

APULIFE

AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

FALL/WINTER 2020

COVID MANAGEMENT ■ A MODEL CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY ■ BECOMING A THRIVING UNIVERSITY OF CHOICE

**THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF
AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY
(2020–2027)**



RENEWAL

*Strengthening Our Capacity for Cultivating
Christ-Centered Scholars and Leaders*

God First Since 1899



Dear Friends:

I trust that you are experiencing the Lord's joy and strength in this unprecedented season in which we find ourselves. This fall, APU released our much-anticipated Strategic Plan. In the midst of such uncertainty and challenge, the Plan has brought energy and hope for Azusa Pacific University's future. Even virtually, you can feel the Community's collective excitement for this new roadmap, which will enable our University to contribute in meaningful ways for such a time as this.

University strategic plans emerge from consideration of the socioeconomic, educational, and political land-scape, with analysis of the strengths and opportunities of an organization and its people. In August 2019, a diverse group of Azusa Pacific University faculty, staff, students, administrators, and trustees embarked on an eight-month planning process, reflecting upon more than 100 years of Christ-centered academic excellence and thinking about how APU should plan for a challenging future. Few could have pre-dicted that one of the greatest disruptors in higher education, let alone the world, would materialize in Spring 2020. While the full impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on higher education remains unknown, the effect on University life has been extensive. In late May 2020, as colleges and universities across the United States grappled with the implications of this health crisis, institutions also needed to address a significant wave of social unrest. In this context and the presidential election season's extreme par-tisan politics, our country and world desperately seek clarity, direction, and hope for the future.

In the midst of these formidable challenges, the APU Strategic Plan, *Renewal: Strengthening Our Capacity for Cultivating Christ-Centered Scholars and Leaders*, brings prioritized focus to meet the opportunity for Azusa Pacific University to thrive and contribute in rich and meaningful ways to society's evolving and pressing needs. This blueprint sets out a bold seven-year strategic path forward defining how Azusa Pacific will flourish. This issue of *APU Life* provides a broad overview of *Renewal's* 5 Grand Initiatives that can catalyze APU to become:

A model Christian University. Become the model Christian University for our culture and times: Defining engagement with virtue as leading Christian scholars and citizens.

A thriving University of choice. Become a University destination of choice for a diverse body of students, faculty, and staff, reflecting inclusive academic excellence.

A transformational and collaborative organization. Build APU's leadership structure to promote and sustain a newly unified and collaborative approach to transformational University development and impact.

A recognized leader in technology and data management. Advance APU as an academic leader in innovative technology and data management promoting insightful decision-making.

A sustainable financial enterprise. Create entrepreneurial funding strategies and practices to resource new initiatives and secure financial sustainability.

Renewal is grounded in Romans 12:2: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that by testing you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (NIV). As you read this issue of *APU Life*, may you see the wonderful grace of God in His wisdom and guidance of Azusa Pacific University as we seek to strengthen and extend the impact of His University in these uncertain times.

With best personal regards,

Paul W. Ferguson, Ph.D., DABT
President

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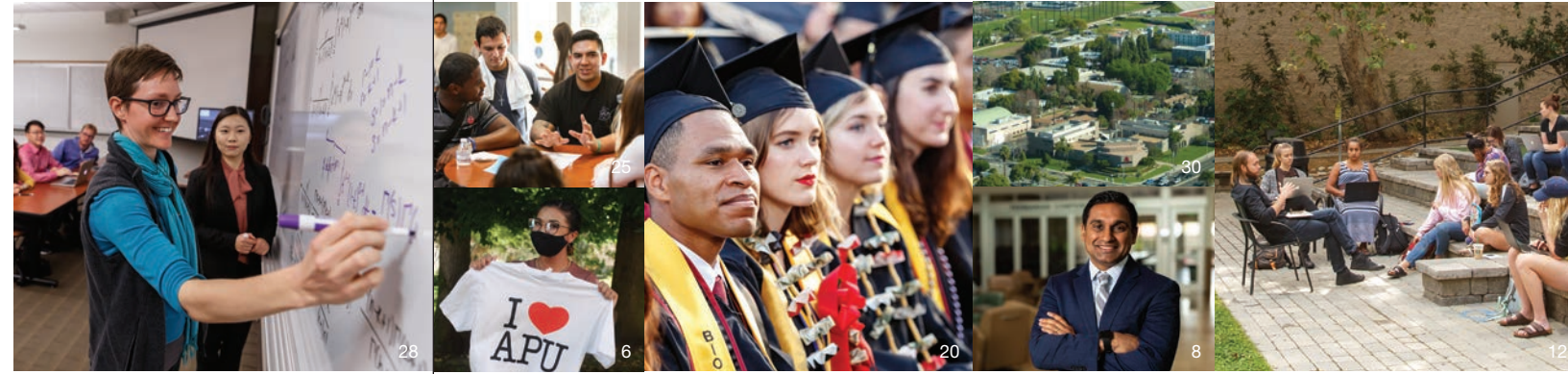
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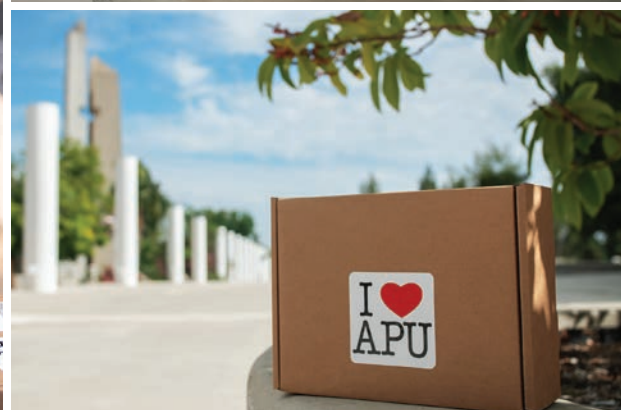
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Cover illustration and design by Saeri C. Dobson, a Los Angeles-based illustrator, designer, and professor.



Welcome Days transitioned to a virtual experience for the Fall 2020 semester, and through the reimagined format, new students discovered the people and resources needed to connect and thrive in APU's Christ-centered academic community. From receiving an APU Welcome Kit in the mail, hand-packed by dozens of APU volunteers, to attending the virtual worship service and candela and gate ceremonies, new students and families were warmly greeted and the beginning of their unique APU journey celebrated.

Leading through Crisis: APU's Commitment to Academic Excellence

BY MEGAN PROSSER, PH.D.

A year ago, the higher education landscape was already facing pressure to increase access and affordability and enhance majors and programming to better meet marketplace needs and a changing student demographic. COVID-19, a global pandemic with worldwide impact, further emphasized these demands and punctuated the need for innovative thinking and rapid response in order for education delivery in a virtual setting.

The arrival of the novel coronavirus first reported in December 2019 required wise decision-making and clear communication. Both underscored the university's commitment to community care and fiscal discipline in the face of this unprecedented event. The following represents a brief summary of the actions taken to safeguard the APU community and advance the mission of this university. Taken in total, the undertaking was one which speaks to the resilience and commitment of the APU community.

During the Spring 2020 semester, the APU Critical Incident Response Team mobilized, activating the COVID-19 APU Emergency Operations Center to coordinate a comprehensive campus response. Over a two-week period in mid-March, as state and local public health guidelines and directives seemed to shift daily, the APU community made an extraordinary conversion in campus operations in Azusa, at the Regional Locations throughout California, and around the world.

To limit viral contact and spread, on March 12, 2020, APU pivoted courses on all campuses to remote learning. This required a phenomenal effort on behalf of the deans, department chairs, program directors, and faculty. They strived in the midst of flux to uphold the university's academic mission and maintain a deep commitment to quality and student learning. APU students also demonstrated extraordinary flexibility and adaptability to an abrupt shift in their learning environment. APU's Office of Information and Media Technology (IMT) played a critical role in supporting distance learning and virtual orientations.

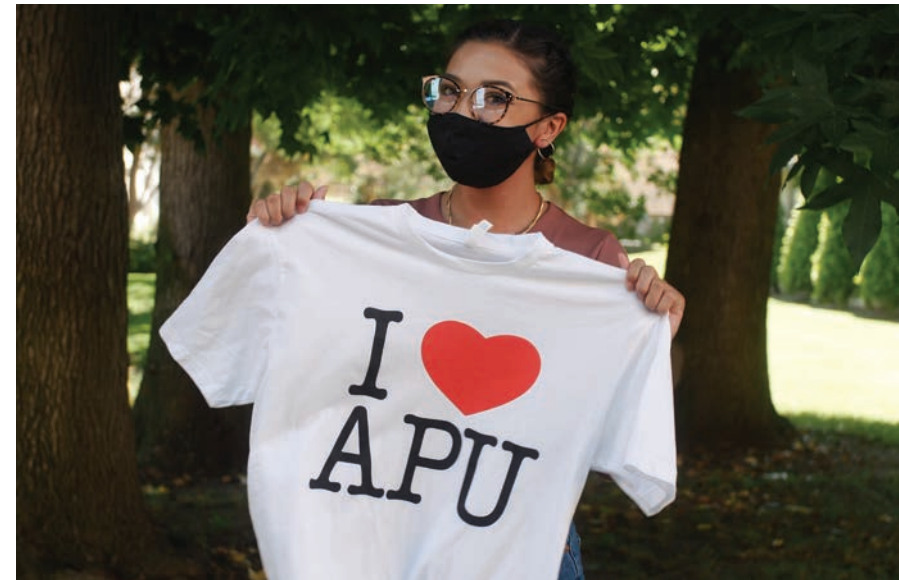
With a rise in COVID-19 cases and a keen need to minimize risk, APU announced just five days later that the majority of the community would shift to work from home, while still enabling essential workers to facilitate university operations and distance learning from campus. University housing and dining services closed, and residential students, who could, safely went home. Students with need were

housed and cared for on the Azusa campus by the Student Affairs team and Student Health Center. In addition, students studying abroad in Ecuador and South Africa returned home safely despite incredible international hurdles. On March 19, California Governor Newsom issued a mandatory statewide safer-at-home order, emphasizing the alignment of APU decision-making with state guidelines and directives.

Remote learning and work from home sparked the immense creativity and ingenuity of the APU community with reimagined delivery of academic programming and community connection. These efforts included:

- The President and President's Cabinet developed a strategic and tactical communication plan through 86 separate communications.
- The Division of Student Affairs created online programming to support student spiritual formation and ongoing student engagement including the launch of togetherapu.org.
- The Office of the Provost provided resources and training opportunities for faculty support and development.
- The Academic Success Center maintained individual connections with all undergraduate and professional students through a call campaign.
- Schools and Colleges maintained individual connections with all graduate students through a call campaign.
- Enrollment Management offered more than 50 online events to maintain continued connection with prospective students.
- The Office of Human Resources provided employee instruction and guidance including creative work-at-home strategies in compliance with public health mandates, donation of accrued vacation, and redeployment of workers to projects of higher need.
- Six million in federal relief dollars were secured to assist the University and APU students.

APU spent the summer actively preparing to reopen in the Fall 2020 semester. The Return to Campus Task Force and the Academic Return to Campus Working Group readied APU for a safe reopening of facilities and the delivery of academic programming in accordance with evolving state and county guidelines and directives. The Return to Campus Plan encompassed academics, the academic



PHOTOS BY NATHAN INGALLS, M.A. '19 AND APU STUDENT HEALTH CENTER

calendar, guidelines for health and safety, cleaning and sanitation, and physical distancing, as well as contingency plans should outbreaks occur.

As a part of that preparation, and consistent with management principles established in Spring 2020, APU strived to effectively balance community care with fiscal responsibility. This entailed ensuring the health and safety of the community, responding collaboratively and openly, and maintaining fiscal discipline in the face of unexpected costs. Early in this process, the Student Health Center, under the direction of Dr. Todd Emerson, developed a \$1.2 million COVID-19 Testing and Monitoring Center, fully funded by gracious contributions from friends and donors in coordination with the APU Advancement team. Despite APU's desire and planning to return to campus for Fall 2020, the COVID-19 landscape once again shifted following the Memorial Day and Independence Day holidays.

In mid-July, due to the resurgence of COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations, Governor Newsom reissued closure orders for inside businesses and mandated no in-person learning for K-12 schools in counties on the State Monitoring List. All counties served by APU are located in counties that were on the list. President Ferguson informed the APU community that, based upon the COVID-19 surge and concern for the health and safety of students, staff, and faculty, APU would resume remote learning for Fall 2020. In early August, guidelines from the state and county again affirmed the decision to pivot to remote learning.

APU faculty, staff, students, and administrators are demonstrating extraordinary resilience and resolve, and remaining committed to developing Christ-centered scholars and leaders, in the midst of these challenging and uncertain times.

A campus-wide survey conducted by the APU administration offered insights that further refined the university's approach throughout the summer and into the fall. Responses highlighted strong support for the community to continue remote learning/work from home due to the rising COVID-19 cases in Southern California. The survey findings indicated greater than 90 percent satisfaction/agreement with the decisions made by APU in response to county, state, and federal public health guidelines and 75 percent satisfaction/agreement with the support provided to transition to remote learning/work from home. This survey also led to improvements in the Fall 2020 remote learning/work-from-home environment. These enhancements included additional technological and training support to enhance the remote learning experience and Town Halls and President's Roundtables to enhance community connection, engagement, and communication. APU faculty, staff, students, and administrators are demonstrating extraordinary resilience and resolve, and remaining committed to developing Christ-centered scholars and leaders, in the midst of these challenging and uncertain times.

Pending continued decline in COVID-19 incidence rates in Los Angeles County and approval from public health agency partners, APU is hopeful to reopen in Spring 2021. This will occur with the full support of and value for the ongoing Return to Campus strategies and initiatives, including the donor-funded COVID-19 Testing and Monitoring Center in the APU Student Health Center, additional campus cleaning capabilities, and enhanced teaching/learning technologies. Focusing on Christ-centered academic excellence while balancing community care and fiscal discipline remains a guiding principle for which God has consistently blessed APU's ability to manage COVID-19.

Megan Prosser, Ph.D., is the senior advisor to the president and chief of staff, and chair of the Return to Campus Task Force at Azusa Pacific University. mprosser@apu.edu



APU Names New Provost

Azusa Pacific University President Paul W. Ferguson, Ph.D., DABT, named Rukshan Fernando, Ph.D., provost and chief academic officer in July, following a six-month nationwide search. Fernando's expertise lies in leadership identity, higher education administration, and inclusive excellence.

"Dr. Fernando is an exceptional leader who will champion and advance liberal arts, professional, and graduate education," said Ferguson. "He brings a deep understanding of APU and a strong commitment to work alongside all members of the APU Community with a passion for our shared goal of Christ-centered academic excellence, realized fully through implementation of the university's new Strategic Plan."

As APU's Chief Academic Officer, Fernando will lead and advocate for APU's academic mission, overseeing 11 schools and colleges, a seminary, and 3 libraries. Reporting to the president and serving as a member of the President's Cabinet, Fernando will provide strategic leadership and oversight of academics and broad university initiatives.

"I am honored to be named APU's provost as I believe strongly in APU's commitment to empower our diverse student body to reach their God-given potential, achieve their academic dreams, and graduate to make a positive impact in the world," said Fernando. "I look forward to working with APU's exceptional faculty who provide nationally recognized research and teaching expertise to advance APU's mission."

Fernando earned a Bachelor of Science in Social Work from Taylor University; Master of Social Work with a concentration in Community Organizing from the University of Michigan; and Master of Arts in Community Economic Development with a concentration in Policy and Doctor of Philosophy in Community Economic Development from Southern New Hampshire University.

APU Secures \$1 Million for Endowed Chair in Citizenship and Civic Virtue

The Fletcher Jones Foundation has announced its generous contribution of \$1 million toward the Endowed Chair in Citizenship and Civic Virtue in Azusa Pacific's Honors College. Emerging as a significant faculty advancement funding initiative of the Strategic Plan, this is the first of three chairs outlined that will strengthen APU's capacity to cultivate Christ-centered scholars and leaders and contribute to the university's growth as a research university with impact.

The Endowed Chair in Citizenship and Civic Virtue ensures the permanent presence of a top faculty member with expertise in teaching about civic virtue, the responsibilities and blessings of citizenship, and the leadership skills essential to a free people. The aim will be to foster the moral and intellectual character of civically minded young people. This chair's primary responsibility will be to inform their teaching with scholarly perspectives and outcomes, maximize impact on student lives, and prepare them to engage society with virtue as leading Christian scholars and citizens.

"The endowed chair will contribute to the Honors College goal of producing leaders and citizens equipped and worthy to assume positions of influence, having grown in wisdom, virtue, faith, and eloquence," said David Weeks, Ph.D., dean of the Honors College. "Through this generous gift, we will shape the future, ensuring that today's top-performing students, who are tomorrow's leaders, will always study civic virtue and citizenship."

APU Scores High Marks in the National Survey of Student Engagement

Over the past four years, APU has participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which collects information about the undergraduate experience of both first-year and senior students. Last year, 343,045 first-year (47%) and senior (53%) students responded to the survey from 521 U.S. institutions. Results from student ratings on the NSSE place Azusa Pacific University above peer institutions in several categories, including Higher-Order Learning, Reflective and Integrative Learning, and Quantitative Reasoning, among others.

The NSSE results from APU students were compared to three groups: Group 1 representing 43 Council for Christian Colleges & Universities institutions, Group 2 representing 80 doctoral institutions with high research activity in the same

"The endowed chair will contribute to the Honors College goal of producing leaders and citizens equipped and worthy to assume positions of influence, having grown in wisdom, virtue, faith, and eloquence."

DAVID WEEKS, PH.D.

Carnegie class as APU, and Group 3 representing 42 Western Private Institutions in California, Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii.

Both first-year and senior APU students consistently indicated significantly elevated levels of student engagement over each of the comparison groups. The four themes that comprise student engagement are Academic Challenge, Learning with Peers, Experiences with Faculty, and Campus Environment.

The NSSE also measures participation in High Impact Practices. For first-year students, these include Service Learning, Learning Communities, and Research with Faculty. For seniors, these three are included as well as Internship or Field Experience, Study Away, and a Culminating Senior Experience. APU scored well in all High Impact Practices, with Service Learning (as judged by seniors) rated significantly higher at APU than all three comparison groups.

The NSSE serves as a tool for four-year institutions to gather data centered on institutional quality, ultimately to be used to improve undergraduate studies. Research shows that institutions that align their resources to foster engagement potentially experience higher levels of student success.

APU Welcomes New Board Members

The Azusa Pacific University Board of Trustees approved five new board members in 2020, who were nominated by APU staff, faculty, and administration and extensively interviewed by the board. "I am enthusiastic about the ongoing active recruitment of new board

members reflecting a broad diversity of background, expertise, and focus to equip the board for insightful decision making," said President Paul W. Ferguson, Ph.D., DABT. APU's new board members are:



Richard Link is a financial executive, most recently serving as the Group Vice President Controller and Chief Accounting Officer for Smart & Final Stores prior to his retirement.



Kelli O'Gorman, CPA, is an educator and Director of Development for Los Gatos Christian School.



Lindsey Rehfeld, M.A., is the Founder and CEO of Visiting Angels in Glendora and Upland. Rehfeld was recognized as the 2015 Alumna of the Year.



Rishi Sriram, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Higher Education and Student Affairs and the Graduate Program Director of Educational Leadership at Baylor University. Sriram is an APU alumnus, completing his Ph.D. in Higher Education.



Robert Tiede is the former President and CEO of Sonoco, Inc.



APU Establishes COVID-19 Testing Center

Foundational to the University's Return to Campus Plan, the Advancement Team, under the leadership of Vice President Corbin Hoornbeek, secured nearly \$1.2 million from generous donors and friends to fund the development and implementation of a COVID-19 Testing and Monitoring Center. Testing recently expanded from APU's Azusa campus to four of the university's regional locations in San Diego, Inland Empire, Monrovia, and the High Desert.

Medical Director, Dr. Todd Emerson, and the Student Health Center lead APU's monitoring, testing, tracking, and management of COVID-19 efforts for students, staff, and faculty. "Now more than ever, the health and safety of the APU community is our top priority," said Emerson. "The testing center is part of a university-wide

"The testing center is part of a university-wide strategy to reduce the spread of COVID-19..."

DR. TODD EMERSON

strategy to reduce the spread of COVID-19 on our campuses and ensure compliance with health agency guidelines and directives."

The Centers for Disease Control in their higher education guidelines includes testing to diagnose COVID-19 as one component of a comprehensive plan to help protect students, faculty, and staff and slow the spread of the virus in conjunction with promoting behaviors that reduce spread, maintaining healthy environments, maintaining healthy operations, and preparing for when someone gets sick.



APU's Academic Partnership with Leading Community College to Address Nursing Shortage

Azusa Pacific University and Pasadena City College announced a new partnership that will extend access to nursing education for residents of the San Gabriel Valley region and help alleviate the chronic nursing shortage statewide.

"This dynamic endeavor between PCC and APU shows what's possible when public and private higher education work together to place student needs first, fueling their academic and professional success, and helping address California's critical nursing shortage," said President Paul W. Ferguson, Ph.D., DABT. "Azusa Pacific University nursing graduates are among the most distinguished in the field, valued for their compassionate and competent care. APU looks forward to working with PCC as a model for other such collaborations."

This collaboration enables nursing students to concurrently enroll at PCC and Azusa Pacific, earning credits and clinical experience through both institutions. In just six semesters of total program study, PCC's Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) students will graduate from Azusa Pacific with their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). California healthcare organizations are moving to BSN-prepared graduates as the entry-level standard.

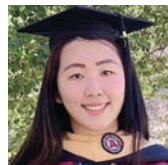
The accelerated program elevates the proficiency of nurses entering Southern California hospitals and clinics, moving these students beyond the two-year associate degree and increasing their skill as caregivers. In combining the low-cost, open-access program at PCC with Azusa Pacific's nationally ranked School of Nursing, students from all educational backgrounds will walk a pathway to a high-paying, rewarding career. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and the Board of Registered Nursing's annual surveys, APU graduates approximately 4 percent of the newly registered nurses in the state, with employment rate for all prelicensure programs at 100 percent within a year of graduation, and 90 percent of those employed are within the state of California.

Social Work Graduates' Research Makes Impact

As one of only two institutions in the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities classified as an R2: Doctoral University with high research activity, APU student and faculty researchers offer solutions to addressing society's challenges. This commitment to scholarship with impact garners national recognition for APU through the work of students like Daniel Montoya '20 and Eunice Chen, MSW '20.



Montoya, who holds a Bachelor of Social Work, is a recipient of the prestigious Hatfield Prize, and received a \$5,000 grant to fund his research under the guidance of faculty advisor Anupama Jacob, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Social Work, on the reintegration of families who have experienced chronic homelessness and are living under the permanent supportive housing model. His findings from their semester-long research project were recently published in a public policy report by the Center for Public Justice. Montoya and Jacob are the first social work team from APU to receive the Hatfield Prize.



Chen, under the direction of faculty advisor Adria E. Navarro, Ph.D., LCSW, associate professor in the Department of Social Work, completed her capstone project at Partners in Care Foundation on *The Impact of the Community Wellness Department's Evidence-Based Programs on Social Isolation Among Older Adults*. The research was published on the National Council on Aging's website and is slated for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Chen is serving as a social worker at AltaMed's PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) program, where her research informs her work serving older adults and addressing critical issues, including isolation and loneliness.

APU Hosts the 2021 Angeles Worship Summit



Extending its commitment to equip church congregations for innovative intergenerational worship, vibrant artistry, and Christian community, APU hosts educational events and mentoring experiences throughout the year where youth and adults work together, gaining guidance and inspiration to lead with confidence. The Angeles Worship Summit will take place Friday and Saturday, February 5-6, 2021, via Zoom. Registration runs through Monday, January 25, 2021.

This immersive experience brings together musicians, artists, and poets to explore their creative abilities. The themes of this year's Summit will draw from Micah 6:8 and the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:3-12 as participants consider what it means "to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." The vision for the event is based upon the four core principles of reflection, innovation, service, and excellence.

Each year, the Angeles Worship Summit draws junior high, high school, and college students, as well as adult worship leaders, pastors, volunteers in churches, and youth worship teams. By engaging in thoughtful worship design and participating in helpful breakout sessions, youth and adults alike gain new, relevant tools that can be taken home to their local churches. Keynote speakers share timely issues facing congregations, and participants can showcase their talents.

APU Department of Social Work Awarded \$2.7 Million Grant



APU's Department of Social Work was awarded a \$2.7 million, five-year federal grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to provide Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students. This grant enables the university to fund 10, \$30,000 scholarships for full-time Master of Social Work students a year (\$60,000 over two years) to those students qualifying as disadvantaged per HRSA criteria. Students must have financial need



Events Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month and APU's Status as Hispanic-Serving Institution

As Azusa Pacific moves toward its goal of becoming a university destination of choice for a diverse body of students, faculty, and staff, reflecting inclusive academic excellence, a deepened call for community engagement furthers these outcomes. In October, in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month and APU's designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), the university held two events—the HSI Forum: Strengthening Our Designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution on Wednesday, October 7, and the first Latinx Mosaic Affinity Association (LMAA) panel: Pathways for Latinx Doctoral Students on Wednesday, October 14.

and meet one of the following additional criteria: Have a family income of less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level, be the first in their family to attend college, or have graduated from an underperforming high school. Approximately 75 percent of APU's social work students report being the first in their family to attend college, with a majority of students also meeting financial need.

"This is an excellent opportunity for APU to help our students financially and to support social work workforce development in Southern California. With the award of this scholarship, students also have access to additional academic support through professional mentoring by a faculty and job seeking resources," said Mary Rawlings, Ph.D., LCSW, chair and professor, Department of Social Work.

The goals of this grant are to increase underrepresented minorities among the behavioral health workforce in primary care settings that address medically underserved communities. This is accomplished by recruiting, providing scholarships for disadvantaged students, training through partnerships, retaining, and facilitating workforce entry of eligible full-time clinical social work students who are considered disadvantaged and have a demonstrated financial need.

The HSI Forum, moderated by Keith Hall, Ed.D., vice president and chief diversity officer, discussed a longitudinal approach to engage prospective students with a strengths-based mindset affirming students' cultural capacity, creating pathways and touch points for holistic engagement and success throughout a student's academic journey, and remaining engaged with students as they graduate and become alumni working in the field or pursuing graduate studies. The panel also explored pathways to amplify the representation and success of Hispanic and other minoritized groups in STEM and other underrepresented majors and fields.

The LMAA Panel, moderated by Richard S. Martinez, Ed.D., executive director of the Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence, discussed the importance of mentorship in and among Latinx students, how Latinx doctoral students from the LMAA have successfully navigated the higher education system through personal narrative, and pathways for Latinx doctoral students to amplify the representation and success of Hispanic and other minoritized groups.

During both events, APU faculty and administrator participants focused on developing a shared vision to bolster access, retention, success, graduation, and career development of traditionally underrepresented students.

APU as a Model Christian University

BY PAUL W. FERGUSON, PH.D., DABT, AND ANDREW BARTON, ED.D.

Azusa Pacific University: Advancing a Renewed Vision for APU

For more than a century, Azusa Pacific University graduates have earned degrees that bear witness to the remarkable heritage and expansion of the institution since its founding in 1899. The Mission Statement, adopted in 1990 by the APU Board of Trustees, sparked significant growth over the last three decades: *“Azusa Pacific University is an evangelical Christian Community of disciples and scholars who seek to advance the work of God in the world through academic excellence in liberal arts and professional programs of higher education that encourage students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life.”* While names and locations have changed, the University’s *God First* motto remains. Today, more than 120 years later, and in the face of significant disruption and unparalleled opportunity for impact, Azusa Pacific University is poised to equip a new generation of increasingly diverse students with an excellent Christ-centered education.

APU makes a distinct mark among the country’s four-year colleges and universities, contributing to the nation’s higher education landscape and underscoring the value and necessity of a premier Christian institution to advance social and Kingdom good. Among the university’s unique attributes and contributions, the following highlights exemplify Azusa Pacific University’s readiness for renewal and impact:

APU serves more than 11,000 undergraduate and graduate students, as one of the largest Christian universities on the West Coast. APU is ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* among the 389 Doctoral-level National Universities category of America’s Best Colleges 2021, with 5,750 undergraduate and 5,633 graduate students. APU is nationally recognized as a Carnegie Classification R2 Doctoral University with high research activity consistent with outstanding faculty scholarship. APU is 1 of only 135 National Universities in this category and 1 of only 2 colleges and universities of the 180-member Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU).

APU actively engages the community. APU received the prestigious Carnegie Community Engagement Reclassification in 2020, 1 of only 359 institutions nationwide.

APU attracts a richly diverse community that reflects its choice Southern California location. APU is designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) as defined by the U.S. Department of Education, and an Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI). Students of color comprise 65% of the student body. First-generation students make up 30% of APU’s undergraduate student population.



APU offers a comprehensive and rigorous academic portfolio to meet the intellectual, employment, and market-driven needs and interests of students. APU provides more than 100 outstanding academic programs focused on Christ-centered academic excellence.

For example:

The School of Nursing consistently ranks as a top 10 program in the nation (*USA Today*) and No. 1 in California (*College Factual* and *Niche.com*). APU School of Education has graduated more than 20,000 educators, including superintendents, district leaders, principals, and school psychologists and counselors. The APU Honors College was recognized by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni in 2019 as 1 of 5 “Hidden Gems” in the nation. The APU College of the Arts’ School of Music ranks No. 7 in California in 2020 (*College Factual*), the Department of Theater Arts nationally ranked in the top 30% of universities in 2018, and the BFA in Acting for the Stage and Screen program ranked in the top 25 universities nationally in 2018-19 (*OnStage Blog*).

Continued on page 14



APU will graduate approximately

2,750 students
this year who will impact the world
as leaders and scholars.

THE DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM STATS:

- 97%** graduation rate
- 100%** National Physical Therapy Exam rate
- 100%** employment rate



APU invests in high market-demand programs. The Doctor of Physical Therapy program has a 97% graduation rate, 100% pass rate on the National Physical Therapy Exam, and 100% employment in the field. APU's Games and Interactive Media major equips students for careers in the \$100 billion gaming industry and is the first of its kind in the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities. APU alumni earn an average of \$54,200 10 years after graduating, compared to the national average of \$34,300; and 93% are employed within two years of graduation, versus the national average of 83%.

APU delivers a nationally recognized co-curricular student experience. APU's nationally regarded Student Affairs (SA) program offers engaging, high-impact co-curricular experiences. SA provides opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to develop a deeper understanding of their faith, academic goals, and vocational pursuits. Students benefit from 50 clubs and organizations with more than 1,185 undergraduate students in active formal on-campus discipleship groups, and a Counseling Center fully accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services.

APU athletics is a top 20 nationally recognized NCAA Division II program (Learfield IMG Directors' Cup), involving 450 student-athletes in 8 men's sports and 11 women's sports. Since its inception, the program has attained 51 national and 138 conference championships, and produced 14 professional athletes and 14 Olympians who garnered 7 Olympic medals. Current Cougar student-athletes maintain a collective 3.36 grade-point average.

Current Cougar student-athletes maintain a collective 3.36 grade-point average.



APU ARCHIVES

The Value of a Christian University Education



As higher education becomes increasingly commodified and competitive, universities must address the changing demographic, economic, and technologic dynamics in the marketplace. APU will utilize contemporary and relevant strategies to prepare the next generations for successful careers, help people retool for new workplace demands, enhance quality of life of all citizens, spur imagination through the arts and humanities, and create new knowledge to fuel innovative technologies and businesses, while working with state and federal partners to enhance economic development for society.

Laurie Schreiner, Ph.D., chair and professor in APU's Department of Higher Education, extends this call further by asking, "What good is Christian higher education?" She contends that it must not only support and encourage the individual and public good commonly addressed by secular education, but it must also distinctively prepare graduates for advancing Kingdom Good. The Kingdom Good of Christian higher education "might be conceptualized as inclusive of individual and common good but transcending both." Schreiner makes five insightful recommendations:

- Capitalize on the strengths of Christian higher education to focus on being salt and light in the world.
- Encourage greater campus engagement to meet the needs of the world.
- Instill a positive perspective at the individual-student and university-systems levels.
- Expand the co-curriculum beyond individual student growth to common good contribution.
- Match the energy and intentionality of students' spiritual development to help them realize a Kingdom role in becoming impactful Christian scholars and leaders.

More than 20 years ago, Fr. Richard Neuhaus suggested that the Christian university is especially suited to provide the transformational education experience that prepares students for careers and life. He wrote of its role in cultivating the life of the mind: "If the life of the mind is not understood as an integral part of Christian discipleship and mission, the term Christian university is indeed, as some claim, an oxymoron." He continued, "The question that those who lead a Christian university must answer, and answer again every day, is whether the confession that Jesus is Lord limits or illuminates the university's obligation to seek and serve *Veritas*—to seek and serve the Truth."

The challenges facing Christian higher education in the next decade are particularly significant, as the nation wrestles with a health pandemic, race and inequity, and the legislative balance between ensuring the protection of citizen rights in a pluralistic society and the rights of religious liberty expressed by the Church and religious colleges and universities. Policies around admissions, nondiscrimination, financial aid, hiring, and alignment with university mission are but a few of these pressing issues within a culture struggling with moral clarity and purpose.

David Brooks, *New York Times* columnist, reflected on seeking a college education in this culture: "Highly educated young people are tutored, taught, and monitored in all aspects of their lives, except the most important, which is character building. When it comes to this, most universities leave them alone." APU is in the best position to offer society a way, as Brooks suggests, of "talking about and educating the human person in a way that integrates faith, emotion, and intellect. . . and have a recipe to nurture human beings who have a devoted heart, courageous mind, and purposeful soul." APU stands ready to embrace this responsibility.

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APU IS:
1 of only 2
 CCCU schools
 classified as an R2
 Doctoral/Research
 University.



PHOTOS BY DANA ATTEBERY, MA, '17

The Strategic Planning Process: Advancing a Renewed Vision for APU

The consensus-based planning process within the APU Community was guided by the Strategic Plan Leadership Team to encourage active constituent engagement.

This process enabled the APU Community to:

- Come together in a spirit of hope and renewal after a season of acute fiscal and management challenges.
- Reflect on the institution's role as a premier Christian University in a disrupted landscape.
- Identify areas of excellence that advance Kingdom Good and improve practices that fall short.
- Implement policies and contemporary processes that produce excellence in our students, staff, and faculty.
- Position APU as a leader at state and national levels in providing sustainable Christ-centered academic excellence within the competitive higher education sector.

Drawing upon diverse perspectives and skills, the 31-member Leadership Team inspired rich dialog and interaction around APU's future. Thought leaders and subject-matter experts from different academic disciplines, co-curricular and student support systems, campus locations, and lengths of service gave voice to the university's

present and future challenges, opportunities, and vision. All schools and major divisions were represented, as were faculty, staff, students, alumni, administration, and members of the Board. The Strategic Planning Process fostered open and rigorous engagement between the Leadership Team and various constituencies. The work of these groups quickly coalesced into five Grand Initiatives.

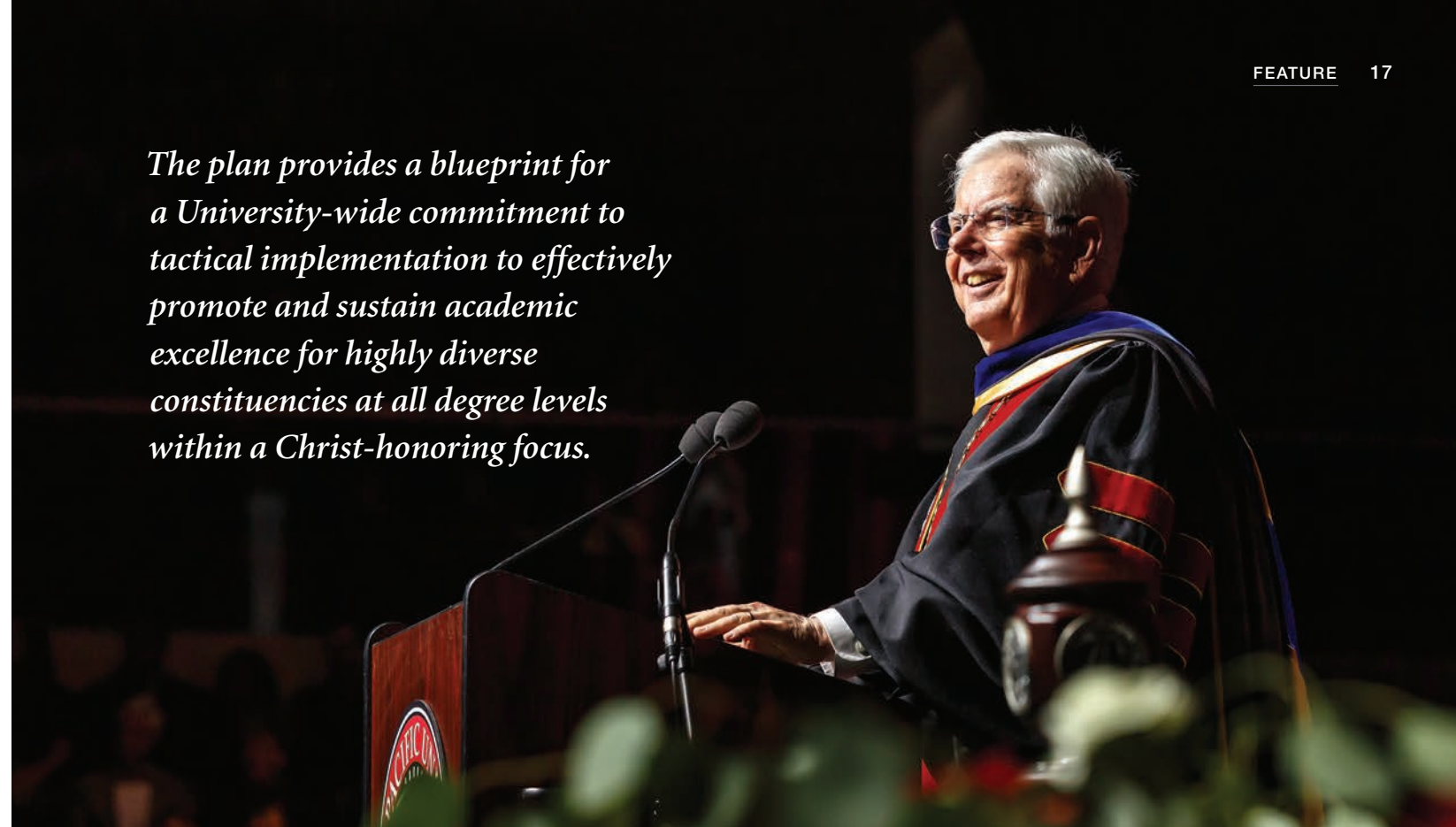
As designed and implemented, *Renewal: Strengthening Our Capacity for Cultivating Christ-Centered Scholars and Leaders* will advance APU as a University of impactful Christian scholars and leaders characterized by best practices of the highest quality. The plan provides a *blueprint* for a University-wide commitment to tactical implementation to effectively promote and sustain academic excellence for highly diverse constituencies at all degree levels within a Christ-honoring focus.

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The Strategic Plan Leadership Team spent

100+ hours collaborating in teams to plan for the university's future.

The plan provides a blueprint for a University-wide commitment to tactical implementation to effectively promote and sustain academic excellence for highly diverse constituencies at all degree levels within a Christ-honoring focus.



STRATEGIC PLAN LEADERSHIP TEAM

Dr. Paul Ferguson, President
(Leadership Team Chair)

Dr. Andrew Barton, Vice President for Strategic Planning and Mission Integration
(Leadership Team Co-Chair)

Tayo Agbalaya, President, Student Government Association

Maricela Alvarado, MPA, Graduate Student Fellow, Higher Education

Brittany Billar, M.S., Associate Dean of Engagement, Student Affairs

Christian Brazo, M.A., Executive Creative/Internet Director, University Relations

Dr. John Burdett, Assistant Professor of Music, Director of Instrumental Studies and Bands, College of the Arts

Alanna Cajthaml, MBA, Vice President for Finance and Business Strategy; Chief Financial Officer

Dr. Coba Canales, Dean of Spiritual Life, Student Affairs

Evan Collins, MBA, Member, Board of Trustees

Dr. Courtney Davis, Associate Professor of Communication Studies, College of the Arts

Terri Drechsler, M.A., Assistant Director, Compensation and Benefits, Human Resources

Dan Fachner, Member, Board of Trustees

Dr. Rukshan Fernando, Provost

Pamela Fisher, M.A., Assistant Professor of Communication Studies, College of the Arts

Aaron Hinojosa, M.A., Executive Director, Student Center for Reconciliation and Diversity

James Janssen, M.Div., Executive Director of Technology

Dr. Ron Jewe, Professor, School of Business and Management; Co-Chair, Diversity Council

Dr. Joy Karavedes, Administrative Manager, Division of Teacher Education; Staff Council Chair

Dr. Loren Martin, Professor of Clinical Psychology, School of Behavioral and Applied Sciences; Faculty Moderator

Dr. Aurora Matzke, Assistant Provost

Gary Pine, MBA, Director of Athletics

Donato Powell, Associate Vice President, Facilities Management and Construction

Dr. Renee Pozza, Professor and Senior Associate Dean, Academic Initiatives and Innovation, School of Nursing

Dr. Megan Prosser, Senior Advisor to the President and Chief of Staff

Dr. Laurie Schreiner, Professor and Chair, Department of Higher Education; Chair of Chairs Advisory Council

Dr. Ethan Schrum, Associate Professor of History, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Faculty Fellow, Honors College

Michelle Staggs, M.S., Director, APU Inland Empire Regional Campus

Dr. David Weeks, Professor and Dean, Honors College

Dr. Jessica Wong, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, School of Theology

Audrey Yeoh, MPH, Director of Foundation Relations, Advancement



PHOTOS BY DANA ATTEBERG, M.A. '17

A Renewed Vision for Azusa Pacific University

Through *Renewal*, Azusa Pacific University aspires to be the premier Christian university of choice for our culture and times. This consensus-based vision, which motivates APU to address future higher education trends while committing to intensive self-reflection for improvement, will enhance APU's academic stature. APU will provide stellar academic and professional opportunities, but more importantly, *model* how a major national university can continue to be Christian in a "post-Christian" society. With successful implementation of *Renewal*, the nation could look to Azusa Pacific as a Model Christian University.

As such, APU can extend Christ-centered, inclusive academic excellence, integrating faith and scholarship through research, teaching, and service in undergraduate and graduate programs, and engage society with virtue. This University can be a provider of broad and innovative programs to the next generation of diverse learners and ethical leaders; increase

success in student retention, graduation rates, and career preparation programs for diverse learners; become more effective in hiring and retention of employees of color; and employ relevant and

contemporary discipleship-based student affairs programming to promote quality of student thriving.

APU as a Model Christian University can cultivate a diverse group of engaged and motivated faculty and staff supported by strong, strategically organized leadership teams and collaborative engagement defined by missional focus, mutual respect, and open communication. In this effort, faculty and staff can be committed to values-based commentary and resolution of society's most difficult challenges, from science to social and spiritual issues. APU can provide focused faculty and staff professional

development programs that support research, community engagement, and recruitment and retention strategies to attract the highest quality employees and bolster morale.

With successful implementation of Renewal, the nation could look to Azusa Pacific as a Model Christian University.



According to the *College Scorecard*, six years after graduating, APU alumni

earn significantly more (53%) than the national average.

and sciences to guide impactful civic engagement, theology to foster Christ-centered spiritual formation in our society, or the visual and performing arts to inspire our communities to thrive.

By cultivating a more innovative institution and promoting the Kingdom and Common Good, Azusa Pacific University strives to become the nation's premier Christian University with a diverse group of students, faculty, and staff known as engaged citizens of character and virtue. They will be known as thoughtful scholars and leaders in their disciplines, sharing the truth and love of Christ in a society that so desperately needs both.

Learn more about *Renewal* at apu.edu/renewal/.

Paul W. Ferguson, Ph.D., DABT, is president and **Andrew Barton, Ed.D.**, is vice president for strategic planning and mission integration at Azusa Pacific University. president@apu.edu, abarton@apu.edu

With the strong cadre of University faculty and staff, APU as a Model Christian University can be defined by academic innovation offering relevant and contemporary undergraduate and graduate degree programs designed to meet emerging trends in the workplace as well as traditionally popular vocational and postgraduate opportunities. Academic programs reflect APU's interdisciplinary commitment to addressing societal needs and influencing culture. As a future-looking and forward-thinking institution, APU as a Model University can make data-informed decisions in academic and operational performance, and optimized strategies for the physical plant, strategically connecting facilities, capital, and technology infrastructure improvements to program growth and significantly improve quality of place at APU.

As an investor in the future, with a vibrant commitment to campus sustainability, student affordability, and opportunity, APU can be characterized by sound fiscal management and growth with balanced budgets and innovative cost savings. Robust philanthropy from generous and engaged donors can increase the University Endowment for new, needed scholarships to attract and support the brightest young scholars from diverse and first-generation backgrounds, and fund Endowed Chairs to enhance faculty development and research programs addressing society's most pressing needs in such fields as the health and social sciences to promote wellness, the liberal arts

THE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Azusa Pacific's College of the Arts **influences the world stage** by creating exceptional, innovative art grounded in faith.



Becoming a Thriving University of Choice

BY LAURIE SCHREINER, PH.D., KEITH HALL, ED.D., AND SHINO SIMONS, PH.D.



In 2020, students entering college or graduate school face seemingly insurmountable challenges—a global pandemic, racial injustice, a divided nation, and financial uncertainty appear to make higher education a dream to be deferred by many. Higher education as a whole is under increased scrutiny, with the value of a Christian university questioned more than ever before. Yet, it is no accident that Azusa Pacific University chose this year to unveil its Strategic Plan, *Renewal: Strengthening Our Capacity for Cultivating Christ-Centered Scholars and Leaders*, as a bold vision of hope.

Grand Initiative 2 is to become a Thriving University of Choice for students, staff, and faculty. This signals our commitment to provide the highest levels of academic and personal excellence to meet this generation's needs. Diverse and technologically savvy, today's students are well aware that they are inheriting a world where problems far outweigh solutions, and virtue and truth are in short supply. Many

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Recognized for high-caliber research, science faculty have secured grants totaling nearly \$2 million from federal, foundation, and industry sources.

are the first in their family to attend college or persons of color who have not been well-served by the educational system. Whether a recent high school graduate beginning the college journey or a seasoned professional entering a doctoral program, students who choose APU will recognize us as a place where they can **thrive**—a place that will help them discover and develop God’s call on their lives. For students, they must feel they **belong** here—that this is a place where deep learning occurs and relationships are cultivated, where the Spirit is at work, and their dreams can be realized.

Consider Anthony, an African-American first-generation college student with great potential who enrolled at APU. He started his first year unsure of himself, undecided regarding his major, and uncertain

about his future. Over the course of his academic journey, he developed clarity on his identity, his faith, and his calling. He attributes his development to God working through a number of faculty, staff, peers, and experiences at APU, affirming his talents and challenging him to think deeply and critically about the connection between his capacity and calling. Now Anthony passionately serves as a chaplain at an esteemed high school, strategically and skillfully assisting diverse, impressionable students in deepening their faith and developing a heart to serve the disenfranchised.

One of the first steps toward creating a campus culture where all students can flourish is to adopt an institutional framework that defines and operationalizes APU’s commitment to equity and inclusive excellence. This framework will inform such strategic efforts as longitudinal and comparative assessment to ensure equitable outcomes, curricular and co-curricular redesign for inclusive excellence, and structural changes to bolster the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff, and students. As we grow into our strategic plan, we will forge more extensive partnerships beyond our campus with community colleges whose students desire a four-year degree and with local community partners in the areas our regional campuses serve. Our support will expand to ensure we are reaching all students and meeting their needs. These strategic priorities will enable APU to employ a Christ-centered, comprehensive, equity-minded approach to student success and establish us as a destination of choice.

As a Christian university, everything we do is infused with a deep intentionality about following Christ—in our teaching, research, support of students, athletics programs, performing

For students, they must feel they belong here—that this is a place where deep learning occurs and relationships are cultivated, where the Spirit is at work, and their dreams can be realized.



APU is designated by the U.S. Department of Education as a Hispanic-Serving Institution and recognized as an Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander-Serving Institution.



arts, and engagement in Azusa, throughout California, and beyond. Others will see our work and want to be part of it. Our commitment to inclusive academic excellence means that we strive for every classroom to be a place of transformational learning where students’ curiosity is cultivated and their faith is nurtured; where they are challenged and supported; where their gifts, talents, and cultural strengths are affirmed; and where they are changed as a result of the learning process. It means our graduates enter their chosen careers well-equipped to meet the needs of a hurting world. We are committed to supporting students both in and out of the classroom who bring a variety of perspectives, knowledge,

and experiences to this institution. By intentionally opening our enrollment to students regardless of their religious beliefs, we strive to be like Christ in providing a supportive space for questions and exploration.

This approach requires a collaborative partnership between academics and student affairs to support the holistic development of students. The Student Affairs division offers services and programs to nurture students as they mature in their understanding of their identity, faith, and calling, while also supporting their emotional and physical well-being. APU’s Student Affairs division encourages students’ spiritual development through opportunities such as corporate worship, local and global service, and spiritual care.

Our graduate students often choose APU as a result of hearing about us from their colleagues at work. APU graduates are known for being compassionate, competent, and courageous leaders. Many are drawn to APU by the type of education their colleagues describe—an

education that is rigorous, but also provides mentoring by faculty, an opportunity to do research that makes a difference, and networking connections throughout the U.S. and globally. An example is Dr. Melanie Humphreys, president of King’s University in Edmonton, Canada. The first woman president of a Christian college in Canada, Humphreys came to APU having heard about us through our global connections. She joined the Ph.D. in Higher Education program, wanting to increase her capacity as a student affairs leader. As she learned more about herself, higher education, and how God was calling her to lead, she had the confidence and skills to apply for a presidency—and is making a difference in the lives of university students in Canada.

Our desire for APU to be a thriving university of **choice** means that not only do students choose us because we will bring out their best, but our faculty and staff also see APU as the place where God has called them to be, a place where they are valued and where meaningful, life-giving work is done together. Many of our faculty are researchers as well as teachers; they have chosen to work at APU because they want to be in a place where their scholarship can bring glory to God. They have chosen APU as a place that supports them as both scholars and teachers, but also challenges them to continually find new perspectives within their discipline, new ways of reaching their students, and new ways of creating space for the mystery of God and the rich diversity of God’s realm. They could choose to go anywhere, but they have chosen APU as the place where they belong.

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Students of color comprise

65% of the student body.

First-generation students make up

30% of APU’s undergraduate population.

So imagine it's 2027 and APU has fulfilled the bold vision of its strategic plan to be a **thriving university of choice**. As you walk across campus, you feel at home as you see people who look like you. You see groups of students and faculty gathered around tables deep in conversation. It's easy to figure out where to go to meet your needs, even if it's your first time on a university campus, and warm smiles and offers of assistance welcome you as you enter staff offices.

As you pass by classrooms, you notice the diversity of faculty and students. You see state-of-the-art technology and labs, with students actively engaged with one another and their instructor. You meet faculty who believe that any student admitted to our undergraduate, professional, master's, or doctoral programs can succeed—and they see it as their job to bring out the best in students, as they support and challenge them to the highest levels of excellence. You encounter student life staff, peer mentors, academic advisors, athletic coaches, and spiritual life staff who are clearly working together and engaged in a job they love—helping students grow into who God has called them to be in order to do the work God has designed them to do.

As you talk to students, you hear stories of transformation. You hear of obstacles they have overcome with the help of faculty and staff; you hear about the clear pathways to success that were outlined for them from the moment they were admitted to APU. They speak of APU as a place where they not only feel welcome and safe, but where they can engage and belong. They tell you that APU's reputation for

Through our research, teaching, and service to the community, we want to make a difference in the world, and we are eager to begin this important work.

inclusive academic excellence is indeed deserved, as there is a strong sense of community on campus and no racial or ethnic disparities in student success and graduation rates. In fact, you learn that when graduates cross the stage, whether the student is a first-generation student from Azusa graduating with their bachelor's degree, a master's-level graduate who took evening classes while holding down a full-time job, or a Ph.D. graduate now able to enter the top of their field, APU has been a place that has helped them thrive in order to make a difference in the world.

By saying we desire to be a thriving university of choice for a diverse student body, faculty, and staff, we are saying boldly and unequivocally that we want to impact the world, walk alongside the marginalized, and help our students reach their God-given potential. Through our research, teaching, and service to the community, we want to make a difference in the world, and we are eager to begin this important work.

Laurie Schreiner, Ph.D., is chair and professor, Department of Higher Education; Keith Hall, Ed.D., is vice president for diversity and inclusion; and Shino Simons, Ph.D., is vice president for student affairs, all at Azusa Pacific University. lschreiner@apu.edu, khall@apu.edu, ssimons@apu.edu



Building a Transformational and Collaborative University

BY RUKSHAN FERNANDO, PH.D., AND PAOLA MARTINEZ

A 10-minute drive from the Azusa campus transports the traveler into the middle of the Angeles National Forest, with its foothills full of biodiversity and meandering rivers. These rivers and the surrounding landscape transform and adapt over time due to the natural process of erosion, sedimentation, and even forest fires. Back on the APU campus, our rich university ecosystem includes a diverse community of faculty, staff, and students, representing different backgrounds, experiences, talents, and expressions of the Kingdom of God. In light of this unique institutional tapestry, APU is proactively responding to our ever-changing environment by transforming practices, process, and, in turn, people who impact the world for Christ.

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To transform our organization, we need to elevate the most important asset we have, our people.

To help shape this evolution, the university included in its Strategic Plan the Grand Initiative 3, titled A Transformational and Collaborative Organization, which calls for structural change to meet the needs of today's students and employees. In the face of a changing higher education landscape and a society challenged by national discord and a global pandemic, a transformed and collaborative learning organization is not optional, it is imperative for the success and impact of each member of the APU Community.

Over the past 20 years, APU experienced tremendous growth in academic and co-curricular programming, faculty research, and community life. APU is fortunate to have a wide-ranging academic portfolio of programs—baccalaureate to doctoral degrees—offered across seven campuses and through a number of learning methods. Yet, some of our current strategies and practices must be re-envisioned to meet society's current and future needs. In becoming a Transformational and Collaborative Organization, we must invest in our community's growth as an integral part of the university's bright future. With intention, we seek to create a culture that is attractive to our students and employees, promotes engagement, inspires them about the possibilities ahead, and develops them as individuals with unique God-given gifts.

The behaviors of the individuals in an organization and how they interact together to get work done—the APU culture to which we aspire—begins with leadership. This is no small feat. APU's leaders must gain and sustain commitment to the shared vision. They must inspire, motivate, collaborate, challenge assumptions, take risks, and encourage innovation. Equally vital to the future of APU, our leadership must promote equity and diversity in the administration

of organizational policies and practices. When diversity, inclusion, and equity go together, the APU community is empowered to bring its best to our work and mission.

Today, a culture transformation is under way at APU. President Ferguson began to lay this foundation when he arrived at APU in 2019. He poured into this foundation a spirit of unity, collaboration, and an expectation that the individual divisions would work together through a common set of Christ-centered values. Together, the university community will seek to embody these values, aligning them with the strategic plan and creating opportunities that shape a new set of behaviors and attitudes to build upon and execute for the long-term vision for our community and culture.

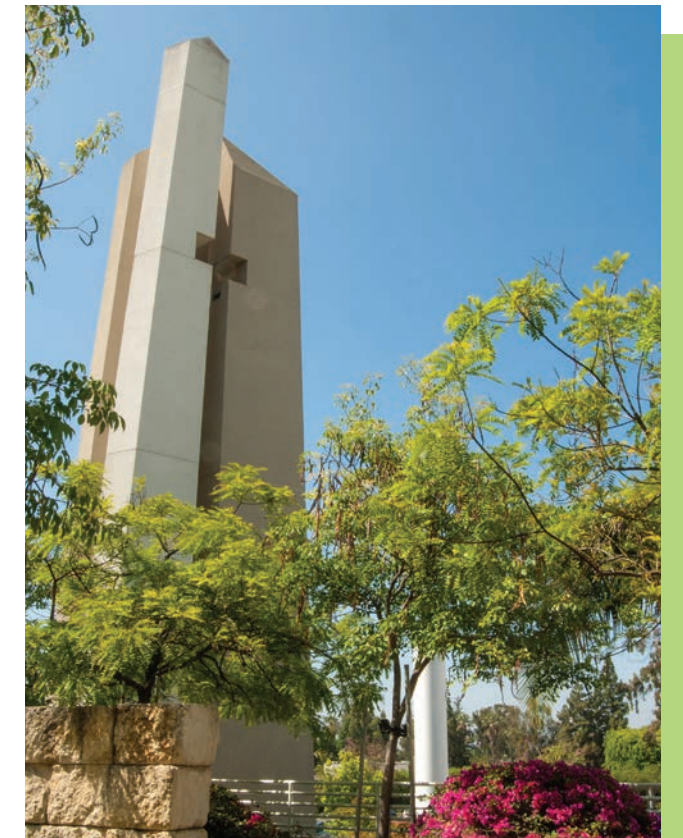


Azusa Pacific University ranks in the

Top 25 universities nationwide based on alumni ratings, according to a new study published in the *Journal of Consumer Affairs* and featured by *Forbes*.

To transform our organization, we need to elevate the most important asset we have, our people. Taking time to develop our employees is a valuable investment in our future. This means focusing on strengthening our leadership bench, building critical skills, and enhancing our overall employee experience. We know that by strategically investing in our people, we will emerge as a stronger, more agile and innovative organization. For faculty, we will cultivate interdisciplinary teaching, research, and service. Departments working together will create and adapt programs that seek to answer the fundamental challenges of our times. For staff, it means welcoming them as an important voice at the table, thereby creating meaningful pathways for sincere engagement in the life of the institution. As APU focuses on equity, professional development, and support for all employees, Grand Initiative 3 will incubate a movement which builds on our current strengths and grows our national reputation.

A complex and far-reaching university, Azusa Pacific is making a significant impact now, to be amplified moving forward. With equitable structures and renewed culture, we become a 21st century Christian higher education institution committed to rich learning, spiritual formation, and academic research. Knowing this will take time, APU must evolve akin to the beautiful waterways and landscapes of the Angeles National Forest. Part of that maturation will unfold in important dialogue, which will foster the strength and health of this great institution.



SPIRITUAL FORMATION

is infused throughout the university experience, through chapel services, ministry and discipleship opportunities, and **faith integration** in all areas of study.

Although challenging, we are resolved to rise to this task. The call for a transformed and collaborative organization not only propels us internally, but it also facilitates a credible Christian witness in the midst of a pluralizing and polarizing society and advances God's work in this world.

Rukshan Fernando, Ph.D., is provost and **Paola Martinez** is vice president for human resources at Azusa Pacific University. rfernando@apu.edu, paolamartinez@apu.edu



PHOTOS BY DAN AJTEBER, M.A., '17, AND APU ARCHIVES

Becoming a Recognized Leader in Technology and Data Management

BY LOREN MARTIN, PH.D., AND DON DAVIS, ED.D.

The words of Proverbs ring just as true today as they did nearly 3,000 years ago during the reign of King Solomon, and they apply not only to individuals, but also to organizations. Through Proverbs 9:10 (NIV), we are given the ultimate recipe for life: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” We are also given the recipe for success in 3:13 (NIV): “Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding.” Indeed, to understand, we need wisdom (4:7, NASB): “The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding.” So then, this begs the question: How does one acquire wisdom? It begins with the acquisition of knowledge: “The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out” (Proverbs 18:15, NIV).

Meeting the objective of this Grand Initiative 4 requires a substantial and necessary financial investment in emerging technologies and a reorganization of institutional information management structures.

Certainly, the university provides a unique environment for the collection and distribution of knowledge, the acquisition and application of wisdom, and ultimately, understanding. The Christian university provides an opportunity to ground this process in reverence to the Lord and to enlighten our understanding with the knowledge of the Holy One. While institutions of higher learning often succeed in this process with their students, they typically fail to apply this to their own operations, according to John Aubrey Douglass in *The New Flagship University*. As part of our *Renewal* strategic planning process by which we engage in “strengthening our capacity for cultivating Christ-centered scholars and leaders,” APU’s Grand Initiative 4 is to become “a recognized leader in technology and data management.” This important objective requires the deployment of innovative technology to harness the information before us in order to gain wisdom and build understanding. This understanding improves learning environments that support transformational experiences for current and future students. Ultimately, understanding informs how we can better cultivate Christ-centered scholars and leaders.

Meeting the objective of this Grand Initiative 4 requires a substantial and necessary financial investment in emerging technologies and a reorganization of institutional information management structures. Such investment and reorganization will equip APU to be more agile, adaptable, and efficient, thereby carving out more time and resources for further innovation. This investment and reorganization has further reciprocal effects as it will better equip APU to collect, manage, and analyze data, which will then lead to better-informed decision-making. Leveraging data to improve internal processes provides a path toward a more efficient and sustainable future for the university and a model to be emulated.

To become a model Christian university means that APU must learn from the best universities while maintaining a clear Christian purpose and distinction. According to Aubrey Douglass and Igor Chirikov (2020), the best universities collect, organize, and analyze data for institutional self-improvement in order to successfully carry out their teaching, research, and public service missions. In fact, all universities collect and analyze data for purposes of required external reporting to the U.S. Department of Education and outside accrediting bodies. Unfortunately, most of this data is underutilized as a tool for self-improvement. And yet, the treasure trove of data before us continues to expand.

For universities, this includes information about admissions, enrollment, student learning and success, faculty performance,



academic program evaluation, operations, and finance. It also includes data that can be acquired from website navigation, mobile platform usage, and learning management systems. Indeed, many decisions that we make today carry with them logs or event records that can be harvested and analyzed to determine what factors led to a desired outcome. To be “a recognized leader in technology and data management,” APU must become an exemplar for others to follow by maximizing the value of the data we acquire through innovative techniques and technologies, and with the utmost security and integrity.

Applying wisdom to the information that we acquire to make accurate predictions is how we gain understanding and best serve the mission of the university. Specifically, for students, this translates into understanding how to improve recruitment, engagement, learning, academic success, institutional satisfaction, and spiritual formation; for faculty, how to improve pedagogy, faith integration, research output, service to the university and community, and job satisfaction; for staff, how to improve productivity, performance, and job satisfaction; and for the organization, how to improve communication, collaboration, accountability, efficiency, financial stewardship, and institutional effectiveness. Broadly, this translates into how to better cultivate Christ-centered scholars and leaders, culminating in a Model Christian University.

Loren Martin, Ph.D., is professor and director of research in the Department of Clinical Psychology, and currently serving as the APU chief data officer and interim director of institutional research; and **Don Davis, Ed.D.**, is vice president for administration and chief information officer at Azusa Pacific University. lmartin@apu.edu, ddavis@apu.edu

Creating a Sustainable Financial Enterprise

BY ALANNA CAJTHAML AND CORBIN HOORNBECK



A recent survey of 300 American college and university presidents found that long-term financial viability was a top-cited concern. The pandemic has shaken the financial foundations of many colleges, though the full extent of the impact remains difficult to assess. Prior to COVID-19, the national enrollment landscape and programmatic trends were already shifting, magnified even more so in California, where institutions serve highly diverse student populations and grapple with accessibility and affordability issues.

Emerging out of a time of fiscal challenge, Azusa Pacific University has been recently focused on analyzing the financial landscape before the global health crisis struck, employing strategies to work with intention amidst the disruption facing higher education. APU approaches the work moving forward with the confidence of its more than 120-year history and the new hope drawn from the Strategic Plan, *Renewal: Strengthening Our Capacity for Cultivating Christ-Centered Scholars and Leaders*, to embrace the challenge of anchoring our financial future, not as an end in itself, but as a means for fulfilling our vision to be the premier Christian university for our culture and times.

As we embark upon this important work, we anchor on this promise: “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19, NKJV)

Grand Initiative 5: A Sustainable Financial Enterprise, is an ambitious strategic initiative that involves the entire APU community. APU’s economic engine is fueled by many parts, which function interdependently. Diverse undergraduate and graduate enrollment streams, a budget model with sound forecasting assumptions, growth in total asset base, careful management of investments, a growing endowment, and strong fundraising can all ensure that the health of APU’s economic engine is robust.

Philanthropy

Philanthropy plays a critical role in the financial sustainability of APU. The strategic plan outlines several important opportunities and initiatives, including growing the endowment by \$48 million, advancing faculty scholarship and research, expanding and improving the physical campus, funding student scholarships to increase accessibility and affordability as well as to reward merit, and developing the spiritual growth and calling for all our students.

Growing the Endowment

APU is committed to growing the endowment through disciplined investment of annual budget surpluses and strategic philanthropy. APU anticipates that over the seven years of the strategic plan, an additional \$25 million will be invested from budget surpluses. In addition, we will raise an additional \$23 million to grow the endowment to more than \$140 million. This goal includes three new endowed faculty chairs (\$9 million total), \$10 million to support student scholarship endowments, and a \$4 million endowment to advance research. This growth-oriented endowment focus will create a sustainable revenue stream for APU for years to come.

The University Endowment is anticipated to reach

\$142M during *Renewal*.

Enhancing Facilities

APU is blessed with an exceptional Azusa campus that supports many of our existing programs. As our student demographic shifts and new programs are added, some of this space can be renovated and repurposed to serve these changing needs at a much lower cost than new construction. Similarly, as APU builds upon nationally recognized and innovative programs in areas such as the health sciences, the arts, and the Honors College, specialized space may necessitate the construction or repurposing of buildings. These needs and opportunities will be assessed through a collaborative process that integrates the academic vision with a campus master planning process.

Optimizing Financial Modeling

APU has worked diligently to create a sustainable financial model that allows leadership to respond to the changing landscape of higher education and the national economy. This includes an investment in technology, enhancing fiscal management policies and procedures, and creating transparency so staff, faculty, and students feel engaged in the financial stewardship of APU’s resources. Additionally, APU will continue to evaluate how to utilize and structure its debt to enhance the University’s Strategic Plan, while not overburdening the operational budget.

Amid the uncertainty facing higher education, APU’s bold Strategic Plan will build a sustainable financial model, enabling the University to respond nimbly to changes and opportunities over the next seven years. It provides for an investment in our campuses, technology, and most importantly, in our faculty, staff, and students. As we embark upon this important work, we anchor on this promise: “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19, NKJV).

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Romans 12:2

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing, and perfect will.” (NIV)