The $2 Million: Where it Came from, Where it's Going

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Contributing Writer

On Friday, Nov. 16, an urgent e-mail titled "NEWS FLASH" was sent to everyone in the EMU community. In it, President Joe Lapp informed students about the "single largest gift" in EMU history from Lilly Endowment, Inc.

The Lilly Foundation is awarding EMU a $2 million grant to finance programs exploring the theological aspects of vocation.

EMU first became aware of the possibility of attaining a grant when Goshen College received grants in November of 1998. A little over a year ago, EMU was invited by the Endowment to apply for a planning grant of $50 thousand to assist them in writing a proposal for a larger grant, possibly up to $2 million. EMU received this planning grant and began work in May of 2001, when a group of faculty and a few students worked together to plan the grant and its proposal.

After much work, the grant write-up was finished. It was submitted and eventually accepted, giving EMU the largest possible amount of $2 million.

Academic provost Beryl Brubaker is very excited about this development.

The grant will have three main focus points: developing students' vocation as part of discipleship, discovering it within the community and working with persons who feel called to consider pastoral ministry.

On the EMU website, Lapp said, "The grant will allow EMU to develop throughout the university for faculty and staff to assist students in exploring the theological aspects of vocation, what it means to identify and determine God's call on their lives."

The first point will consist of what Brubaker calls "creating a cultural call." EMU is hoping to find ways to incorporate a vocational focus in classes and space for students to reflect on the connection between faith and vocation with a reason to question her beliefs.

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