



SPU Internal Grant Interim¹ or Final Grant Report²

Academic Year & Type of Grant (FRG, SERVE or Innovation)

2014-15 SERVE Grant

PI Name (and Co-PI's)

Michael D. Langford, Assistant Professor of Theology, Discipleship, and Ministry

Original Title of the Proposal

The High Calling of Youth Ministry: Best Practices

The Final Project Report must briefly address the following in 1-2 pages:

1. Summarize the project goals and the activities that took place to meet those goals during the grant period. Note who was involved and if anyone was an SPU student.

The goal of the project was to help students think about their vocation as youth ministers by bringing established youth ministers to classes to guide reflection upon their practices as those embedded in particular ministries. Over the course of two quarters, we brought a total of 10 speakers from church-based and para-church youth ministries to speak about the particularities of their work. The students also came to the PI's house for a group dinner toward the end of the year to communally mark and celebrate our common vocational journey.

2. What were the major findings? If there are no findings or completed work at this time, what did you learn from carrying out this project that could be applicable to future scholarly works?

The following is a chart of the speakers, the ministries they represented, the classes they spoke in, the date, and the topic of their presentation (in addition to general introduction).

| Name | Ministry | Class | Date | Topic |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|--------------|----------------------|
| Tony Vasinda | St. Luke's Parish | THEO 3730 | January 22 | Youth & Worship |
| Josh Schack | Sammamish Pres. | THEO 3730 | January 29 | Parents |
| Greg Ingle | YouthWise | THEO 3730 | February 5 | Youth Mentoring |
| Denny Burda | Grace Lutheran | THEO 3730 | February 12 | YM as Vocation |
| Katie Douglass | Princeton Sem. | THEO 3730 | February 19 | YM & the Arts |
| Alison Bray | YoungLife | THEO 3730 | February 26 | Diversity in YM |
| Nate Rice | Bellevue Pres. | THEO 3730 | March 5 | Student Leaders |
| Nick Steinloski | Bethany Comm. | THEO 3730 | March 12 | YM Volunteers |
| Jeffrey Overstreet | SPU | THEO 3715 | April 24, 27 | Youth and Entertain. |
| Scott Gronholz | Bethany Pres. | THEO 3715 | May 22 | Youth and Technology |

¹ Faculty with a multiple year grant or asking for an extension or reallocation of their grant monies must complete as much of this form as possible as an interim grant report before multiple year disbursement, extension or reallocation can occur.

² When electronically submitting your report to CSFD, please cc: your chair and/or dean (whomever received your original grant notification).



Following the presentations, speakers would spend time answering questions from the class. This was often the most profitable time. Students loved hearing about the nuts and bolts of ministry, and often asked questions that explored how the lectures and readings from class were applied in practice. It was very helpful in seeing what youth ministry as a vocation (professionally or not) looks like.

We all shared a dinner at the PI's house on May 16, with 16 people in attendance. It was great to celebrate and debrief the year.

3. How were or will the results be disseminated (publication, presentation, creative work, etc. – be as specific as possible)? Please add an addendum or link to completed projects or provide a time-line for future dissemination.

There was no dissemination other than the presentations that the speakers gave to the classes. The results of these presentations are in the hearts, minds, and notes of the students.

4. What future scholarly works will be related to this project?

It is hoped that this project not only benefitted the students, but also the relationship that SPU has with area youth ministers. Thus the hope is that there will be future opportunities and willingness for outside speakers to come and speak with our students. Such connections can also result in internship placements and even possible volunteer or paid job positions.

5. Is there external funding that you would like to pursue with the [Office of Sponsored Programs](#)?

If we had a pot of funds to pay outside speakers, that would be terrific, but there are at present no plans to apply for any grants for that.

6. Did you run into any problems or difficulties in completing the project? How were these resolved?

The biggest obstacle was scheduling. Because of the number of speakers, it was challenging at times to schedule all of them on different weeks. In addition, different speakers spoke about different aspects of youth ministry, and matching the subject matter up with what different classes were teaching at any particular point in the quarter was also a challenge. But working with the speakers on possible times and subject matter resolved this problem.

7. If you had student participation – how did participation in this project further their professional goals or vocational understanding?

Students who are considering youth ministry as a vocation were able to garner from those involved in day-to-day youth ministry a realistic picture of what ministry to and with adolescents looks like in a particularized context. These contributions were able to complement the more theoretical – even if practical – models that they received in the lectures and readings of courses. This helped some students in their vocational reflection by helping them think about if they want to do youth ministry professionally or as a lay person, about what sort of context in which they would want to serve, and about what sort of specialized youth ministry they would want to pursue.