

APU LIFE

AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

FALL/WINTER 2022

ADVANCING STUDENT SUCCESS ■ BIBLES FOR ATHLETES ■ IGNITING A SPIRITUAL FIRE



Faithfulness to Mission: Working Together for Greater Kingdom Impact

God First Since 1899



Dear APU Family,

Now several months into my role, I continue to be amazed by all that God is doing in our midst. The mission of APU, lived out in the Four Cornerstones of Christ, Scholarship, Community, and Service, has come alive for me as I interact daily with students, faculty, and staff. I'm experiencing firsthand a community marked by a deep love for Jesus and a heart to serve others. It's what Faith and I sensed during the presidential search process and it confirms yet again our calling to APU.

The Four Cornerstones of APU are not just words on a page. They capture the ethos of this Christ-centered university and serve as a differentiator from the majority of colleges and universities in our nation.

At APU, Jesus is central to who we are, as has been true throughout our 123-year history. The Bible describes Christ as the Chief Cornerstone, and with Him as our sure foundation, our faculty and staff are reaching out to the students entrusted into our care with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

APU is also serious about scholarship—about the life of the mind. The Scriptures tell us that the mind of Christ stands in sharp contrast to the wisdom of this age. As a Christ-centered university, I want the Truth of God's Word to permeate all of the academic disciplines—for students to leave here fully trained and equipped with the technical skills to thrive in their vocation, while also being the hands and feet of Christ and living out the Fruits of the Spirit.

APU's third cornerstone of community is found in the warmth of our student body and the kindness of our faculty and staff, marked by the presence of the Holy Spirit. This became real to me a few weeks ago as I listened to a student share her testimony. Following the unexpected death of her father and times of deep struggle and grief, she talked about how the APU community surrounded her, loved her, and introduced her to the only One who truly saves. With tears in her eyes, she shared her salvation story and her decision to enter the waters of baptism on our campus.

I've also been moved by the ways the APU community is living out its fourth cornerstone of service. I joined our nursing students at our High Desert Regional Campus for a wonderful program called Socks, Shoes, and Salvation. Through this outreach program, students wash the feet of the homeless and provide them with clean socks, a pair of shoes, and the love of Jesus. Watching our students minister to the "least of these" in their community is where APU's mission to equip students as difference makers becomes real.

As you read this issue of *APU Life* magazine, I trust you will be reminded anew of our commitment to live out our *God First* mission with courage and conviction and to train and equip disciples and scholars to make a difference in our world for the cause of Christ.

In Christ,

Adam J. Morris, PhD
President

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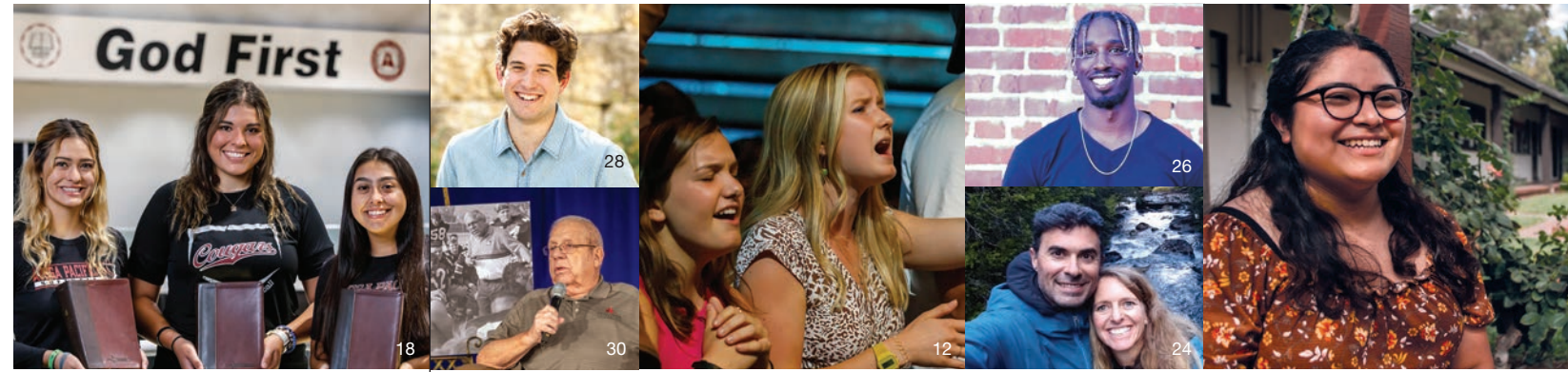
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APULIFE

FALL/WINTER 2022



FEATURES

- 12 Faithfulness to Mission: Working Together for Greater Kingdom Impact**
by Adam J. Morris, PhD
- 16 Advancing Student Success**
by Kandy Mink Salas, PhD
- 18 The Sword Project: Blessing Athletes with Personalized Bibles**
by Nathan Foster
- 20 Annual Report**
- 24 Fulfilling Their Call with Shelter on the Lake**
by Nathan Foster
- 26 Breaking Barriers: Providing Foster Youth with Shoes for Grades**
by Nathan Foster
- 28 Igniting a Spiritual Fire**
by Peter Cooley
- 30 APU Honors Coach Milhon through Football Alumni Reunion**
by Nathan Foster

DEPARTMENTS

- 2** President's Letter
- 6** Campus Close Up
- 23** Cougars Sports Roundup
- 30** Alumni News and Notes
- 31** Around APU

Cover photo by Dana Attebery, MA '17

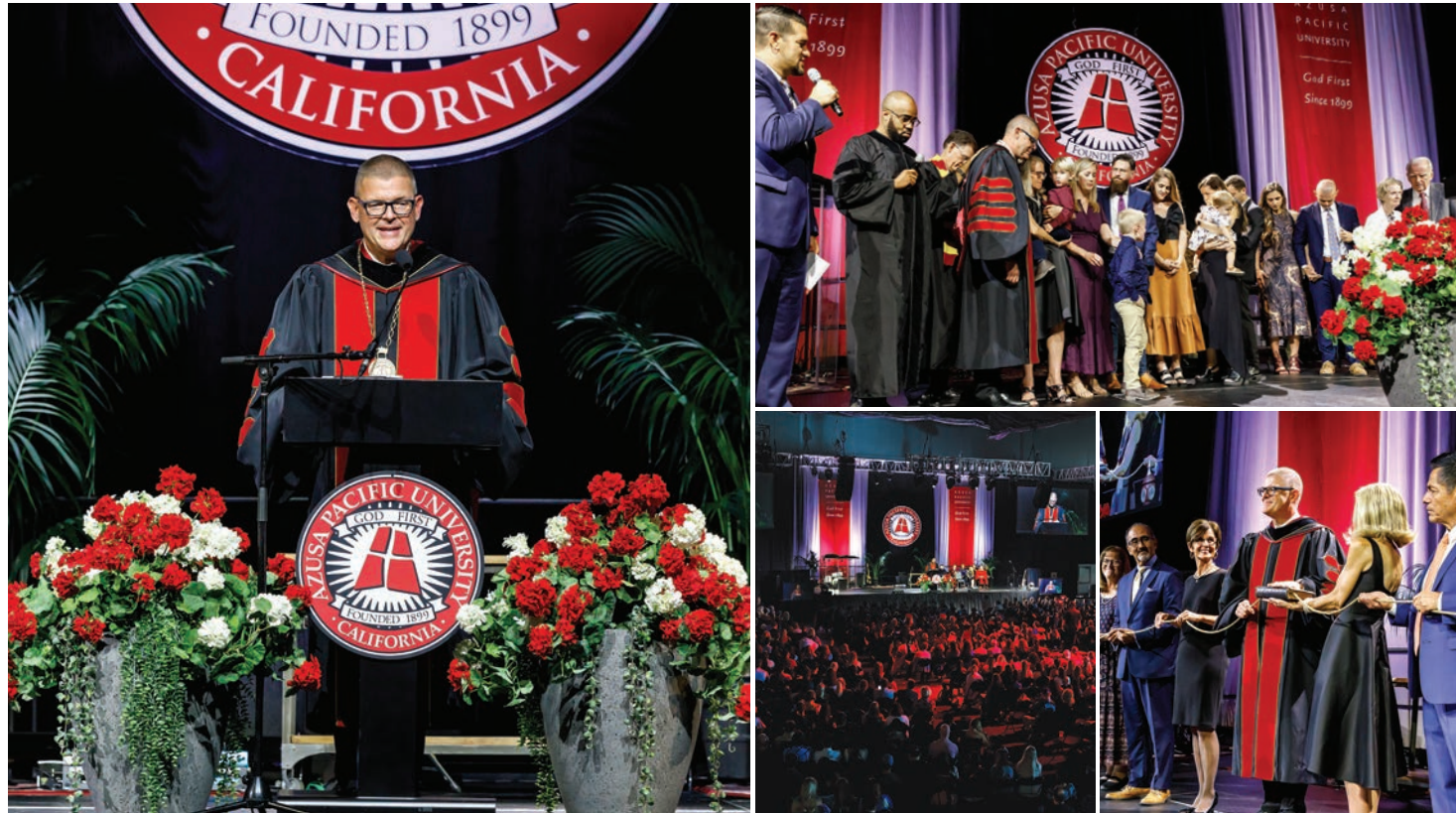


The new John and Marilyn Duke Student Commons on West Campus serves as a welcoming space for all students. Designed for multiple uses, the modern and spacious venue provides areas to gather for a shared meal as well as comfortable places to study. The fully donor-funded facility opened at the start of the fall semester and is already enhancing campus life, functioning as a home away from home for commuters and a place to connect for graduate students.



SEE MORE OF DUKE COMMONS

Scan the QR code for a closer look at the new student commons and how it's bringing the APU community together.



PHOTOS BY DANA ATTEBERY, MA '17

APU Celebrates the Inauguration of Adam J. Morris, PhD

Azusa Pacific University celebrated the inauguration of its 18th president, Adam J. Morris, PhD, on Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2022. More than 2,000 faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends of the university filled the Felix Event Center to watch as Morris was officially sworn in to take the helm of APU. “During my interview process with the Board of Trustees, I told the leadership of this great university that I wanted to be part of something so big that only God could do it,” Morris said. “It’s that hopeful expectation of what God will do in our midst that motivates and encourages me to join each one of you on this epic adventure called Azusa Pacific University.”

During his address, Morris revisited the history of APU, back to its roots as the Training School for Christian Workers. “The institution grew to become Pacific Bible College, then Azusa College, followed by Azusa Pacific College, and today, Azusa Pacific University,” he said. “APU’s history is replete with remarkable men and women of God whom He has used to advance His mission throughout the world.” Morris spoke of the impact these great leaders had, including Richard Felix, Cornelius Haggard, William Marshburn, Cliff Hamlow, Carolyn Koons, Ron Turner, Nobel Henson, and Jon R. Wallace. “Pausing this morning to remember anecdotes from APU’s past is both healthy and wise; it’s Biblical and it’s fitting for a day like today,” Morris said. “The Psalmist writes, ‘I remember the days of old; I meditate on all

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“There is much to do, and I couldn’t be more optimistic for our future, but I would be remiss today if I didn’t ground us yet again in our sacred, time-honored mission.”

ADAM J. MORRIS, PHD

that you’ve done; I ponder the work of your hands’ (Psalm 143:5). Recalling moments from our past is really an invitation to reflect on God’s goodness and faithfulness, and to acknowledge all that God has done.”

Morris spoke about the priorities for the year ahead, including developing a financial roadmap, reinvesting in infrastructure, bringing clarity to the strategic plan, spending time cultivating community well-being, and building an executive team to chart the course into a future full of possibilities. “There is much to do, and I couldn’t be more optimistic for our future, but I would be remiss today if I didn’t ground us yet again in our sacred, time-honored mission,” he said. “APU is an institution that is unapologetically Christ-centered, with a deep commitment to academic excellence, a global Great Commission mindset, and a passion to touch the lives of our beloved and diverse student body.”

Wall Street Journal Features APU Professor Wendi McGehee’s Expertise on LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

The *Wall Street Journal* featured the expertise from Wendi Dykes McGehee, PhD, CF-LSP, chair of Azusa Pacific University’s leadership and organizational psychology programs, in a story about companies using LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) in the workplace.

McGehee and Jillian Gilbert, DSL, CF-LSP, also from the Department of Leadership and Organizational Psychology, are pioneers in bringing LSP into the classroom for graduate students. This method of engaged learning and cocreation provides a groundbreaking enterprise in adult learning where significant obstacles are removed, leaving room for personal and group transformation. Trained faculty in APU’s School of Business and Management (SBM) use LSP in their consulting practices to help organizations of all types solve complex challenges facing the workplace today. Previous clients include the U.S. Naval Warfare Division, LinkedIn, Kaiser Permanente, and more.

“Engagement with LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® can lead to building one’s creative confidence,” McGehee said. “Two years ago, there weren’t many U.S.-based facilitators like myself, but it’s exploding here now.”



“Engagement with LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® can lead to building one’s creative confidence.”

WENDI DYKES MCGEHEE, PHD, CF-LSP

The SBM hosted the 2022 LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® North American Community Meeting from November 9-11, 2022. The conference offered presentations by certified facilitators on best practices and innovative strategies for using LSP, research studies and theoretical papers surrounding the phenomenon, and a refresher session on the methodology of LSP. Method cocreators Robert Rasmussen and Per Kristiansen presented at the conference.

Read the full *Wall Street Journal* article at tinyurl.com/4u3x39sd.

APU Ranks as a Top University for High-Earning Female Alumni

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, females make up only 27 percent of the workforce in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), despite these areas including some of the fastest-growing and highest-paid jobs of the future. Azusa Pacific University defied that trend, with its recent ranking as one of the top 12 Western R2 universities that produce the most high-earning females. “This ranking is especially noteworthy. For our female alumni to be recognized in male-dominated STEM fields, it attests to how APU’s STEM programs

and faculty help our students excel in critical thinking, problem solving, communication, teamwork, and leadership, in addition to our distinctives of transformative learning and faith integration,” said Louise Ko Huang, PhD, acting dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The Steppingblocks study used demographic, education, and employment filters to generate a list of R2 universities producing the most females under 40 earning \$100,000 or greater.

“We are thrilled to know our alumni are shattering the glass ceilings—these women represent the best of APU: Christian-centered difference makers, who because of their skill, intelligence, and character stand out as rising stars in their workplaces and communities,” said Stephen P. Johnson, DMA, interim provost. “The high expectations and mentoring they received from our committed faculty contributed to them becoming leaders that others want to follow.”

As an R2-designated institution, APU engages in high research activity. Faculty members are deeply engaged in original research, teach their own courses, and often involve their students in their research projects, including undergraduates. This translates to richer learning opportunities, better marketability upon graduation, and ultimately a better return on investment.

APU also placed in the top 12 percent of universities nationwide on its return on investment. Categorized in an online database published by Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce, APU was scored on a variety of factors, including tuition and costs, average student debt, graduation rates, and net earnings after graduation.



APU Upward Bound Program Receives Five-Year, \$1.5 Million Grant to Help Azusa Students Prepare for College

Azusa Pacific University’s Upward Bound program received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education in the amount of \$297,557 per year for five years, totaling nearly \$1.5 million. This grant enables APU’s Upward Bound program, now in its fifth year, to continue its

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7

significant partnership with Azusa Unified School District (AUSD).

“Through this new grant, APU and AUSD will build upon our successful track record of equipping students to succeed in college,” said Armando Bustos, MS, project director for the Upward Bound program. “Education is the pathway to a better life for these students and their families. It’s an honor to support them and see their college dreams come true.”

Each year, APU’s Upward Bound team serves 60 Azusa High School (AHS) students. When the outgoing class graduates, their spots are filled by rising students. The program is free for students. Upward Bound participants enroll in college preparatory courses and receive services including after-school tutoring, individual academic counseling, college and career exploration, and college and financial aid application assistance. Participants can also benefit from attending Saturday Academy, a series of 16 workshops that teach skills in areas such as financial literacy, goal setting, and scholarship writing. The program also helps students explore their collegiate options by touring different universities each year.

“The Upward Bound Program has a transformative impact on Azusa Unified students, equipping them with the self-confidence and tenacity to thrive in high school and college,” said Arturo Ortega, AUSD superintendent. “APU has been a great partner and advocate for AUSD students. Securing an additional five years of funding opens up valuable new opportunities for our incoming freshmen.”

During the 2020-21 academic year, 91 percent of AHS Upward Bound participants had a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher; 99 percent continued on to the next grade level or graduated with a regular secondary school diploma; and 89 percent enrolled in a postsecondary institution. “What the numbers don’t reflect is the ripple effect,” Bustos said. “Our students primarily come from low-income families; our goal is that by going to college, they can transform the socioeconomic status of their family and help them lead happy, successful lives.”

APU Hosts 4th Annual STEM Research Symposium

Azusa Pacific University’s Center for Research in Science (CRIS) hosted the fourth annual STEM Research Symposium (SRS) on September 24. The SRS provided an opportunity for more than 30 undergraduate students from the departments of biology and chemistry, engineering and computer science, and math, physics, and statistics to share the research they conducted with faculty advisors over the summer.

“This flagship event draws some of our best and brightest students to showcase their research,” said Louise Ko Huang, PhD, CRIS director and acting dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. “The SRS

provides an excellent opportunity for our undergraduate researchers to disseminate their findings in a professional setting prior to presenting at regional and/or national conferences.”

The SRS featured keynote speaker Lisette de Pillis, PhD, the Norman F. Sprague Jr. Professor of Life Sciences and Mathematics at Harvey Mudd College. A renowned expert in the field of cancer immunology modeling, de Pillis has conducted extensive research using mathematics to search for new ways to understand and treat diseases including cancer, HIV, type 1 diabetes, and SARS-CoV-2. She was recognized with the Maria Goeppert-Mayer (MGM) Distinguished Scholar award, the first and only MGM award bestowed upon a researcher from an undergraduate institution and only the second mathematician to receive the award. De Pillis is the mother of an APU alumna and a current APU student.



Students and faculty highlighted their research through poster and oral presentations, with a competition awarding the top presenters. The winners for the following categories were: *Outstanding Oral Presentation in Biology and Chemistry*: Jacqueline Maze ’24 (Jon Milhon’s lab); *Outstanding Oral Presentation in ECS/MPS*: Emily Gottry ’23 (Edwin Ding’s lab); *First-Place Poster Presentation*: Colleen Walker ’24 and Tyler Durbin ’24 (Kevin Huang’s lab); *Second Place Poster Presentation* (tied): Maya Arnouk ’25 (Matt Berezuk’s lab); and Sydney Noell ’24 and Melissa Rios-Buza ’23 (Jennifer Young and Elijah Roth’s lab).

CRIS serves a community of students and scholars by promoting research that encompasses and extends the scope of scientific studies to address the inseparable relationships between science, faith, and culture. CRIS also encourages student and faculty research by arranging intra- and extramural internships, inviting visiting scientists to engage with students on campus, and working to establish synergistic partnerships with local businesses and organizations.



APU Receives ABET Engineering Accreditation

Azusa Pacific University’s Bachelor of Science in Engineering program received accreditation from the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET, the global accreditor of college and university programs in applied and natural science, computing, engineering, and engineering technology.

“ABET accreditation is nationally and internationally recognized as the gold standard in quality assurance in engineering education—top industry organizations expect their engineers to be the products of ABET-accredited programs,” said James Yeh, PhD, chair and associate professor in the Department of Engineering and Computer Science (ECS). “This excellent outcome testifies to the high caliber of the APU Engineering program, the quality and commitment of its faculty, and the dynamic engagement of an active advisory board consisting of senior industry professionals.”

ABET accreditation assures that programs meet standards to produce graduates ready to enter critical technical fields that are leading the way in innovation and emerging technologies, and anticipating the welfare and safety needs of the public.

By the Numbers

7: The number of years of accreditation reaffirmation—and the maximum allowed—that the School of Business and Management (SBM) received from the International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE). IACBE accreditation is mission-driven and outcomes-based, involving an independent, external evaluation of the business programs offered by an institution’s academic business unit. SBM prepares students with the skills and integrity needed to do business well in today’s world.

180: The number of high school students, teachers, and guests representing Kern County School District who visited APU’s campus for an outreach event that featured a keynote address from Keith Hall, EdD, vice president for student belonging and chief diversity officer, followed by a Black Excellence in Higher Education panel, plus workshops and tours, and on-the-spot admissions event for high school seniors.

15: Grants received by Azusa Pacific University since July 1, 2022, representing government and nonprofit awards, and which total \$15.1 million. These grants fund a variety of programs and initiatives ranging from advancing student success and a public health scholarship program to training pathways for Hispanic pastors and community-focused money management education.

70: The number of Fulbright Awards offered to APU faculty, students, and alumni since 2002, including Abbylin Sellers, PhD, associate professor in the Department of History and Political Science, and Mary Shepard Wong, PhD, professor in the Department of Sociology, TESOL, and Modern Languages, both of whom received a Fulbright Award for the 2022-23 academic year. Sellers will teach at two institutions in Japan—Yokohama National University and Hosei University—and Wong will travel to Taiwan as part of a team of international education professionals.

“Being accredited by ABET is extremely significant for a new engineering program like ours,” said Louise Ko Huang, PhD, acting dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. “The ABET accreditation signifies that APU’s hard work over the last several years to equip and position our students well is recognized and affirmed.”

Sought worldwide, ABET’s voluntary peer-review process is highly respected because it adds critical value to academic programs in the technical disciplines, where quality, precision, and safety are of the utmost importance. ABET accreditation reviews look at program curricula, faculty, facilities, and institutional support and are conducted by teams of highly skilled professionals from industry, academia, and government.

“Recent APU graduates have been accepted into several graduate schools and employed by top-rated companies such as Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, The Aerospace Corporation, Google, Amazon, and Tesla, as well as by many nonprofit organizations,” said ECS professor and ABET coordinator George Thomas, PhD.

APU’s BS in Engineering equips students with a solid foundation in engineering principles for a variety of fields including aerospace, agriculture, automotive, business, defense, energy, health care, and telecommunications.

“Being accredited by ABET is extremely significant for a new engineering program like ours.”

LOUISE KO HUANG, PHD



APU Theater Presents *Phantom of the Opera*

Azusa Pacific's Department of Theater Arts presented *Phantom of the Opera*, a live rendition of the French novel by Gaston Leroux with an enthralling score by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Based in the 19th century, *Phantom of the Opera* tells the story of a beautiful soprano singer who becomes the obsession of a masked musical genius living beneath the Paris Opera House. *Phantom of the Opera* is luxuriously orchestrated and acted, magnificent in scenery and costumes, and awesome in scale. The production was directed by guest director Gary Krinke, who directed APU's *The Addams Family* and has extensive experience as a director at Fullerton College.

"The APU theater arts department is one of only five in the nation to receive the rights to produce Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*, and our production featured a live 14-piece orchestra," said department chair Jill Lincoln, MA.

APU's plays and musicals are produced through a program of rigorous training, and the Department of Theater Arts prepares outstanding, innovative, and influential artists in an ever-growing and multifaceted performing arts profession.

Grants Advance Significant Research and Scholarship

\$4,999,904

From the Lilly Endowment Inc. to Bobby Duke, PhD, interim associate provost for research and libraries and accreditation liaison officer, this funding will support a partnership between APU, Life Pacific University (LPU), and the Latin American Bible Institute (LABI) to create transformational training pathways for Hispanic pastors. This project seeks to address two significant obstacles for Hispanic students: access and affordability. By developing a shared curriculum with online classes available, APU, LPU, and LABI are removing barriers and preparing students to make a difference in their communities and churches. Students who choose to pursue their undergraduate degrees at LPU or LABI can go directly to Azusa Pacific Seminary for their MDiv or DMin degree.

\$3,956,580

From the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to Aja Lesh, PhD, RN, executive director of APU's Institute of Health Research, to provide loan forgiveness for nursing students. This includes a \$2,630,688 grant for undergraduate students and a \$1,325,892 grant for graduate students. APU is the third-largest producer of new nurses into California's workforce, and last year APU's School of Nursing graduated more than 700 licensed nurses. These grants will enable many more future nurses to attain an affordable degree.

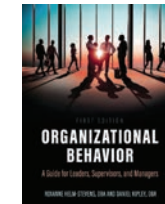
\$1,053,634

From the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/HRSA to Aurelia Macabasco-O'Connell, PhD, ACNP-BC, FAHA, chair of the Department of Doctoral Studies in the School of Nursing, to support students on a trajectory to become full-time nursing faculty in schools or colleges of nursing. The Nurse Faculty Loan Program has provided continuous funding to APU for the past 12 years totalling \$8,286,058. At a time of great nursing shortages and workforce challenges in health care, this program supports nurses and their education, especially students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

\$729,218

From the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) to fund Project SUDUCATE overseen by a multidisciplinary team: Rachel Castaneda, PhD, MPH, professor in the School of Behavioral and Applied Sciences and Lynda Reed, RN, FNP-C, DNP, associate professor in the School of Nursing, in partnership with UCLA's School of Medicine, Integrated Substance Abuse Programs, Training Director, Sherry Larkins, PhD. The aim of the grant is to integrate substance use education and training into the nursing curriculum to enhance student competencies in addressing substance use issues in primary care settings in local communities.

Scholarship at Work



Organizational Behavior: A Guide for Leaders, Supervisors, and Managers

(Cognella Academic Publishing, 2022) by Roxanne Helm-Stevens, DBA, interim dean and professor, and Daniel Kiple, DBA, professor, School of Business and Management

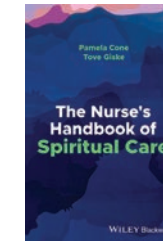
A Guide for Leaders, Supervisors, and Managers provides readers with research and strategies to help individuals reach organizational objectives and create positive workplace cultures. The text is organized into five dedicated sections. Section one underscores the importance of studying organizational behavior, introduces key theories, explores various methods for understanding human behavior, and examines the concept of emotional intelligence. Section two discusses employee motivation and job design, need-based motivation, learning theory, cognitive and behavioral theory of motivation, organizational reward systems, and pay structures. In section three, readers learn how to create and lead effective, high-performing teams, strategies for communication in organizations, and methods for understanding and resolving conflict. Section four addresses topics related to leadership and management, including management styles and approaches, formal and informal leadership, decision-making styles, and ethics. Section five speaks to organizational culture and change. An essential and enlightening guide, *Organizational Behavior* is an exemplary textbook for courses in organizational behavior and business management.



The Sound of the Sea

(National Music Publishers, 2022) by Stephen P. Johnson, DMA, interim provost

The sea is beyond our control. This composition is an original work setting Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "The Sound of the Sea" to music, following the text through turbulent and serene times. The phrases and harmonies are captivating and rich in energy. Written for an *a cappella divisi* choral ensemble, this artistic work explores the life, the voice, and the uncontrollable nature of the sea, as well as the mirroring of that nature with the internal pursuits of the human soul.



The Nurse's Handbook of Spiritual Care

(Wiley Blackwell, 2022) by Pamela Cone, PhD, RN, CNS, PHN, professor emerita, School of Nursing, and Tove Giske

The Nurse's Handbook of Spiritual Care helps nurses develop a high level of competence in spiritual and existential care as an important part of whole-person, patient-centered nursing care. Every patient and situation a nurse encounters is unique, and spiritual issues, concerns, and needs can be expressed and met in a variety of ways. The intersection of spirituality and health is a sensitive and sacred space where the nurse-patient relationship of genuine caring and compassion is of crucial importance. This handbook covers the fundamentals of spiritual care, written to inspire and challenge the reader. It provides a space for reflection and encourages lifelong learning. The authors present a new teaching-learning theory—the learning spiral—to enable and empower readers to "tune in" to patients and work to soothe spiritual suffering and existential pain, ultimately facilitating patient well-being.



Reading the Bible Around the World: A Student's Guide to Global Hermeneutics

(IVP Academic, 2022) by Federico A. Roth, PhD, professor, Justin Marc Smith, PhD, associate professor, Kirsten S. Oh, PhD, professor, Alice Yafeh-Deigh, PhD, professor, and Kay Higuera Smith, PhD, professor, School of Theology

In *Reading the Bible Around the World*, a cross-cultural team of scholars describes and workshops global readings in biblical interpretation, focusing on passages in the Old and New Testaments. By presenting a range of readings from different regions and people groups, with particular attention to marginalized groups, the authors demonstrate the importance of contextually sensitive approaches. They help us build up key values for reading Scripture in the 21st century: self-awareness, other-awareness, and true dialogue. Who we are shapes how we read. Guided by these expert teachers, readers gain a deeper understanding of the influence of their own social location and how to keep growing in biblical wisdom by reading alongside the global Christian community.

God put the word **REVIVAL** on my heart and it's only grown in intensity. Alongside me, there are many faculty, staff, and students who are also praying regularly that the Spirit of God will fall afresh on this community.

Faithfulness to Mission: Working Together for Greater Kingdom Impact

BY ADAM J. MORRIS, PHD

On January 26, 2022, I sat with the APU Board of Trustees for what turned out to be my final interview in the presidential search process. It was more than a 12-hour day, and we all came prepared with our final round of questions. By midafternoon, having talked through the many complexities of leading a faith-based organization with hundreds of employees and thousands of students, we dove into a topic near and dear to my heart—faithfulness to mission. I wanted to probe core aspects of APU's institutional identity and APU's resolve to stand its ground amidst the tumult facing all of Christian higher education.

My heart was filled when trustee after trustee talked about APU's mission and their strong conviction as a board to hold firm to our time-honored identity as a Christ-centered university. We unpacked the challenges of the last several years and talked about what will be required of APU moving forward amidst the strong headwinds and adverse threats to religious liberty. I sought confirmation that APU's Board of Trustees had the conviction to remain missionally faithful, come what may. Our conversation affirmed the board's unwavering commitment and confirmed my deep desire to join a Spirit-led leadership team that was truly on mission.

Continued on page 14

Continued from page 13

The history of higher education is replete with colleges and universities founded on Judeo-Christian principles that no longer resemble their former selves. Longitudinal studies of several of these institutions show a specific moment in time when a singular decision was made, seemingly insignificant, that threw them off course. It's like a ship's captain whose navigation plan is off by just one degree... they miss their final destination by hundreds and hundreds of miles. Unfortunately, this has been the demise of far too many faith-based institutions that have compromised mission for financial exigency or some other perceived benefit. It's been said that the coming years will be tough for Christian colleges and universities—many will crumble financially or cave missionally.

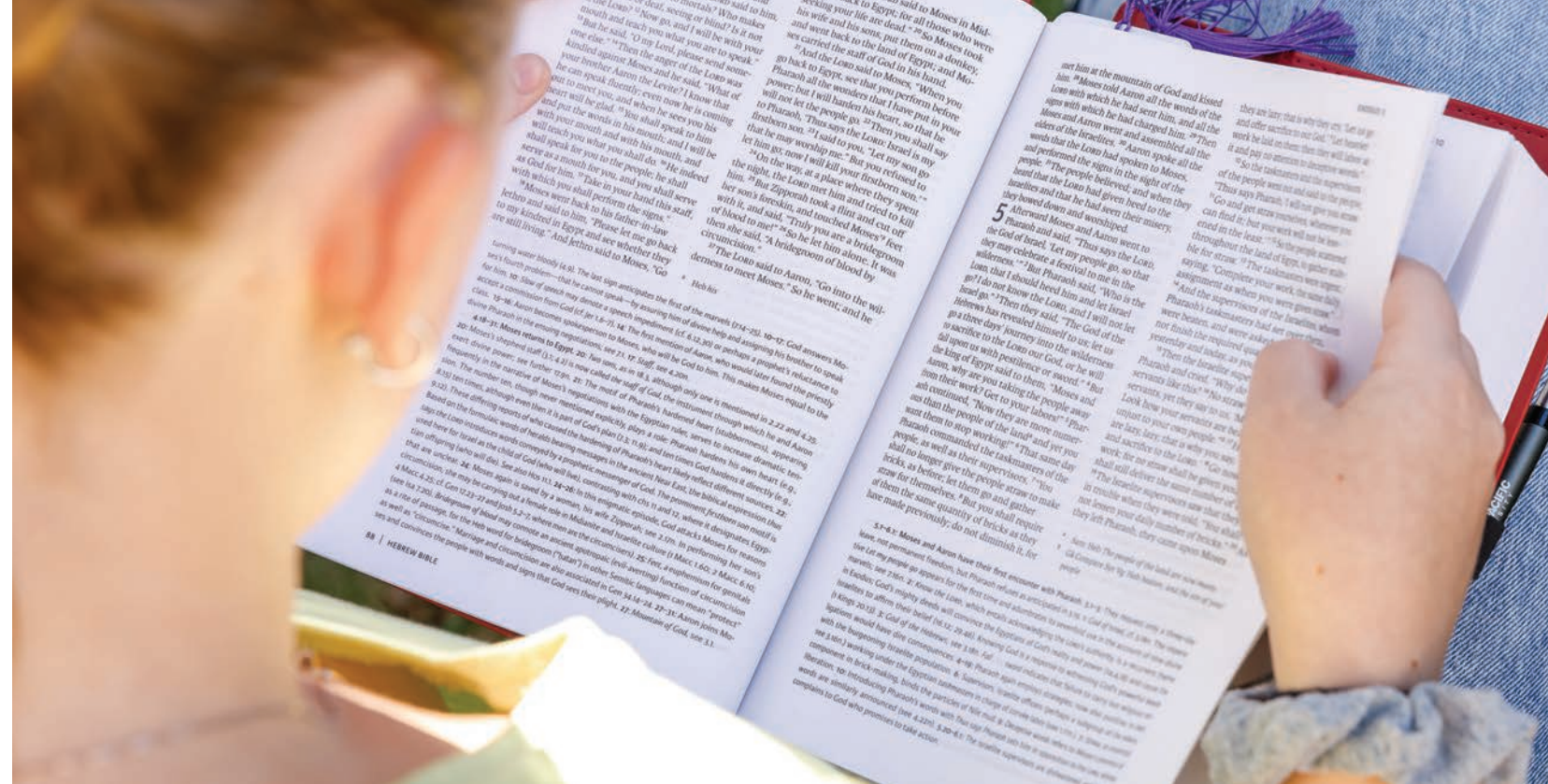
As one who has served in Christian higher education for more than three decades, I agree that the pressures facing us are great. But I'm reminded of the supremacy of God and His clear instructions in Proverbs 4:25-27 to "keep your eyes straight ahead; ignore all sideshow distractions. Watch your step, and the road will stretch out smooth before you. Look neither right nor left; leave evil in the dust" (The Message).

In my study of APU's history this past summer, I came upon the meeting minutes from March 12, 1900, when a small band of women and men were gathered in uptown Whittier, California, believing that Los Angeles desperately needed a training school "to provide thorough instruction in the Bible... [and to] give practical training in all that

The entire nursing student body of APU's High Desert Regional Campus donated, cleaned, and sanitized more than 1,000 pairs of shoes given away at the annual Socks, Shoes, and Salvation outreach event in downtown Victorville.



ELLE WILLIAMS



DANA ATTEBERY, MA '17

pertains to home and foreign mission work... [with the] power to engage in evangelism and the raising up of new work for the Kingdom of Christ... to do all and everything necessary for the promotion of the Kingdom of Christ on the face of the world."

The founders of the Training School for Christian Workers (now Azusa Pacific University) had as their singular focus a school that was fixed on training and equipping women and men to become agents of the Gospel for the expansion of God's Kingdom. Embedded in those meeting minutes were the newly minted Articles of Faith that grounded the Training School, biblically and theologically. My heart was filled when I compared the original Articles of Faith with the Articles of Faith guiding APU today, underscoring our 123-year history of faithfulness to mission.

September 22, 2022, marked my first official APU Board of Trustees meeting, and it was important to me that we continue our conversation about missional faithfulness and specifically the role of the president in keeping APU aligned on its core mission and purpose.

I shared with the Board of Trustees that this year I will begin working with our leadership team to identify the institutional pillars that must be in place for a Christ-centered university to be found faithful. Some of these include having a clear mission statement

and missional alignment across the leadership team, including the board, the administration, and the faculty and staff. Faithfulness to mission includes providing deep theological training through the required undergraduate Bible curriculum, and resourcing the Office of Faith Integration. It also requires clear hiring practices and making sure that curricular and cocurricular programming provides opportunity for students to flourish spiritually.

The overarching question I'm asking this year is, what would have to be true for a Christian university to be found faithful, and where is APU on this continuum? Then, where is APU strong, what needs shoring up, what should we stop doing, what should we start doing, and how will we measure effectiveness?

These are fundamental inquiries, ones that will require discernment and wisdom from God. But I can't think of a better set of questions as we work together to position APU for even greater Kingdom impact.

For APU to stay on mission, we must take Jesus' command in John 15:5 seriously—to "abide in Him." As Jesus was preparing His disciples for His impending sacrificial death on the cross, He reminded them of their calling and mission, emphasizing the importance of their absolute dependence on Him. Jesus said, "I am the vine;

you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (NIV).

As APU's 18th president, I want nothing more than for APU to be missionally faithful. In my first few months on the job, I've encountered countless APU faculty, staff, and students who are "abiding," with a shared passion to see this institution used by God to impact lives in order to transform our culture with graduates who are on mission for God.

Even before stepping into this leadership role, God put the word **REVIVAL** on my heart and it's only grown in intensity. Alongside me, there are many faculty, staff, and students who are also praying regularly that the Spirit of God will fall afresh on this community.

As Azusa Pacific University "abides in Him," and as we stand firm on mission amidst the cultural, social, and financial pressures facing all of Christ-centered higher education, I believe the Spirit of God will flood this place, and that God will use APU in even more profound ways to accomplish His purposes.

These are exciting days at Azusa Pacific University. God is on the move!

Adam J. Morris, PhD, is the 18th president of Azusa Pacific University. amorris@apu.edu

The founders of the Training School for Christian Workers (now Azusa Pacific University) had as their singular focus a school that was fixed on training and equipping women and men to become agents of the Gospel for the expansion of God's Kingdom.

Advancing Student Success

BY KANDY MINK SALAS, PHD



First-generation college student Eimee Ponciano '24, whose parents immigrated to the U.S. from Guatemala, applied to many Southern California colleges, wanting to stay close to home. She chose Azusa Pacific University after feeling a strong connection to her admissions counselor. "I had a lot of questions; she just kept answering them happily and asking if I had any more," Ponciano said. "I really liked that. That was something I didn't get from any other school—the personal touch and dedication from the staff."

Support from faculty and staff proved pivotal for Ponciano because school often felt overwhelming. "Everything was so new to me. I didn't know anything about credits or how to get the classes I needed," she said. "I overcame these challenges by admitting I needed help, not trying to do everything on my own. The GENI Scholars and TRIO programs have been invaluable, especially the advice from my mentor, Armando Bustos."

Across the country, the college student population has become increasingly diverse. Azusa Pacific University is a campus enriched by students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic levels, and family experiences. These students speak many languages and arrive at APU through different education pathways, including first-generation students, transfer students, and adult learners.

A diverse student body brings distinct needs, unique challenges, and wonderful insights and gifts. At APU, supporting all students and helping them thrive is paramount to the institution's Christian mission of graduating disciples and scholars. As the Bible instructs, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" (I Peter 4:10, NIV).

To promote student retention, graduation, and success, APU provides several programs and support services, including Summer Bridge and TRIO. Summer Bridge is a six-week summer residential program that serves first-generation students and includes college courses, enabling participants to get a head start on their academic program. The curriculum also offers a college success course with access to ongoing campus resources. "APU's Summer Bridge program helped me transition so well from high school to college," said Nadia Marron '26, a nursing major and psychology minor. "I discovered what it was like to be a college student and learned about campus resources that benefit me to this day."

TRIO, a group of programs funded by federal grants, helps first-generation and low-income students succeed in college. APU administers two of these grants—Student Support Services (SSS) and Upward Bound; SSS assists current APU students, while Upward Bound serves our local Azusa community, working with Azusa High School to promote college-going behaviors. For TRIO participant Jaylen Hornback '25, a psychology major, the program has fueled a desire to succeed. "Through TRIO, I've met some of the most hard-working, intelligent people, and they keep my focus on advancing in my life," he said.

Many students mention the APU hallmark of caring, dedicated faculty and staff when describing their successful journey at APU. "I am grateful to God that Azusa Pacific University has met my educational needs in various ways," said Leidy Juarez '23, MEd. "APU has provided resources to promote my academic success—tutoring, writing appointments, mentoring, pastoral counseling, and community building through Discipleship Groups. APU has phenomenal faculty and staff who have cared and supported me in my hopes of becoming an elementary school teacher."

TODAY'S APU STUDENTS

56%: undergraduates with previous college credit (not counting AP classes in high school)

28: average age of an APU student

34%: first-generation undergraduates

70%: female students

33%: Pell-eligible APU undergraduates (the Pell Grant is a federal grant given to students with the highest economic need)

39%: new undergraduate students in fall 2022 identify as Latino/Hispanic, now the university's largest ethnic group

A recent \$2.7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education will enable APU to further its student success initiatives. The award, "Advancing Student Achievement and Success," will help APU, as a Hispanic Serving Institution, increase retention and graduation rates of Hispanic students through improved academic advising models, junior and senior learning assistants, and Summer Bridge program enhancements, as well as upgrades to organizational infrastructure and student tracking data systems. The grant will also strengthen the student experience in the classroom through faculty development programs, curricular/General Education revisions that include culturally responsive pedagogies, and mentorship skill development.

Through these continued efforts, APU will celebrate many more student success stories like that of Ponciano. After finishing her freshman year virtually, she looked forward to experiencing APU in person by commuting from Watts to Azusa. Presented with another opportunity that stretched her, Ponciano rose to the challenge and moved onto campus, becoming an Alpha leader and then a resident advisor. She now gives back by mentoring freshmen, many of whom face the same challenges she did. A double major in honors humanities and psychology, Ponciano looks forward to being the first in her family to graduate from college. "My parents came to this country to give their children a better life," she said. "Graduating from college is what they dreamed of for my sister and I—we're their living wish. I may be the first in my family to graduate from college, but I certainly won't be the last. It makes me happy to see their dreams, and mine, come true."

Kandy Mink Salas, PhD, is associate provost for student success. kminksalas@apu.edu

The Sword Project: Blessing Athletes with Personalized Bibles

BY NATHAN FOSTER

Carrie Webber, Azusa Pacific University's head softball coach, was on a mission. She walked onto the field with a stack of thick leatherbound books in her arms, knowing that this moment meant more than any win ever would. These were no ordinary books; in fact, they were copies of the bestselling, most read book of all time. Titled the Sword Project, APU's Athletics Department gives personalized study Bibles to all incoming athletes.

For Webber, the inspiration for the Sword Project came from former player Becca Jewett '21. While Jewett was a student at APU, she went into her own pocket to buy Bibles for the freshmen on the team. "Becca would have dinner with them and present them with a Bible with their name on it," Webber said. "It was awesome watching the impact that had. It definitely meant a lot to them." Webber began to notice that many incoming athletes didn't have Bibles. "I think that one of the best things that we can possibly do for our athletes is to put a Bible in their hands," she said.

As Webber looked for the right study Bibles, she encountered a problem—the Bibles weren't cheap, and the cost added up quickly with the large number of athletes. This problem was solved thanks to a generous donation through a foundation run by Jamen Wurm, CPA, MS '98, a member of APU's 1998 NAIA national-championship-winning football team. Wurm, a partner at Goehner Accountancy, is a big believer in giving back to the program that

helped shape him into who he is today. When APU announced the closure of the football program in 2020, he asked former football coach Bo Beatty '94 if he had any ideas about where the funds he had donated could go. Beatty told him about the work Webber does and got them in contact. After talking with Webber, Wurm knew he wanted to be a part of the Sword Project. "I'm very excited to know that this is going toward such a great cause," Wurm said. "It is a blessing to be a part of possibly providing a student-athlete with their first Bible ever."

The Sword Project's name comes from a hand-engraved sword on the cover of each Bible, referring to the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). Inside the sword, Webber can inscribe up to 12 characters, which athletes choose. Many ask for their names or the Scriptural location of their favorite Bible verse. Webber has received lots of encouraging feedback from the athletes. "One girl had wanted a Bible for years, but cost was always an issue. She was so excited to receive one," Webber

said. "Another girl had an old hand-me-down Bible. She said it was hard for her to open it, for many reasons, but this Bible is her own and has given her the newfound motivation to open it and experience God's Word."

APU athletes have a unique opportunity to grow in their faith, according to athletic director Gary Pine '84, who conducted a survey on their spiritual growth. "While Bible classes and chapel are an integral part of APU's Christian education, the resounding response from athletes was that they saw the most spiritual growth from meaningful conversations with their teammates and coaches," Pine said. "The beauty of athletics is that when you're on a team, you develop a bond that allows for vulnerability. People feel comfortable asking deep questions that they might not feel comfortable asking elsewhere."

In academic classes, APU faculty find ways to integrate their faith with the subject material. On athletic teams, coaches model a Christian lifestyle

and walk alongside their players. "We want to impact our athletes beyond the four years they're here. Nothing can impact your life greater than the Word of God," Pine said. "When our student-athletes walk across that commencement stage, they're no longer a student and no longer an athlete. We hope to pour into them enough so they know their identity is not in academics or athletics, rather it is in Christ. Now they'll have their own Bibles, and it's a book they'll continue to use long after they graduate."

Each coach has their own ways they pour into their players—some do Bible studies, others have team movie nights featuring Christian productions such as *The Chosen*, and others pray with their team before and after practices. All APU coaches are available to talk to their players when deep questions arise. "I had a player call me recently and say, 'Coach, I know God's real, and I don't know much more, but I really want to know. Can you sit down with me and tell me more?'" said

Webber. "I told her I absolutely could. I live for those moments. Wins are pretty cool, but the joy from those moments lasts way longer. I don't always get to be there for that moment when they say yes to their faith and yes to God. But while I might not get to see that moment, I definitely notice how they've been transformed at APU. That's very special."

Nathan Foster '20 is public relations manager in the Division of Strategic Communication and Engagement. nfoster@apu.edu

"It is a blessing to be a part of possibly providing a student-athlete with their first Bible ever."
—Jamen Wurm



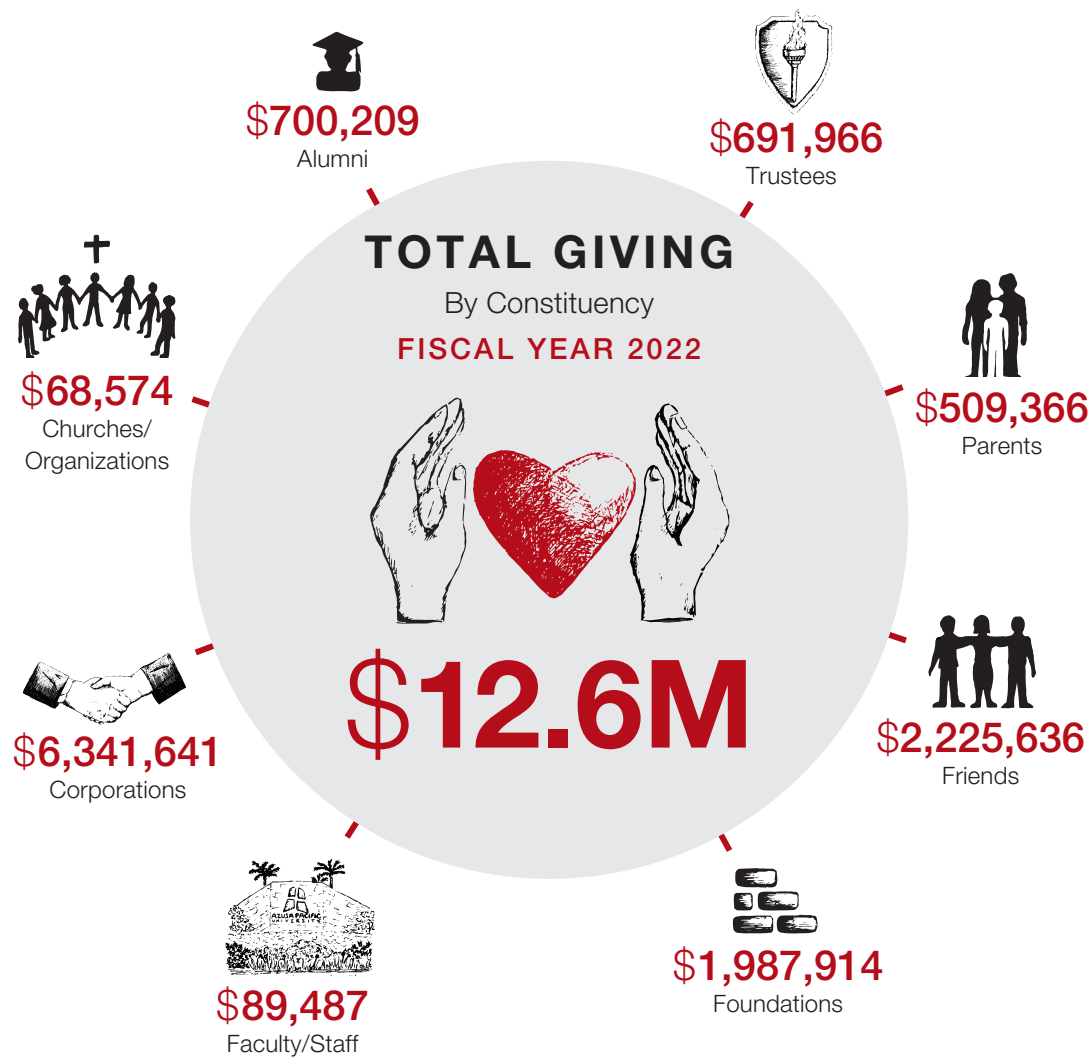
SO FAR THIS YEAR, MORE THAN 130 BIBLES HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO STUDENT-ATHLETES.

If you'd like to help continue this tradition, please consider scanning the QR code and donating.



PHOTOS BY DIANA ATTEBERY, MA '17

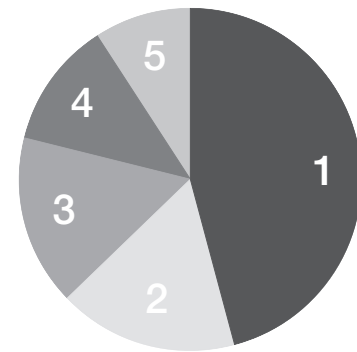
Donors Made This Possible



Azusa Pacific GIVING 4.19.22 DAY
Make a Difference

- 24 hours
- 991 donors
- \$228,635 raised
- 69 areas, programs, and scholarships supported across the entire university community
- Gifts made from 32 states and 6 countries

Total Giving by Project



1. Unrestricted: \$6,129,154
2. University Fund: \$2,169,411
3. Restricted: \$2,072,263
4. Capital: \$1,270,250
5. Endowment: \$973,715

Total: \$12,614,793

FY22 Planned Gifts

\$1,502,212.48

What is a Planned Gift? APU provides professional services to help individuals make informed decisions regarding their current and future estate plans, while also facilitating investment in the mission of APU to create disciples and scholars. Gifts take the form of gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, matured bequests, and other gift-planning vehicles.

Over time, these generous gifts have helped build today's endowment of more than \$89 million, which funds scholarships as well as academic and cocurricular programs and support.

For more information, contact the Office of University Advancement at (626) 815-5333 or advancement@apu.edu.

FY22 Matching Gifts

\$28,241.18

What is a Matching Gift? Many companies encourage philanthropy by matching their employees' gifts to colleges and universities such as Azusa Pacific. Most match the gift dollar for dollar, and some will even double or triple the amount. Participating companies may also recognize donations made by retirees and/or spouses of employees.

Generally, a matching gift will go toward the same program as your donation unless your company's policy requires otherwise.

Will My Company Match My Gift? To find out if your company has a matching gift program, inquire with your company's human resources department, or contact the Office of University Advancement at (626) 815-5333 or advancement@apu.edu.



Student Profile

DILLON LYNCH '23
Liberal Studies: English Concentration
Los Angeles, CA

Impact of Generosity

My scholarship is life-changing. Growing up with a learning disability, school was a challenge—when I was 7, I was diagnosed with an auditory and visual learning defect and was placed in special education classes. I was often picked on, and it messed up my confidence and self-esteem. The fact that I left it all to God has really kept me going all these years, even though at times my faith gets tested. Coming to APU has been a huge part of my faith and learning journey. My scholarship helps me tremendously because I can get the additional resources I need to be able to graduate.

APU and Your Calling/Career

The story of how I ended up at APU was all God! In spring 2019 I wasn't in school, because I couldn't afford it, and I had a part-time job that I did not like. In the fall semester I had gone back to West Los Angeles College, where I was heading into my fourth year. I was not close to getting my AA degree, and the counselors at the school gave up on me. My dad told me that I had to transfer to a four-year school or he wouldn't help me out. I told my dad I was going to transfer after the fall semester, but I told him this with absolutely no plan! That night I prayed, "Lord, please bless me and make a way for me to get to a university where they will give me a chance. Please give me a community where I will meet amazing people and educators." The next day APU called and said, "Hey, you didn't finish your application to transfer here in the spring!" I totally forgot that I had even started the application, so I finished it and sent in my transcripts. Two days later I was called to do a campus tour, and it was such an amazing school! The next day, the transfer counselor called and said that I was admitted to APU!

Thriving at APU

I have been most involved in the intramural sports teams at APU. Also, being part of the Kaleo* chapel team has been the best experience. These are the places where I met most of my friends. Everyone here is amazing. We all have the same thing in common: honoring God and devoting our lives to Him. It's amazing being able to talk freely about what God has done in our lives and being able to pray for one another.

Making an Impact

Once I graduate from APU, I will be going into the education field. I want to teach and make a difference in students' lives. With God by my side, I know the expectations I set for myself will be achieved.

*Kaleo is a weeknight chapel service designed to guide students through an ongoing exploration of Scripture.

Total Students

8,111

- 49% Undergraduate Students
- 51% Graduate Students

Graduates in 2020-21

2,680

\$89,461,386
market value of the endowment

9,427
gifts given
in 2021-22

100%
of undergraduate
students receive
scholarships or other
financial aid

If you would like to see APU's complete audited financial statement, email businessoffice@apu.edu.



Strengthening Azusa Pacific University through Endowed Scholarships

Since 1899, Azusa Pacific University has trained students as leaders and difference makers, equipping them to advance God’s work in the world. To continue this important and meaningful legacy, APU provides scholarships to make our Christ-centered education affordable and accessible. A critical and lasting way to support scholarships is through an endowment. An endowment offers a long-term, permanent, self-sustaining source of income. The principal is preserved and a portion of the interest earned is paid out for the endowment’s purpose. Through this cycle, an endowment grows and provides funding for student scholarships in perpetuity.

In fiscal year 2022, APU embarked on an exciting campaign where new scholarship endowments were matched dollar for dollar up to \$25,000, and our generous donors answered the call—eight student scholarship endowments were started. These dedicated donors have created \$16,000 of scholarship funds annually for students wanting to make a difference in the world for Christ. If you are interested in establishing an endowment at APU, contact Bernice Hong at bhong@apu.edu or (626) 387-5879.

FOUNDATION AND GRANTOR SUPPORT

\$10,000 and more

- Canyon City Foundation
- Carl E. Wynn Foundation
- Charles Koch Foundation
- Church of the Nazarene Foundation
- Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
- Helen & Will Webster Foundation
- JW & Ida M. Jameson Foundation

- Merklin Family Foundation
- National Christian Foundation
- National Christian Foundation California
- National Christian Foundation, Inc.
- Peter and Masha Plotkin Memorial Foundation
- Singer Foundation
- The Ahmanson Foundation
- The Esther Foundation
- The Free Methodist Foundation
- The San Diego Foundation

BUSINESS AND CORPORATE SUPPORT

\$2,500 and more

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing
- America’s Christian Credit Union
- Amy L. Magnusson, MD
- Benevity Social Ventures Inc.
- Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity
- Charles Schwab & Company
- Charles Schwab Foundation
- Citrus Edge, LLC
- Dean Enterprises
- Edison International
- Fidelity Brokerage Services
- Furniture Row
- Gawenda Seminars & Consulting
- Gilead Sciences, Inc.
- KPMG Foundation Matching
- Larry W. Smith Ranch
- National Philanthropic Trust
- Network for Good
- Northrop Grumman Corporate Citizenship
- Paul K. Richter Memorial Fund
- Visiting Angels Glendora

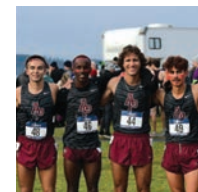
Cougars Sports Roundup

Vogt Homers in Final At-Bat of MLB Career



In the final at-bat of his 10-year Major League Baseball career, Azusa Pacific alum Stephen Vogt '07 hit a solo home run for the Oakland A’s. It was a memorable way to end a career, and was also a historic moment—Vogt became just the fifth player in MLB history to hit a home run for the first hit and the last hit of a career (his first MLB hit was a home run during the 2013 season). Vogt ended his career as a two-time MLB All-Star, a 2021 World Series champion with the Atlanta Braves, a four-time Catfish Hunter Award winner, and a three-time Dave Stewart Community Service Award winner.

Men’s Cross Country Makes History



The men’s cross country team made history this fall, becoming the first Cougars cross country squad to qualify for and compete at nationals in the NCAA era. The Cougars secured a spot at nationals with a third-place finish in the West Region, behind all-region performers Salvador Capetillo, Felix Perrier, Nixon Korir, and Riley Burns. At nationals, the Cougars finished 21st in the men’s 10k. On the women’s side, Eline Pinter was an individual qualifier for nationals after she placed ninth at regionals and earned All-West Region distinction. Briseida Garcia Meza and Leia Jones were also All-West Region runners for their performance in the women’s 6k.

Volleyball Posts Another Winning Season



The Cougars finished 15-14 this fall, which makes it eight out of the last 10 seasons that Azusa Pacific volleyball wrapped up the year with a winning record. The Cougars were led by All-PacWest First-Team selections Annaka Jorgenson (outside hitter) and Kyra Palmbush (middle blocker). Jorgenson was a three-time PacWest Player of the Week this season, finishing the campaign ranked second in the conference in kills at 3.63 per set (370 total), and fourth in points at 3.99 points per set (407 total). Palmbush established herself as one of the best middle blockers in the conference in leading the PacWest in hitting percentage (.377 on 440 attempts) and finishing seventh in blocks (0.98 blocks per set, 10 solo blocks, and 79 block assists).

Men’s Soccer Wraps Up Fall Campaign



Azusa Pacific finished 6-8-4 overall this season and 4-3-3 in PacWest play, making it four straight seasons that the Cougars have posted a winning record against conference opponents. With a relatively young roster, the Cougars looked to captain Gregoire Diep to lead the team on and off the pitch. Diep was named a First-Team All-West Region performer after playing every minute of every game for Azusa Pacific this season at midfield—over the course of 18 games, he scored a team-leading nine goals (5th in the PacWest) while collecting two assists.

Women’s Soccer Closes Out Season in Strong Fashion



The Cougars wrapped up the 2022 campaign with a 9-4-4 overall record and a 6-2-2 PacWest mark. Azusa Pacific won five of its final six matches, including a 1-0 win on its home pitch over rival Biola in the Cornerstone Cup. Mackenzie Coleman anchored the Cougars backline all season long, earning Second-Team All-West Region after starting every game for the Cougars and helping the team to 10 clean sheets and 13 games in which their opponents scored one goal or less. Coleman also contributed in the attack, scoring a goal and adding two assists.

Swimming and Diving Make a Splash



Swimming and diving has had an impressive first half of the season, highlighted by a victory over Biola in the Cornerstone Cup on Senior Day. In the Winter Invitational, which took place November 18-20, four swimmers earned national qualifying times at the “B” standard, along with Olivia Liddle earning national qualifications in the 1- and 3-meter dives. Madeline Schultz broke a school record in the 50 free, and the quartet of Schultz, Riley Smith, Hannah Swailes, and Montana White bested the APU record in the 200 free relay. The Cougars will compete in the Alumni Meet at Slauson Pool in Azusa on Saturday, January 7, at 10 a.m.

For more news and updates on APU athletics, including team schedules, visit athletics.apu.edu.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DYLAN '88 AND CHERI (HACKER '98) HARRIS

Fulfilling Their Call with Shelter on the Lake

BY NATHAN FOSTER

Dylan '98 and Cheri (Hacker '98) Harris are spreading the Gospel to the ends of the earth, or about as close as you can get to that. In 2011, after years of traveling across Asia and Europe and down the Pan-American Highway, the couple settled with their three kids—Ritter, 15, Amelia, 13, and Tobin, 11—in San Carlos de Bariloche, a lake town at the base of the Andes mountains in southern Argentina. Dylan and Cheri decided that this would be the perfect spot to launch a ministry—one geared toward backpackers.

“We spent a lot of time sharing the Gospel with locals on our travels, but they weren’t generally very receptive,” Dylan said. “Backpackers, on the other hand, were much more willing to talk about their faith. They’re searching, exploring, and are open to learning about Jesus.”

The couple runs Shelter on the Lake, which offers up to eight travelers at a time a spot to stay for free. Though lodging is free for guests, most contribute by helping pay for community food and participating in cleaning, cooking, and upkeep projects. Travelers come from all over the world, passing through on their journey north. During the day, guests and volunteers spend time on outdoor adventures including rock climbing, hiking, and paddle boarding. “We purposefully spend time with them, getting to know their story, who they are,” Dylan said. “It’s when we’re out in this gorgeous Argentine paradise that we talk about Jesus.”

Shelter on the Lake is staffed by a rotating handful of volunteers from the U.S. who spend a few months at a time furthering God’s Kingdom. “When backpackers stay with us, they step into this Christian community where we truly do life together,” Dylan said. “We get to know them and pour into them. They’re overwhelmed by this love in word and deed that they’ve never experienced before.” Before the travelers depart, they’re given a small, lightweight Bible in their language to bring with them on their journey. “Our vision is for them to hear the Gospel, see it in action in the community, and take it with them,” Dylan said.

This ministry is possible because of what Dylan and Cheri learned while students at Azusa Pacific. Dylan worked full-time in the bookstore and helped lead Walkabout with former APU President Jon Wallace. “I was a nobody, but Jon made me feel like the most important person in the world,” Dylan said. “His listening and caring inspired me.” Dylan uses these same skills with guests and while discipling volunteers.

Cheri graduated with a degree in Spanish and Christian ministries and a minor in art. “Our ministry is a direct result of being equipped with the education we received at APU,” she said. Cheri used her creative skills to design the building for Shelter on the Lake, as well as make the furniture, crockery, and art inside. She uses her Spanish knowledge to

communicate with locals and run the shelter. The couple also operates a small church out of their house, allowing Cheri to use what she learned in her ministry classes.

Dylan and Cheri are exactly where they want to be. “We’re living our dream. Everything that God created us for—outdoor adventures, travel, ministry, language, art—it all just came together,” Cheri said. “At APU, there were always conversations about doing what God has called you to do. We’re blessed to be doing the work that God made us for.”

Nathan Foster '20 is public relations manager in the Division of Strategic Communication and Engagement. nfoster@apu.edu

To learn more about Dylan and Cheri’s work with Shelter on the Lake, arrange a visit, or volunteer for the season, contact them at shelterontheLake@gmail.com.



During the day, guests and volunteers spend time on outdoor adventures including rock climbing, hiking, and paddle boarding. “We purposefully spend time with them, getting to know their story, who they are,” Dylan said. “It’s when we’re out in this gorgeous Argentine paradise that we talk about Jesus.”

Breaking Barriers: Providing Foster Youth with Shoes for Grades

BY NATHAN FOSTER



PHOTO COURTESY OF RANDALL TRICE '19, MSW '20

Randall Trice '19, MSW '20, got lost on his first day of school at Azusa Pacific University. As he tried to find the way to his theology class, his nerves began to grow. When he finally stumbled into the classroom, his professor, Paul Shrier, PhD, looked at him with compassion and asked if he was looking for theology. Trice nodded and Shrier replied, “Well then, you’re in the right spot. Have a seat.”

As a first-generation student, the struggle to get to that classroom on his first day of college was symbolic of a greater challenge. “I didn’t have any family to show me how to fill out the FAFSA application or how to read a syllabus,” he said. “I had to learn to navigate college on my own.”

As he adjusted to college life, he explored majors. Like many students, Trice wasn’t sure what career path to take. He knew he loved working with kids and thought about becoming a nurse, then a psychologist, before discovering his dream profession. “There are so many avenues to travel with social work,” he said. “You won’t become rich by being a social worker, but you will gain a lot of knowledge and be able to help many people.”

With a clear direction now in mind as a social work major, Trice focused on growing in his faith. He had chosen APU because of the university’s *God First* commitment, and although he grew up going to church for the first half of his life, his faith had dissipated over the years. “I wanted to get connected back to God; I felt lost for so long and knew I needed His guidance,” he said. “When I got to APU, it was like Christmas Day. Chapel provided the spiritual TLC I needed. I wanted to stand up, put my hands up, and just groove to the worship. I was like a kid in a candy store.”

As Trice flourished spiritually, he developed a passion for education. After he graduated in 2019, he went on to earn a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree in 2020. As part of his MSW coursework, Trice had to analyze a nonprofit organization. He didn’t like any of the available options, so he decided to start his own. “My professor, Donna Gallup, told me if I could come up with a mission statement and a target audience, she’d let me make my own for the

class project,” he said. “I had an idea in my head for a while before that, but this led me to put it on paper and start it soon after that.”

Trice’s idea is now a functioning nonprofit, based in Pasadena, called Shoes4Grades, which donates shoes to foster youth. Kids can get one pair of shoes for free; if they’d like to get a second, all they have to do is bring up their quarterly scores by 5 percent, or half a letter grade. “I wanted Shoes4Grades to motivate kids to do well academically and to develop a lifelong love of learning,” he said. “If you can get a good education, you can break the cycle of poverty and set an example for the next generation to follow.”

This mission is personal for Trice. At 9 years old, he and his brother were separated from their mother and placed in the care of the Department of Children and Family Services. Trice went from living somewhere without gas and hot water and with very little food to a place where his needs were met. “Being put in foster care was the best thing that could have happened at the time,” he said. “We were not living in good conditions. I prayed and prayed and God answered. Although the transition arose from some unfortunate events, it was something we desperately needed.”

As Trice settled into life in his new home, he began to go to school, something he hadn’t done before. Unfortunately, he experienced something many foster kids can relate to—bullying. “All of my clothes were hand-me-downs, things that other foster kids had worn before, but weren’t really fit for me,” he said. “A lot of kids were really mean. They’d pick on me because I didn’t have the latest clothes or shoes.” This changed when he joined the basketball team. “I was pretty good at basketball back then, so kids decided they would rather align with me than bully me,” he said. “Sports were definitely the common denominator for us.”

While Trice began to find acceptance socially, he still struggled academically. “I was a poor reader; I didn’t fully learn how to read until 7th grade,” he said. “My mother never sat down and read with us. My caregiver didn’t even know, because I was too embarrassed to say anything about it.” Trice’s lack of literacy made it hard to succeed in school, until one day when he found the courage to ask his English teacher for help. “She took me to a reading club where I started learning basic phonics and how

to blend words. It took a long time and was very frustrating at first, but she kept pushing me to show up and learn.”

After Trice learned to read, his grades drastically improved. By the time he graduated high school, his GPA was strong enough to apply to college. He attended a school in Maryland before coming back home to take classes in a setting where he felt more comfortable, transferring to Pasadena City College before landing at APU.

Trice strives to make sure his sons, Jordan, 11, and Kyrie, 3, have the upbringing he lacked. While taking a full load of classes at APU, he worked a full-time job as a campus supervisor at a group home called Hillsides. Balancing higher education, a job, and fatherhood was a tall task. “Jordan’s schedule often conflicted with mine, so I had to be proactive and move things around so I could be there for him,” he said. “I don’t know how I did it, but it all worked out.” Failure was not an option, since Trice was determined to set a good example for his sons. “That’s why I went to school: to lay down the foundation for them to follow. Education opened up so many doors for me, and I want them to experience the same thing, just without the barriers I faced.”

This is what Trice aims to do through Shoes4Grades—remove obstacles, allowing children to thrive in school. As of June 30, 2022, the organization had donated 2,307 pairs of shoes to children in need, in the community and across the nation. The results have been striking—the motivation of new shoes has led to children getting much better grades. Trice hopes to continue the growth of Shoes4Grades by building a facility to provide a space for mentoring and tutoring. He also hopes to partner with a shoe company. “We want to go from 2,000 pairs of shoes

“If you can get a good education, you can break the cycle of poverty and set an example for the next generation to follow.”

—Randall Trice '19, MSW '20

to 200,000, but we don’t have the funds for that,” he said. “If we had a partner to help us, we could expand our impact, blessing more kids in the community with confidence and encouraging them to do well academically.”

Faith got Trice where he is today and it continues to guide him. “My faith is a huge part of every decision I make,” he said. “My favorite verse has always been: ‘With God all things are possible.’ God called me to start Shoes4Grades. I hope my example shows that anything is truly possible through God.”

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Randall Trice is APU’s nominee for the **2023 Council of Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) Young Alumni Award**, which recognizes an individual (or a team of individuals working in a joint venture) who has achieved uncommon leadership or success in a way that reflects the values of Christian higher education.

Igniting a Spiritual Fire

BY PETER COOLEY

To learn more about Charlie's journey as a ministry student, scan the QR code.



PHOTOS BY DANA ATTEBERY, MA '17

In a single day, Charlie Reynolds '25 discovered his fiery passion for serving God. Growing up, most of Reynolds' family and friends were nonbelievers, and faith was not an important part of his life. "I had heard about Christ, but I never truly knew who God was, or what He had done for me. I had a hunger deep inside me for something more, but I didn't know what it was."

It was in Reynolds' junior year of high school that he had his breakthrough faith experience, after one of his football teammates invited him to church. "When my friend asked me to go to church, I was nervous and didn't know what to expect," he said.

What started as just a morning service turned into an all-day event, concluding with an evening service and Reynolds accepting Christ. "I don't exaggerate when I say my conversion was radical," he said. "Before that day, I knew nothing about God. I came out on the other side with an insatiable desire to fervently love Christ and share the Gospel with everyone. It was like a fire ignited in me."

With his heart for evangelism, Reynolds feels called to become a minister and said that being a student at Azusa Pacific University is life changing.

"In high school, my only Christian friends were at church," he said. "When I came to APU, I discovered other Christian students and professors wanting to dive deep into conversations and community. I am able to make meaningful relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ—people I can pray with and go to in times of need. I have been blessed to be able to walk with warriors of the faith right alongside me."

In his studies at APU, Reynolds is being equipped for a lifelong career in ministry. Pursuing a major in Christian ministries and a minor in honors humanities, he is encouraged by studying with like-minded peers and professors in subjects that interest him. Reynolds notes the importance of his classes in preparing him for the future.

"My classes don't just skim the surface—every day I am challenged to confront aspects of the unexamined Christian life," he said. "I get to study what I'm passionate about in engaging and relevant ways. APU is equipping me with so much more than just a degree—it's helping me see how God is working and growing me."

Stemming from his own testimony of being invited to church, Reynolds has a strong conviction toward outreach, inviting others to



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—Charlie Reynolds '25

join him at church and APU community events. Reynolds participated in his first mission trip to Ensenada during spring break, expanding his vision to global outreach. "It was remarkable to see others' dependence on Christ, even in the face of homelessness and poverty," he said. "That kind of faith is what I want to embody in my life."

Reynolds plans to attend seminary after he graduates. "I am excited to continue pursuing God's calling for my life, staying open to his guidance along the way," he said.

Peter Cooley is a public relations intern in the Division of Strategic Communication and Engagement. He is a music education and honors humanities major, and performs in multiple ensembles at APU. Outside of work, Peter enjoys reading, hiking, and playing music.

APU Honors Coach Milhon through Football Alumni Reunion

BY NATHAN FOSTER

Azusa Pacific University honored the legacy of coach Jim Milhon with a football alumni reunion hosted by the Office of Alumni Engagement and the Athletics Department from September 30-October 1, 2022. An APU football legend, Milhon was the Cougars head football coach from 1978-95. Over those 17 seasons, Milhon led the Cougars to an 81-69-3 record, accounting for the second-most wins in program history.

“Jim Milhon epitomized the best of Azusa Pacific coaches; he turned the Cougar football program around, establishing a culture of success built on playing tough and executing good fundamentals,” said Gary Pine, director of athletics. “His players knew that he loved them by how he interacted with them. He was a very personable coach who had a story to share for every situation. He took time to know you, your family, and the people who were important to you. He could be direct, but he was never demeaning. His players loved him, and played hard to win for him.”

Of the hundreds of players who were coached by Milhon, none went on to have a more successful professional career than Christian Okoye '87, the “Nigerian Nightmare.” Okoye, who came to APU to train for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics in track, was offered a spot on the football team after Milhon and the rest of the coaching staff witnessed his legendary “running back’s speed in a linebacker’s body.” After breaking numerous records at APU, Okoye was selected by the Kansas City Chiefs in the second round of the 1987 NFL draft, accumulating 4,897 career rushing yards and 40 touchdowns in six seasons.

“Coach Milhon cared more about his players’ hard work and well-being than winning a football game,” Okoye said. “I remember Coach Milhon’s booming voice. He was always happy and willing to teach. Everything he did on the field was done with love and God in mind.”

This event is the first opportunity the university has had to recognize and celebrate the Azusa Pacific football program since it was discontinued.



PHOTOS BY HOLLY MAGNUSSON

“We hope this gives our alumni, who were so deeply impacted by this program, the opportunity to remember and celebrate together, as well as honor the leaders who were such an integral part of their experience at Azusa Pacific College and Azusa Pacific University,” said Angie DiClaudio, MBM, director of alumni engagement. “We hope to have other generations of APU football players come together for a similar opportunity in the near future.”

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DIANA ATTEBERY, MA '17

Remodeled Campus Store Opens

Azusa Pacific University’s new Campus Store, located inside the Duke Student Commons, is a one-stop shop for students, alumni, faculty, and staff. From course materials, clothing, and gear to gifts, computers, and other tech, the Campus Store has it all. Come visit us in person Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m., and Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., or online at campusstore.apu.edu.



Scan the QR code to view the updated Campus Store website and browse the many products and services it offers.



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