



Office of the President

January 29, 2021

Dear Alumni Friends,

If you are like me, the actions and events of the last several months have shaken many of our daily perspectives, perhaps impacted our confidence in traditional norms, and guided our time in prayer to more earnestly seek God's wisdom, stamina, patience, and direction to navigate such turbulent waters. Whether it is the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic, especially in Southern California, with the health and fiscal challenges for many families, businesses, and universities like us, or the tumultuous political season, I wanted to offer some words of encouragement as we begin the Spring Semester that may, hopefully, refocus us on the timely value of providing a Christ-centered University education and the eternal sovereignty of the God we serve.

Good News: In the midst of these current challenges, God has significantly blessed APU:

- Led by the Office of Advancement, with support from University Relations, Rally with Us was a strong success in its virtual format, raising \$1.3M, an all-time funding record for this event in support of student scholarships.
- Based on APU's strategic fiscal management and community care during the pandemic, in December Moody's Investors Services maintained APU's improved 2019 credit rating as stable (which was negative during the 2018 fiscal challenge) despite the higher education sector, in general, rated as negative.
- Although final details on specific guidelines/restrictions for use and timeline of distribution are not yet available, as part of the 12/27/20 Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) associated with COVID-19 Pandemic relief to Institutions of Higher Education, APU is estimated to receive approximately \$8.7M. This will assist us in managing revenue loss due to mandated remote learning strategies and continued care for our students.
- Through the broad and creative efforts of the APU Community, we provided an unprecedented 2020 Virtual Commencement in December to provide our students and families with a capstone experience celebrating their graduation achievement.
- The kickoff of a university-wide, data-driven enterprise risk management program spearheaded by the newly formed Strategic Enterprise Risk Management Committee occurred; the overview is on the Office of the President [website](#). Not only is this timely in relation to pandemic management and recovery, but it also brings contemporary risk management practices to enhance APU institutional operational success.
- With a commitment to full engagement between the APU Community and the Department of Campus Safety to promote consistent communication and practices, the University Safety Committee has been restructured with a higher profile, more strategic engagement, and a campus-wide view for promoting workplace safety.
- A renewed collaborative effort between the Divisions of Enrollment Management and University Relations developed a contemporary [virtual tour](#) to enhance recruitment efforts in the virtual space.

Managing COVID-19: The Executive Return to Campus Committee continues to engage with the state and county orders and will keep the community informed of pertinent [updates](#). Similar to Fall 2020, the current limited permissions for campus access include: (1) essential employees to facilitate operations, (2) faculty to deliver remote learning, (3) residence for students who have no alternative housing options, (4) face-to-face training for programs providing education essential to pandemic recovery, and (5) limited athletics conditioning and competition. We will continue to engage with the state and county regarding increased access when it is safe and possible to do so. We are pleased that the new Hyflex technology is now fully in place in selected classrooms to enhance our remote teaching and learning.

Strategic Planning: Working groups for many of the strategic planning initiatives are underway. Communication updates regarding recent progress and activity around *Renewal* will be in a more regular rhythm, through a forthcoming expanded [webpage](#), and communication from Vice President Barton, Provost Fernando, and Staff Council.

Ways to Get Involved: We encourage your continued connection and engagement with the APU community. You are invited to subscribe to the [APU Alumni YouTube channel](#), which includes the Alumni Academy. The Academy features interesting and dynamic topics from APU faculty, and will have new content throughout the coming months. In addition, [APU Connect](#) is an alumni platform that allows Cougars to stay connected. There are networking and social opportunities available. If you own a small business, there is also a business directory where you are able to promote your information to other APU Alumni. One of the featured benefits for APU Alumni is lifetime access to the [Career Center](#). If you are looking to hire or in need of career assistance, please utilize the Career Center as a resource.

When Azusa Pacific alumni, parents, and friends join together and give, APU students can make a new discovery, impact a life, serve in countries near and far, and work as Christ's hands and feet around the world. APU Giving Day is a 24-hour social media takeover that celebrates Azusa Pacific University and offers you—our incredible APU alumni—the chance to join together to make an impact and give to what you're most passionate about at APU. Join in on April 13—make your gift and share on your social media pages to make a difference for APU students!

Closing Thoughts: I have greatly enjoyed time in Psalms over the holiday season, appreciating how David sought God's guidance and protection in the midst of strife and uncertainty. As you reflect on his prayer from Psalm 33:16-22, consider the clear contrast of God's power and strength versus the strength and wisdom of man alone:

No king is saved by a multitude of an army;
A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.
A horse is a vain hope for safety; neither shall it deliver any by its great strength.

Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him,
On those who hope in His mercy,
To deliver their soul from death,
And to keep them alive in famine.

Our soul waits for the Lord;
He is our help and our shield,
For our heart shall rejoice in Him,
Because we have trusted in His holy name.

Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us,
Just as we hope in you.

We all know that this spring brings both hope and continuing challenges which we are ready to face. But I also know, as did David, that our success will be grounded by our hope in God's sovereign guidance and wisdom. To God be the Glory.

With prayerful gratitude for each of you,

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