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VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT AND ACTION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF MALE

AND FEMALE UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS[*]

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ABSTRACT

The current study examined 158 university faculty members' discernment and living out of vocation using both quantitative and qualitative data assessing concepts of vocation definition, personal experiences of discerning vocation, personal bridges and barriers experienced while pursuing one's vocation, and differences in living out one's vocation that are experienced by men versus women. The implications of this research are discussed in terms of enhancing faculty members' abilities to integrate their faith and vocation with their ongoing work as teachers, writers, and academic leaders.

VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT AND ACTION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF MALE AND FEMALE UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

Until recently, higher education has been characterized by a separation between academic and religious pursuits. Professors in secular institutions, for example, are often discouraged from attending to matters of faith and spirituality in their classrooms and in their conversations with students (Astin & Astin, 1999). In addition, the topics of faith and spirituality have largely been ignored by professionals within the field of student affairs and have been absent from theories attempting to explain how student development unfolds (Love & Talbot, 1999). There are a variety of reasons for these trends, including a growing commitment to scientific or research-based approaches to knowledge (Marsden, 1992; Yankelovich, 2005).

Attention to the connection between the area of faith and spiritual development and the area of academic and career development, however, is emerging for both students and faculty members. College students themselves appear to be the origin of this connection as they are increasingly interested in matters of religion, faith, and spirituality as it relates to their life purpose and sense of personal wholeness. For example, studies on beliefs and values among college students (Higher Education Research Institute, 2005), research projects focusing on youth and religion (Smith & Denton, 2005), and the surge in enrollments in religiously affiliated colleges and universities (Riley, 2004) evidence a movement toward a greater focus on faith, spirituality, and religion in the academy. The role of faith and spiritual development is not only an important part of the mission of higher education to address the whole person (Stamm, 2004), but recent surveys also suggest that the majority of college students have a strong interest in religious and spiritual matters (Young, 2003).

One particularly important aspect of faith and spiritual development in the context of higher education is its connection to the process of developing a sense of meaning and purpose in life, a process commonly referred to as vocational development. Although vocation is a complex concept that is difficult to define, the secular perspective generally defines vocation as one's work, career, or occupation. In contrast, Christians generally view vocation in a spiritual context, as a calling from God. Discussions about vocational calling often distinguish between various types such as professional service (e.g., work/career), leadership within the church, and a more general calling to the religious life (Hardy, 1990; Meilaender, 2000; Palmer, 2000). A distinction has also been made between *secret* vocation and *corporate* vocation (Calvin, 2000). Secret vocation refers to one's calling as related to one's personal life (e.g., friendship, marriage, etc.) while corporate vocation refers to one's calling as related to a career of service. Common to all forms of vocational calling is the charge to love and serve others with the gifts that God has given (Buechner, 1993; Farnham, Gill, McLean, & Ward, 1991; Hardy, 1990; Raines & Day-Lower, 1986).

Paloutzian, Richardson, & Rambo (1999) suggest that religion is the only area in which one encounters commitment to an ultimate concern or purpose and as a result, might inspire the development of life purpose or a sense of vocation. There have been numerous studies that have researched the relationship between faith and life purpose, and findings indicate a positive relationship between life purpose and various aspects of faith, such as mysticism (Byrd, Lear, & Schwenka, 2000), spiritual experiences (Kass, Friedman, Leserman, Zuttermeister, & Benson, 1991), religious conversion (Paloutzian et al., 1999), and spiritual strivings (Emmons, 2005). For the purpose of the current study, we draw from the conceptual literature on vocation and life purpose and define vocational calling somewhat broadly, as one's *sacred lifework,* which

includes any human activity that gives meaning, purpose, and direction to life. In discerning one's vocational calling, then, the question is this: "What am I supposed to do with my life?" or "What am I living for?" Such questions about life meaning and purpose often surface during the college years as students consider issues associated with personal identity, faith beliefs, and career options. Many authors have argued that higher education can, and should, play a central role in helping students to discover and pursue their vocational callings (Crosby, 2004; Dalton, 2001).

University faculty members are also finding connections between the area of faith and spiritual development and the area of academic and career development. Faculty are finding these connections, in part, because of their increased understanding of their role as mentors to students, leading them to subsequently reflect on the overlap within their own lives between matters of spirit and matters of the academy. Although the importance of both formal and informal mentoring has been an important topic within business organizations for decades (e.g., Allen, Eby, & Lentz, 2006), the role of mentoring and its importance in higher education has only recently been recognized (e.g., Fowler, 2000; Johnson, 2007; Parks, 2000). In addition, authors are beginning to describe the significance of the mentoring community in the development of students' vocational calling (Fowler, 2000; Parks, 2000). Faculty on college campuses can play a key role in stimulating and nurturing students' vocational development through their leadership and mentoring roles. Research examining the impact of mentoring on undergraduate students has found that students who are mentored are more satisfied with their academic major and the larger institution, more likely to persist to degree completion, report higher academic aspirations and achievement, and report higher levels of both personal and

spiritual well-being (Baker, Hocevar, & Johnson, 2003; Cannister, 1999; Koch & Johnson, 2000).

Despite the potentially important role of faculty in student vocational development, however, very little research has examined either how faculty view their roles as vocational mentors or how faculty conceptualize and experience vocation in their own lives. One exception is a survey (Astin & Astin, 1999) which found that although faculty were generally enthusiastic about discussing issues of meaning, purpose, and spirituality, they felt little institutional encouragement or support for such discussions. Furthermore, we know of only one study, to date, that has examined how faculty conceptualize and experience vocation in their own lives. Narloch (2004) interviewed a random stratified sample of 45 faculty members regarding their understanding of the concept of vocation. The majority of faculty conceptualized vocation from a traditional perspective, defining vocation narrowly as one's occupation. Only 14% of faculty conceptualized vocation as involving multiple roles such as occupation, family, and service to others. In terms of describing the process of vocational discernment, most faculty (39%) viewed discernment as a passive process whereby one's vocation is determined by outside forces (e.g., fate, being called by God). The method used in this study, however, was limited due to the small sample of faculty who were interviewed and the nature of the assessment (e.g., only three interview questions were used).

Another limitation in both the empirical and theoretical literatures is the lack of attention to potential sex differences with regard to the nature and development of vocational calling. Research on faith, for example, suggests that gender and sex may play an important role in the development of vocational calling. There is a substantial body of research, for example, indicating that men and women differ with regard to a wide variety of religious variables

including religious practices (Barna Research Online, 2001; Cornwall, 1989), faith and

spirituality (Barna Research Online, 2001; Donelson, 1999), and patterns of faith development

(Das & Harries, 1996). Such differences, as they relate to faith, suggest the potential impact of

gender and sex on the discernment and development of vocational calling. In addition, several

authors who address the process of vocational discernment describe potential barriers that may

interfere with vocational development and may differentially impact males and females.

Potential barriers to hearing one's call might include negative emotions (e.g., fear), emotional

problems, greed, lack of self-knowledge, or lack of spiritual development (Farnham et al., 1991;

Hardy, 1990). Other potential barriers to vocational development discussed in the literature

include undue influence by authority figures (e.g., parents) and social pressures such as gender

stereotypes. Men and women may be hindered from discerning and acting upon a particular

vocational call, for example, when they deviate from a "traditional" role. As a result, women

may not respond to a vocational call to a historically male dominated occupation (e.g., ministry).

Likewise, men may not respond to vocational callings related to female dominated occupations

or activities (e.g., nursing; taking the primary role in childcare). Research also suggests that

specific components of an individual's life experiences and environment may serve as barriers to

life purpose. One team of researchers, for example, examined the impact of minority status on

life purpose and identity development and found that for participants who experienced perceived

discrimination, minority status was negatively related to purpose and growth (Ryff, Keyes &

Hughes, 2003). Research is needed to further empirically examine the nature of vocational

discernment and the impact of gender and barriers on the development of vocational calling.

This paper describes the findings of an exploratory research study involving university

faculty members' discernment and living out of vocation, sponsored by the Lilly Endowment's

Theological Exploration of Vocation project. The research design included an accumulation of both quantitative and qualitative data assessing concepts of vocation, personal experiences of discerning vocation, and barriers experienced while pursuing one's vocation along with potential gender differences in faculty responses. Anonymous responses to survey questions were used to obtain objective, quantifiable data relevant to the processes of vocational discernment and action. Our research was also inspired by Frederick Buechner's (1970) insight that all theology is autobiography. Thus, another effective way to understand how faculty members discern and act upon their faith and vocation is to hear their stories and self-reflections. Analysis of autobiographical writings focusing on faith and vocation within faculty members' teaching, scholarship, and leadership roles were also used as a qualitative source of information relevant to the processes of vocational discernment and action. Due to the exploratory nature of the current study, formal hypotheses were limited except for the prediction that gender differences would be evident in faculty members' personal experiences of discerning vocation and perceptions of vocational barriers.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The Faculty Sample

The quantitative assessment included an invitation to the entire undergraduate faculty of a private Christian university (N=144) to complete a survey on vocational discernment and action. Of those invited to participate, 75 faculty members did so for a response rate of 52%.[1] The qualitative assessment was conducted over several months following the survey and included an invitation to 120 undergraduate faculty members from the same university who participated in

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[1] The demographic characteristics of the faculty who responded to the survey did not significantly differ from the larger faculty population suggesting that the sample was similar to the population from which it was drawn in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religious denomination, and marital status.

seminars designed to integrate faith, learning, and vocation to complete an autobiographical essay. Of those invited to participate, 83 faculty did so for a response rate of 69%. Participants for the survey ranged in age from 23 to 64 years with a mean of 47.7 years of age, whereas the essay respondents ranged in age from 29 to 69 years with a mean of 40.4 years of age. Additional demographic characteristics for each sample are displayed in Table 1.[2]

Assessment Procedures

Faculty survey. The quantitative assessment included a 75-item survey developed for the current study that assessed faculty members' definitions of vocation, personal experiences of vocation, barriers to vocational discernment and action, and sacrifices associated with living out one's vocation (see Tables 2 and 3 for a listing of survey items). Respondents indicated the degree to which they agreed with each statement using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "not at all" to "very much." Various demographic characteristics of faculty were also assessed using a brief demographic form.

Faculty were initially sent a letter inviting them to participate in the survey. The survey and demographic form were included with the invitation letter along with an informed consent form detailing participants' rights and responsibilities. Two weeks following the initial invitation to participate in the study, faculty received a follow-up letter reminding them to complete and submit the survey. A final request to complete the survey was sent four weeks after the initial invitation.

Faculty autobiographical essays. The qualitative assessment included an autobiographical essay assignment associated with attendance at a seminar designed to integrate faith, learning, and vocation. Faculty were asked to write self-reflective vocational essays

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[2] Some faculty completed both the survey and essay assessments. The proportion of faculty completing both assessments is unknown given the anonymous nature of the survey assessment.

focusing on: 1) the turning points in their lives that have shaped and clarified their vocational paths, 2) mentors who have offered guidance in discerning their vocation, and 3) the distractions, tensions, and barriers they have experienced in pursuing their vocation.

Each faculty member was sent a letter inviting them to participate in the seminar autobiography assignment as part of an ongoing research project related to vocation in the academy. An informed consent form detailing participants' rights and responsibilities was included with the letter, along with a brief demographic information form. Each faculty member was asked to complete their autobiographical essay prior to the seminar and to write their essay according to the following instructions:

*We would like for you to write a self-reflective essay focusing on your vocational journey up to this point in your life. Please aim for three to four pages of double-spaced text. The essay should **draw from some or all** of the following issues:*

- *A description of the major "turning points" along your vocational journey*
- *Discussion of particular moments of crisis or confusion as well as moments of joy and clarity along your journey*
- *Attention to particular individuals who have contributed either positively or negatively to your vocational development*
- *Discussion of experiences that have either affirmed your sense of calling or that have shaken your sense of calling*
- *Discussion of any distractions, tensions, or barriers along the way that you believe have hindered your pursuit of your vocational calling*

We carried out a content analysis of these essays using the methods described by Mayring (2000) and Patton (2001), utilizing two readings of each essay – the first deductive, the second inductive. The first reading deduces which essay passages respond to the writing prompt in use. Deductively, we employed the following process: We read each of the 83 essays, looking for specific mention of each of the following three topics: 1) spiritual turning points that contributed to a change in life direction, 2) key individuals whose counsel played a role in directing the author's vocational journey, and 3) barriers to either discerning or to living out one's

sense of calling. As we read each essay, we highlighted these pertinent passages and created a statistical record of which essays contained each topic.

In a second reading, we applied an inductive approach in order to establish subcategories for each of the three topics mentioned above. In each essay, as we focused all of our attention on the highlighted passages, we noted the recurring subthemes that were present for a given topic. For example, the role of mentoring revolved around four categories: close friend, family member, teacher, and thought provoking writing. Additional subthemes that were identified are described below. We then collected all of the subthemes that were present for each of the three main topics and analyzed the frequency of occurrence of each subtheme in order to be able to determine their significance within the scope of all 83 essays.

Following our two tiered content analysis, we constructed a "thick description" for each topic and its set of subthemes, based on the conceptualization developed by Geertz (1973). In Geertz' own words, our analysis is a way of "sorting out the structures of signification" so that we can describe the "degree of coherence" of the "culture" of vocational journey. Thus, we have summarized the overall textual content of these essays as relating to turning points, mentors, and barriers. Our approach was to let each faculty author's writing speak for itself. Accordingly, we identified the recurring types of content that are present in this 83-essay cultural artifact. Then, for each content type, we sampled representative excerpts from the essays, thus providing, via the voices of the faculty themselves, a "thick" account of the "anthropology" of vocational journey. Finally, we divided the essays by sex and reviewed the differences in each group's treatment of turning points, mentors, and barriers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We have divided our summary into four sections. In all but the first section we will present results from both assessment tools - the survey and the essay assignment, in order to allow our discussion to focus on the themes that recur across both methodologies. The first section addresses the ways that faculty members defined vocation and determined its boundaries of application, including the extent to which each of the following areas play a part in defining one's vocation: occupation/career (especially teaching and scholarship), marriage, parenthood, friendship, church, community, and service to others. The second part of our analysis covers the area of vocational discernment. Here we consider how faculty reported discerning their life purpose, with particular attention to mentoring relationships and the turning points that they encounter in their vocational discernment journey. The next portion of our summary investigates the kinds of barriers and distractions that faculty members reported encountering in living out their vocation. The barrier categories included demographic, personal, interpersonal, environmental, and sacrificial. Finally, our analysis examines the differences in vocational definition, discernment, and barriers as a function of faculty member gender.

Definition and Scope of Vocation

In contrast to secular perspectives on vocation, spiritual views of vocation frame it as a calling from God. Such a calling refers to hearing and understanding God's voice and then obeying the summons given. Discussions about vocational calling often distinguish between various types, such as the distinction between one's secret calling, as related to one's personal life (e.g., friendship, marriage, etc.), versus one's corporate calling as related to a career of service. We define vocation broadly to include any human activity that gives meaning, purpose, and direction to life. So, the concept of vocation transcends job or career to include vocational

callings related to friendship, parenting, marriage, church membership, and community involvement (Hardy, 1990). Vocation refers to the whole of life, the personal as well as the professional realms of being (Farnham et al., 1991).

To evaluate faculty members' conceptions of vocation, the percentage of faculty responding to survey items assessing this dimension was examined and these values are displayed in Table 2. The results suggest that in terms of defining vocation, faculty generally conceptualized vocation in terms of their profession, life purpose, and God's will for their lives. The majority of faculty, for example, responded with "a lot" or "very much" when asked if they agree that vocation refers to job/career/profession (82%), one's life purpose (92%), and God's will for one's life (82%). Faculty were less likely to view vocation in terms of formal ministry activities, as 30% responded with "not at all" or "a little" to this item. Most faculty members did not believe that one's vocation depends on one's gender (69%). In addition, faculty members included personal aspects of their lives as part of their vocations: a majority (62%) included marriage, an even larger number (70%) included parenthood, and close to half (42%) included friendship in the scope of vocation. A significant minority responded with "not at all" (8%-10%) to these categories. When asked about the relationship between service and vocation, the large majority of faculty members conceptualized vocation as always involving service or benefit to others (64% responded with "a lot" or "very much").

Based on the faculty survey, it is evident that calling is a broadly defined area, encompassing more than merely one's career. The theological basis for defining calling from a spiritual perspective is also evident in the survey results. That is, faculty members largely viewed calling as having spiritual moorings tied to service to others. Ironically, though, these spiritual

moorings do not translate into a connection with formal ministry.   Thus, faculty members base their broad view of vocation on religious grounds that transcend one's life position and purpose.

The Process of Discernment

Very little empirical work has examined the nature and processes associated with vocational discernment. Authors writing about the topic of vocation frequently focus on the role of faith as being responsible for the development and understanding of an individual's vocation (Fowler, 1991). By comparison, we assert that faith and vocation formation are mutually dependent processes. As one's faith develops and evolves, so does one's vocational story and vice versa. Faith and vocation development represent the same interwoven journey.

Kant (1990, p. 451) states that whole interest of both practical and speculative reason is to be found in addressing the three questions of the moral life: "What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope?" These questions, respectively, reflect on past discernment, present action, and the role of faith that looks toward the future of one's life. Thus, theologically, these flow into a single vocation question: What does God call me to do with my life? The moral life of calling is about both discernment and action, concepts that are intertwined throughout one's life. Farnham et. al. (1991) also described the discernment process in terms of the whole person: "The ability to discern comes from living the life of the Spirit, a process of growth involving an ever greater integration of desires, feelings, reactions, and choices" (p. 25).

Survey results. To evaluate faculty members' personal experiences of vocation, the percentage of faculty responding to survey items assessing this dimension was examined and these items are displayed in Table 2. Of the faculty surveyed, 97% indicated that they had a strong sense of their own personal vocation and indicated that to some degree their own vocations include serving others in need (99%). When asked which areas of their lives are

influenced by their personal sense of vocation, most faculty endorsed occupation/career (97%

responded "a lot" or "very much"). Faculty generally believed that their personal sense of

vocation developed from personal interests or skills as well as a sense of God's will for their

lives (90% and 84%, respectively, endorsed these items "a lot" or "very much"). Faculty were

also likely to indicate that significant life experiences or the influence of others affected their

personal sense of vocation (75% and 73%, respectively, responded with "a lot" or "very much").

Essay results. Gordon T. Smith (1999) says that an awareness of experiences that serve

as spiritual turning points in one's life journey can serve as a measure of vocational discernment.

In this regard, Smith (1999) writes: "At each transition [of life] we wrestle with fundamental

matters of faith. As young adults we choose a faith of our own to give purpose and direction to

our lives. In midlife we trust God with the character and meaning of our lives when we are not

all that we hoped we would be; we learn to trust God in the midst of our limitations. In our

senior years we find that the only way we can let go is through a fundamental faith in God, a

God who is bigger than our work, our career and our ministry" (p. 75).   Examination of the

faculty essays confirmed that significant experiences that serve as turning points do in fact aid in

discerning vocational calling.

At the deductive level, 74% of the essays contained discussion of a turning point or other

pivotal experience that helped shape the faculty member's vocational identity. In the second,

inductive reading, we reviewed each "turning point" excerpt, looking for recurring themes. We

found the following subthemes and their corresponding percentages within the turning point

category: change of location (15%), health issues (5%), job opportunities (30%), marriage

(20%), personal loss or failure (55%), spiritual awakening (14%), starting a family (36%),

watershed experiences (67%), and world events (9%). For this discussion, we will focus on the two most commonly occurring themes: watershed experiences and personal loss.

Watershed experiences. Here are three excerpts that describe turning point moments in terms of a watershed experience that redirected the author's life toward their calling. Each experience is typical of all of the essays, in that it involves a time when the author hears or feels an inner voice that tells them to move in a new direction, toward their calling. The first example describes a crossroads moment in the disciplinary transition from chemistry to English:

> All of my science courses seemed like work; all the literature courses seemed like play.
> On Thanksgiving holiday, I had to work through some heavy-duty equilibrium problems for my quantitative analysis chemistry course, and I was to read Thornton Wilder's Our Town for my American literature course. The power of the play overwhelmed me. I didn't know it then, but I was feeling the difference between what Thomas De Quincey called the literature of knowledge and the literature of power. And I began to think, 'Something is wrong here. Why am I competent in but so unmoved by my major, and why do plays and stories and novels and poems move me so?'

The next example describes a watershed experience in the form of a personal encounter that affected the author's life direction:

> Here is a true turning point, though I did not know it at the time. I met Ben during at a worship service in Spain. He was the first person to ever mention that his own church was associated with various institutions of higher education. I had not grown up in the church, but had joined as a college student and this connection was a real revelation. It bridged a huge gap that I felt, the gap between the seemingly solitary and self-serving work of the scholar and the need I felt to give back to the society that had helped

educate me in the first place.

The final example involves a watershed moment that led the author into the academy:

> I took the CBEST test, passed, and became eligible to be a substitute teacher. On my first
> day as a substitute, I was assigned to cover seventh grade math. The moment I walked
> into the classroom I knew I was going to be a teacher. I felt as though some missing
> piece of my self had fallen into place. I guess it was more like some false piece of my
> self had fallen away.   Everything seemed different. Life seemed to have meaning. The
> world seemed to need what I had to offer, and I had found my way.

> ***Personal loss.*** The second most frequently mentioned kind of turning point experience

centered around a personal loss. In these cases, as with all the personal loss accounts in the

essays, the loss resulted in positive outcomes because a sense of calling provided new direction

and hope. Here are two excerpts, typifying the personal loss as a turning point. The first

example involves death of a family member:

> It is important to note that while the timing of my 'turning points' has been opportune
> in many ways, it has not been without heartache. The most difficult was the death of my
> father four years after we moved to my new job. It was devastating, both in the loss of
> my father and in not being actively involved in his daily care given the distance brought
> about by our move. Another heartache was that my wife's vocational and personal
> sacrifices when moving here were immense. Our move also meant distance from deep
> family and church roots and lifelong friendships. These were significant losses for us.
> Yet, despite these heartaches, the moments of joy and clarity of call have greatly eased
> the very real moments of darkness and despair.

The second example describes the loss of stability in the home and the sense of openness it created:

> When I was fifteen, my parents separated. This meant the end of economic stability for my family, as my father took all of our savings with him, but a new sense of peace came over us all. I began to work full-time while in high school in order to help support my family at home and my sister away at college. While it may seem strange to some, I saw this period as a gift. I learned at a very early age that I could support myself. This opened up a whole world to me, as I realized that I could take risks in life. Suddenly, the world beyond my hometown seemed to open its doors to me.

> *Mentoring.* Another kind of discernment indicator surfaced in many of the essays - the

role of the mentor. Parker Palmer (1998) says this about mentors: "The power of our mentors is not necessarily in the models of good teaching they gave us [...] Their power is in their capacity to awaken a truth within us, a truth we can reclaim years later by recalling their impact on our lives" (p. 21). Friendships that serve as mentoring relationships are especially important in the academic life, as stated by Mary Rose O'Reilley (1998): "In academic culture most listening is critical listening. We tend to pay attention only long enough to develop a counterargument; we critique the student's or the colleague's ideas; we mentally grade and pigeonhole each other. In society at large, people often listen with an agenda, to sell or petition or seduce. Seldom is there a deep, openhearted, non-judging reception of the other. And so we all talk louder and more stridently and with a terrible desperation. By contrast, if someone truly listens to me, my spirit begins to expand" (p. 19). It is part of our calling to be mentors and to be mentored. Good friends are like good counselors – they listen and advise. Examination of the faculty essays

confirmed the importance of the influence of others along the vocational journey, as the role of

mentors was identified by faculty members in discerning their vocational callings.

At the deductive level, 50% of the essays contained discussion of a mentor who shaped

the faculty member's vocational identity. In our second, inductive reading, we reviewed each

"mentoring" excerpt, looking for recurring themes. What emerged were the following subthemes

and corresponding percentages within the mentor category: close friends (42%), family

members (56%), teachers (60%), and thought provoking writing (12%). Of these categories, the

essays discussed the ideas of mentoring by family members and professors most often.

Family Members as Mentors. Here are three excerpts describing mentoring experiences

from family members. Each one provides the author with a role model for their own life. The

first example is of the influence of a grandfather whose life embodies compassion and kindness:

> One might ask how my grandfather and his life and death helped me become who I am
>
> today. As I mentioned, my grandfather was a gifted craftsman. He would use the talents
>
> God granted him to bring joy to others. He would bring joy to my sister and me by
>
> teaching us how to use the different tools in his workshop and by spending hours with us.
>
> He would also bring joy to others by giving them handmade gifts. My grandfather was
>
> one of my role models. As I was growing up, I tried to use my talents to bring joy to
>
> others. On a daily basis, I tried to be a kind and caring person.

The second example is that of an influential mother, whose influence provided the author with

both virtues worth emulating and training at an early age in the life of the mind:

> My emotionally healthy, intellectually liberated, and wonderfully articulate mother had a
>
> marvelous sense of humor and an inspired gift of helping us keep all of this in
>
> perspective. She helped my sisters and me learn to make informed choices, to express

our opinions with conviction, and to discriminate right from wrong and good from bad.

She urged us to be friendly and to make polite conversation with the many different types

of people who came to our home. By the time I was three years old, I had begged my

mother into teaching me to read, and I already knew that my life was all about stories,

books, and words and that God would write my story.

The final example relays an account of a grandmother who reminds the author of their

accountability to their life purpose:

In almost every letter that my maternal grandmother wrote to me, she would include the

following verse, II Timothy 2:20: 'In a large house there are not only articles of gold and

silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a

man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made

holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.' I think that references like

that, throughout my early life, gave me a sense that I was called by God to do important

things.

Professors as Mentors.   The second most frequently mentioned form of mentoring came

from college professors. In each case, the author was directed by a faculty member to consider a

particular course for their life, a course that they took, which subsequently provided meaning and

direction. Here are two representative exemplars, the first of which describes a professor who

communicated passion for his discipline and provided a view of how a career can represent a

vocational model:

In college, I came to know an incredible professor, who, by the time I met him, had

already been teaching more than twenty years. When he came to my college in the late

1960s, he *was* the theatre department. As I worked with him in classes, on stage, and

as a work-study student, I came to understand more clearly the meaning of vocation. He exuded passion for his field, and he gave of himself unselfishly. When he wasn't directing a play, he was pulling costumes for someone else's production, running the box office, or designing sets. And when he wasn't doing any of those things, he was telling me how his life in academic theatre had given him the opportunity to take his family all over the world, the skills to work on dramatic productions at his church, and the drive to produce and direct children's theatre productions in Davidson at Christmas and during the summers. In short, he provided me a vocational model.

The second example demonstrates to their protégé what it means to be a teacher, scholar, professional, and a model of stability:

In graduate school I found a female mentor, something I hadn't had before within higher education. She was a relatively young professor and I was her first doctoral student. I was encouraged by her because of her availability, professionalism, and effectiveness, both as teacher and scholar. She is a Catholic and is in a stable marital relationship, something that was not very common among the other professors in that department. In sum, I respected her both personally and professionally. After I graduated, she forwarded a couple publishing opportunities my way and continues to reflect pride in my accomplishments. I must say though, that she had some reservations about my accepting a position at a Christian/teaching college. She was initially concerned about my ability to be productive as a scholar within this context. She has been very pleased with my productivity here and I am happy about that.

In examining the process of vocational discernment it is helpful to have both quantitative and qualitative data to uncover thematic findings. Based on the faculty survey, it is evident that

faculty members experienced a strong sense of calling that included serving others in need. In addition, results of both the survey and essay analysis confirmed the importance of life events and life mentors in shaping and deepening their sense of calling. These kinds of experiences mirror the thinking of Maslow (1994) on peak experiences in the religious realm.

Barriers to Living out One's Vocation

Beyond discernment is movement. Beyond comprehension is pursuit. Calling is not simply a mental process, but it demands action and follow-through. Several authors describe potential barriers that may retard vocational pursuit and development. Potential barriers might include negative emotions (e.g., fear), emotional problems, greed, lack of self-knowledge, or lack of spiritual development (Farnham et al., 1991). Other potential barriers might include undue influence by authority figures (e.g., parents) or social pressures such as gender stereotypes. Anne Lamott (1993) describes her own barrier-laden calling: "On the day I was born, I think God reached down and said, 'Baby girl Annie, I am going to give you a good brain and some artistic talent and a sense of humor, but I'm also going to give you low self-esteem and hat hair, because I want you to fight your way back to me'" (pp. 179-180). God gives us lives that contain difficulties so we will fight our way back to him, and in so doing, draw from His strength and character.

Survey results. To examine potential barriers and sacrifices that faculty members experienced related to their vocational calling, the percentage of faculty responding to survey items assessing these dimensions was examined and these results are displayed in Table 3. In terms of demographic factors, relatively few faculty members responded that they had experienced such factors as barriers to their vocations. Most faculty members reported that age, gender, ethnicity, education, and income were "not at all" experienced as barriers (47-69%).

Faculty were asked whether any personal attitudes or emotions interfered with their ability to pursue their vocations. Of the options provided, faculty members were most likely to endorse the following personal characteristics as barriers "a lot" or "very much": self-doubt (31%), need for personal control (27%), selfishness (26%), and fear (23%). Faculty were also asked whether the views and opinions of others had interfered with their ability to pursue their vocations. In general, faculty did not endorse interpersonal barriers to a great degree. The majority of faculty indicated that interpersonal interactions, such as those with family members, friends, and colleagues, did not serve as barriers to their vocations (53%-78% responded with "not at all").

In terms of various potential environmental barriers, the majority of faculty indicated that neither gender, race, physical limitations, church traditions, nor pressure/desire to get married served as barriers to their vocations (62%-85% responded "not at all"). Faculty were more likely, however, to endorse as barriers items aimed at financial circumstances. Approximately one quarter of faculty, for example, indicated that concerns about supporting their standard of living had at some point interfered with their ability to pursue their vocations. Survey responses also indicated that faculty viewed raising children and other family responsibilities, to some degree, as barriers to their vocations.

Faculty were also asked to report on the degree to which they experienced various sacrifices associated with pursuing their vocations. Faculty were most likely to indicate salary as a sacrifice associated with their vocational calling (34% responded with "a lot" or "very much"). Responses also indicated that faculty sacrificed time with family and friends as a result of pursuing their vocations (21%-31% responded with "a lot" or "very much"). Faculty also reported that career advancement or promotion and desired geographical location were sacrifices

(26% and 23% responded with "a lot" or "very much," respectively). The majority of faculty did not report that getting married and having children, approval/acceptance/support of family or friends, or health were sacrifices associated with their vocational callings (55%-88%).

Essay results. At the deductive level, 43% of the essays contained discussion of a barrier or obstacle that contributed to the author's struggle to live out their calling. In our second, inductive reading, we reviewed each barrier excerpt, looking for recurring themes. What emerged were the following subthemes and their corresponding percentages of occurrence within the barrier category: cultural biases of race (6%) and gender (35%) roles, financial concerns (25%), lack of faith (22%), personal conflict (27%), pride (14%), and sexual identity (1%). Of these, the two predominant categories were gender roles and personal conflict.

Barriers associated with sex. We present two excerpts that exemplify the content of the essays' treatment of barriers stemming from the author's sex. The first describes a career option that is often closed to women:

> During this time I discovered my passion for youth ministry – but my sex within the church kept me from this pursuit. While it may be best that I didn't end up a youth minister, realizing that I was limited because of my sex was deeply disconcerting and left me a bit confused as to where God was leading me. In fact, I recall thinking that God only called men to positions of ministry and so I resigned myself to that reality. It was a tremendous time of growth and realization and challenge – but also confusion as I was given messages that I should get my MRS degree while there (I married off 13 roommates), racism is socially acceptable, and my role as a woman is to be a good wife.

The second example presents the challenges of maintaining one's life direction in an environment that does not embrace it:

> While I was in graduate school, my daughter was born. I continued to work on my dissertation while trying to be home with her as much as possible. Two and a half years later, I finished my degree and became pregnant with our son. When people asked me what I was going to do once I finished my doctoral work, I often replied, "Stay at home with my children and cross-stitch." That was what godly women of my generation were expected to do. It is lonely, for example, in my church where I am one of a very few young working mothers. Certainly I am one of an ever fewer number of young moms there who has CHOSEN to work. So, I seek to balance my professional service with my service to my family and my neighbor. It is a balance that is taking all of the emotional energy I can muster.

Barriers associated with personal conflict. The second predominant theme dealing with barriers to vocational pursuit stemmed from internal, personal conflict, for which we present one excerpt which involves the internal fragmentation that serves as an obstacle to living out one's calling:

> My love for the truth, and my joy at seeming to have found it in economics, was not uniquely Christian, but in me it expressed itself in a uniquely Christian way, and it immediately created a peculiarly Christian conflict.   After I completed my Ph.D., I faced a disconcerting problem – I had been so well trained in the science of economics that I could no longer perceive any relationship between ethical reflection and economics. The irony of my predicament was not lost on me. I had been taught that economics had no ethical content, that it concerned itself solely with 'what is' – observed behavior, the

properties of certain mathematical models – and not with "what should be." I had not

lost my conviction that the revealed truths of the faith had an important bearing on the

conduct of my discipline, but I had been stripped of the intellectual tools necessary to

discern the connections, and to reconcile faith and reason. I was in an intellectual bind.

Clearly, faculty members experience challenges in the pursuit of their calling, spanning external

and internal pressures as well as sacrifices. The survey responses provide a partial glimpse into

the kinds of issues that faculty deal with as they engage with their life direction and purpose, but

reflective narratives provide rich insight into the ways in which the *secret* life of personal

conflict as well as the role of gender both play important roles in living out one's calling.

Sex Differences

Although the topic of sex differences in vocational calling has not been examined

empirically, research in the areas of faith and identity development suggests the potential impact

of sex and gender on the vocational development process. There is a substantial body of

research, for example, indicating that men and women differ with regard to a wide variety of

religious variables including religious practices, faith and spirituality, and patterns of faith

development (Barna Research Online, 2001; Cornwall, 1989; Donelson, 1999). Sex differences

are also sometimes evident in the identity development process. Some aspects of identity, for

example, such as dating and sex roles occur later for a larger proportion of men while other

aspects of identity such as political views occur later for a larger proportion of women

(Pastorino, Dunham, Kidwell, Bacho, & Lamborn, 1997).

Survey results. To examine potential sex differences in the barriers and sacrifices that

faculty members experienced related to their vocational calling, five subscales were created by

summing scores across groups of survey items. Subscales included Demographic Barriers

(Cronbach's alpha = .85), Personal Barriers (Cronbach's alpha = .87), Interpersonal Barriers

(Cronbach's alpha = .78), Environmental Barriers (Cronbach's alpha = .82), and Sacrifices

(Cronbach's alpha = .80).[3] T-tests were conducted to evaluate sex differences for each of the

subscales and the results are displayed in Table 4. Significant group differences were observed

for 3 of the 5 subscales. Compared to male faculty members, female faculty members obtained

higher scores for Interpersonal Barriers, Environmental Barriers, and Sacrifices. No sex

differences were noted for survey items assessing conceptions of vocation or vocational

discernment.

These findings suggest several differences in living out one's call as experienced by men

versus women. Women believe that the views and opinions of others, such as teachers or

professors, have interfered with their ability to pursue their vocations. In addition, women

endorsed several environmental or social circumstances as interfering with their ability to pursue

their vocations such as lack of financial resources, feeling pressure or a desire to get married,

raising children, and the traditions of their church home. Women also reported experiencing a

greater number of sacrifices associated with pursuing their vocations including foregoing having

children and spending time with friends.

Essay results. From our previous two-tiered content analysis of the essays, we sorted the

respondents by sex in order to see how turning points, mentoring, and barriers differ by sex. For

the essay sample of 83 faculty, we had 47 male and 36 female respondents. Within the male

group, 70% of the essays mentioned a turning point, 57% identified a mentoring example, and

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[3] Correlational analyses were conducted to determine the interrelationship among the barrier subscales for males and females separately. All of the correlations were significant and positive for males at the .01 level of significance and coefficients ranged from .41 to .71. For females, Demographic Barrier scores were positively correlated with both Personal Barrier (r=.65, p<.01) and Interpersonal Barrier (r=.47, p<.05) scores, Personal Barrier scores were positively correlated with Interpersonal Barrier scores (r=.59, p<.01), and Interpersonal Barrier scores were positively correlated with Environmental Barrier scores (r=.61, p<.01).

30% discussed barriers to vocational activity. For the female group, 78% mentioned a turning point experience, 39% included a discussion of their mentor, and 61% wrote about some kind of barrier. Thus, from the essay data, it is evident that men place greater emphasis than women on the role of their mentor, whereas women perceive barriers significantly more often than men in their vocational journey.

Clearly, vocational barriers are real and they take on markedly different forms for male faculty compared to female faculty members, pointing to the challenges that each must face in both preparing for and living out one's academic calling. Our findings suggest that this area of research deserves closer scrutiny, with particular attention to how the barriers manifest themselves so differently across sex. Female faculty members tend to have greater difficulty with the process of living out their vocation, whereas male faculty members are more often struggling with identifying which vocational goal to pursue at the outset.

CONCLUSION

We divide this section into three parts. First, we summarize the lessons we have learned from our research analyses. Second, we discuss recommendations for faculty development and institutional support that flow from this research and from the literature. Finally, we discuss the limitations of our study and suggestions for further research.

Much of what faculty members understand, discern, and act upon as they attempt to comprehend their life-purpose or vocation is important for two reasons. First, as these processes are applied, faculty members mentor and assist the students they interact with on a daily basis. In the words of Sharon Daloz Parks (2000), "If the vocation of higher education is to feel the 'riddle of the world and to help to unravel it,' mentoring educators are invited to serve as poets – awakeners of imagination, professors whose spirits so infuse their subject matter that the spirit of

the student is beckoned out and finds fitting forms in which to dwell" (p. 169). Second, defining, discerning, and living out one's life-purpose is inherently self-satisfying and gratifying in the human journey. Personal reflection and affirmation can provide clues to life's meaning and value. Parks (2000) offers further insight here, suggesting that it is a way of re-establishing our home: "To be at home within one's self, place, community, and the cosmos is to feel whole and centered in a way that yields a sense of power and participation" (p. 34).

Our research on and about the university professoriate uncovered several commonalities across faculty members' experiences in terms of discerning and acting upon their vocations. In contrast to the work of Narloch (2004), for example, our research demonstrates that faculty define vocation more broadly than career by including family and friendship roles in addition to their occupations. Our findings also highlight the importance of mentoring in vocational discernment. This serves as a reminder to faculty members that our mentoring relationships with our students may be a step in their vocational discernment, just as it was in our own vocational journeys. Parks (2000) has asserted that the cornerstone of any educational institution is the faculty student-relationship whereby the "true professor serves, inevitably, as a spiritual guide" (p. 166). Faculty members have a special opportunities to mentor and guide students as they discover the connections between their faith and career, as well as their broader sense of vocation. As Bain (2004) points out, the mentor - protégé relationship, built on trust, is a key relationship: "Professors who established a special trust with their students often displayed a kind of openness in which they might, from time to time, talk about their intellectual journey, its ambitions, triumphs, frustrations, and failures, and encourage students to be similarly reflective and candid" (p. 141). Furthermore, our findings suggest the importance of recognizing the watershed experiences that shape our vocational journeys, experiences that we will continue to

encounter throughout our lives. As we learn to appreciate them, even embrace them, we can use them to grow and develop our sense of vocational identity, and we can help our students to do the same. Finally, we have provided significant evidence of the kinds of barriers to living out one's calling that may be encountered among faculty members and how these barriers may manifest differently for men versus women, both in timing and in substance.

In conducting our research, our investigation focused solely on university professors, making our sample of vocational journey experience inherently limited. But, there are two important characteristics that are distinctive to the academic culture of faculty members that contribute to the value of studying university professors as a particular group of individuals: the academic life is both reflective and highly formative. The life of the mind is a contemplative life. Academicians engage in this kind of life with great ease because of the nature of their professional training. They continuously think critically about their field, and with prompting, can think deeply about themselves. Formatively, faculty members play an essential role as mentors to the growing, transforming lives of young adults who are caught in the highly volatile developmental years of college life.   Indeed, students are like their teachers. They experience life on many of the same levels. They go through tough times and question their life direction. They experience transitions, barriers, crises, and gender issues as do their faculty mentors. Thus, it behooves members of the university professoriate to understand their own sense of purpose and calling so they can help the students around them in their classrooms, their offices, and in the hallways to discern their own vocational callings. It is for the greater good of university students that their teachers should have a deep understanding of the process of their own vocational definition, discernment, and action.

Faculty development and other institutional support structures can make a significant impact on the lives of faculty, and accordingly, on the lives of the students they instruct and mentor, as well as the university culture. Our research provides corroborative evidence of the importance of establishing thoughtful institutional systems to help faculty maximize their impact on student lives and learning. In the words of Seaman (2005), as he writes about how to overcome disconnections in students' lives, it is the impact of the faculty that is most critical: "The key to success in all these places lies largely with the faculty. Students' high regard and respect for their achievements and knowledge offer the potential to bridge the divide that separates academic life from social life on most campuses, imbuing faculty members with an influence beyond their role as classroom teachers" (p. 272). In this regard, the role of the faculty mentor is critical, but it requires intentionality. Johnson (2007) points out the importance of developing mentoring skills and opportunities: "Academic leaders should consider methods for intentionally preparing faculty for their role as mentor" (p. 231), so that the opportunities for potential student protégés is maximized by faculty preparation and development.   In addition to developing faculty identities as mentors, Edwards (2006) suggests that institutions should help their faculty be able to deal with "questions that arise out of religious or spiritual concerns" (pp. 66-67), so that their contribution to the institution's identity is more cohesive.

Furthermore, Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens (2003) encourage institutions to understand that faculty, too, seek to find meaning in their work: "Perhaps even more important is how they think about their work, what they believe in, care about, and find meaningful and personally rewarding on a human level" (p. 201). Indeed, faculty want to pour their "transcendent" lives into their work: As Colby and her colleagues (2003) assert: "Just as the faculty we talked to believe in undergraduate education that engages more of the student, they

also appreciate the fact that they can bring more of themselves to their teaching. Many say they have cared about some transcendent value for a long time - it may be social justice, community participation, or spirituality - and they are grateful for a way to bring their work and personal values together" (p. 204). Chickering & Reisser (1993) provide several strategic guidelines for helping faculty contribute their lives, ranging from developing clear and consistent objectives for the institution with respect to academic and personal development to creating educationally powerful environments that involve intentional interactions between faculty as agents of socialization and their students. Finally, moral and spiritual growth in college requires proactive principles and practices. Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm (2006) provide a framework for this to occur, in terms of ten principles that range from "moral commitments to students, faculty, staff and other key constituents" (p. 273) to "honoring achievements of authenticity, spirituality, meaning, and moral purpose" (p. 281). In the best scenario, faculty members ought to feel comfortable in transmitting some of their deepest lessons about how to discern and live out a life of purpose, and in this way they stand in the unique position of being able to influence students' lives. One of the best ways to be effective in such a mentoring role is to engage in the reflective processes that the current research highlights. In addition, faculty members need appropriate resources to be effective as mentors. Faculty members need institutional encouragement and support to both engage in reflection about their own vocational development and to mentor their students as they progress along their own vocational journeys.

Finally, we acknowledge that the current research has its limitations and that there are a number of areas that are worth consideration for further study. For example, this paper is about quantitative and qualitative responses from the faculty at one Christian institution. The findings are therefore limited to primarily Christian faculty members' experiences of discerning and

living out their vocational calling. Although, our sample may appear to be rather limited, given

our nonsecular definition of vocation, it was fitting to examine this construct in a largely self-

identified Christian sample. Future studies should examine vocational discernment and action

among a broader faculty sample to include other academic communities, both religious and

secular. In addition, given the long history among academic institutions of interest in religious

commitment, teaching, and the intellectual life (Hughes, 2001), an examination of differences in

conceptions and experiences of vocation and life purpose between religious and secular

institutions could be valuable and informative. Another limitation to the current study is the

moderate response rate (52%) to the quantitative survey. Although the response rate for the

current study is just below the minimum 60% response rate generally expected to mailed

surveys, considerable effort was expended to obtain a high rate of participation (e.g., potential

participants were contacted on three separate occasions) suggesting that the response rate for the

current study may be adequate for the particular research project and population (Pyrczak, 1999).

An adequate response rate (69%) was obtained for the qualitative aspect of the study and likely

reflects the fact that these faculty participated as part of a small group seminar. Further research

is also needed not only to investigate in greater depth and detail the process of vocational

discernment, but also the impact of barriers on vocational discernment and action across the

boundary of sex as well as gender. In addition, there are also other demographic variables that

would be valuable to consider, such as age, race and ethnicity, and faculty members' disciplinary

emphasis. Although the sample size of the current study limited our ability to examine these

variables, such research is needed in order to deepen as well as broaden the academy's

understanding of what it means to respond to and live out the vocation of a university professor.

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Table 1: Percentage of Faculty Across Demographic Characteristics for each Sample

	Survey	Essay
Demographic Characteristic		
Gender		
Female	28	43
Male	72	57
Race		
African American	4	7
Asian	3	7
Caucasian	85	79
Latino	1	5
Other	7	2
Marital Status		
Divorced	6	2
Married	85	81
Separated	1	0
Single	8	16
Widowed	0	1
Religious Identification		
Catholic	8	21
Jewish	0	1
Muslim	1	0
Protestant	84	78
Other	7	0

Table 2:
Percentage of Faculty Responding to Survey Items Related to Defining and Experiencing
Vocation

			Responses		
Survey Items	Not at All	A Little	Somewhat	A lot	Very Much
Definition and Scope of Vocation					
Vocation refers to:					
Job/career/profession	0	4	14	24	58
Personal interests/skills	1	4	25	44	23
One's life purpose	0	3	6	25	67
Formal ministry activities	15	15	22	24	19
God's will for one's life	3	3	10	19	63
Vocation depends on whether one is male or female.	69	12	10	7	2
Vocation always involves service or benefit to others.	8	4	23	30	34
Vocation encompasses the following aspects of life:					
Occupation/career	0	0	12	19	69
Marriage	10	7	22	25	37
Parenthood	8	6	16	29	41
Friendship	10	11	37	27	15
Church involvement	7	10	22	33	29
Community involvement	7	3	29	43	19
Service toward others	4	7	18	33	38
Personal Experiences of Vocation.					
I have a strong sense of my own personal vocation.	0	0	3	39	58
My vocation includes serving those in need.	1	4	19	31	45
My personal sense of vocation has developed from:					
Personal interests/skills	0	0	11	47	43
Sense of God's will	4	3	8	34	50
Influence of others	1	10	16	51	22

Significant life experiences	0	1	23	47	28

What areas of your life are influenced by
your personal sense of vocation?

Occupation/career	0	0	3	28	69
Marriage	7	6	21	36	30
Parenthood	6	3	16	43	26
Friendship	4	11	46	32	7
Church involvement	7	10	22	38	24
Community involvement	5	7	39	31	18
Service toward others	1	7	20	41	31

Table 3:
Percentage of Faculty Responding to Survey Items Related to Vocational Barriers and Sacrifices*

Survey Items		Responses			
	Not at All	A Little	Somewhat	A lot	Very Much
Vocation-Related Barriers					
Demographic					
Age	47	18	19	12	1
Gender	62	8	14	12	1
Ethnicity	69	12	12	4	3
Education	55	16	14	8	3
Income	53	14	22	7	3
Personal					
Fear	28	24	24	16	7
Emotional problems	60	20	16	3	1
Selfishness	24	32	18	22	4
Self-doubt	20	20	28	20	11
Need for personal control	21	16	36	21	6
Desire for certainty	19	22	39	15	4
Lack of motivation	43	41	12	3	1
Need to feel secure/safe	23	42	24	8	3
Uncertainty	38	27	22	6	7
Lack of faith	41	31	14	12	3
Lack of understanding of the concept of vocation	46	27	14	9	4
Interpersonal					
Parent/other family member	54	16	12	14	4
Friend	69	15	11	3	3
Boy- or girlfriend	73	14	10	1	1
Teacher or professor	60	22	14	3	1
Spouse	70	12	11	3	3
Mentor	78	8	10	4	0
Colleague	57	20	12	7	3
Supervisor/boss	53	20	12	7	7
Environmental					
Lack of financial resources	34	20	28	10	8
Concerns about supporting my standard of living	28	30	19	19	4
Unwillingness to sacrifice financially	39	24	22	11	4
Pressure/desire to get married	70	19	6	3	3
Gender discrimination	69	10	11	11	0
Racial discrimination	85	11	3	1	0

Job-related responsibilities	30	23	23	16	9
Raising children	38	18	15	14	10
Family responsibilities	35	31	14	16	3
Traditions of my church	62	11	12	10	5
Physical limitations	77	15	5	1	1

Vocation-Related Sacrifices

Desired geographical location	46	18	14	12	11
Salary	27	15	24	19	15
Time with my children	24	14	35	15	6
Time with my spouse	23	14	35	20	5
Time with other family	20	18	31	23	8
Option of having children	85	5	5	3	1
Option of marriage/relationship	88	7	3	1	1
Physical health	60	19	11	7	3
Mental or emotional health	55	22	12	11	0
Time with friends	22	32	24	12	10
Approval/acceptance/support of family members	64	16	11	5	4
Approval/acceptance/support from friends	64	20	8	5	3
Career advancement/ promotion	39	19	15	20	6

*The question prompt for barriers and sacrifices read: "To what degree do you believe that each of the following has served as a barrier/sacrifice to your ability to discern or act on your life vocation?"

Table 4:
Gender Differences in Barriers and Sacrifices Associated with Vocational Discernment and Action

	Female Faculty		Male Faculty		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Survey Subscales						
Demographic Barriers	11.42	5.44	9.04	4.90	1.76	.083
Personal Barriers	26.33	8.07	24.45	8.54	0.82	.423
Interpersonal Barriers	15.61	5.76	12.57	4.93	2.15	.035
Environmental Barriers	26.26	8.15	20.08	6.42	13.33	.001
Sacrifices	31.47	8.97	26.51	7.37	2.27	.026