are likely to be in relationship to their parents as they are navigating choices around college major and career. One point she made consistently was that conflict with parents is a normal and common experience during this time. As counselors and advisers, we are in a position to be interested and caring adults that may share some of the same messages a parent would share, without the interpersonal conflict inherent in a parent-child relationship.

Finally, we broke into smaller working groups to come up with ideas and advice for students as they are interacting with their parents around vocational choices. I participated in the group that came up with "Ten Commandments" for students planning a conversation with their parents. This exercise was both fun, and informative. I think the final product could be made into a handout for students who are struggling with how to have these conversations.

In addition to the content presented and discussions that followed, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to meet and develop relationships with a number of colleagues on campus. As a new member of the SPU community, this experience assisted me in developing awareness of resources (both people and services) to whom I can refer students in need.

# SERVE GRANT one page reference sheet

Mark Sullivan – April 15, 2015

## Meeting One: Theology of Vocation

### 3 Categories of Calling:

*Missional* – Individually discerned purpose in work, volunteer opportunities, etc.

*Direct* – Clear, direct, from God

*General* – God’s call to all people: Be good, serve God, etc.

\*In advising students, missional calling should be the focus

### How to discern missional calling:

- 1) Role of spiritual disciplines (constantly present instead of episodic) allow fundamentals to bubble to the surface. Ex. Prayer, fasting, scripture reading, giving (gratitude)
- 2) Self-reflection! Gifts, passions, needs of the world, but also realistic distinctions between genuine limits and temporary setbacks
- 3) Role of communal reflection: Diverse group, team of advisors, must evaluate advice

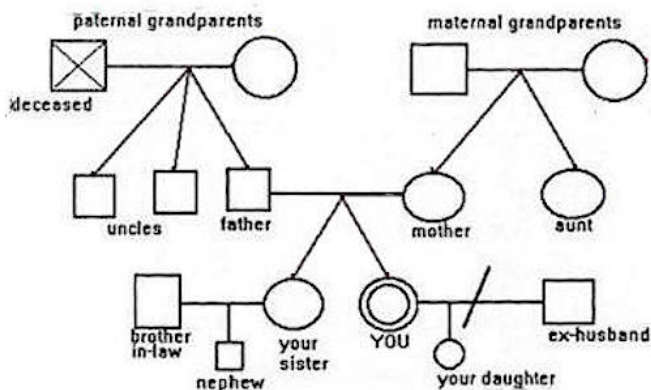
## Meeting Two: Parental Expectations and Culture

A.K.A., “Doctor or Lawyer”

### Cultural Forces:

- 1) Sacrifice for the future (parents leaving safety, family, secure jobs) adds pressure
- 2) Gratitude and obligations toward parents/extended family adds pressure and emphasizes the wishes of those individuals
- 3) Remittances (financial) or need to help support siblings/family financially provides a drain on time, focus, etc.
- 4) Over-emphasis on financial security, limited knowledge of career options push students to specific fields (“Doctor or Lawyer”)

Genogram helps build discussion around family’s view of success/money. Allows student to ID who are the stars/strugglers, uncover patters of influence and pressure that are external to themselves.



## Meeting Three: Vocational Discernment

### A simple Examen:

- 1) At the end of the day find a quiet place, prep for prayer by breathing slowly and deeply, relaxing body and letting go of all the thoughts, ideas, plans in your mind
- 2) Acknowledge you are in the presence of God, who loves you unconditionally
- 3) Bring to mind something from the day that makes you grateful, relive that experience
- 4) Bring to mind something from the day that makes you least grateful, relive and hold the experience without trying to fix it
- 5) Close with a prayer of thanksgiving

*Consolation* – movement of love or desire toward God, appreciation of gifts

*Desolation* – movement away/absence from God, feeling of emptiness

## Meeting Four: Vocational Disappointment

“Nothing is normative demographically for this group.”

### Helping Skills System:

- 1) Approval and Reassurance – Provide support and encouragement
- 2) Closed Questions – Request limited or specific information
- 3) Open Questions – Ask for clarification/explore thoughts/feelings
- 4) Restatement – Simple repeating/rephrasing of content
- 5) Reflections of Feelings – restatement while acknowledging feelings
- 6) Challenge – Point out discrepancies, contradictions, defenses
- 7) Interpretation – Goes beyond what has been overtly stated
- 8) Disclosure – Reveal something personal about helper’s experiences
- 9) Immediacy – Disclose immediate feelings about self
- 10) Information – Supply info in the form of data, facts, opinions, etc.
- 11) Direct Guidance – Suggestions, directives, instructions
- 12) Other – other unrelated statements, small talk, for comfort

## Meeting Five: Summary

“Nothing is normative demographically for this group.”

### 10 Commandments for Talking with your parents:

- 1) Thou shall research and be prepared/practice
- 2) Thou shall not drop a half-baked bomb and leave
- 3) Thou shall prepare yourself physically, mentally, and spiritually
- 4) Thou shall not get defensive or blaming
- 5) Thou shall seek to be emotionally neutral and objective
- 6) Thou shall not speak in absolutes or use “God card”
- 7) Thou shall demonstrate responsibility in other areas of life
- 8) Thou shall not play your parents against one another
- 9) Thou shall ask for and find the appropriate time to talk
- 10) Thou shall not neglect financial realities

SERVE Grant Lunch and Learn Series  
Winter Quarter 2015  
Notes & Reflection  
**Niki Amarantides**

Parker Palmer: Each time a door closes, the rest of the world opens up. All we need to do is stop pounding on the door that just closed, turn around—which puts the door behind us—and welcome the largeness of life that now lies open to our souls.

**Koskela:** What is our work at SPU: to guide students in recognizing their purpose or mission that finds expression in their career, volunteer work, and or family life. Doug raised important questions to consider: What breaks your heart? Is the obstacle being faced a genuine limit or a temporary setback: how do we distinguish the difference?

While a missional calling can inform a major selection, it need not *determine* a specific major

**Readings: Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents, Ch. 4, Doctor or Lawyer by Susan Cho Van Riesen**

Caucasian American parent: do whatever you want to do: I will always support you; whatever makes you happy vs. Asian (Jewish, Greek, immigrant..)parent: So and so is going to....How happy his parents are.

Financial security is important to parents because of their being deeply affected by their earlier experience of scarcity and difficulty.

Parents' culture emphasizes interconnectedness and filial piety not self-understanding and self-acceptance.... a culture based on Confucian philosophy vs. a culture deeply influenced by humanistic psychology.

Parents hope to see some of their own aspirations and desires come through the lives of their children. Concept of ancestors living through descendants is familiar one.

Struggling with what you want and family needs: "consider a different timeline so that you and your family can be better prepared for the future you are stepping into. You don't always have to do immediately what you sense you are being led to....pay off loans, work through family issues, then pursue calling to work internationally.

**Parental Expectations & Culture: Bowenian Family Therapy** (Family Systems): when anxiety is low, we are able to think about our situations our very existence. When it's high or we live in a state of chronic anxiety—we can't think.

Saving face: core social value in Asian cultures. Saving face signifies a desire or defines a strategy to avoid humiliation or embarrassment to maintain dignity or preserve reputation. Consider the repercussions in classrooms and tutoring based on raising questions for explanations and clarifications. Consider using the Genogram Template when a student frequently referring to family and expectations. Pose the question who is the star? What constitutes success in your family? How valued is financial success? Who is perceived as the struggler in your family?

**Carla Orlando: Finding Myself in Vocational Discernment**

My favorite session with favorite tools for myself, my class, and for all SPU students. After this session, I “got” the Falcon Formation concept. If every student could be exposed to these tools, this would be a value-added component of each student’s education: the simple examen (Orlando version):

- At the end of the day, find a quiet place and prepare yourself for prayer by breathing slowly and deeply, relaxing your body and letting go of thoughts, ideas, and plans
- Acknowledge you are in the presence of God who loves you unconditionally. With each inhale, remind yourself of this love, made from love, of love , for love
- Ask God to bring something to mind from the day that makes you most grateful. Relive this moment as much as possible, basking in the life you experienced.
- Ask God to bring something to mind from the day that makes you least grateful. Be with this experience, without changing it or fixing it. Gently hold it in the light of God’s healing forgiveness.

**Questions for my Simple Examin Prayer**

When did I feel most alive today?	When did I feel life draining out of me?
When did I give and receive love today?	When did I give and receive the least love?
When did I have the greatest sense of belonging to myself, others, God, Creation?	When did have the least sense of belonging to myself, others, God, Creation?
When did I have the greatest sense and expression of my gifts and skills or meaning and purpose today?	When did I have the least sense of my gifts and skills, or feel least meaning and purpose today?
What was today’s high point?	What was today’s low point?
When did I feel the most joy?	When did I feel the most sadness or anxiety?

## **Bikos: Emerging Adulthood:**

63 majors at SPU; 40,000 job titles.

Students are renegotiating relationships with parents as they get to practice being adults with us—  
exploration; insight; action.

We can reflect, express approval, ask open ended questions and restate what they've expressed to us.

We can also challenge, interpret, and normalize

### **HELPING SKILLS SYSTEM: WEB FORM E**

- Open Questions...I wonder how you feel, tell me more about ...last time that happened, what is an example. How does that make you feel...
- Restatement
- Reflection of feelings
- Challenge: from what you said; so do you....I wonder how...
- Interpretation...perhaps, maybe, I wonder, he seems
- Information
- Direct Guidance

Observation: While very informative and engaging, I need to reprint Vikos articles in a more readable sized font so I can fully take in the studies referred to.

Overall reflection: I much appreciated this series. I appreciated being with my colleagues (familiar and new), being cross departmental (thank you SAS for attending), and for considering the question of vocation and struggle for our students, particularly for our first gen and ethnic minority students. Each session was engaging without being a barrage of material. I appreciated the reflection sessions (when Susan was away and the last one that Susan led). I think the series could have benefited from a session on life-span development of college-age youth (presented by SCC?) to put in context the disruption of coming to college coupled with the challenges of major and career explorations, revisions, reversals. I also think some case studies and role plays could have deepened our thinking (maybe next time☺). However, this series was outstanding, and I am grateful it was developed and offered. Thank you, Susan, and SERVE funding!

Date: April 2, 2014

From: Patty Farmer

Re: SERVE Grant Workshop on Vocation & Parental Expectations: Key Learning's

Theological Reflections on Vocational & Parental Expectations by Doug Koskela.

- Helpful to know the differences between Missional, Direct and General Calling and to know that most people/students will fall under Missional and General Calling.
- Important to remind students about the General Calling that gives them guidelines for living out their daily lives in addition to the Missional Calling where they find a guiding purpose and expression through their career, volunteer work and/or family life.
- Tips on how to help students discern their Missional and Direct Calling also useful in working with students.

Finding Myself in Vocational Discernment by Carla Orlando

- The discernment exercise Carla took us through was helpful even though I'd been through it before. I recently conducted a version in my GS 3001 class when Carla was not available. It was good to experience it on the other side and it gave me insights into how I'll do it differently in my class this quarter.

Vocational and Parental Expectations by Susan Lane

Genogram Template

- Although I was familiar with this tool, I had not used it in this context for a while. The questions to ask the student: "Who is the star?" Who is the struggler? In my family, success is.....and money is..... Gave it a new perspective for me and I plan to use this in student meetings.
- Doing the Genogram for my family was also enlightening since I had not done it since I had children!

**Doctor or Lawyer?** article provided some interesting insights and helped provide me with more empathy with minority students who are experiencing parental/cultural pressure.

Vocational Disappointment by Lynette Bikos

- "Emerging Adult Career Transitions" article & research material were a great refresher since I had read the book, Emerging Adulthood by Jeffrey Jensen Arnett.
- Importance of family and interpersonal (coupling) relationships also was valuable for me to learn about and will be useful in my counseling of students on career exploration.
- Importance of young adults getting to "practice being young adults" in our office away from their parents.
- Good material on how to facilitate exploration, importance of using listening skills, open conversations, coaching students on how to have mature conversations with their parents around career issues.

Final Class:

*10 Commandments for talking with Parents*

*5 Questions Parents will ask*

*5 Actions student need to take to prepare for conversations with parents*

- These exercises were really valuable and helpful.
- In the past, I haven't really gone into this much depth and coaching students on how to interact with their parents around career issues so this was very helpful

**Susan Okamoto Lane**  
**SERVE grant lunch series takeaways**

Here are concepts/tools I've used with students from the SERVE grant lunch series:

**Doug Koskela's descriptions of the different kinds of calling:** General, Missional and Specific.

**Genograms** and how if there are specific family expectations about preferred career paths, it pops out and students can understand why they feel so pressured and why it's so emotionally loaded to feel called toward something different.

**Questions and suggestions to help students to prepare for conversations with their parents.**

Our small group playfully developed the "Ten Commandments for Talking with Your Parents", and the students I've shared these with pulled out pieces of paper and wrote them down as fast as they could. (I'm hoping they understood these aren't the same as the Ten Commandments from the book of Exodus!) Here's the list we brainstormed:

*Ten Commandments for Talking With Your Parents about Your Vocational/Major Interests*

1. Thou shalt be prepared: Do your research and practice what you are going to say.
2. Thou shalt not drop a half-baked bomb and then leave.
3. Thou shalt prepare yourself physically, emotionally and spiritually.
4. Thou shalt not get defensive, angry or blaming.
5. Thou shalt seek to be emotionally neutral and objective. Anticipate push back.
6. Thou shalt not speak in absolutes ("never", "always") or play the God card.
7. Thou shalt demonstrate responsibility in other areas of life.
8. Thou shalt not play your parents against each other.
9. Thou shalt ask for and find an appropriate time for the conversation.
10. Thou shalt attend to financial realities: graduate on time, concerns about getting a job.

I also found the list brainstormed by another group "*Five Questions Students Have to Be Prepared to Answer*" to be helpful as a prompt/prod for students to prepare for conversations with their parents:

1. What kind of jobs can you get with this major? What kinds of organizations have these kinds of jobs?
2. How will you support yourself or your family? (Salary info, opportunities, dispelling myths such as "*You don't make any money working for non-profits.*")
3. Is this what you really want to do with your life? Something you will enjoy? (Need stories of how it matches your natural skills, talents and interests; evidence of self-assessment and reflection)
4. What is your plan? (You're not planning to move home are you?)
5. Will you have to move to do this work? How will you stay connected to the family?