



***Exploration
of Vocation and Ministry
Program***

**PROGRAM HANDBOOK
2005-2006**

Office of the Chaplains

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Program Description

Furman University, through the Office of the Chaplains, offers an *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* program for students considering a form of ministry in their vocational pursuits. While many students in the program will anticipate entering seminary education following their time at Furman, other students will explore theological reflection while planning to live out their faith-based vocation in another area or discipline. Thus, the *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* program is expected to be diverse. Some examples of those who may wish to consider this program include:

- A student who plans to enter seminary/divinity school after graduation from Furman;
- A student who is in the process of discerning her/his vocation and is considering a form of faith-based ministry and is looking for a place to ask theological questions related to calling;
- A pre-med. student who plans to enroll in medical school after graduation but desires to put her/his training to work in conjunction with a faith-based program.

Applying to the Program

Students wishing to enroll in the *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* program are asked to complete the following:

1. Complete an application for the program, available from the Office of the Chaplains;
2. Schedule an appointment with one of the chaplains to discuss the application and your sense of calling at this stage of your journey;
3. Review the “Accountability Guidelines” of the program and complete the “Participation Covenant”

Acceptance into the Program

Once accepted into the program by the Office of the Chaplains, students are eligible for financial aid as a program participant. The amount is determined by the Financial Aid Officer.

Students may enroll in the program at any time at the discretion of the university chaplains. One need not be a freshman to apply.

The Structure of the Program

First-year *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* students will participate in an orientation class that meets every Wednesday afternoon, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. The class will offer opportunities for students to explore their call to ministry as well as engage in discussions related to ministry in the postmodern context. Along with assigned readings, writings, and classroom presentations, first-year students will plan and lead Furman’s University Worship held each Sunday during academic terms.

All *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* students will meet weekly on Tuesday evening for fellowship and sessions related to the call and practice of ministry. Readings, discussions, guest speakers, and other avenues of learning will be used in these common sessions.

Students in the second, third, and fourth years of the program will engage in supervised ministry internships off-campus. The selection of internship sites is done in consultation with the chaplains and will be in keeping with the student's personal and professional goals as well as a commitment to expose the student to a variety of ministry settings. All *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* students will meet with one of the chaplains in the spring term to discuss internship placements for the following year.

Accountability Guidelines

Students enrolled in the *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* program are asked to commit themselves to the following guidelines:

- First year students agree to participate in weekly classroom sessions led by the chaplains. Students agree to plan and participate in University Worship during their first year in the program. Please note: **one absence per term is permitted;**
- All students agree to model a life of faith through appropriate lifestyle choices;
- All students agree to participate in weekly gatherings of the *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* program;
- Upon successful completion of a year of orientation, students agree to participate in annual approved internships in the areas of urban ministry, hospital chaplaincy, congregational ministry, or other setting (at the approval of the chaplains). In order to expose the student to a variety of settings, internships will change at least annually. Students are expected to devote five hours per week to these internships.
- Students agree to actively participate in a community of faith, on and/or off campus.
- Students commit themselves to satisfactory academic performance.

Evaluation

The design of the *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* program is such that students, chaplains, and internship supervisors will continually engage in reflective exercises that help the evaluation process to take place. Formal times of evaluation give students the opportunity to explore and discern their vocational calling in a process of engaged learning. These formal processes include:

- At mid-term all students working in internship settings will complete a written evaluation of their experiences. These evaluations will be submitted to the chaplains for review and possible follow-up;
- Near the end of each internship assignment both the student and the supervisor will complete a written evaluation and submit these to the chaplains;
- Annually, near the end of the spring term, each student enrolled in the *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* will meet with one of the chaplains to discuss her/his evaluation,

the evaluation of the supervisor, and, if appropriate, the possible internship placement for the next academic year.

The chaplains are committed to ongoing dialogue regarding the evaluation of the *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* program. Students should be aware that evaluatory conversations may take place at any time through the year. Students are encouraged to schedule an appointment with one of the chaplains if questions or concerns arise between periods of formal evaluation.

Leadership within the *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* Program

The *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* program is a partnership between students, chaplains, supervisors and Furman University. Students are expected to play an active role in leading the program. Specific examples of these responsibilities include:

- Designing and implementing university Sunday worship under the supervision of the chaplains;
- Taking responsibility to attend all sessions of the program;
- Communicating with the chaplains when special needs or circumstances arise.

Some students will be chosen to serve in special leadership capacities during their time in the *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* program. The chaplains will select two students from those in their second year or beyond to serve as Program Facilitators. These students will work together to coordinate the activities of the Tuesday evening sessions in consultation with the chaplains and the leadership team (described below).

Students will have an annual opportunity to select two students from each participating class to serve on a Leadership Team. This team will be convened by the Program Facilitators throughout the year.

Ministry Internships

The placement of a student in a ministry internship is a significant opportunity for engaged learning and continuing reflection regarding the discernment of ministry and vocation. The procedure for placement in the *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* program is as follows:

1. In a brief essay, clarify and write out a statement of learning goals for the upcoming internship period. Your statement should include a description of your understanding of call as well as a personal assessment of your strengths and weaknesses in ministry. Page limit: 2 single-spaced.
2. Meet with one of the chaplains at least two months prior to the expected internship to discuss your learning goals and possible placement.
3. Make an appointment with the ministry supervisor mutually selected and agreed upon by you and the chaplains.
4. Discuss with the ministry supervisor your learning goals and other expectations. Listen to her/his expectations. Carefully observe and assess whether or not this is a

- person with whom you can establish a good working relationship. If you sense the need to explore other options after this initial conversation, make an appointment with one of the chaplains as soon as possible to discuss alternatives.
5. Develop a tentative agreement in writing concerning your learning-serving relationship with the ministry supervisor. A copy of this agreement should be given to the chaplains. This agreement should minimally state:
 - Your assessment of personal strengths/weaknesses;
 - Your learning goals;
 - Specific times of meeting for both supervision and service;
 - Initial activity involvement or responsibility
 - Stipend or financial remuneration, if any.
 6. Complete a written mid-year evaluation (provided by the chaplains).
 7. Schedule a consultation with the chaplains during the winter or spring term to assess your participation and progress toward your learning goals.
 8. At the end of the school year both the student and the ministry supervisor will submit an evaluation of the internship.

Pluralism and the *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry Program*

The *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* program grows out of Furman's previous *Church Related Vocations* program. As such the program was originally designed to offer a time of exploration related to ministry within the context of Christian communities. As Furman continues in its mission to engage in learning in a pluralistic context, the university chaplains have sought to adhere to the vision of this community as put forth in Furman's strategic plan:

Furman aspires to be a diverse community of women and men of different races, religions, geographic origins, socioeconomic backgrounds, personal characteristics, and interests. This diversity reflects values the university hopes to embody: openness, honesty, tolerance and mutual respect, civic responsibility, global awareness, and bold intellectual inquiry. These values foster a critical examination of inherited assumptions, even as they protect freedom of expression and the open exchange of ideas. In sum, Furman University aspires to be a diverse community of learning, harmonious in its differences, just and compassionate in its transactions, and steadfast in its commitment to an educational program of the highest quality.

Thus, while the majority of students engaged in the *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* program will come from a variety of Christian traditions, the chaplains welcome those who are exploring issues of ministry and vocation from other religious traditions to apply. The program can be customized to fit with a student's particular tradition, especially in the internship placement phase.

An Invitation

The *Exploration of Vocation and Ministry* program seeks to provide students the opportunity to deepen their awareness of call and purpose as they continue their education and make plans to be in effective ministry throughout their lives. This time of discernment and

learning is designed to bring clarity to the call to ministry as well as give those who intend to pursue advanced theological studies an opportunity for engagement with themes and resources that will equip them for future scholarly and professional work. The chaplains invite you to use this time to grow and flourish in your journey of self-discovery and call.

The Chaplains

Dr. Vaughn CroweTipton is the University Chaplain. Formerly the senior pastor at Auburn First Baptist Church in Auburn, Alabama. Dr. CroweTipton also taught in the religion department at Auburn University, as well as Mercer University, Brewton-Parker College and Macon College. He has served as senior pastor at Northwest Baptist Church in Ardmore, Ok., senior chaplain at Methodist Children's Home in Macon, Ga., and pastor of Loveview Baptist Church in Hillsboro, Tx. He has published numerous articles, edited several books, and serves as a conference speaker.

A graduate of Mississippi College (B.A.), he holds the M.Div. degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies from Baylor University.

Dr. Keith D. Ray II is the University Associate Chaplain. Formerly the pastor at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Greenville, SC, Dr. Ray has pastored United Methodist Churches in the Greenville area for nearly fifteen years. Dr. Ray has been involved in Furman's Lilly Center for Theological Exploration of Vocation, teaching through the Office of Continuing Education. Dr. Ray is also on the faculty of the Institute for Worship Studies where he guides students in the process of developing theses in the area of worship.

Dr. Ray is a graduate of Marshall University (B.A.), Candler School of Theology at Emory University (M.Div.), and Northern Seminary (D.Min. in Worship Studies). Dr. Ray has done additional graduate work in liturgical studies at the University of Notre Dame.