

# Teaching an Internship Course with an Emphasis on Vocation and Calling

TODD P. STEEN

Department of Economics and Business, Hope College

**ABSTRACT:** Although internships are increasingly important to business students as part of their education, Christian professors can often find it difficult to integrate a Christian perspective throughout the teaching and academic supervision of interns. This article presents a model that focuses the internship experience through a process of reflection on the concepts of vocation and calling. The article also includes descriptions of assignments used in an internship course taught at a Christian college, including practices for journal writing and a list of books and films that are used in the course.

**KEYWORDS:** internships, teaching, vocation, calling, Christian perspective, academic credit

---

## INTRODUCTION

A significant issue confronting collegiate departments of business has been increased demand by students for internship experiences. In the past, students may have thought themselves fortunate to obtain a single internship, but it is now not unusual for students to complete several internships while in college. At the same time, higher educational institutions have worked to better integrate internship experiences into curricular programs, including the provision of academic credit for internships. Business firms may require applicants for open positions within their companies to have completed an internship experience. At my institution, parents of prospective students are aware of this trend and often inquire about the availability of internships in the business major.

If Christian colleges and universities desire that all their courses integrate a Christian perspective (Roller, 2021), this must also occur in the teaching and academic supervision of interns. However, there are relatively few models available for this purpose. This article will describe one curricular option—an internship course with an intentional focus to reflect on vocation and calling. This article includes examples of books to use for readings, descriptions of techniques for journal writing, paper assignments, and other assignments used in an internship course taught for academic credit at a Christian college.<sup>1</sup> In this course, students

are required to make connections between their worldview and their work and are given the tools for future reflection. I have developed and taught this course over a twenty-year period and have been quite pleased with student outcomes in the course. Since the purpose of the course is not to teach accounting or marketing or some other specific field but to promote reflection on vocation and calling, the framework can be used for a variety of different internships and could be used for other disciplines outside of business. There has been very little work in academic literature focusing on the relationship between student internships and the ideas of vocation and calling. This article examines the place of internships within higher education, with an emphasis on vocation and calling, and reviews some of the previous literature concerning internships.

While colleges and universities have generally developed structures to administer internships, they have been less successful in connecting internship experiences to Christian notions of vocation and calling. The late Frederick Buechner (1973) wrote, “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet” (p. 95). Although some Christians have criticized this definition as ignoring calling that can come out of sadness (Thompson, 2022), a strength of Buechner’s statement is the assertion that our calling should respond to the needs of our neighbors. Another formulation comes from Cornelius Plantinga (2002), who wrote,

Christians follow their main vocation by playing a lively part in institutions and endeavors that, consciously or not, seek the interests of the kingdom. Of these the church is first, but others—including governments, businesses, professions, and non-profit service organizations—are crucial as well. (p. 113)

Both statements can help provide a focus for students' internship experiences. There are various ways to understand the idea of vocation and calling. Lee Hardy (1990) provides a detailed history of these ideas. The Christian ideas of vocation and calling provide a robust foundation for any model of teaching and supervising internships.

## THE PLACE OF INTERNSHIPS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Internships are playing an increasingly important role in higher education, particularly in business. A widely reported statistic suggests that more than 60 percent of college and university students complete internships (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2017); this figure would probably seem low to faculty of business students. According to Rogers et al. (2021), "U.S. organizations employ 2 million interns per year, about half paid and half unpaid" (para. 1). A typical expression of the importance of internships in Christian business education comes from Bluefield University (2022):

Internships are an important part of any business degree program. They give you real-world experience and knowledge that augments what you learn in the classroom and provide [sic] valuable insight to the career you want to pursue. Even more importantly, they can help you build connections and sometimes even lead to that first job! Many top companies expect new hires to have internship experience [sic]. So, in some instances, the internship isn't just a nice thing to have, it's a must. (paras. 1-2)

As noted above, one reason students find internship experiences so desirable is that they often result in offers of employment. According to a report by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2020), "For interns, the offer rate was 68 percent, the acceptance rate was 81.6 percent, and the conversion rate was 55.5 percent" (p. 3). Polling data from Gallup and Purdue University suggest that internships can have a broadly positive impact on interns. They report that students who had an internship or job that allowed them "to apply what I was learning in the classroom" were twice as likely to report "being engaged at work" and 1.5 times as likely to report "thriving in all areas of well-being" (Gallup, 2014, para. 4). There are issues of causation

and selection bias in polling data such as these, but the results are suggestive of good outcomes for internships.

Educational institutions need to make decisions about how internship experiences count as academic credit and how these situations will be supervised and monitored; they often formulate a set of rules and even legal documents to deal with some of the situations that arise during internships. Institutions can struggle with how to monitor internships given that most of the students' activities are occurring off campus and are not under the direct supervision of a college faculty or staff member; businesses can on occasion assign tasks to the intern that are unrelated to the academic outcomes of the course. Internship supervisors within firms and other organizations may also have little time or lack interest in connecting to the educational institution and may have limited knowledge of the institution's goals.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Although previous research about internships addresses a wide variety of topics concerning student outcomes, there are relatively few articles concerning a Christian approach to the teaching of internship courses. An article by Prescott et al. (2021) addresses the costs of internships and finds that students' academic performance was negatively affected by the internship while it was ongoing. Although academic performance did rebound after the students completed their internships, it did not fully recover. Our findings suggest that faculty and administrators cannot determine the appropriate curricular role for college internships without fully considering their academic effects. (para. 1)

In a dissertation that focused on business internships, Walker (2011) found a potentially contradictory result: "Those students who participate in an internship are more likely to finish with an overall, higher, final GPA than those who do not take advantage of a student internship" (p. 71). He also reported, "The experiences of an internship do not necessarily improve students' GPA in business-core classes.... Those students who participate in an internship are more likely to persist to graduation than those who do not participate in a student internship." Rogers et al. (2021) conclude that while there are many unpaid internships, "[n]early all management research on internship experiences and outcomes focuses on paid interns," and "unpaid internships have relatively poorer job design, resulting in lower satisfaction and career development" (para. 1).

These are just a few examples of research on internships. It does not appear that there is a strong systematic body of

received wisdom on this subject. My search of articles in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* over the last five years found minimal discussion concerning the academic supervision of internships. There appears to be little previous work that examines how the design of an internship course could integrate reflection on the topics of vocation and calling.

The subject of internships has not been prominent in either Christian Business Faculty Association (CBFA) journals or at recent CBFA conferences. There are no articles in the *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business (JBIB)* or *Christian Business Academy Review (CBAR)* with the word “internship” in the title. Windes et al. (2017) discuss the evaluation process for interns and mention the importance of vocation and calling, but they do not describe in detail how the reflection process might be incorporated in the teaching of an internship course. In the published proceedings of the CBFA conferences from 2017 to 2021, there were very few articles with anything more than passing references to internships. Hogelucht (2021) mentioned internships in addressing how students can model their faith at work. McHugh (2021) had the most mentions of internships in any article and reported on the results of a survey he conducted of faculty at an unnamed Christian institution. He found that faculty often believed that their institution was “not providing adequate internship support” (p. 172). There was no mention of the word “internships” in any of the abstracts of articles presented at the 2022 CBFA Annual Conference (Holbrook & Houghton, 2022). In addition, the word “internships” did not appear in any of the titles of articles published in the first twenty-one volumes of *Christian Higher Education* through 2022. The need for further research on the topic is more appropriate than ever concerning the subject of internships and their place in Christian higher education.

While professional literature is lacking regarding the process of integrating vocation and calling into internship courses, some institutions are working to develop programs to promote vocational reflection during internship experiences. As one example, Calvin Theological Seminary has an extensive program to help their students discern their calling during their education, including internship placements (Vocational Formation Office, n.d.). Although this program is located within graduate-level theological education leading to ministry, some of the ideas there could be applied in business internships. The Lilly Foundation has also encouraged the discussion of vocation and calling at the college level through the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (Council of Independent Colleges, n.d.).

## COURSE DESIGN AND REQUIREMENTS

When students first approach me about earning academic credit for their internship, I emphasize that the course is a unique opportunity that might happen only once in their lifetime. Although individuals often desire to reflect on their vocation and calling in a systematic fashion, it becomes quite difficult during their work lives. In my academic department, the course is titled Internships in Vocation, which emphasizes the core of the experience. When I teach the course, it is offered as a remote course during the summer. Students have worked at a variety of locations around the country as well as internationally. On occasion, I have had the opportunity to visit students in their workplace if they are local or communicate with them via telephone or video conferencing, but generally the interaction in the course has been through email and the course management system. The course is not required for business majors, and it is offered by other instructors using different methods during the regular academic year.

Students typically find internships on their own for the summer and have worked at a wide variety of companies and organizations, both large and small. These have included corporations, retail brokerages, health organizations, insurance agencies, agricultural producers, start-up companies, churches, summer camps, and other non-profits. The Internships in Vocation course is closely aligned with an objective of the college’s strategic plan, which states, “Every student’s academic program will include rigorous, relevant, customized, faculty-supervised experiences (on or off campus) that link intellectual skills and habits developed through the liberal arts with vocational aspirations” (*Hope College Abstracts*, 2017). One would expect that the process of vocational reflection would be a significant part of a career center’s *modus operandi* at any Christian college or university. The activities described below can help complement activities that take place within such centers.

The course is structured around several writing assignments designed to help students reflect on the concepts of vocation and calling. To start, students complete an initial paper that outlines their goals for the internship and requires a description of their ideas about work and their current understanding of vocation and calling. Students then read and complete a substantial review of Cornelius Plantinga’s (2002) book *Engaging God’s World*. This book provides an organized formulation of a Christian worldview as well as a theological explanation of the ideas of vocation and calling. They are required to relate the material in the book to their experiences in their internships and respond to some of the discussion questions that are included in

the book. I have used other books as the main volume in the course, including Lee Hardy's (1990) *The Fabric of this World* and Gordon Smith's (2011) *Courage and Calling*. Tim Keller's (2012) book *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* is another possibility. Details on the above assignments are presented in Appendix A.

The heart of the course revolves around the journaling requirement. Students submit weekly reflections about their activities at the internship, what they are learning about themselves, and how these insights relate to their faith. Students generally have little experience with journaling and the sustained reflection that it requires, and I provide a variety of writing prompts that they can use. Students turn in a journal entry each Monday that describes the previous week, and I generally provide feedback within a day or two. This schedule gives them an opportunity to respond to my questions and suggestions in their next week's journal entry. Throughout the summer, this process serves as an extended conversation and opportunity for mentoring. I learn a lot about the students' beliefs and feelings. A description of some of the journal prompts, instructor feedback, and grading elements is presented in Appendix B.

Additional assignments for the course include a review of *The Devil Wears Prada* (Frankel, 2006) and a final paper, which includes a summary and appraisal of the internship experience with a focus on the idea of vocation. In addition, students complete a second book review on a book chosen in consultation with me. Students also complete an assignment where they interview two people and discuss questions concerning the nature of work and these individuals' ideas about calling. They are required to write a summary of the responses and a commentary on the experience. Students must ask where the respondents developed a sense of calling (if any) and what circumstances in their work add or detract from this sense. Students often interview family members or co-workers, and this assignment has led to many significant conversations. Overall, the course is comparable to a senior seminar course, where a student might reflect on various readings. However, in this case, the reflection is tied closely to the work experience that the student is having in the internship and the student's hopes and aspirations for the future. The idea of adding significant reflection about vocation and calling can be adapted to almost any internship course or experience, whether paid or unpaid, in-person or online. It may take different forms, but the reflection and instructor feedback components would be similar. Additionally, these components make the internship course significantly different than those offered by secular universities.

## STUDENT OUTCOMES AND FEEDBACK

As I have taught this course over the last two decades, I have noticed a few consistent trends in student outcomes for the course. First, the deepest and most thoughtful papers I have read as a professor have come from this course. In addition, I have been surprised by the quality of work from what I thought were "average" students. I have also developed closer teaching relationships with students even though the course is not a face-to-face experience. The course has also allowed me to pray for my students more specifically and effectively.

Student feedback for the Internships in Vocation course has been very positive. Their feedback has focused on the reflection process that takes place, particularly in the journaling process. Students also appreciate the opportunity to see a connection between their faith and their work that they were not able to see before. Workplace supervisors of internships have reported to me that the course design helped the student be much more focused in their experience.

Although student comments should be interpreted with a grain of salt, included below are several quotes from students about the course as a sample of student feedback. These were sent to the professor as part of an informal evaluation of the course and have been used with the students' permission.

"The biggest improvement I have made this summer is taking time to reflect. In order to find our calling, we need to be honest with ourselves."

"I think the biggest thing that I have learned this summer is really to trust God's purpose."

"I loved this course and the way it made me think about my calling and how I can become a better student as well as a better Christian."

"This summer, I have learned so much not only about agriculture, but myself. I am proud of how far I have come and where God's plan for me will take me from now on. Thank you for encouraging us through this process in our lives and teaching us the importance of what work has to offer to the world!"

## CONCLUSION

Supervising an internship or teaching an internship course brings unique challenges. During the internship, students are off campus, so there is relatively little direct supervision by the professor. Given that students sometimes hear they can receive academic credit for "work experience," they may view the internship by itself as enough to earn credit and can be reluctant to complete other assignments



as part of the academic component of the internship. Yet, Christian professors desire to integrate a Christian perspective into their internship course and the supervision of the intern and want their students to have a meaningful learning experience. These goals are not always easy to accomplish, however, and there are relatively few models available to accomplish this purpose. This article describes several assignments that can help integrate the Christian concepts of vocation and calling into an internship course.

Teaching an internship course that focuses on vocation and calling has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my teaching career. Even though the course is taught almost a hundred percent remotely, the process of deep reflection by students and timely detailed feedback by the professor has resulted in a learning environment characterized by openness and trust. As a result, I have ended up knowing my students in these classes better than in any others. There are many ways to integrate this reflection process into internship courses, and I recommend these activities to all faculty who supervise internships.

#### ENDNOTE

- <sup>1</sup> A syllabus for the course and any further information about class assignments are available upon request from the author.

#### REFERENCES

- Bluefield University. (2022, February 1). *The importance of internships for business students*. Bluefield University. <https://www.bluefield.edu/blog/why-you-should-do-internship-in-business-school/>
- Buechner, F. (1993). *Wishful thinking: A theological ABC*. Harper & Row.
- Council of Independent Colleges. (n.d.). *NetVUE*. <https://cic.edu/networks/netvue/>
- Frankel, D. (2006). *The devil wears prada* [Film]. Twentieth Century Fox.
- Gallup, Inc. (2014, May 6). *Life in college matters for life after college*. Gallup.com. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/168848/life-college-matters-life-college.aspx>
- Hardy, L. (1990). *The fabric of this world: Inquiries into calling, career choice, and the design of human work*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Hogelucht, K. (2021, September). How students let their “light” shine in the workplace. In R. L. Holbrook & M. Peddicord (Eds.), *Intersection of faith and business* (pp. 31-44). Christian Business Faculty Association. [https://www.cbfa.org/\\_files/ugd/9d54b2\\_03ecbc3f1d8049269c3f9a1af7367a1d.pdf](https://www.cbfa.org/_files/ugd/9d54b2_03ecbc3f1d8049269c3f9a1af7367a1d.pdf)
- Holbrook, R. L., & Houghton, D. (Eds.). (2022, October). *Cupbearers to kings: Empowering students to be future shapers*. [https://www.cbfa.org/\\_files/ugd/9d54b2\\_affe9968ac1f417b82c90f42483f0817.pdf](https://www.cbfa.org/_files/ugd/9d54b2_affe9968ac1f417b82c90f42483f0817.pdf)
- Hope College abstracts: 16th annual celebration of undergraduate research and creative performance. (2017). Hope College Digital Commons. [https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/curcp\\_16/2/](https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/curcp_16/2/)
- Keller, T. (2012). *Every good endeavor: Connecting your work to God's work*. Viking.
- Kendrick, A. (2019). *Overcomer* [Film]. Provident Films.
- McHugh, J. (2021, September). The role of faculty on student preparation for career success. In R. L. Holbrook & M. Peddicord (Eds.), *Intersection of faith and business* (pp. 154-184). Christian Business Faculty Association. [https://www.cbfa.org/\\_files/ugd/9d54b2\\_03ecbc3f1d8049269c3f9a1af7367a1d.pdf](https://www.cbfa.org/_files/ugd/9d54b2_03ecbc3f1d8049269c3f9a1af7367a1d.pdf)
- Meyers, N. (2015). *The Intern* [Film]. Warner Brothers.
- Mulligan, R. (1963). *To kill a mockingbird* [Film]. Universal Pictures.
- National Association of Colleges and Employers. (2017). *The class of 2017 student survey report executive summary*. <https://www.nacweb.org/uploadedfiles/files/2017/publication/executive-summary/2017-nace-student-survey-executive-summary.pdf>
- National Association of Colleges and Employers. (2020). *Internship & co-op survey report executive summary 2020*. <https://www.nacweb.org/uploadedfiles/files/2020/publication/executive-summary/2020-nace-internship-and-co-op-survey-executive-summary.pdf>
- Plantinga, C. (2002). *Engaging God's world: A Christian vision of faith, learning, and living*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Prescott, P., Gjerde, K. P., & Rice, J. L. (2021). Analyzing mandatory college internships: academic effects and implications for curricular design. *Studies in Higher Education*, 46(11), 2444–2459. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1723531>
- Rogers, S. E., Miller, C. D., Flinchbaugh, C., Giddarie, M., & Barker, B. W. (2021). All internships are not created equal: Job design, satisfaction, and vocational development in paid and unpaid internships. *Human Resource Management Review*, 31(1), 100723. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2019.100723>

- Roller, R. H. (2021). Interest rates, investments, microfinance, insurance, and risk management through the lens of Scripture: Biblical faith integration in a financial markets and institutions course. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 16(1). <https://cbfa-jbib.org/index.php/cbar/article/view/573>
- Smith, G. T. (2011). *Courage and calling: Embracing your God-given potential*. InterVarsity Press.
- Thompson, D. A. (2022, July 13). Where our deep sadness and the world's deep hunger meet. *The Christian Century*. <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/features/where-our-deep-sadness-and-world-s-deep-hunger-meet>
- Vocational Formation Office. (n.d.). *Answer your vocational calling*. Calvin Theological Seminary. Retrieved from <https://calvinseminary.edu/vocational-formation/#assessments>
- Walker, R. B. (2011). *Business internships and their relationship with retention, academic performance, and degree completion*. [Doctoral Dissertation, Iowa State University]. Iowa State University Digital Repository. <https://doi.org/10.31274/etd-180810-1223>
- Windes, D. L., White, L. S., Harkema, K. J., Hamilton, R. A., & Samudio, C. N. (2017). Preparing business students for participation in God's creative and redemptive purpose for the world. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 12. <https://cbfa-cbar.org/index.php/cbar/article/view/454>

## APPENDIX A: DETAILS OF COURSE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Each of the following writing assignments prompts students to reflect on issues of vocation and calling in response to a Christian worldview. Descriptions provided focus on the aspects of the assignments regarding vocation and calling. Although there are questions and prompts for each of the assignments, they are also intended to be quite open-ended to allow for students' ideas to be expressed freely.

In evaluating the assignments, in addition to the quality of writing, I focus on the depth of reflection that is taking place as well as the growth in this process. Since I usually work with a small group of 5-10 interns, the experience is "customizable" for students at different life stages. Some have a highly developed Christian faith, while others have a nascent faith or no Christian faith at all. My responses to both their journal entries and their responses in these papers work in a developmental fashion to help them consider new ideas and to promote growth without expressing judgment on their current situation.

### Exercise 1: Initial Reflection Paper

This paper is intended to provide a benchmark describing the student's understanding of issues regarding vocation and calling at the beginning of the internship experience. I use this initial paper to identify questions that I can ask students in their subsequent journal assignments. For the assignment, the student is asked to respond to the following questions and prompts:

- 1) What experiences in your life have been formative regarding your views on work?
- 2) Describe two people in your life who you believe hold positive views of work and describe why you feel this way.
- 3) What are your current conceptions of the terms vocation and calling, and how do they relate to your faith or belief system?
- 4) Describe any Bible passages that have been influential in your thinking about work and vocation.
- 5) How do your answers to the previous questions frame your goals for the internship experience?

### Exercise 2: Book Review of Cornelius Plantinga's *Engaging God's World*

This assignment requires students to complete a substantial review of Cornelius Plantinga's book *Engaging God's World*. The assignment is intended to help students understand the concept of a biblical worldview based on the ideas of creation, the fall, and redemption. Many students have not formulated a systematic biblical worldview. The assignment also asks students to reflect on how this worldview impacts their ideas of vocation and calling. The solid biblical framework in Plantinga's book is intended to provide a lens for the subsequent reflection in journal assignments and other papers they will write for the course. In the assignment, the student is asked to respond to the following questions and prompts:

- 1) Read Genesis 1 and Chapter 2 of the Plantinga book. What is the significance of the biblical story of creation for our life in this world?
- 2) Read Genesis 3 and Chapter 3 of the Plantinga book. What is the impact of the fall on our world?
- 3) Read Colossians 1:1-15, Romans 8:18-25, and chapter 4 of the Plantinga book. What is the significance of God's redemption of the world through Christ's death on the cross?
- 4) How do Plantinga's ideas impact our work in the world?

- 5) How does Plantinga describe the idea of vocation in the book?
- 6) Are there ideas in this book that will impact the conduct of your internship experience?

### Exercise 3: Second Book Review

For this assignment, students are required to complete a review of a second book that examines the issues of vocation and calling. The choice of book is negotiated between the professor and the student. For the assignment, the student is asked to respond to the following questions and prompts:

- 1) What is the central thesis or theme of the book?
- 2) How do the ideas in this book relate to your faith or belief system?
- 3) How would the ideas from this book impact the design of work in the world?
- 4) How do the ideas in the book relate to Plantinga's concept of a biblical worldview as described in *Engaging God's World?*
- 5) Are there ideas in your book that will impact the conduct of your internship experience and your future work life?

### Exercise 4: Movie Review

Movies and other video content are a substantial source of entertainment in today's world as well as a significant influence on our culture. In this assignment, students reflect on a movie in terms of a biblical worldview, with an emphasis on concepts of vocation and calling. A secondary goal is to give students some experience in practicing cultural discernment. The default movie used for this assignment is *The Devil Wears Prada* (Frankel, 2006). This movie is popular and well-known even to students of the current generation. Topics of vocation and calling are near the surface and central to the idea of the movie. Other movies are certainly suitable, and I allow students to review other movies that they suggest subject to my approval (some other alternatives include *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Mulligan, 1963), *The Intern* (Meyers, 2015), and the Christian film *Overcomer* (Kendrick, 2019)). For the assignment, the student is asked to respond to the following questions and prompts:

- 1) What are the central themes of the movie?
- 2) Describe the views of work of two central characters in the movie.
- 3) How do these views relate to Plantinga's concept of vocation as described in his book *Engaging God's World?*
- 4) How do the ideas in this movie relate to your faith or belief system?
- 5) What can we learn from this movie regarding our work?

### Exercise 5: Interview Assignment

For this assignment, students are required to interview two individuals and write a paper reflecting on this experience. Students develop a list of questions relating to work, leisure, vocation, and calling that they ask the respondents. Students also ask these individuals how their views reflect their faith or belief system and how their views have developed over time. The respondents are also asked to provide advice for the student regarding future work experience. Students then craft a paper describing their responses to the interviews and reflect on them in relation to their own faith or belief system, as well as in connection to the ideas concerning vocation expressed in the Plantinga book.

### Exercise 6: Final Paper

In this assignment, students reflect on their internship. Since the experience for these students occurs over the course of a summer, there is a significant opportunity for development. For the assignment, students are asked to respond to the following questions and prompts:

- 1) Why do you work? Why should one work? Consider various perspectives, including your own and those of others you have interviewed and those you have read about. How do your ideas relate to your faith or belief system?
- 2) What have you learned about yourself during your internship? How did you learn it?
- 3) Compared to the ideas expressed in your initial paper, reflect on whether your views of vocation and calling have developed or changed during the internship. To what do you attribute these changes, if any? How do your ideas relate to the concept of vocation as expressed in the book by Plantinga?
- 4) What are some vocational opportunities that you see for yourself?
- 5) What are your plans for the next five to ten years considering what you have learned during your internship and during your college experience?

**APPENDIX B: JOURNAL WRITING PROMPTS, FEEDBACK, AND GRADING RUBRIC**

For the journal writing assignment, students write weekly entries describing their work activities, what they are learning about themselves, and how this relates to their faith. There is a course document provided to students which contains a variety of prompts that they can respond to in their weekly journals. While vocation and calling are an emphasis of the course, they are not the only aspect. Some prompts directly related to vocation and calling include:

1. How is the subject of faith and religion addressed in your workplace?
2. How does the work you are doing this week fit in with your personal sense of vocation and calling?
3. Which co-workers provide a good example of Christian service in their work lives? Why? Do any non-Christian workers provide examples of service that parallel a Christian view?
4. What gifts of yours are being used in your internship? What gifts are not being used?
5. What is your evaluation of the products or services that your business or organization is providing based on their contribution to God's Kingdom or to a more just society? How might you change things if you had the opportunity?
6. How does this internship experience relate to your ideas about work/life balance?

There are other writing prompts that can help provide context for the instructor to better understand the experiences of the intern. These prompts include:

1. Write an evaluation of your activities during the day from the perspective of your supervisor.
2. Reflect on a few ideas from a course you have taken in your major and how this relates to your work.
3. What appear to be the top priorities of the organization where you are working? What is the level of employee "buy-in" for these priorities?
4. Do an analysis of a project that you have worked on, examining the strengths and weaknesses of your work.
5. What would you do differently this past week if you could?

A significant part of the journal experience is the feedback that is provided to the student. When they receive my comments, they are expected to respond to them in the following weeks. As just one example, when a student took a week off from work during the summer to travel to Europe, they were required to write about their impressions concerning work design and attitudes towards work and how they might differ in Europe because of faith and culture. The grading elements for the journal assignment include an evaluation of the depth of reflection in the journal, writing quality, creativity, timeliness, and improvement over the course of the summer.