



Office of the President

Dear APU Alumni,

These past months have been tremendously challenging for us as individuals, as an institution, and as a nation and world. Events have converged from a wide spectrum, causing disruption in all aspects of our lives. C.S. Lewis captured for me how we have attempted together at APU to navigate these difficult circumstances, *“You can’t go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.”*

Fiscal Year 2020 Ended Strong. The APU Community responded with incredible generosity and impact to end the fiscal year strong, embracing strategic cost-cutting measures, and donating accrued vacation. Additionally, the University Fund received \$2M from prayerful donors this past year. APU ended the fiscal year compliant with our debt obligations and with an operational budget surplus.

Pivot to Remote Learning This Fall. In preparation for Fall 2020, the Return to Campus Taskforce and the Academic Return to Campus Work Group developed a comprehensive health and safety plan. Our \$9 million investment in that endeavor includes creation of a donor-funded COVID-19 Testing Center on campus, key to a safe return. We placed delivering an excellent Christ-centered education at the forefront of all our efforts to be ready to return safely at the appropriate time.

Weighing these factors along with our commitment to the health and safety of the APU Community, I announced our pivot to remote learning in an online modality this fall on July 22, striving to re-create the classroom environment with an emphasis on interactions between faculty and students. Fall classes will begin on August 31, 2020, and end on December 18, 2020.

Remote learning comes with a renewed commitment to rigorous academics, rich student support, intentional faith integration, and deep connection between faculty, staff, and students—distinctions of an APU educational experience, whether in person or virtual.

Our students will experience:

- Christ-centered academic excellence
- Meaningful engagement between professors and students with new improvements in technology to support learning
- Robust wellness and health resources to navigate COVID-19 and thrive in distance education
- Transformational faith integration and spiritual development through online chapels, discipleship groups, and spiritual mentoring programs
- Personalized student advising and peer counseling that promotes academic growth and faith maturity

Significant Considerations for Fall Semester. Remote learning will include a reduction in on-campus auxiliary services and *the suspension of the fall athletic seasons by the respective athletic conferences*. Programs and services available to students will elevate the learning experience, emphasize spiritual formation, and support mental and physical health and wellness.

Virtual Homecoming 2020. The Office of Alumni Engagement will offer a virtual homecoming experience this year, during the week of October 26. More information to come soon, but mark your calendars and save the date today.

Provost Appointed. Dr. Rukshan Fernando was appointed Provost of Azusa Pacific University. This selection marks the culmination of a diligent, national search facilitated by CarterBaldwin Executive Search and coordinated by Vice President Keith Hall and Vice President Paola Martinez who chaired a diverse Provost Search Committee representing the APU Community.

Dr. Fernando came to APU eight years ago as an Associate Professor and BSW Program Director. Subsequently, he served from 2015-19 as Professor and Associate Dean in the School of Behavioral and Applied Sciences. In 2018, he was selected to participate in the APU Leadership Development Program for Emerging Leaders. Responding to a call for different service, Dr. Fernando filled the roles of Interim Head of University Libraries from 2018-19 and Interim Dean of the School of Business and Management in 2019. In these positions, Dr. Fernando developed additional leadership and management experience in faculty development, curriculum development, fiscal management, and accreditation processes.

Virtual Board of Trustees Meeting Convened and New Members Welcomed. The Board of Trustees expressed gratitude to outgoing members, Dr. Nick Yphantides and Sally Segerstrom, and approved five new Board members, listed below.. I enthusiastically support the Board's ongoing process to actively recruit new members who reflect a diversity of background, expertise, and focus for insightful and Christ-centered decision making.

- **Richard Link** is a seasoned financial executive, most recently serving as the Group Vice President Controller and Chief Accounting Officer for Smart and Final Stores.
- **Kelli O’Gorman, CPA**, provides considerable financial experience in both education and high technology businesses and serves as an educator and Director of Development for Los Gatos Christian School.
- **Lindsey Rehfeld, M.A.**, is the founder and former CEO of Visiting Angels in Glendora and Upland. She brings experience in leadership, strategic planning, and fiscal responsibility.
- **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.
- **Robert Tiede** is the former president and CEO of Sonoco, Inc. He is an entrepreneur with vast business, board, and strategic planning experience.

May we not forget that these difficult times can strengthen our faith and vision . . . *together*. We can certainly *see the salvation of the Lord* these past six months. I am humbled to be your partner in this journey, anticipating additional opportunities for growth in our challenges. Thank you for your faithfulness.

With best personal regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul W. Ferguson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul W. Ferguson, Ph.D., DABT

President

