

The CrossRoads Project at Hope College: Thinking Theologically about Career, Calling, and Life

Proposal Narrative

Every fall, a new group of students — about 800 of them, along with most of their parents and many of their siblings — walk through the doors of Hope College’s Dimnent Chapel and take their seats for the college’s opening convocation. This impressive event combines the best of academic pomp and circumstance with liturgy and hymnody from a range of Christian traditions, and adds an inspirational address for good measure. And even though the new crop of students are usually sweltering from the August heat and distracted by the hundreds of new names and faces that they are trying to keep straight, they do express genuine enthusiasm about the start of this new phase of their lives. They are about to strike out on something exciting, intense, and a bit mysterious. And they are eager to make the best of it.

We have often wondered how we might bottle some of that overflowing enthusiasm and store it up for the students to take off the shelves later in their academic lives. When midterm exams have them in a panic, when friends and families continuously ask them about their intended majors (and careers and even spouses), when they’re unexpectedly cut from an athletic team, or when a professor suggests that they might want to try another subject — at such times, they could use another dose of that early enthusiasm. When their best laid plans have started to go astray, they are faced with the need to rethink and re-orient themselves. At times like these, the energy and focus that filled that first day of college can seem very far away indeed.

What is it about that first day, and particularly about that opening convocation, that makes it so energizing and inspiring? The question is worth asking, because if we could pinpoint the sources of that inspiration, we could almost “bottle” it and provide it to students throughout their careers at Hope College.

Three features of the event stand out in high relief. First, it is a *theological* event. Set in the context of the worship of the Church, it affords the college the opportunity to declare its collective faith in God and to authorize theological language as part of the academic vocabulary of the institution. Second, it is *academic* in focus. The presence of the college faculty and an address that demonstrates a clear dedication to the life of the mind provide an important orienting moment for our students: college may be about fun and friends and sports and independence, but above all, it is about thinking carefully and critically about everything under the sun. Finally, the opening convocation is *integrated*. Under one roof, it brings together faith and learning, science and the arts, faculty and students, and the whole culture of Hope — past, present, and future.

We believe that these three “marks” of our annual Opening Convocation — an integrated academic and theological event — are worth bearing in mind as we seek to sustain the focus and energy that our students experience on their first day of college. And while no one venture can accomplish that goal single-handedly, we believe that Hope’s Program for the Theological Exploration of Vocation has done a great deal to provide the kind of academic and theological integration within which our students are able to think seriously, reflectively, and with enthusiasm — about their careers, their callings, and their lives.

Our PTEV program — known here at Hope as The CrossRoads Project — has made a significant impact on the entire college culture, and particularly on our students; it has helped them to renew and replenish their energies as they wend their way through the complicated labyrinth of collegiate life. We have given them the opportunity to “think theologically,” and have employed the language of *calling* and *vocation* as a way of helping students integrate their faith, their learning, and their work. Hope College students are being challenged to understand their vocations in at least three interrelated ways: first, that they are all called to be college students; second, that they need to undertake serious and reflective vocational discernment at certain key moments in their college careers; and third, that their vocations are constantly growing and developing, thus making the process of discerning one’s calling a lifelong endeavor that can be embraced with joy.

Regardless of their majors, their extra-curricular activities, or their future endeavors, all our students share at least one calling in common: they are called, in this season of their lives, to be college students. The CrossRoads Project has helped them to see their time at college, not as a period of thankless work that is undertaken to secure future economic benefits, but as a period of life in which, regardless of their field of study, they can live (in the words of Dorothy Sayers) on the model of the “artist.” For the artist, she says, “there is no distinction between working and living” — where one’s work is one’s life, and where the whole material order, and all personality and emotions, are the actual material of human work (“Vocation in Work,” in *Callings*).

No matter how well they think they have planned their lives, our students reach a number of decision-points during their college careers: they choose courses, they declare a major, they prioritize their extracurricular activities, they develop and change in their faith commitments and their spiritual lives. These decision-points can become “teachable moments” in which students can take the opportunity for some genuine and integrated vocational discernment. The CrossRoads Project capitalizes on these teachable moments and — with the help of a generous and committed faculty — offers students a wide range of opportunities to think about their callings. Of course, some of our students experience these turning points as times of crisis and self-doubt. Here too, the Project has been able to offer a wide range of resources to students who had previously sought out help only on an *ad hoc* basis (if at all). We have helped our students understand their challenges and setbacks as opportunities for learning and growth, in which a moment of crisis can be transfigured into a moment of grace.

At the same time, we are aware that our students can sometimes become fixated on the expectation that God’s call upon their lives will be revealed in a particular event or a particular moment in time. While we would not deny that some of our students do in fact experience God’s call upon their lives in a single epiphanic moment, we also try to help them recognize that God can work through other channels as well. The professor who says, for the third time, “you know, you’re really gifted at this work” — or the sheer joy that a student feels when doing what she loves — may be as divinely ordained as that elusive voice in the night.

The CrossRoads Project has therefore worked to encourage students to think of vocational discernment as a lifelong endeavor, requiring critical thought, attentiveness, a supportive community of conversation, and occasional times set aside for intentional reflection. Rather than understanding this as one more task on our task lists, however, we should be willing to embrace

it with joy. We are, in fact, privileged to have been created in the image and likeness of God, and to have been endowed with a mind and a will that can respond freely to God's call upon our lives. It should not surprise us that the shape and texture of that call may vary at different seasons of our lives.

Our success in helping students to “think theologically about career, calling, and life” makes the CrossRoads Project a highly compelling program, worthy of being sustained and further integrated into the ongoing life of Hope College. In this proposal, we hope to illustrate this claim by, first, articulating the project's vision and demonstrating its compatibility with the college's overall mission; second, describing the significant impact of its various programs; and third, showing how a sustainability grant from the Lilly Endowment will allow its most successful programs to become institutionalized and woven into the fabric of the Hope College experience.

I. PROGRAM VISION AND COLLEGE MISSION

The central purpose of the CrossRoads Project has remained consistent with our initial vision: we seek to encourage all members of the Hope College community in the ongoing task of discerning, with wisdom and theological insight, the vocations to which God is calling them. We believe that such active discernment will better prepare our students for lives of service to God and to others, and that it will help sustain our faculty and staff in their callings.

The Project takes its inspiration from Frederick Buechner's often-quoted yet still instructive definition of vocation as the place where “your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.” We believe that all people are called to particular vocations by God — who is the source of our giftedness, the embodiment and exemplar of giving, and the one who sends us into the world to give to others in service.

This understanding of vocation is rooted in the historic Christian faith, and particularly in the Reformed tradition. In addition, Hope College has a long tradition of showing hospitality and respect to all members of our community, regardless of their religious commitments. We believe that the theological exploration of vocation can be undertaken from a variety of worldviews and perspectives. And although the word *vocation* can sometimes be understood in its narrow sense of a call to ordained ministry (and although some of our programs do have that specific focus), we understand vocation in its widest possible sense. There are many ways to live out one's callings: through service, friendship, and parenting, as well as one's work. Vocation includes career-related issues; but it also transcends those issues, shaping a person's entire life.

Over the two and one-half years of the Project's existence, these aims and purposes — as outlined in our original grant proposal — have remained fairly constant. The Project operates with a fairly broad understanding of the language of vocation, as elucidated in the foregoing paragraphs. The CrossRoads Project has undertaken a variety of initiatives that have allowed the “theological exploration of vocation” to permeate the college community — challenging faculty, staff, and students throughout each phase of each person's career at Hope. Our goal is to encourage all members of the community to get involved in the work of “thinking theologically about career, calling, and life.” Indeed, this phrase — which appears on our program's logo —

has guided our work in significant ways. It has encouraged us to move beyond narrow questions about career choice and job placement, and into an effort to get everyone at Hope College into the habit of *thinking theologically* — about every discipline, every idea, and every practice.

This approach to vocation is very much in keeping with the Reformed heritage of the college. It manifests the key Reformation insight that all people are called to particular vocations in life, and that there is a close relationship between one's profession and one's vocation. (As is often pointed out, the German word *Beruf*, which appears on official application forms and similar documents to mean "profession" or "job," derives from the word *rufen*, "to call.") We have enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to draw on the college's theological heritage as we articulate the significance of vocation for our present-day student body.

This vision that has sustained our PTEV program over its first three years is integrally related to the mission of the college, which is "to offer, with recognized excellence, academic programs in liberal arts, in the setting of a residential, undergraduate, coeducational college, and in the context of the historic Christian faith." Three elements of Hope's mission, in particular, are key to our understanding of the CrossRoads Project's vision and purpose.

"With recognized excellence": In the ancient Greek philosophical tradition, as extended by Christianity in the Middle Ages, the concept of "excellence" was best described by the language of the *virtues*. At Hope College, we have found this tradition to be a rich and fruitful one, and have employed the language of virtue in campus conversations. For example, in the midst of some debate a few years ago over certain controversial issues, the college developed a statement entitled *The Virtues of Public Discourse*. This document helps guide our conversations by asking that they be marked by humility, hospitality, patience, courage, and honesty. Less explicitly, but just as intentionally, we strive for our academic and extracurricular programs are marked by the cardinal virtues of justice, temperance, courage, and practical wisdom — and especially by the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. In this way, we have sought to allow our understanding of "excellence" to be shaped by a specific theological and philosophical content, and not to devolve into generic declarations that we are "doing a good job."

The CrossRoads Project encourages this goal of "recognized excellence" in the college's academic program by encouraging students to pursue their studies in ways that are marked by the virtues. In particular, we try to help them think about the larger impact of their vocational choices. Will they put their talents and gifts to good use in meeting the world's deepest needs? Will they find ways of integrating their faith with their careers? What measures will they use to evaluate their academic choices and their vocational direction? Can they step away from our culture's emphasis on success as measured by money and status, and focus instead on the degree to which their direction in life fulfills their true calling and manifests the virtues of justice, courage, and love? Even though many of our students would not necessarily answer all these questions with a definitive and resounding "yes," many of them would, in fact, acknowledge that they have begun to ask these kinds of questions. We believe that the CrossRoads Project has helped to foster such discussions on the Hope College campus.

"The liberal arts": The college is justifiably proud of its longstanding commitment to the liberal-arts tradition. We have a rigorous general education requirement which all our majors, including those in business and the natural sciences, are required to complete. We devote a great deal of

faculty time and energy to our students' first experience of this general education program — the First-Year Seminar — and to their final experience of it in the capstone Senior Seminar.

The CrossRoads Project has been fully committed to enhancing and strengthening the liberal-arts education offered at Hope College. We have achieved this goal by our various programs to strengthen the FYS and Senior Seminar courses — mentoring faculty through workshops, providing for better student-faculty interaction, and making vocational discernment a more significant theme in these courses. The CrossRoads Project has also supported the college's commitment to the liberal arts in other ways — sponsoring conferences, speakers, faculty discussion groups, and other important initiatives that cultivate a fuller appreciation for the many facets of liberal education.

It seems to me that the language of “vocation,” introduced to the campus under the aegis of the CrossRoads Project, could become a unifying theme for Hope's efforts on behalf of the liberal arts. That language could provide more focus to the Senior Seminar; it could also help us understand and articulate the mission of the college in a way that emphasizes how its *Christian* and *liberal arts* components reinforce each other, such that the vocation of the college serves the vocations of all its members.

– Curtis Gruenler, Associate Professor of English, at a discussion of the Liberal Arts at Hope
“The historic Christian faith”: As is the case on the campuses of many colleges with a church-related foundation, this is the part of our mission statement that generates the most lively discussion. Various members of the college's many constituencies have differing ideas on exactly what constitutes “the historic Christian faith,” as well as how (and to what degree) our commitment to this faith should impact our teaching, our research, and the overall shape of our academic program. At various times in the college's history, this lively discussion has broken out into wide-ranging debate. Nevertheless, the very fact that we can declare this commitment in our mission statement, and that we can all support it in various ways, suggests that Hope College has done a reasonably good job of steering a middle path between the more tightly-focused conception of the “Christian college” on the one hand, and the secularizing tendencies that have beset many church-related colleges on the other.

We believe that the CrossRoads Project serves this aspect of our mission very well, and in two interrelated ways. First, we have undertaken a variety of initiatives that have allowed the “theological exploration of vocation” to permeate the college community — challenging faculty, staff, and students throughout each phase of each person's career at Hope. We have found ways to encourage the entire community to get involved in the work of “thinking theologically about career, calling, and life.” We have enlisted members of the faculty who do not normally focus on theological questions to raise them in their courses where relevant. We have helped a number of departments and programs to provide opportunities for their students (internships, retreats, and workshops) that place theological and vocational questions in a prominent place on the agenda. And we have developed a variety of “Pre-Seminary” initiatives that have dramatically increased the number of Hope students who identify themselves as working toward some kind of graduate work in theology or ministry. All of these achievements were goals of our original grant proposal, and will be described in more detail in the next section of this proposal.

Secondly, however — and this result was not expected — the CrossRoads Project has provided a kind of virtual “space” for theological and vocational conversation on campus — something like the *agora* of the ancient Greeks, or a New England “commons,” though without being confined

to a particular physical location. In the “space” that the Project has opened up, people with widely varying interpretations of Hope’s commitment to “the historic Christian faith” have found a home. Because the program is not closely wedded to any one doctrinal, liturgical, or denominational tradition, a wide range of faculty have discovered that their particular angle on the mission statement can find expression and support in the Project’s offerings. Evangelicals, Roman Catholics, theological liberals, theological conservatives — all have found room under our tent for their particular expressions of the Christian faith. Many faculty have been able, for the first time, to explore the relationships between their own faith commitments and their academic disciplines; some had never before found the opportunity or resources to undertake this exploration, while others had been concerned that their particular “take” on those relationships would not be well received by certain parts of the college structure. Even though these concerns on the part of faculty members may sometimes have been unfounded, the very perception that they would meet resistance had discouraged some faculty. Because the CrossRoads Project is able to offer full-time attention to individual faculty projects, we have been able to help them outline the theological and vocational implications of their work in ways that they had not previously imagined. Some examples of this guidance will be offered in the next section of this proposal.

We have shared our vision of the program by producing high-quality publicity materials. We continue to use a brochure to introduce the basic thrust of the Project; part of its purpose is to direct interested students (and others) to our website, which we keep updated with the latest opportunities. We also publish a high-quality newsletter each semester; these describe the Project’s most successful initiatives in detail, and provide vivid images as well as commentary from those whose lives have been changed by the programs in which they have participated. The newsletter is distributed to an ever-growing mailing list (now at about 2,200) of faculty, parents, alumni, donors, and friends. (These newsletters are included as Appendix A.) We also make major presentations about the Project’s initiatives to parents (at Parents’ Weekend and at Orientation), to alumni, to the college’s Board of Trustees, and to faculty and staff. Collectively, over 1,400 people have attended such presentations. Overall, we believe that we are successfully communicating our vision and our mission focus to our various constituencies.

To summarize: the CrossRoads Project is well integrated with the Mission of Hope College, and is grounded in the institution’s religious heritage and tradition. Our vision for the program has remained consistent throughout its existence, and we expect to continue to uphold this vision into the future.

II. IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM and III. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

In the two years of its existence, the CrossRoads Project has had a tremendously positive impact on the lives of our students and on many of the faculty at Hope College. In this section, we seek to describe this impact and to provide some indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, of the Project’s success. Because we are only in Year Three of the original program, we have begun, but not yet completed, our first major assessment process; that will be concluded at the end of the current academic year. However, we have gathered most of the data that we expect to need to

make that assessment, and are therefore able to offer some initial supportive evidence of the program's impact and success.

Hope College's approach to the PTEV program has been to operate a large number of relatively small initiatives, rather than to have a single comprehensive program that affects every student. From the very outset, we believed that this approach would not only increase the number of faculty who would be willing to participate; it would be more appropriate to our student body, whose members bring to campus a wide variety of theological assumptions and vocational goals (or lack thereof!). Some students know exactly where they are headed, and only need help in thinking about the particular context in which they want to work. ("I know I want to be a teacher, and my parents want me to get a job nearby; but I feel called to work in the inner city.") Others are undecided about their careers and their majors; some of these are basking in the joy of exploring a variety of options, and we are happy to find ways to encourage their basking and to facilitate their explorations. Other students are feeling pressure and stress (from parents, friends, or themselves) to make a decision *now*; and these students, too, need a pastoral response to their anxieties and concrete resources for their decision-making. A few students are certain that they want to go into some form of lay or ordained ministry, while others think they might be experiencing a call but are resisting it, either actively or passively. And many students (and most faculty) are trying to discern the shape of their academic lives as central to their vocation.

Because of this diversity of circumstance, the CrossRoads Project offers over fifty different programs and initiatives, organized into four major categories. This proposal will provide a brief (not comprehensive) account of the programs in each of the four areas, along with some indicators of the impact that these programs are having. Then, we will return to the three major goals of the PTEV grant initiative, as articulated by the Lilly Endowment, in order to offer an account of how these goals are met by the various programs that we offer.

Area One: The Liberal Arts as Vocation

The initiatives of the CrossRoads Project in this area have the potential to affect a very large number of students. Because all of our students are engaged in the liberal arts from the first moment of their arrival on campus, and because they continue to be engaged up through their Senior Seminar experience and beyond, these programs can potentially affect almost every Hope College student. Among our most significant accomplishments:

- We have enhanced the First-Year Seminar (FYS) program by (a) offering grants to faculty members to develop new sections of FYS, or modules for use within FYS sections, with an emphasis on vocation (8 faculty have received funding and a further 6 have employed a module that was thus developed); (b) providing funding for retreats and other events that bring FYS students into conversation with their instructor — who is also their academic advisor — concerning questions of vocation and calling (12 instructors have taken advantage of this opportunity thus far); (c) offering a one-day faculty seminar each summer for FYS instructors to explore vocation from a specifically theological perspective (33 faculty members attended at least one session); and (d) sponsoring a number of one-time events for faculty to relate vocation to other

themes (such as the liberal arts, or Hope's general education program) that are central to the FYS experience. In total, over 50 different Hope faculty members have participated in one or more of these programs; about 40 of these faculty later taught at least one section of FYS. As a result, over 800 first-year students have been exposed to the theological exploration of vocation, either directly (at retreats and workshops) or through their instructors. This accounts for about 50% of the first-year students at Hope during the two Fall semesters during which the program has been active.

- We have strengthened the Senior Seminar program by (a) offering grants to faculty to develop sections of the course with a focus on vocation (7 faculty thus far); (b) offering a three-week Senior Seminar Workshop (scheduled for May 2006) focusing specifically on issues of vocation (25 faculty have signed up for this event — so many that we had to divide the group and offer two sections of the workshop). By the end of the 2006-2007 academic year, about 1,000 senior students will have taken a seminar that is taught by an instructor who has been actively and deeply engaged in CrossRoads-sponsored conversations and research concerning vocation and its theological ramifications.

- We have enhanced our first-year Orientation program by (a) working with Orientation Assistants to help them offer a vocationally-focused activity during their small-group sessions with their students; (b) introducing students to the idea of vocation at the opening plenary session; (c) offering a special session for parents of new students, introducing them to the Project's vision and to several of its initiatives; and (d) showing a film that raised relevant theological and/or vocational issues for the students. Over the past two years, nearly every Hope first-year student and over 400 parents have participated in these activities. Additional opportunities were provided for parents at Parents' Weekend events and through an online "mini-course" in which about 25 parents participated. Assessments have been done on most of these events; students frequently cite the significance of the vocation exercise with their Orientation Assistants, and the parents have been universally enthusiastic about the Project's work.

Sessions were very well received by parents who attended, particularly parents of first-year students who were interested in learning about how their sons or daughters could think about career choices in terms of what their gifts and interests are and how those gifts and interests can be used to help meet the needs of the world.

– Stephanie Greenwood, Director of Parent Relations

- In the summer of 2005, we sent a DVD to every incoming first-year student; this included a number of students talking about their decision to come to Hope, their process of vocational discernment, and the relationship between their faith and their lives. Initial assessment of this project indicates that about half the students watched the DVD; when these students were asked whether it "encouraged them to think more about their vocation or calling," about 45% answered that it did so "very

much” or “a lot” while an additional 42% said that it did so to some degree. Similar responses were returned for the question, “After viewing the DVD, did you have a clearer sense of the meaning and significance of ‘vocation’ and ‘calling’?” We still plan to do some focus group conversation about the DVD to learn more about how to improve it for the future.

- We have offered one Sophomore Retreat-Seminar. In our initial proposal, we envisioned this as a “modest but strategically-placed initiative” to bridge the gap between the FYS experience and the Senior Seminar. While we have encouraged a number of faculty to participate in this program, few have gone forward with a proposal. The one Seminar that has occurred, however, was very successful: Theatre professor Michelle Bombe took a group of students to Stratford, Canada for a week of vocational exploration of opportunities in theatre that go well beyond the usual categories of cast, crew, and director. Students met with education programmers, business managers, and other Festival staff; they did directed journaling each night and met in small and large group discussions. They were specifically encouraged to think about how their vocational choices were related to their faith commitments. We believe that this event can serve as a model for other faculty who might venture in the same direction; however, we need to develop strategies for recruiting more faculty.

The time in Stratford helped the students set goals. It wasn’t enough for them to sit around and say that they really felt called to use their talents in the theatre. They needed to be proactive and seek out the experiences that would enable them to live out their calling. For some, it gave them the courage to listen to a voice they might have been ignoring — to try an area of theatre that they hadn’t considered.

– Michelle Bombe, Associate Professor of Theatre, on the Stratford Retreat-Seminar

- We have offered a number of other opportunities — in the residence halls, at one-day and weekend retreats, and by sponsoring speakers and other programs on campus — that have generally raised the awareness on campus of issues surrounding the theological exploration of vocation. At least 300 students have participated in a retreat or a residence-hall event; hundreds more have attended speakers or panels at which vocation was a primary theme. However, neither residence-hall-based events nor retreats have been as successful as we had originally hoped. Leaders have participated in training sessions, but have not taken the opportunity to schedule events to the degree that we had expected. Retreats have been more popular when they involve a group of people with something in common (a first-year seminar class, a group of students interested in ministry, or a residence hall cluster) rather than a generic invitation for anyone to attend. We have adjusted our expectations and our offerings accordingly.

The following table compares our actual results in this first area so far with the outcomes that we set for ourselves in the original grant proposal:

Goal	Expected	Actual
students who encounter the central ideas of vocation and calling in the new admissions materials and at Orientation	100%	100%
students who explore vocation in their First-Year Seminar	50%	50%
students who engage these topics with their Resident Assistants and Resident Directors	50%	20%
students who participate in a Sophomore Retreat Seminar	50	11
students who engage in a Vocation Discernment Retreat	50/yr	100/yr
seniors engaging vocation more deeply in Senior Seminar	all	TBD

Area Two: Specialized Study as Vocation

In our initial proposal to the Lilly Endowment, we wrote that

Like their counterparts elsewhere, Hope students have less difficulty seeing their major or their pre-professional training as a “vocation.” Often, however, their understanding of this work lacks the deeper reflection that might help transform their work into a robust sense of vocation. At the same time, many students at Hope complain that they seldom or never discuss the broader implications — intellectual, moral, or spiritual — of the field in which they have chosen to specialize. This program is intended systematically to introduce students to the wider issues inherent in their own areas of specialization.

We have launched three very successful Pre-Professional Pilot Programs and have also developed a program of Alternative Placement Internships with a strong international focus. In particular:

- Our Health Professions program, under the energetic leadership of Amanda Barton of our Nursing Department, has sponsored speakers (over 100 student attendees), trips to two major conferences (75 student attendees), and informal conversations that have encouraged our students in these fields to think carefully about where and how they might deploy their gifts in response to the world’s deepest hungers. In 2005, the program offered three different health–profession-focused spring break trips — in rural Kentucky, in Nicaragua, and on the Apache Reservation in Dulce, New Mexico (34 students participated in these trips, also meeting before and after the trip for critical reflection and conversations about the theological and vocational questions that these experiences raised for them). Another 30 students have participated (or will participate later this year) in May Term practicum courses that combine on-site health professions internships with active strategies for vocational discernment (directed

journaling, mentored conversations, and discussion groups). These events combine theory and practice so as to allow and encourage our students to bring critical reflection into their practical experiences. The programs have been particularly responsive to the students' specific needs in the area of vocational discernment, because the program's director began by meeting with 160 students in small focus groups to learn what sorts of opportunities they needed and to which they would respond.

- Our Business program, facilitated by Todd Steen of the Economics Department, allows our faculty in Economics, Management, and Accounting to further develop what was already a strong interest of most of its faculty members: integrating a concern for service and the welfare of others into the teaching of courses in these disciplines and into the internships that the department offers. Almost every one of the 17 faculty members in this department has participated in a significant way: developing new courses or internships, conducting research on the significance of vocational choices, or working individually with students in the process of discerning their callings. Specific programs include a tax preparation assistance program for local low-income residents (2 students), mentor-mentee pairings with business leaders (6 students), the Institute for Student Consulting, providing management-related assistance to local minority-owned businesses (3 students), and a program of "Internships for Vocation" (6 students).

It was great to see the students tackle the diversity of their assignments — especially as they needed to establish relationships with the business partners. . . . I believe this also has the value of people who are going into business seeing how their skills might be used in community service and in God's Kingdom service. . . . At Jubilee, we see the experience as very positive and hope that it continues in the future.

– David Kool, Director of Jubilee Ministries, on the Business student interns there

- Our Education program, directed by Jeanine Dell'Olio, has two major components. First, it allows a few selected students to be rigorously prepared to work in some of the more seriously under-resourced schools in our immediate geographical area, and then places them in these schools as student teachers; second, it offers a series of panels and workshops for all students who are specializing in Education, in order to help them think about how they might put their talents and skills to work in institutions that are different — culturally, racially, economically, or geographically — than the schools to which they are more accustomed. Other panels focus on how teacher's faith commitments can play a role in their vocation, even if they teach in a public, independent, or charter school. Thus far, eight students are in various stages of the student-teaching program, and hundreds of students have attended the panel discussions

and speakers. Dr. Dell’Olio reports a significant increase in the number of students who have expressed a strong interest in working in culturally diverse or economically deprived school systems. Another program placed 5 students in a four-week May Term internship at a school for the children of Bible translators in Papua New Guinea — a program that we hope to repeat and sustain at other sites in the future.

- Our Alternative Placement Internships have placed students in a variety of overseas and domestic locations, where they put the skills that they have learned in the classroom to work in an area of particular need. Students have worked with World Vision food distribution networks in South Africa, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe (10 students thus far); with medical missions in Kenya and Guatemala (2 students); with an educational mission in Kenya (5 students this coming summer); and with a variety of governmental and non-governmental agencies in Puerto Escondido, Mexico (15 students attended the initial planning trip for this internship — 4 of whom are now in the Peace Corps! — and 10 students registered for a longer internship this summer). This spring and summer, a team of 12 engineering majors will travel to Cameroon to set up a water filtration system, in collaboration with Engineers Without Borders.

My time in Kenya filled me with dreams and goals for my future, but dreams that were more centered on the people that I actually encountered, and goals that are realistic and hopefully more integrated with real life scenarios. I think about taking my nursing education to the next level, and getting a masters in community health. I think about employment with an agency already at work in African countries. . . . Whatever the case, my time spent during my internship in Kenya took a dreamy-minded child and grew her into a thoughtful, more educated woman — a change that I believe will influence the rest of my life.

– Rebekah Stewart (‘05) on her nursing internship in Kenya

While the original grant proposal did not specify numerical goals for the Pre-Professional Program, we can say with confidence that all three have met our expectations, that two have exceeded them, and that one has far exceeded them. We set a goal of 4 students per year in Alternative Placement Internships; we are averaging nearly 20 students per year in such internships. This chart does not include the hundreds of students who have attended speakers, panels, shorter conferences, and the like; it focuses only on long-term participation.

Student participants in one-week (or longer) pre-professional vocation programs in:	Expected	Actual
Health Professions	N/A	64
Business	N/A	29
Education	N/A	11
Alternative Placement Internships	4/year	20/year

Area Three: Theological Education as Vocation

Because of Hope College's Reformed heritage, the large number of our students who come from active church congregations, and the presence of a major theological seminary adjacent to the campus, we are well-situated to produce significant numbers of lay and ordained ministers for the future leadership of the Church. Somewhat surprisingly, however, there has never been an office or program at the college that has taken primary responsibility for maintaining contact with such students and supporting them on their vocational path. Although the Office of Career Services, the Department of Religion, and the Campus Ministry program have all sought to do what they can, their efforts were often diffused by the lack of a single official clearinghouse for resources and support.

The CrossRoads Project has worked hard to remedy this situation, and has instituted a number of programs to support the increasing number of our students who are headed to seminary or toward some form of church leadership as their life's work. In particular, we have accomplished the following goals from our original grant proposal:

- We have launched a Pre-Seminary Society for the support and pastoral care of students who are either committed to attending seminary upon graduation from Hope, or who are seriously discerning such a call. At the initial informational session for the group, an astounding 75 students showed up; follow-up sessions have provided speakers, hospitality, readings, and conversation. Leadership is provided by Rev. Trygve Johnson, Dean of the Chapel, and the Project's Associate Director. Many of the students indicate that they had previously felt rather alone in their discernment of this calling; they have felt greatly supported by the sheer awareness of just how many Hope students are potentially on this track. We have also sponsored a spring-break vocational discernment trip for students considering urban ministry (7 participants), as well as two ministry retreats (jointly with Calvin and Alma colleges' PTEV programs; 20 Hope students total). At this year's retreat, 27 students responded to a concluding survey; to the statement "I learned more about sorting through my vocational options," 18 respondents said this was "true" or "very true"; another 8 indicated it was "somewhat true."
- We have enhanced our Seminary Day program, in which seminaries from across the country are invited to the college to set up a booth and tout their wares. Although this program already existed at Hope, it had a fairly low profile; moreover, it only occurred every other year, thereby missing a number of students who had discerned a call to ministry in their senior year. We have also enhanced the program by adding new workshop opportunities and broadening the advertising of the event. During the two years in which this program has been active, an average of 20 seminaries have exhibited here, and over 100 Hope students have officially registered to participate, and many more have wandered through the exhibition area. Students from other area schools, including Calvin and Alma Colleges, were invited (and provided with transportation vouchers); about 30 non-Hope students have attended these events as well.
- We have initiated a Seminary Visitation program, in which students who are in the process of applying to a seminary (typically in their senior year) can receive partial

funding of their travel to visit the campus. Thus far, we have funded about 20 students for these trips, most of whom have gone on to enroll in a seminary. (It was also anticipated that we would sponsor vanloads of students to visit nearby seminaries in, e.g., Chicago; this opportunity has proven less popular, as students tend to drive to such locations on their own.)

- We have initiated the Lilly Scholars program, in which students who have made a commitment to attend seminary receive a significant Hope College scholarship (which reverts to a loan if they decide not to attend seminary). We had planned to offer only five scholarships each year, but the response to the program has been overwhelming: 15 students applied the first year and 25 in the second year of the program. Each year we were able to select 10 excellent candidates — mostly seniors, but with a few exceptional juniors to provide some year-to-year continuity for the group. The original plan was for the students to meet monthly for theological conversation and discussion about how to prepare for seminary; but the students have so enjoyed the meetings that they decided to meet even more frequently — once every two to three weeks. The program is very ably coordinated by the Rev. Dr. Lynn Japinga of the Religion Department.

“Discussion topics were relevant and thorough. I truly feel better prepared for seminary and ministry; this was an excellent bridge for my senior year.”

“I really enjoyed the stimulating intellectual discussions. Through Dr. Japinga’s excellent choices of readings, I got a better idea of the breadth and variety in the Church.”

“A great opportunity for discussion of pertinent and intellectual theological issues — a unique opportunity at Hope.”

“An overwhelmingly positive experience.”

— Comments from Lilly Scholars reviewing the first year of the program

- This year, we also initiated the CrossRoads Scholars program, designed to support entering Hope students with an interest in multicultural ministry. These students are not asked to make a definitive commitment to attend seminary, but they are chosen on the basis of their church involvement and their potential for future theological leadership in a multicultural context. Again, we had hoped to select one or two scholars each year; but the response has been very strong; we had 14 applicants. Our Office of Financial Aid helped us maximize the significance of each scholarship dollar we awarded, enabling us to offer scholarships to seven students in the first year of the program, five of whom actually enrolled at Hope (though one has since left the college).

The application process for the second year of CrossRoads Scholars is currently underway; we have received 15 applications this year.

- We have designed an Action/Reflection Curriculum to support the college's already highly successful Alternative Spring Break program. Students have signed up in droves for these one-week mission trips to various foreign and domestic locations; however, in the past, the theological significance and vocational implications of these trips were not always clear to the students. With the design of curricular materials by Dr. Steven Hoogerwerf of the Department of Religion, and with the cooperation of the Campus Ministries staff, we have been able to offer a series of training sessions and follow-up events. These sessions provide the trip leaders with the necessary resources to help students understand that their spring break trip is not only an intense emotional and spiritual experience, but also a theologically significant moment in their lives with implications for vocational discernment.
- We have designed a "Ministry Studies" Minor (described in the original grant proposal as a "Certificate of Ministry"). This program, which is still in the final stages of approval at various levels within the college structure, is designed for students who do not expect to attend seminary, but who hope to be involved in some form of ministry in a church or parachurch organization upon graduation from Hope College. It has several tracks (for Youth Ministry, Music and Worship Leadership, and Mission and Social Witness), which include various required and elective courses in Religion, Sociology, Psychology, Communication, and Music (depending on the track chosen). Students in all tracks will participate in a gateway course, a capstone course, and an internship. While this program is just beginning, we believe that it has the potential to provide important guidance and direction for the significant number of our students (perhaps 20 per graduating class) who hope to enter into some form of church leadership directly after college.

(Two additional programs — one for Church Vocation Internships and one for a Parish Nursing program — have not yet come to fruition. This is due to some internal realities of the departments and programs which had been expected to be involved; we continue to work to overcome these difficulties and to develop these programs. More details are available in our annual reports.)

All in all, we believe we may now be sending up to 20 students per graduating class to seminary, and another 20 into other church leadership positions. (We do our best to track their whereabouts, but we probably miss a few.) While we have little data from before the time of the CrossRoads Project that would enable us to make a direct comparison, it seems very clear (from data gleaned from Career Services and various faculty who mentored students) that the numbers may well be double what they were in previous years. In any case, we know that there is a "buzz" on campus about seminary that simply was not previously present. Students feel more supported in their vocational discernment — spiritually, academically, financially, and theologically.

The following table again compares our actual results so far, in Area Three, with the outcomes that we set for ourselves in the original grant proposal. As will be clear from the numbers, we have far exceeded our own expectations in this area:

Goal	Expected	Actual
students participating in the Pre-Seminary Society	20	75
students participating in Seminary Day	25/yr	45/yr
students who will fly to visit seminaries	10/yr	10/yr
students who will participate in church internships	15	TBD
students in the Lilly Scholars program	5/yr	10/yr
students who will become CrossRoads scholars	2/yr	5/yr
students participating in the Certificate of Ministry program	15	TBD
students on mission trips with an action-reflection curriculum	300	400
students participating in a new parish-nursing program	5	TBD

Area Four: Academic Life as Vocation

In our original proposal to the Lilly Endowment, we wrote that

The programs described so far are all strongly student-centered. We recognize, however, that these programs are unlikely to succeed unless faculty and staff are themselves deeply committed to the ethical and theological exploration of vocation. The three initiatives which constitute this program are designed to encourage precisely these commitments.

Clearly, the other areas of the Project also provide opportunities for faculty to develop new courses, initiate internship programs, and mentor students. However, we have also been committed to providing for faculty development that does not necessarily have a direct and immediate outcome for a group of students. In this area, we have fulfilled all the plans of the grant:

- We have developed a week-long Faculty Summer Seminar, facilitated by the Program Director and a faculty member from outside the institution, on a topic that brings theological issues into conversation with another academic discipline. Questions of vocation are high on the agenda for these seminars, but our primary goal has been to help faculty think about the specifically theological questions that may lie just under the surface of other academic disciplines. Last summer’s seminar was entitled “The Call of Two Cities: The Vocation of ‘Citizenship’ in Church and World,” focusing on theology and political theory, co-led by Dr. Jeanne Heffernan of Villanova University. It had eleven participants and was very highly evaluated by the attending faculty. This summer’s offering, still in the planning stages, will be “Performing Our Callings:

Thinking Theologically about Drama, Voice, and Vocation.” The co-leader is Dr. Diane Timmerman of Butler University.

- We have offered Faculty-Student Research grants, enabling a twofold exploration of vocation: “research on vocation” — taking up a particular area of vocational discernment or a relevant figure as the subject of the research — and “research as vocation,” focusing on the research process as a calling in and of itself. Most applicants for these grants have in fact shaped them to accomplish both of these goals at once. In the two years in which this program has been active, we have awarded four such grants, on topics ranging from the writings of Dorothy Sayers to child welfare in Romania.

I have learned so much, not only about Dorothy Sayers, but about myself. . . . After an entire summer of reflection, I have been truly able to discern where my passions lie. I made the recent decision to change from the pre-med tack (which I was nearly done with) to becoming an English and French double major. Perhaps my life plan is less concrete, but my understanding of myself and my talents is so much surer. I might not know exactly what I want to be, but I know who I am and who I am becoming.

– Brianne Carpenter ('08), on her Faculty-Student Research experience

- We have offered “Mini-Grants” to faculty who have a special project in mind that does not fit any of our ordinary categories. Two faculty have taken up this offer; Dr. Carol Simon hosted a series of events to facilitate conversation around the book *Can Hope Endure?*, which explores Hope College’s “middle way” among church-related institutions. Dr. Curtis Gruenler (English) has begun a program entitled “Midrashes on the Mission of Hope,” encouraging faculty, staff, and students to write brief reflections on Hope’s mission statement and what it means to them to be at a college that raises theological and vocational questions in such a direct and thoroughgoing way.

The following table summarizes our expectations and achievements in this area:

Goal	Expected	Actual
faculty participating in a summer seminar	10/yr	11/yr
faculty-student grants for research as/on vocation	2/yr	2/yr
Faculty/staff receiving mini-grants for vocation initiatives	2-3/yr	2 total

The Four Project Areas and the Three Goals of the PTEV Grants

We conclude this section of our proposal with a description of how these various initiatives have addressed the three primary goals of the original PTEV grant initiative:

Helping students examine the relationship between faith and vocation. Almost all of our initiatives are designed to contribute to this goal. This is true regardless of whether programs are intended primarily for students (retreats, workshops, speakers, and conferences) or for faculty who will then bring their expertise and their perspectives to the students (course development and internship grants, faculty seminars and workshops, mentoring projects). We always ask faculty to describe the specific ramifications of their projects for the theological exploration of vocation, and we find that they are usually able to do so in relatively sophisticated ways. We have gathered assessment data (both qualitative and quantitative) from faculty and students that has given us a fair degree of confidence that this goal is being achieved. A sampling of this data is attached as Appendix B.

Providing opportunities for exploring vocations in Christian ministry. The entire focus of Area Three of the Project's initiatives is directed toward this end. We are excited by the number of students who have "come out of the woodwork" to express their interest in lay or ordained church leadership, and we believe that the number of students who go into this field as their life's work will continue to grow as these programs gather momentum and become institutionalized in the college's organizational structure and its budgets.

Enhancing the capacity of faculty to mentor students in these areas. Hope College was particularly fertile soil upon which the seed of the PTEV grant could fall. Our faculty members tend to be strongly interested in the faith dimension of their work; often, they lack only the time and the financial resources to bring these two sets of questions into conversation with one another. In other cases, they need some structured events and concrete suggestions in order to understand the degree to which, already, their own disciplinary interests are closely aligned with their faith commitments. By encouraging faculty to pursue their own deepest joys, and to match them with the deepest hungers of our students, we have provided some important vocational discernment opportunities for the faculty members themselves. They in turn have brought their new-found or renewed interests into the classroom, into mentoring relationships, and into the development of internships and other extra-curricular programs. This faculty initiative has, in turn, been reinforced by the extended summer seminars and full-day workshops that introduce faculty to more complex themes in theology and vocation.

All of this analysis leads us to the conclusion that the CrossRoads Project has been, in the words of one our Deans, "a big, bold, raging success"! We enthusiastically welcome the Endowment's offer to help us sustain this success over the next several years, so that its most successful programs can become fully institutionalized in the life of the college. We are grateful that more and more of our students are asking how they are being called by God to match their particular talents and joys to the world's greatest needs. In particular, CrossRoads Project initiatives have encouraged students:

- to integrate theological thinking and vocational discernment into their own plans for life-long learning;
- to think about vocation as a lifelong journey of exploration and discovery, and not only as a lightning-bolt moment of clarity;
- to consider more intentionally the possibility that God is calling them to some form of lay or ordained ministry in the Church;
- to consider careers that will put their newly-developed skills in the service of those most in need, both in the U.S. and abroad;
- to re-examine their own goals and expectations within their chosen careers, such that issues of compassion, service, and contributions to the wider community are chief among their considerations; and
- to explore the possibility of graduate school and other professional preparation that will eventually produce the next generation of teacher-scholars at Hope College and similar institutions across the country.

We believe that work of this caliber is worthy of the Endowment's support — particularly given our institutional commitment to match its funding over the three years of the sustainability grant, and to continue the program's initiatives into the future.

IV. CONTINUATION OF THE CROSSROADS PROJECT

Given the success of almost all the Project's initiatives, we believe that a good case can be made for sustaining almost all of its programs. We believe that, with the awarding of a Sustainability Grant from the Endowment, we will have all the budgetary resources necessary to do so. In fact, we expect the funding of the original \$2,000,000 grant to last for nearly six calendar years (rather than the intended five); therefore, the additional \$500,000 from the Endowment — matched by the same amount of college funding — will sustain the same level of spending for another three years. At the same time, we do expect some programs to require somewhat less funding in the future, and others to require somewhat more. While the attached Budget Narrative will describe these changes in detail, we here offer a brief analysis of these adjustments, again categorized in the grant's four areas.

Area One: The Liberal Arts as Vocation

- We suspect that the level of interest in First-Year Seminar course development grants and workshops will decline over time, as all those faculty who were interested in these issues will have received grants and attended workshops. On the other hand, we are always recruiting new faculty into the program, and as more and more faculty come to recognize the importance of the theological exploration of vocation in the college's General Education courses, we may see additional interest. We would like to continue to offer funding for an occasional course development grant (perhaps one per year). We would also like to continue (and perhaps add additional funding for) our program of FYS retreats to explore vocational questions.

- In the Senior Seminar program, the teaching faculty is a more consistent group with less turnover from year to year; we therefore anticipate that most faculty teaching regularly in the program will have had significant exposure to theological and vocational reflection by the time the initial grant period ends. We anticipate offering one course development grant perhaps every other year, in order to accommodate new faculty who have an interest in the topic. The Senior Seminar workshop will continue to be held every two to three years; however, it will be funded by the college's endowment that is designated for this purpose. It will not always be wholly dedicated to the theological exploration of vocation (as it is this year); however, that topic will now become a regular feature of the workshop's agenda.
- We expect the improvements in the Orientation program and the training for Residence Life staff to become fully institutionalized within the college's Student Development division, such that very little CrossRoads funding will be needed to sustain these programs in the future.

Area Two: Specialized Study as Vocation

- Our Health Professions program will be sustained in its fullness, but will require less funding during the sustainability period. Most of the programs are now underway and need less administrative oversight (which accounted for the lion's share of the initial costs). We will continue to provide work-study funds for student workers who can help the director with conference registration and planning, workshop planning, and similar events.
- Our Business program will also be sustained, again with considerably less administrative overhead. Because this pre-professional program is contained within a single academic department and is supported and participated in by practically every member of that department, the institutionalization of these programs is already well underway. We expect some continued costs for field supervisors in internships, mentor stipends, and similar recurring costs.
- Our Education program is another highly cost-effective program which is already becoming institutionalized within the college's structures. Faculty stipends, which were needed to get the pilot program off the ground, will now be absorbed into the regular teaching plans of the department. We will continue to fund the panels and workshops during the sustainability period, with the expectation that this work will gradually be taken over by the department's internal budget.
- The three aforementioned programs were designed as pilot programs, in the hope that some other Hope College academic departments and programs might consider launching similar initiatives. While we do not expect to fund such work at the same level as was needed by the initial pilot programs, we hope to launch at least two

new programs: one, already in its initial pilot stages, will help English majors consider vocational options in addition to an M.F.A. or teaching; the other is directed at Communication majors, who often have a great many career choices open to them and who may need more help in the vocational discernment process.

- We hope to continue and perhaps even to expand our very successful program of Alternative Placement Internships. Because many of the sites are located rather far away from Holland, Michigan, these programs tend to have high initial setup costs. However, once the programs are in place, we need only fund some small bursaries to encourage students to go; and, as word of mouth spreads, students become more and more willing to pay for these trips on their own. We will focus most of our energies on helping students pay for summer internships, since academic-year internships can be absorbed into the cost of tuition and are eligible for financial aid from the college.

Area Three: Theological Education as Vocation

- We expect to continue and to expand the Pre-Seminary Society, along with its programs of support group meetings, vocational discernment retreats, and similar activities. Over time, we are working to institutionalize these programs in the office of Campus Ministries, where our new Dean of the Chapel has taken a particularly strong interest in mentoring students in this area. (He has just begun an offshoot group to help students think about preaching; he calls it the “Dead Preachers Society.”)
- We hope to continue to support the Seminary Day program and the Seminary Visitation program. These two programs, though actually not very expensive, are instrumental in increasing the number of students who graduate from Hope with the intention of attending seminary.
- We very much want to continue the Lilly Scholars and CrossRoads Scholars programs. Again, we believe that these are very significant recruiting tools for students who will eventually enter the leadership corps of the Church. They are, however, expensive programs; the college is already contributing to them from its financial aid budget (as part of our cost-sharing from the original grant application). This is an area in which we hope to do considerable fund-raising, perhaps endowing these programs so that they can provide significant levels of financial aid for students in the future.
- The Action/Reflection Curriculum for our Alternative Spring Break program is now operational and will take only modest levels of funding to sustain it over the next several years. Plans are already underway to institutionalize this program in the office of Campus Ministries.
- The “Ministry Studies” Minor will require additional funding during the sustainability period. Our original grant had considerable funding set aside for the faculty released-time needed to develop and implement this program, but in the end,

most of the work was done by the Project's Associate Director and by an outside consultant. As a result, we have considerable "leftover" funds from the original grant. However, as the program gets up and running, we will need to provide funding for the teaching of the gateway and capstone courses, as well as funding a part-time director of the program. We believe that some of this work could be grafted on to the present job description of the Project's Director and/or Associate Director.

Area Four: Academic Life as Vocation

- We hope to continue the week-long Faculty Summer Seminar, as long as faculty interest is sustained and funding is available. Faculty are greatly rejuvenated by the opportunity to "go back to graduate school" for a week in the summer, and the goals of the Project and the mission of the college are fulfilled by the faculty's willingness to engage in sustained theological conversation.
- We expect to continue the Faculty-Student Research grants, as long as there is continued faculty and student interest in vocation — both as an object of study and as a subject for meta-reflection on the enterprise of research itself.
- We hope to continue to offer "Mini-Grants" for projects that do not fit the other categories. Thus far, however, experience suggests that our plentiful array of offerings results in few faculty finding it necessary to resort to this category in order to carry out their projects. Nevertheless, it has been useful to have a sum of money set aside that can be moved to other areas when those projects turn out to be spectacularly more popular and successful than we had supposed would be the case.

Evaluation, Key Personnel, and Theological Focus

We have continued to call upon our Frost Center for Social Science Research to design and carry out surveys on student attitudes toward issues of calling and vocation here at Hope College. During this third year of the program, we are undertaking a more thorough process of evaluation and assessment, including — toward the end of this academic year — some work with some external evaluators. We have been gathering data on our individual programs as they occur, and we have collated this data in preparation for this sustainability grant application. Again, some samples of this data are included in Appendix B.

In addition, we continue to do a great deal of less formal evaluation and assessment. Part of this involves analyzing the degree of participation in various initiatives, and making adjustments to improve participation where necessary. We try to gather specific written feedback from participants in all our programs, and also to carry out informal conversations with them. Feedback from our faculty continues to be one of the most important aspects of helping us to assess what is (and isn't) working for our students.

The Project will continue to be directed by David S. Cunningham. He carries out most of the planning, coordination, and budget oversight for the project, in collaboration with Dr. Kristen

Deede Johnson, the Project's Associate Director. Their work will change slightly over the next few years as day-to-day administrative oversight becomes less important and their attention shifts to other goals (particularly fundraising and the institutionalization of CrossRoads initiatives into other college units). The program's highly capable Administrative Assistant is Shelly Arnold, who keeps track of all the paperwork (including budget numbers) and provides a friendly greeting to visitors to our office. The Project's Advisory Committee, which will continue into the sustainability grant period, consists of five members of the original grant-writing committee and two additional members added when the Project began. Together, the committee represents all academic divisions and a variety of constituencies within the college. A number of other personnel have been important in developing several of the program's initiatives, as noted in the individual descriptions in the preceding section of this proposal.

As we have noted in our annual reports, the faculty of Hope College are, in some sense, our most important personnel. They develop new First-Year Seminars, Senior Seminars, and Alternative Placement Internships; they coordinate or participate in pre-professional or pre-ministry programs; and they cultivate brilliant new ideas that we had never imagined. While the total number of faculty who have been involved with the CrossRoads Project remains constant at about 50% of our roughly 220 faculty members, the level of engagement of these individuals has continued to increase; they have become more significantly involved in work, and many of them provide leadership for more than one initiative.

Maintaining the theological focus of the program has been relatively easy, for three reasons. First, as noted above, a large percentage of the Hope College faculty are theologically interested laypeople who take their own faith commitments seriously and who care about the relationship between those commitments and their own academic disciplines. Second, the culture of the college as a whole is such that theological issues are frequently on the table; they are often the topic of faculty and student conversations (including in the classroom setting). Finally, because both the Program Director and Associate Director are theologians by vocation, they remain highly attentive to this aspect of the program's charter and vision, and can interpret it to other faculty members and help them to apply it to their particular projects.

Long-Term Institutionalization of CrossRoads Initiatives

As noted above in the individual listing of our programs, we are already finding ways to integrate our programs more fully into the ongoing life of the college. We work closely with a number of academic departments and programs, with Campus Ministries, and with the Offices of Career Services, International Education, and Multicultural Life. Many of these units will eventually take over more leadership of some of the CrossRoads Project's initiatives, thereby given these programs a long-term institutional home. This process will occur gradually, throughout the period of the sustainability grant. At the end of that period (approximately the 2011-2012 academic year), a decision will be made as to whether to continue CrossRoads as a separate entity, or to merge its remaining activities into other departments and programs. In either case, the college remains fully committed to sustaining the theological exploration of vocation on campus — among students, faculty, and other constituencies of the college.

We are blessed to have faced very few obstacles and challenges in the implementation of this program at Hope College. We do not expect any further obstacles to arise over the period of the sustainability grant, other than the usual financial challenges faced by private education in general (and by schools that are affected by the state of the Michigan economy in particular!). We will certainly sustain the goals of the Project into the future; only one question will remain. Namely, will financial circumstances require us to maintain the program at a minimal level of funding, or will we be able to raise an endowment which can maintain these programs at an even stronger level into the future? Our fundraising efforts over the next five years will determine the outcome of this question.

V. LONG-TERM PLANS

We believe that, over the long term, most of the initiatives of the CrossRoads Project can be sustained — whether in a dedicated program or as they are integrated into other divisions of the institution. In many cases, the marginal costs of this continuation will be very small. Many of the projects were designed with these sustainability issues in mind: for example, many of the Alternative Placement Internship programs had significant startup costs, but will be relatively inexpensive to sustain over the long haul, so long as faculty continue to be willing to support them and students are willing to choose them (and pay for them). In other cases, we only need to integrate small amounts of money for hospitality and minor travel expenses into the budgets of the relevant sponsoring programs.

As this process of institutionalization is finalized in the year 2012, one of the most important cost savings will be in personnel. We do not anticipate the need for both a full-time Director and a part-time Associate Director beyond the period of the sustainability grant. By that time, programs will be in place; intensive fund-raising will be complete; and many of the Project's initiatives will be absorbed into other parts of the college's structure. Administration of the project might require a half-time position; the current administrative personnel might work elsewhere in the institution or be absorbed into the regular teaching faculty.

While these changes will represent substantial reductions in institutional costs at the end of the sustainability grant, we do still anticipate certain ongoing costs for scholarships, retreats, and the renewal and revitalization of ongoing programs (and occasional development of new ones) — as well as ongoing faculty development on the theological exploration of vocation (particularly for new faculty). We have therefore dedicated some of the budget for the sustainability grant toward travel and other fundraising expenses, in the expectation that we will be working closely with the college Advancement Office to raise additional funding to sustain the Project's most significant ongoing programs.

Because the CrossRoads Project initiatives are so clearly and effectively focused on the college's mission, we believe that many of our friends and donors will be eager to underwrite the program for the future. Initial conversations with the Advancement Office have indicated that the CrossRoads initiatives are among those that our Regional Advancement Directors can consistently highlight as being among the "great new things" that Hope College is doing. Moreover, the Admissions Office and the Office of Parent Relations have discovered that the

CrossRoads Project is extremely appealing to parents — both among those with students who are already here, and among those who are considering sending their children to Hope College. Their goodwill and their advocacy will also be a key factor in our fundraising efforts.

These observations lead us to believe that a coordinated strategy of fundraising will yield a significant range of gifts to the college — including many new gifts from new donors. This approach, along with the strategies of cost reduction outlined above, will keep most of our ongoing programs active well into the foreseeable future.

In order to assess our progress toward this goal, the Program Director will meet quarterly with the college's Vice President for Advancement, Scott Wolterink (or his designee), in order to monitor our fundraising progress and to consider new strategies when necessary.

VI. SUSTAINABILITY GRANT RESOURCES OVERVIEW

The budget and budget narrative that are attached to this proposal provide a detailed description of our grant request and the college's matching contribution. The total amount requested is \$500,000, which we expect to sustain the program as herein described over the three years following the end of the original grant period, and on into the foreseeable future.

We recognize that the Endowment would like to see the member institutions continue these programs in some form beyond the scope of the three-year extension. This is very much our expectation as well, as we have sought to outline in these pages. Our expectation, at this point, is that Hope College will continue the initiatives of the CrossRoads Project well beyond the end of the sustainability grant period.

* * *

At the end of their senior year, another group of students — again, about 800 of them, along with most of their parents and many of their siblings — walk through the doors of Hope College's Dimnent Chapel and take their seats for the college's Baccalaureate ceremony. Like the opening convocation, this event combines academic pomp and circumstance with Christian liturgy and hymnody, plus an inspirational address. The students are distracted by the excitement that lies ahead, and by the chaotic good fun of the town's Tulip Time festival; but once again, they usually express genuine enthusiasm about the start of this new phase of their lives. As was the case when they arrived at Hope College, they are about to strike out on something exciting, intense, and a bit mysterious. And they are eager to make the best of it.

As we think about the nearly four years that have transpired between the Opening Convocation and the closing Baccalaureate, the questions that we ask must ourselves — not only in the CrossRoads Project’s offices, but across the Hope College campus as a whole — are these: How much opportunity have we given these students to undertake true and deep vocational discernment? Have we encouraged them to think about the relationships among faith, calling, career, and life? Have the excitement and the intensity of these opening and closing ceremonies been sustained throughout the students’ lives at Hope? Have the three “marks” of those ceremonies — that they are *integrated*, *academic*, and *theological* — become marks of the students’ Hope College experience as a whole? We believe that, over the past two and one-half years, we find ourselves more and more able to answer “yes” to these questions. We also believe that the CrossRoads Project — in cooperation with the entire college community — has helped to create the conditions that make such affirmative answers possible. We are eager to sustain the program, and are grateful to the Lilly Endowment for the opportunity to do so.