



Office of the President

March 11, 2021

Dear Alumni Friends,

Following many challenging months, I am thankful that COVID-19 cases in L.A. County are declining, while vaccination rates are increasing. We are seeing positive developments in the L.A. County Department of Public Health guidelines reflecting these trends. For example, we have recently been able to approve a proposal from the College of the Arts for some students to safely return to campus to complete a film project required for graduation and another that enables athletes to be on campus for conditioning and competition.

These positive trends create an encouraging outlook for Fall 2021. I am pleased to announce that APU intends to return to face-to-face learning in Fall 2021 in alignment with state and county guidelines.

While remote learning and working have not been without challenge, significant advances have been made during this season that will benefit our community upon return, consistent with our Strategic Plan, *Renewal*, including:

- Enhanced technology in the classroom that facilitates different pedagogical approaches and increases accessibility.
- Increased creativity and innovation in classroom and community engagement.
- Augmented health and safety on campus due to the advances made in the Student Health Center and Campus Safety.
- Refreshed value of and commitment to building a stronger APU community.
- Continued success of our faculty and staff in pursuing extramural funding to support our students and academic programs. Most recently, the National Science Foundation awarded APU \$650,000 in scholarship support to recruit, retain, and graduate high-achieving, low income, first generation students in the STEM fields.

Here are a few other important updates:

Virtual Commencement 2021: While we are planning for a hopeful Fall 2021 return, it is most likely that large-scale events and mass gatherings in May 2021 will still not be allowed in accord with state and county health guidelines. Desiring to keep our commitment to honor and celebrate the Class of 2021 in the best and safest way possible, and enable planning for students and families, we will hold two distinct [Virtual Commencements](#).

Jon R. Wallace Endowment: We are grateful for the significant response to the establishment of the Jon R. Wallace Endowed Student Scholarship Fund. Since announcing this opportunity, the Fund has grown to \$140,000 and remains [open to additional support](#).

President's Roundtables: During the Fall 2020 semester, 11 roundtable discussions were held with 110 faculty, staff, and students to provide a virtual space for increased engagement and input to University Leadership on important issues. *The President's Roundtables: Virtual Engagement with the APU Community* provides a summary of all these discussions and suggested actions. Review this document on the Office of the President [website](#).

Alumni Opportunities: The [Alumni Academy](#) features APU faculty experts sharing interesting, relevant, and engaging information, recreating a classroom experience for alumni and inspiring the pursuit of lifelong learning. The Alumni Academy is generating new content that will be rolled out in a few weeks. [APU Connect](#) is our networking platform available to APU alumni. Currently, more than 5,000 APU alumni are active users to connect with classmates, promote their businesses, access professional opportunities, and stay informed on APU opportunities and events. Sign up today to be sure you don't miss new platform features debuting in the coming weeks.

Alumni Events:

- Live Virtual Cooking session with Chef Nina: March 25, 5:30-6 p.m. (PDT)
Contact at alumni@apu.edu, if interested in signing up.
- Giving Day: April 13
- National Day of Prayer Virtual Gathering with APU Alumni: May 6, 8-8:30 a.m. (PDT)
The Office of Alumni Engagement will sponsor a virtual time of prayer led by Dr. Coba Canales, Dean of Spiritual Formation, and Dr. Terry Fransen, Vice President Emeritus, as we gather to pray, reflect, and praise God together. More details coming soon.
- Virtual Tie Dye Event: May 22, 4:30-5 p.m. (PDT)
Alumni are invited to create a fun and colorful item, instructed by an artistic creative expert. More details coming soon.

God has been so good to APU, your *alma mater*. As we continue our diligent efforts this Spring and prepare for the Fall, I am so thankful for your continuing support and prayer. Let us all be encouraged by the words of Joshua as he prepared to lead Israel into the Promised Land after a long, challenging journey: "*Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you*" (Joshua 3:5).

With deep gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul W. Ferguson".

Paul W. Ferguson, Ph.D., DABT

President

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