

## **LDRS 390: Leading Faith-Based Ministries**

### **Background**

Many Hope College students evidence a passion to make a difference—to be the difference, really—in their world. For some, this is a vague but pervasive desire, likely the product of their upbringing and/or their faith experience. Other students are consumed by a hunger to help people with a specific need or, in some cases, to actually develop a program, a ministry or even an organization to engage others in service to disadvantaged people within community, nation or world. They inspire us!

Hope College consistently encourages these students to exercise their passion for ministry but lacks a program or even a course in social entrepreneurial leadership from a Christian perspective to help them develop the skills to achieve their dreams to the glory of God.

### **A New Course**

The Center for Faithful Leadership seeks to assist Hope College in pursuit of its mission to “educate students for lives of leadership and service...in the context of the historic Christian faith” by creating opportunities for students to achieve goals associated with a liberal arts education: engaging great questions, cultivating intellectual and practical virtues, and forming character. (See Roche: *Why Choose the Liberal Arts?*) For this reason, CFL has employed Gulker to develop a new course which he believes will be an important first step in giving people the capacity to achieve—and enjoy—their call to serve others in Christ’s name.

### **Course Objective**

This course will give young people the skills to become the next generation of faith-based ministry leaders.

### **Course Content**

Academic training will be enhanced as students are engaged in various facets of faith-based ministry at local organizations. Classroom and field experience will teach students the following:

1. Students will be introduced to the important role faith-based ministries play in responding to individual, project and relational needs within our communities. Students will be learn about promising new trends, including organizational collaborations and continuum services.
2. Interaction with veteran faith-based leaders will give students a passionate understanding of the call—and their call—to ministry.
3. Innovative faith-based practitioners will teach students to conduct need and resource-based analyses of existing ministries and unmet needs.

4. Students will learn how to create new ministry ideas within agencies and churches.
5. Students will learn how to birth and manage faith-based organizations.
6. Students will develop a business model for **their** ministry idea or organization.

LDRS 390 is an independent study course. Students can enroll for 1-4 credits, but enrollment is restricted. Before enrolling, students must be given permission by the instructor.

### **Instructors**

Drawing on an extensive network of agency and church contacts developed over 30+ years, Gulker will facilitate the engagement of multiple professional in the learning experience.

Many of these students are turning to Dr. Virgil Gulker, Servant Leader in Residence at the college's Center for Faithful Leadership, for advice and training. A recognized social entrepreneur, Gulker has created several national and international church-based volunteer ministries, including LOVE INC, Love For Children, and, most recently, KIDS HOPE USA, the largest faith-based mentoring program for at-risk elementary age children in the United States and Australia.

Gulker has observed that the need for this training existed already 35 years ago when he was hired to direct the Holland-based Good Samaritan Center. "Because this training was not available, I, and all my colleagues at other faith-based organizations, had no recourse but to learn by doing. I am embarrassed to admit that the frustrated hours spent learning to minister, and learning to manage ministry, seriously compromised my ability to help the people I felt called to serve. Sadly, that same lack of training exists for people entering faith-based ministry today."