



Physician's Vocation Program

Creighton University School of Medicine

The Physician's Vocation Program (PVP) is a four-year spiritual formation program that offers students tools to explore medicine through the lens of faith and Christian community. Students incorporate the practices of regular prayer, reflection, and discussion with classmates and faculty into their formation as a physician.

First Year

Students receive an introduction to Ignatian Spirituality. They read about and engage in various forms of prayer including the Examen, *lectio divina*, and Ignatian contemplation. The Autobiography of St. Ignatius introduces themes of conversion, discernment, pilgrimage and dependence. In Daniel Sulmasy's book *The Healer's Calling*, students begin to reflect on the intersection of medicine and their faith commitments. Students begin monthly spiritual direction.



Second Year

In the fall students read Joel Shuman and Brian Volck's book *Reclaiming the Body* which is an "exploration of medicine as if God...theology and the church, actually mattered." In the spring students read John Swinton's book *Raging with Compassion* which takes up a Christian response to the challenge of suffering. Faculty and older students join these discussions to offer perspective. Students continue monthly spiritual direction.



Third Year

Students have the opportunity to proceed through the 19th Annotation of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, under the guidance of their spiritual director and in conjunction with their clinical rotations. The Spiritual Exercises involve a commitment to daily prayer and weekly meetings with a spiritual director. The cohort will continue to meet regularly as a group to reflect on faith and the day-to-day realities of medicine.

Fourth Year

Students will take a two-week clinical elective, "Ignatian Spirituality in Palliative Medicine," during their fourth year. This course serves as a synthesis of the constitutive components of the program: prayer, community, service, and medical education. They have opportunities to share their insights with the first and second-year cohorts. Students continue spiritual direction as they discern residency and their medical careers.

