

APU LIFE

AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

FALL/WINTER 2021

ADVANCING RENEWAL ■ A CRESCENDO OF OPPORTUNITY ■ PROVIDING HEALING AND HOPE

The Gift of Christian Community

APU'S FALL RETURN TO CAMPUS



God First Since 1899



Dear Friends,

Recently, I began my service to the Azusa Pacific community as Interim President. I am grateful for the many expressions of encouragement and prayerful support, and look forward to building upon my 15 years of commitment to advancing APU's Christ-centered mission to develop disciples and scholars.

As I approach this season and steward the role, I am mindful of the women and men who have similarly sought to provide leadership, from the Training School of Christian Workers in 1899 to Azusa Pacific University. I will seek to honor APU's *God First* legacy of more than 120 years by leading with integrity, compassion, and courage. In this light, I want to express deep thanks to President Ferguson for his leadership of APU, especially through the unique challenges of a global pandemic.

While my title involves "Interim," my charge from the Board of Trustees is to build upon recent momentum and the aspirations outlined in *Renewal*, the university's strategic plan. In collaboration with the Board, my President's Cabinet colleagues, Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and Student Government Association, I will advance our stated goals, making the necessary decisions and undertaking the tasks that will hand the mission and impact of APU to the 18th President of Azusa Pacific University in an even stronger position. The challenges we face are clear, but so, too, are the extraordinary opportunities and God's promises of presence and provision found throughout Scripture. I believe the future of APU lies not in reclaiming the past, but in building upon it and leaning into God's unique calling for this institution to serve our current and future students.

As we approach the New Year, let us draw near to God and one another with thankful and hopeful hearts.

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us." (Ephesians 3:20)

Sincerely,

Andrew Barton, EdD
Interim President

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With signs waving and smiles beaming, APU student leaders enthusiastically greet new students and their families as they arrive on campus in late August ready to begin their college journey. Always a favorite event to kick off the fall semester, this year's Welcome Weekend held even deeper significance for the APU community, marking a joyous return to campus after a year and a half apart. Coming together with a spirit of gratitude and a hope for the future, APU welcomed and celebrated two classes to campus for the first time—freshmen and sophomores—with special programs geared toward both. Serving as an important moment in the history of this university, Welcome Weekend 2021 will not soon be forgotten.

Azusa Pacific University Hosts 9/11 Tribute



The Azusa Pacific University community gathered with local and civic leaders for a tribute ceremony commemorating the 20th anniversary of 9/11 hosted by the Office of Military and Veteran Services. The program, held at the Wynn Amphitheater on East Campus, included the presentation of colors by APU's Army ROTC Cadets, the National Anthem performed by the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Brass Quartet, and honored guest speakers, including:

Dn. Mario A. Guerra, the civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army, which carries a ranking of Three-Star General for protocol. Originally from Cuba, Guerra arrived in the U.S. on one of the first "Viaje De Libertad" Freedom Flights and was raised locally. He was mayor of Downey from 2006-14, and president of the Independent Cities Association. He is chaplain of the Downey Police Department and is a published author.

Azusa Pacific University is a designated Military Friendly School and Yellow Ribbon Program participant.



Accreditation Update

This 2021-22 academic year marked the culmination of Azusa Pacific University's accreditation cycle. Accreditation is a certification procedure in which a university is acknowledged as having met important, agreed-upon standards by a postsecondary education accreditation agency. This process is extremely beneficial to students, as it allows for increased financial aid opportunities, as well as ensuring that degree programs are recognized by other institutions. It also assures stakeholders that the institution has met high standards of quality and effectiveness.

The 2021-22 school year is the final year for APU's WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) accreditation process. In the fall, APU submitted a comprehensive accreditation report, highlighting its effectiveness and places of growth in key areas of the university. The report highlighted topics such as financial sustainability, quality faculty and staff, student learning outcomes, student success, program success, leadership, integrity and accountability, commitment to continuous improvement, compliance with accreditation standards, and more. The report was written by the Steering Committee, led by Stephanie Juillerat, PhD, APU's accreditation liaison officer, with

Capt. Robert Landeros, commanding officer of the Operations Division of the Azusa Police Department, where he is responsible for overseeing all patrol/traffic operations and Detective Bureau activities. His prior assignments and ranks at the Azusa Police Department include corporal, detective, sergeant, and lieutenant. He served in the United States Army and is a combat veteran of the Iraq War.

Carl Flores, acting assistant fire chief with a combined 40-year career as a battalion chief, fire captain, and firefighter for the Los Angeles County Fire Department. He was a battalion chief for 17 years, and for 6 years served as fire captain, operation bureau chief, and emergency manager at a high-incident fire station. Flores also spent 4 years as fire captain for the L.A. County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), and 6 years as a firefighter specialist.

Azusa Pacific University, a designated Military Friendly School and Yellow Ribbon Program participant, provides comprehensive services for its diverse population of approximately 400 military-connected students—including active-duty personnel, veterans, reservists, military spouses, and military dependents—through the Office of Military and Veteran Services.

important content coming from faculty and staff who served on the Strategic Plan Leadership Team and in Working Groups. After the initial write-up, the report was reviewed by APU's President, President's Cabinet, Provost, Academic Deans, Faculty Senate, and Board of Trustees Executive Committee.

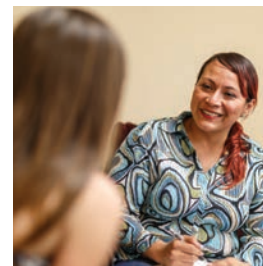


STEPHANIE JUILLERAT, PHD

The report was written by the Steering Committee, led by Stephanie Juillerat, PhD, APU's accreditation liaison officer.

This winter, the WSCUC evaluation team evaluated the report and met for an offsite review, submitting lines of inquiry to be considered in an in-person visit. In April, the WSCUC team will visit APU, then submit a report in early May with recommendations about APU's reaccreditation—a commission meeting will determine APU's length of reaccreditation. Through this process, APU is able to focus on areas of strength and explore ways to improve on operational quality and effectiveness.

APU's Community Counseling Center Receives \$1.94 Million Grant to Help Local School Districts and Community Partners



The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will award Azusa Pacific University a \$1.94 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This grant will enhance APU's Community Counseling Center (CCC) by improving training and resources for child trauma services and investing in partnerships with numerous community organizations.

According to Sally Mansour, MS, LMFT, director of the CCC and administrator for the Department of Clinical Psychology, "This grant enables our students to receive official training in evidence-based practices. Through these practices, student therapists will be able to more effectively serve patients in the local community."

Through this grant, the CCC will offer improved training for APU student therapists, based upon trauma-informed, evidence-based models. This enhanced curriculum will allow student therapists to effectively assess, prevent, and treat children, adolescents, and families who have experienced trauma. With this new model, a comprehensive data tracking system will also be developed to augment the training.

The increased funding allows for renewed contracts with Azusa, Glendora, and Duarte unified school districts, providing continued school, family, and clinic-based mental health services to students and families in the area. In addition, the CCC will host two annual community presentations on topics such as trauma recognition, coping, resilience, self care, and local mental health resources, as well as two outreach events with local providers, youth, and families. To further implement the grant, the CCC will also partner with a wide array of community organizations in order to promote an active network of resources for mental health providers in the area.

"Through this grant, the CCC will be highlighted as an avenue for eliminating barriers and creating opportunities for our students and the neighboring communities we serve," said Mansour.

APU Students Accepted as Fellows in Caltech Summer Research Program

Azusa Pacific students Nathan Suiter '22 and Nayree Panossian '22 were accepted as fellows in the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program to conduct research under the guidance of Sándor Volkán-Kacsó, PhD, associate professor of physics in APU's Department of Mathematics, Physics, and Statistics. Last summer, Suiter and Panossian received funding to continue their research on F-ATP synthase, an essential enzyme in all known forms of life. Both students received a \$6,620 award for the 10-week period, attended weekly seminars led by

Caltech faculty and Jet Propulsion Laboratory scientists and engineers, and engaged in an academic and professional development series.

"This experience grew these students, deepening their understanding of research and analytical skills, as well as preparing them for their future career paths," said Volkán-Kacsó. "In addition, it strengthened the partnership between APU and Caltech as we look ahead to more research opportunities."

Azusa Pacific University earned an R2 designation from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, the most influential rating organization among colleges and universities, for its high research activity. This recognition heralds good news for current and prospective APU students seeking academic programs at the forefront of their fields. Students' ability to engage in a high level of research with faculty members who are leaders in their industries translates to richer learning opportunities and better marketability upon graduation.

Volkán-Kacsó said that Suiter and Panossian are among the many students at APU involved with cutting-edge research in the STEM fields.

"It is very inspiring to see our students demonstrate high levels of interest, care, and drive in our research together," said Volkán-Kacsó. "Their energy and new ideas often move the process forward, and I am excited to see what their futures hold."

"This experience grew these students, deepening their understanding of research and analytical skills, as well as preparing them for their future career paths."

SÁNDOR VOLKÁN-KACSÓ, PHD

APU Honors College Book Reaches No. 1 on Multiple Amazon Best-Seller Lists



A team of APU Honors College students wrote a book about C.S. Lewis' science fiction novels that has reached the top spot on two Amazon best-seller lists. *A Compass for Deep Heaven: Navigating the C.S. Lewis Ransom Trilogy*, published by Square Halo Books, hit No. 1 in the "Religious Literature Criticism" and "Science Fiction & Fantasy Literary Criticism" categories. *A Compass for Deep Heaven* has received enthusiastic feedback from readers all over the world,

including endorsements from more than a dozen major Lewis scholars and incorporation into the curriculum of numerous academic programs.

The book was originally produced as part of the Honors College's Oxbridge Tutorial program. Its editor, Diana Pavlac Glycer, PhD, professor in the Honors College, has served as a mentor and editor for multiple Oxbridge Tutorial groups, in which seniors spend a year diving deep into exploring a single text, resulting in scholarly collaboration and a published book.

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According to Glycer, “The Oxbridge Tutorial is not just a senior thesis; rather, it allows students to participate in a scholarly literary conversation, making significant contributions that increase understanding of a specific work.”

For their 2018-19 Oxbridge Tutorial, Glycer and her student writers focused on Lewis’ Ransom Trilogy, a trio of science fiction works predating Lewis’ popular *Mere Christianity* and the *Chronicles of Narnia* series. “These texts are not widely known, not widely read, and quite honestly, rather perplexing. We saw this as a valuable opportunity to add to the scholarly conversation.”

After the completion and local release of the book, APU graduate Julianne Johnson ’19 joined as coeditor, and the team pushed on to have their work distributed on a broader level. After a lengthy revision process, they were thrilled to see their work reach such a wide audience.

APU Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month and HSI Week

In fall 2021, Azusa Pacific University celebrated National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15–October 15), as well as Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Week (September 13–19). In the interest of becoming a thriving HSI, APU and its Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence hosted two special panel discussions highlighting the work of faculty and staff during the *Renewal* advancement efforts.

The first panel, *2021 HSI Forum: Becoming A Thriving Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)*, discussed strategies to continue to improve APU’s HSI infrastructure and resources through research conducted by the MSI/HSI *Renewal* Working Group. The interactive discussion was moderated by Keith Hall, EdD, vice president and chief diversity officer, and featured Kandy Mink Salas, PhD, assistant professor and program director, EdD in Higher Education Leadership; Aaron Hinojosa, MEd, executive director, Student Center for Reconciliation and Diversity; and Stephanie Gala, MA ’14, director, Academic Success Center.

The second panel, *Latinx Pathways to and Through College*, featured an engaging conversation with university campus leaders, discussing strategic ways to bolster the engagement and holistic success of Hispanic students. The panel was moderated by Hinojosa, and featured Paul Flores, PhD, director, Liberal Studies/Undergraduate Education K-8 Program, and professor, Division of Teacher Education; Rhonda Jones, EdS, program director, TRIO Student Support Services; and Armando Bustos, MS, project director, TRIO Upward Bound.

APU first received HSI designation in 2017. This federal designation is granted to a university based on the percentage of Latino students enrolled there (25 percent or more), as well as at least 50 percent of the

HISPANIC
SERVING
INSTITUTION
(HSI)

APU first
received
HSI
designation
in 2017.

Hispanic student body must be low income. As part of *Renewal*, the university’s strategic plan, APU is committed to becoming a thriving university destination of choice for a diverse body of students, faculty, and staff, reflecting inclusive academic excellence.

APU Celebrates Shalom Café Grand Opening

On October 7, Azusa Pacific University held a special ribbon-cutting ceremony on APU’s East Campus. The APU community gathered on Cougar Walk to dedicate its new coffee shop, Shalom Café, in honor of late President Jon R. Wallace, DBA. His family, including his wife, Gail, were present for the event, and shared heartfelt tributes in his memory. The café, named after Wallace’s favorite benediction—“Shalom, go with God”—features decor based on his passion for hiking and nature, and a plaque celebrating his legacy and impact on the APU community.



Wallace, who served as president of the university for 19 years, is fondly remembered for his inspiring servant leadership and deep commitment to loving people. Before his presidency, he worked at APU in other areas, including the cafeteria, campus security, the bookstore, the print shop, and as dean of students.

In honor of Wallace’s significant contributions to APU, the Wallace family established the Jon R. Wallace Endowed Scholarship at apu.edu/wallace-scholarship/. In accordance with his commitment to students and their education, this endowment will financially assist students who are committed to making a difference in the world through their education at APU. Through this endowment, Wallace’s legacy of servant leadership will continue to be passed down to the next generation of scholars and student leaders.

May Shalom Café and the legacy of President Wallace be a reminder of the possibility of sacred encounters in every day-to-day interaction.

APU Theater Arts Returns for Live Performances



PHOTO COURTESY OF APU'S DEPARTMENT OF THEATER ARTS

Azusa Pacific University’s Department of Theater Arts returned to hosting in-person performances for the 2021-22 season. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, new challenges arose for theater programs across the globe. With the restrictions on in-person gatherings and the transition to an online learning format, APU’s theater community had to be creative in finding new methods to produce virtual plays and continue student learning in the digital realm. For the Fall 2021 semester, theater students resumed rehearsals and productions on campus. Although the plays were limited to outdoor venues, the members of the theater arts department were grateful for the ability to once again work together in person.

“The more innovative we can become, the more students learn to adapt.”

JILL
BRENNAN-
LINCOLN, MA

According to Jill Brennan-Lincoln, MA, chair and associate professor, Department of Theater Arts, “For our 2021-22 season, we wanted to celebrate the opportunity to come together and the indelible way God uses stories to lift us up and unite us in our humanity.”

In October, the theater arts program performed Edmond Rostand’s *Cyrano De Bergerac*, a classic story exploring love, literature, and bravery. For the November show, the department performed *Waiting in the Wings*, a wise drama set in a retirement home for former actresses. With around 110 student actors, stage managers, and technical crew members involved, as well as faculty and staff, the productions were immensely collaborative efforts, demonstrating the resilience of APU’s students and faculty.

Brennan-Lincoln reflected on the APU theater community’s ability to bounce back in the face of adversity. “Creating stories happens in many ways. The more innovative we can become, the more students learn to adapt. In overcoming these obstacles, I believe we fostered an entrepreneurial spirit that is essential to the arts.”

By the Numbers

28: The national ranking *U.S. News & World Report* awarded APU for student first-year experience. College presidents, chief academic officers, deans of students, and deans of admissions from more than 1,500 schools were invited to nominate institutions with stellar examples of first-year experiences.

6.5: APU’s Division of University Advancement met its \$6.5 million goal to fully fund the new West Campus Student Commons through donor funding. Once complete, the area will provide needed space for students to study, eat, and socialize.

17: In 2021, Congress passed the American Rescue Plan (ARP), which included additional COVID-19 relief for institutions of higher education. This stimulus bill included \$40 billion for higher education institutions and students. Of this funding, Azusa Pacific University was allotted \$17 million, \$8.58 million of which is to be used for direct student assistance grants.

1: Azusa Pacific’s 2021 women’s track and field team, under the leadership of head coach Jack Hoyt, became the first Cougar Athletics program to win an NCAA national championship.

Grants Advance Significant Research and Scholarship

\$1.9 million



The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, notified the School of Nursing of a new grant, which includes \$475,173 for year one of the project titled *Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) Program for Professionals*, with Sabrina

Friedman, EdD, DNP, PMHCNS, FNP, serving as principal investigator. A total of \$1,912,252 over four years will be awarded pending availability of funds and satisfactory progress. The goal is to develop and expand experiential training opportunities of the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) provider workforce serving vulnerable populations in medically underserved and rural areas of San Bernardino and Los Angeles counties, with special emphasis on behavioral health needs of children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth. Most of the awarded funds are for stipends to assist graduate students completing their final year of the PMHNP program.

\$445,816



Funded by the Department of Education, Everett Brooks, MBA, principal investigator, executive director of military and veteran services, was awarded the Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success grant. This program encourages model programs to support veteran student success in postsecondary education by coordinating services to address the academic, financial, physical, and social needs of veteran students. The grant funding will be used to establish a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success on campus, enact a veteran student support team, secure a full-time project coordinator, and build a comprehensive plan to sustain high-quality veteran resources and programs on campus.

\$400,000



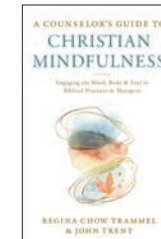
APU's School of Education was awarded \$400,000 over 3 years to participate in the Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity (BranchED) National Teacher Preparation Transformation Center. Awarded to Catherine Hahs Brinkley, EdD, and Rebekah Harris, MS, the funding will be utilized to foster high-quality educator preparation within minority-serving institutions (MSIs) and their school district partners across the United States, drawing from BranchED research. APU faculty in the Division of Teacher Education, as well as Azusa Unified School District teachers, will have access to enhanced resources and professional development and networking opportunities, and will share data with other institutions in the cohort to move forward with sustainability and innovation.

\$297,686



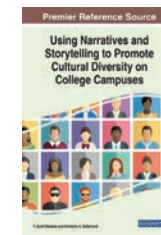
Awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for the Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) Campus Suicide Prevention project, Azusa Pacific University received \$297,686 to be distributed over the course of 3 years. The renewed grant, allotted to Sally Mansour, MS, LMFT, director of the Community Counseling Center (CCC), is a continuation of the work of the past 3 years to improve suicide prevention infrastructure and training efforts across the university. The grant will fund projects to capture data on at-risk student behavior and develop an improved network of resources for students, staff, and faculty—the CCC will offer improved training, events, handouts, and other programs pertaining to suicide prevention, substance abuse, depression, and more.

Scholarship at Work



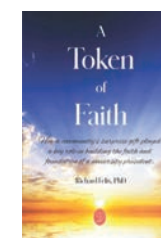
A Counselor's Guide to Christian Mindfulness (Zondervan, 2021) by Regina Trammel, PhD, LCSW, associate professor, MSW Program, Department of Social Work

In *A Counselor's Guide to Christian Mindfulness*, Trammel and John Trent, PhD, provide counselors training in mindfulness skills used in evidence-based practices, including dialectical behavioral therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy. These therapies have been shown to be profoundly effective in the treatment of many mental health issues. Blending elements of neuroscience, social science, and religious training, Trammel and Trent offer a Christian perspective that will be extremely helpful in assisting Christian counselors and therapists to confidently use mindfulness interventions with those they treat and help.



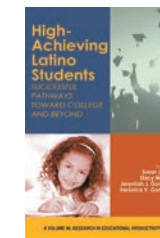
Using Narratives and Storytelling to Promote Cultural Diversity on College Campuses (IGI Global, 2020) by T. Scott Bledsoe, PsyD, director of PsyD clinical training (internship) and professor, Department of Clinical Psychology; and Kimberly Setterlund, MSW, LCSW, assistant professor and graduate program director, Department of Social Work

This research-based publication offers a framework model to identify culture-based narratives. The work follows the lives of five college students through a vast array of experiences and provides a comprehensive dialogue about diversity through the personal narratives of college faculty, students, staff, and administrators. Highlighting a range of topics including microaggressions, ethnicity, and psychosocial development, this book is designed for academicians, practitioners, psychologists, sociologists, education professionals, counselors, social work educators, researchers, and students.



A Token of Faith (Independent, 2020) by Richard Felix, PhD, President Emeritus
Felix shares the inspiring story of how he followed a path from poverty to faith to scholar to teacher and finally fulfilled his life purpose to become the President of Azusa Pacific University. He was born and raised in the small town of Lafayette, Indiana, under the care of his grandparents. Despite living

in poverty, they had a firm belief in God and were surrounded by a supportive Christian community. His pastor encouraged him to attend college, and the congregation gave him a token of faith that inspired him to do God's work in the world. The key choices he made during life's obstacles and struggles led him to become a compassionate, effective, inspirational, and successful leader.



High-Achieving Latino Students: Successful Pathways Toward College and Beyond

(Information Age Publishing, 2020) coedited by Stacy Kula, PhD, director and associate professor, Educational Leadership EdD Program

This book addresses a long-standing need for a work that highlights the success, not failure, of Latino students. While much of the existing research comes from a deficit lens, this book uses a strength-based approach to address Latino achievement. Bringing together researchers and practitioners, this unique book provides research-based recommendations from early to later school years on "what works" for supporting high student achievement. This work received a Book of the Year Award in the Edited Volume category from the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education.



Power Women: Stories of Motherhood, Faith, and the Academy (IVP Academic, 2021)

by Deshonna Collier-Goubil, PhD, interim dean, School of Behavioral and Applied Sciences
A common narrative that women hear is that motherhood and academia are incompatible. Both are challenging vocations filled with complexities and daily ups and downs, yet more and more women are answering the call to both. A growing body of literature highlights parent-professors, but what about the particular needs of Christian women seeking to navigate both callings while living out their faith? With *Power Women*, Nancy Wang Yuen and Collier-Goubil have curated a unique resource by and for Christian academic mothers. This collection of essays highlights the voices of women of different backgrounds, academic disciplines, institutions, and stages of parenting and career.

The Gift of Christian Community: APU's Return to Campus

BY CYNTHIA HOFF

Duffle bags and dorm rooms, sporting events and bonfires, crisp new books and old favorite study nooks—college life conjures up different expectations for everyone. But no one expected the COVID-19 college experience. Like countless campuses across the country, Azusa Pacific University went from a bustling hub of activity to nearly empty overnight. Now, a year and a half later, the APU community is back on campus. Familiar faces and places restore a sense of comfort, but something has definitely changed, fueled by meaningful lessons learned from being apart.

In true Cougar fashion, APU students, faculty, staff, and administrators approached last year's challenge of pivoting to online education with faith and fortitude. They tackled the technology needed to stay connected and take care of business, but they didn't merely "get through" the pandemic; they chose to use it as part of their education experience. Nursing students tapped into their God-given gifts of compassion and healing to comfort

Continued on page 14



Excited students and families arrive on campus for APU's Fall 2021 Welcome Weekend.



Continued from page 13

and care for those struggling with the virus. Social workers devised a way to engage the elderly and stave off isolation. Theater students invented a new way to deliver their craft—drive-in style—and music students created a whole new genre of digital performance, where they leaned into the crisis and faced it with honesty and passion.

This fall, throughout the residence halls, classrooms, faculty offices, and social hangouts, there's an underlying sense of gratitude—a honed and tangible appreciation for the privilege of being together that was not there before. During the 18 months away, APU students, faculty, and staff have come to understand that Christian fellowship is much more essential than they once realized. The fall 2021 return to campus illustrates how APU has integrated this profound insight in every way possible.

UNIFIED ACTION

Unity, one of the distinguishing characteristics of Christian community, flourished at the first sign of the pandemic. “The day we found out social distancing mandates were being put into effect, our team brainstormed what that meant for students, chapel, and life on campus,” said Coba Canales, EdD, dean of spiritual life. “A few hours later, we stood in front of the chapel doors and broke the news that it was canceled. That was the

Coba Canales, EdD, dean of spiritual life, engages with students during Welcome Weekend. Fellowship is key to APU's Christ-centered community.

beginning of it all. We went back to our offices and talked about what was next and prayed together as a team. One of the first ideas to spring up was to create a new chapel platform called Weekly Rhythms, and it allowed us to continue the chapel experience remotely. We offered engaging spiritual content so students could stay connected. More than 1,000 students leaned into this offering that spring.”

This spirit of collaboration characterizes APU's efforts from the moment the pandemic hit to the arrival back on campus this fall. Every department banded together to provide comprehensive support and uphold the shared responsibility of safety. One of the clearest examples of this can be seen in the way the Student Health Center rallied to ensure that the return to campus would be safe for all. “The Division of Advancement worked hard to fund our own testing facilities on campus in addition to offering ongoing vaccine clinics to students, faculty, and staff,” said Bill Fiala, PhD, dean of wellness. “Students submit proof of vaccination through the MyCougar Health electronic record-keeping system, and those who have not been vaccinated submit weekly self-test results, in addition to daily symptom tracking. All students, vaccinated or not, monitor their health daily and contact the health center if they notice any flu-like symptoms.” The university also employed additional temporary personnel to assist with



testing, contact tracing, meal deliveries for students in quarantine/isolation, and the assembly of testing kits. Further, APU's chief medical officer, Todd Emerson, DO, ABFP, serves as the point person for all communications with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and ensures that APU maintains compliance with county guidance and directives during the pandemic.

SHARPENING ONE ANOTHER

The Christian life requires continuous conversion and constant growth, and Christians need one another to achieve that. As iron sharpens iron, so the teacher sharpens the student. For all the amazing accomplishments that occurred remotely, face-to-face learning facilitates much deeper understanding, inspires collaboration, and produces more immediate results. Students and faculty alike share stories about the huge benefits of being back on campus. The time away was particularly challenging for students whose courses included lab work and other types of hands-on learning.

Chemistry major Nayree Panossian '22 earned a coveted fellowship at CalTech to study a rotary motor enzyme ATP synthase of a certain bacterial species called *Thermophilic bacillus*. “My particular research primarily focused on conducting data analysis at different temperatures for the rotational



Chemistry major Nayree Panossian '22 works with her faculty-mentor, Sándor Volkán-Kacsó, PhD, on research related to the CalTech fellowship she received.

“Because we're face to face now, we can work together. It would have taken three to four Zoom meetings to accomplish what we do in one visit now. We aren't just teaching about research—the students are participating in cutting-edge original research.”

—Sándor Volkán-Kacsó, PhD
Associate Professor,
Department of Mathematics,
Physics, and Statistics

rates of a *Thermophilic bacillus* F1-ATPase and coming up with a kinetic model for the rotations,” said Panossian. But remote research proved a bit bumpy. “Research is not always straightforward; it's a process that requires one to acquire new skills. COVID-19 restrictions placed a barrier in our research that made it difficult to communicate with one another rapidly.”

Panossian's faculty mentor, Sándor Volkán-Kacsó, PhD, agreed: “Remote learning is okay for theorists, but the rate of communication and turnover of results is much slower.” Being back on campus has significantly accelerated their work together and has set the stage for a smoother, more productive process, he said. “Because we're face to face now, we can work together. It would have taken three to four Zoom meetings to accomplish what we do in one visit now. We aren't just teaching about research—the students are participating in cutting-edge original research, and it takes more than a Zoom meeting to accomplish that.”

A COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY

The face-to-face learning that drives this type of research also makes it possible for other aspects of Christian community to thrive, such as accountability and compassion. The entire team of faculty and staff at Azusa Pacific has participated in trauma-informed workshops to learn how to engage with students dealing with stress and

Continued on page 16

ALL OVER CAMPUS THERE EXISTS AN UNDERLYING SENSE OF GRATITUDE, AN APPRECIATION OF BEING TOGETHER AGAIN.



“Our faculty and staff are not only concerned with students’ future careers, but also the whole person. Now that we’re back on campus, we can have conversations that lead to character growth and maturity.”

—Rukshan Fernando, PhD
Provost

Continued from page 15

loss, sometimes directly related to the pandemic. “Our faculty and staff are not only concerned with students’ future careers, but also the whole person,” said Provost Rukshan Fernando, PhD. “Now that we’re back on campus, we can have conversations that lead to character growth and maturity. We can read the negative nonverbals in class, so there are more opportunities to notice anxiety, and our faculty can engage with students one on one.”

COVID-19 has impacted every member of the APU community, and each person has processed the experience differently. In addition to training faculty and staff to identify and respond to the signs of suffering, the University Counseling Center (UCC) has also stepped up its resources to care for anyone struggling with loss and grief. “We expected, and have noted, an increase in health-related anxiety with a number of students,” said Fiala. “UCC provided return-to-campus training for students before school started and continues to provide virtual workshops through the Cougars Care program to enhance student resilience.” Also, all students have access to a mental health training module provided online by a third-party vendor, Everfi. The UCC offers ongoing care for traditional undergraduate students, including urgent care/crisis management, as well as regular ongoing counseling services. Graduate and professional students can also access physical and mental health care through APU Telehealth, an app-based service provided in partnership with TimelyCare. All requests are assessed individually to determine whether and what adjustments are necessary to promote student success.

COMMUNITY AT EVERY LEVEL

Traditional undergraduate students are not the only ones who have gained a fresh perspective on Christian fellowship and what it can and should look like on campus. Professional and graduate



Graduate students, many of whom balance school with family and careers, tap into the APU community for strength and to find resources and connections to thrive.



students—some of them single parents, working parents, and children of elderly parents who may have been battling COVID-19—tapped into APU for strength and connection. “They are just as hungry as undergraduate students for spiritual community,” said Shino Simons, PhD, vice president for student affairs. “Prior to the pandemic, we created spaces for graduate and professional students to meet and hang out. During COVID-19, we kept it going with virtual spaces, and they were well attended. We also facilitated a way for students to submit prayer requests. Some were heartbreaking and COVID-related, asking for prayers for parents’ health. Some asked for prayer for their cohort. They knew they needed others praying for them, and they prayed for one another.”

Faculty and staff also felt the void of Christian community during the time away. “Now that we’re back together,” said Simons, “we keep experiencing these sweet moments with students and with one another, and we can share life spontaneously. We can have *unscheduled* conversations. As a team, there’s something beautiful about bumping into each other on campus.”

BEYOND TRADITIONS

There’s a sense of strength that comes from facing difficulty, leaning deeply into one’s faith, and coming back to the gift of Christian community. It’s certainly not business as usual, but traditions still stand and provide the foundation for memories and a lifelong connection to APU. Students who missed out on some of those or had to participate virtually last year got the full treatment this fall. Transfer students and now-sophomores celebrated the beloved Gate Walk just days before Welcome Weekend. “Walking through the gate is a marker, a significant part of their journey,” said Simons. “They are starting a transformational, emotional, spiritual, intellectual journey together. It is right to pause and recognize that significant moment in time. It is important that students feel seen and valued. It is one of the most important parts of the APU community, and these events help us communicate that.”

Breathing new life into those time-honored traditions, there’s an enlightened mindset about

what they mean. “There’s a phrase that characterizes this whole pandemic: ‘When this is over, I’m going to...,’” said Canales. “This mindset created a new kind of anticipation. It’s less about things we want to do, and more about human connection.”

Karla Consuelo Alejandro Meza ’22, Student Government Association president and a resident advisor, echoed Canales’ thoughts. “Students are talking about all the things they once took for granted,” she said. “I heard some students marvel at the fact that they took a quiz on paper—and passed! Coming back to campus is an adjustment.” But she also noted the poignancy of the opportunity to congregate once again: “Community is unity. We are all parts of the body of Christ, and we all have different functions. When any part of the whole is missing, we all feel it, and we can’t function collaboratively as God intended.” And those functions have changed since the pandemic hit. “For example, the best way to show your love and compassion toward someone may be with a big bear hug, or it may be the act of wearing a mask and *not* hugging them,” she said. “Regardless of our individual gifts and talents, we all have the responsibility to uphold and serve one another.”

Serving one another may look a bit different today, but APU is adapting to its current reality, working together in unity to establish fresh ways of living out God’s call to be light and salt to a hurting world.

Shino Simons, PhD, vice president for student affairs, leads a special Candela ceremony for sophomore students and their families who had missed out on the experience freshman year due to the pandemic.

“Now that we’re back together, we keep experiencing these sweet moments with students and with one another, and we can share life spontaneously. We can have *unscheduled* conversations.”

—Shino Simons, PhD,
Vice President for
Student Affairs

Cynthia Hoff is a freelance writer and editor living in Wenatchee, Washington. ceh.hoff@gmail.com



Advancing *Renewal*

In October 2021, Azusa Pacific University published its inaugural *Renewal* Annual Report, which details the progress of the university's new seven-year strategic plan.

As designed and implemented, *Renewal: Strengthening Our Capacity for Cultivating Christ-Centered Scholars and Leaders* will advance APU as a university of impactful Christian scholars and leaders characterized by best practices of the highest quality. The strategic plan, which launched in September 2020, provides a blueprint for a university-wide commitment to effectively promote and sustain Christ-centered academic excellence for highly diverse constituencies at all degree levels. The annual report features first-year successes in meeting strategic recommendations, references action items and timelines, and highlights a number of significant milestones and achievements related to these five Grand Initiatives:

A Model Christian University

Become the model Christian university for our culture and times: defining engagement with virtue as leading Christian scholars and citizens.

A Thriving University of Choice

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

A Transformational and Collaborative Organization

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

A Recognized Leader in Technology and Data Management

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

A Sustainable Financial Enterprise

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

Working Groups

As APU returned to campus for the Fall 2021 semester—and for the first time since the pandemic began—it was clear that *Renewal* had stimulated a new focus and energy across the institution, alongside a heightened collaboration with the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and Student Government Association leadership. The APU community has embraced the vision and language of *Renewal*, engaged in learning around the five Grand Initiatives, evaluated their own contributions, and served on 19 *Renewal* working groups.

More than 280 faculty, staff, students, and administrators participated in the working groups, led by faculty and staff with oversight from the president, provost, or vice presidents, focused on 36 action items laid out by the plan. Each working group delivered either a final report outlining their recommendations to the President's Cabinet or an interim report of progress with intent to continue their work in 2021-22.

The breadth of topics addressed in these working groups indicates the comprehensive nature of *Renewal*, and the complexity and interconnectedness of issues APU faces as it seeks to be the premier Christian university of choice for our culture and times. The annual report highlights and gives more detail to this first year of engagement around topics of institutional identity, spiritual formation and faith integration, student enrollment, financial sustainability, strategic communication, church and government relations, APU's status as a Minority Serving and Hispanic Serving institution, talent management, campus master planning, principle-driven reorganization and right-sizing strategies, a renewed institutional technology and data collection strategy, and more.

The Year Ahead

The full *Renewal* Annual Report (2020-21) can be found on the *Renewal* website (apu.edu/renewal/). The fact that this high level of work was performed largely in a virtual environment is remarkable. Despite these restrictions, meaningful engagement by the APU community around *Renewal* evolved, with tangible evidence that the community has embraced the purpose and strategies of the plan. The language of *Renewal* has permeated the activities and dialog of the APU community—evidence of a consensus-based approach to strategic planning and reflective of the ultimate goal of the process.

The 2021-22 academic year represents one of transition in a number of areas, most notably in the Office of the President and the impact of the return to in-person learning across campuses. What remains consistent is the commitment of APU faculty, staff, administrators, and Board of Trustees to deliver on our promise of a Christ-centered mission to develop disciples and scholars who seek to advance the work of God in the world.

Notable Milestones and Achievements

The annual report noted a number of significant milestones and achievements for Azusa Pacific University in the first year of *Renewal*:

2020

September

Renewal, APU's new strategic plan for 2020-27, launches.

October

\$1 million secured for an Endowed Chair in Citizenship and Civic Virtue for the Honors College from the Fletcher Jones Foundation.

November

APU ranks among top 25 universities nationwide by alumni as reported in *Forbes*.

December

Rally with Us (virtual Dinner Rally) raises \$1.3 million for student scholarships, an all-time funding record for this event.

1,145 students graduate from APU with undergraduate and graduate degrees.

2021

January

APU celebrates the life, service, and impact of Dr. Jon R. Wallace, Azusa Pacific University's 16th President, with an endowed student scholarship.

February

President Paul W. Ferguson announces the new President's Annual Faculty Scholarship Enhancement Grants Program with \$120,000 in funding.

March

Faculty secure a \$650,000 National Science Foundation STEM Grant to fund a first-generation scholar initiative at APU.

April

APU recognizes the teaching, scholarship, and service of 34 faculty by awarding extended contracts.

May

1,782 students graduate from APU with undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Women's Track and Field captures the first NCAA national title for APU.

June

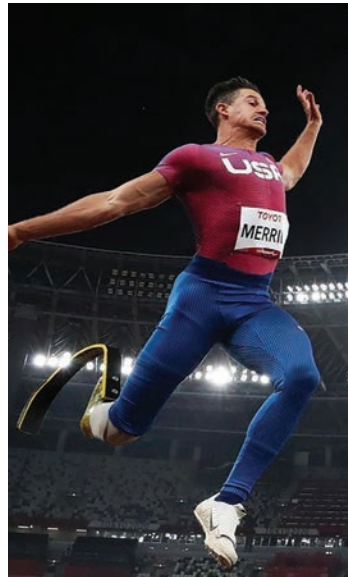
\$6.5 million West Campus Student Commons project receives full donor funding.

July

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, APU ends the fiscal year fully compliant with debt covenants.

APU Grad Shows Resilience with Medal Win in Tokyo Paralympics

BY NATHAN FOSTER



Trenten Merrill '15 went to the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games on a mission. He was determined to succeed in the long jump and represent the U.S. on the podium after falling just short in his Paralympic debut at the 2016 games in Rio de Janeiro. Although his jump in Rio was a personal best and it broke the American record, it placed him fourth and just off the podium.

“Rio was an amazing experience. Tokyo was incredible, but more laid back without all the fans there,” he said. Although he felt much more prepared going into his second Paralympic games, Merrill didn’t have an auspicious start in Tokyo. “I tripped up on my second jump and just ate it in front of everyone.”

Although the jump was painful and hurt his chances at attaining a medal, Merrill was not daunted by a little adversity. He had overcome much greater obstacles in his life.

When he was 14 years old, Merrill and his best friend were riding dirt bikes to his house in San Juan Capistrano, California. They came to the final turn before the house, looked both ways, and began to cross the street. “We didn’t see the car when we checked, and they didn’t see us, because there was a divided median with trees and shrubs that obstructed the view,” he said. “I woke up in the other lane and it felt like the whole thing was a dream at first. Then I looked over and saw my friend Scott on the ground, screaming. I realized it wasn’t a dream. It was real.”

Merrill felt a numb sensation in one of his feet and could tell from looking at it that it was broken. He grabbed his cell phone and called his dad, who arrived followed by two ambulances. They first took Scott, who was in critical condition with a broken back, chipped pelvis, punctured lung, and a bruised face from hitting the car’s windshield. With much medical intervention and prayer, Merrill’s friend eventually made a full recovery.

Merrill remained in the hospital for the next month and a half. After several weeks of effort to avoid the unthinkable, the doctors at Mission Hospital delivered the news that he would need his right leg amputated, just below the knee. Merrill began to cry, panicking at the thought of a life without one of his legs. He reflected on his identity, which was largely rooted in athletics.

Growing up, Merrill played numerous sports—soccer, basketball, baseball, hockey, swimming, and motocross racing. “I remember watching those old Gatorade commercials with Michael Jordan and Mia Hamm and falling in love with sports,” he said. “My dad taught me to play basketball when I was in

preschool and we’d play every night until dinnertime, but I would only come in to dinner if I was winning; otherwise we’d keep playing.” This passion for competition grew with time. When he was asked to think about his dream career, Merrill always answered he would be a professional athlete.

“I felt like my identity was gone when they told me about the amputation. My heart was broken and I didn’t know what my life would be like,” he said. “Then my friend’s mom walked into my hospital room and started praying over me. I felt the Holy Spirit and I sensed God telling me He had big plans for me.” Merrill decided to place his trust in God, and at that moment his uncertainty and anguish were replaced by peace and hope.

Soon after Merrill received his prosthetic leg, he was up and moving again. “I was walking on it that first day, and jogging by the end of the first week. Once I knew I could run with my prosthetic, I just wanted to go back to playing sports. I allowed myself to be me again, to try everything, and not be afraid to fail.”

Merrill continued playing sports in high school, including two new ones for him, volleyball and wrestling. It wasn’t until college that he began competing in track and field. He always knew he was fast, even outrunning some of his teammates during wrestling practice, but he didn’t find out about the Paralympics until his sophomore year at Saddleback Community College. He was invited to a running clinic hosted by the Challenged Athletes Foundation where he met Joaquim Cruz, a retired Brazilian Olympic sprinter who now coached Paralympians. Merrill instantly recognized that this was the move he needed to make—his new dream was to become a track and field Paralympian.

To take the next step in his journey, Merrill decided he needed to transfer to a university. “I had heard a lot of Azusa Pacific ads on my Lecrae/Christian rap Pandora radio station. Then I was watching track and field videos on YouTube and came across Bryan Clay training for the 2012 Olympics at APU,” he said. “The last sign came one day when I was heading to the gym and reached into a pile of workout shirts and pulled out an ‘APU Track & Field’ shirt. I had gotten it at a camp from a friend named John Ellis, who had gone to APU. I decided three signs were enough.”

Merrill began to research APU. He reached out to then-coach Kevin Reid, who got back to him immediately and said the team would love to have him. “I went to check out the school in person,”



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TRENTEN MERRILL '15

said Merrill. “As soon as I stepped foot on campus, I knew this was the place I belonged. God brought me to Azusa.” Merrill competed for the Cougars from 2013-14. He went professional in 2015 and finished up his last few APU classes online.

His years of hard work and perseverance paid off in Tokyo. After his second long jump, Merrill crawled out of the sand pit determined. “I told myself to keep going, to fight. It was a mental battle. I focused on taking it one jump at a time, not worrying about anything else,” he said. He jumped three more times, including a 7.08-meter jump that placed him third in the T64 category. “To put the U.S. on the podium and see that American flag raised, that was an incredible feeling. To get a medal was such an amazing experience,” he said. “It’s now a part of history. I’ll always be grateful.”

Merrill celebrated his achievement, but is by no means resting on his laurels. He aspires to keep competing and setting personal bests, has broken the American record three times, and strives to set more records, including becoming only the second jumper in his category to jump over 8 meters (his current record is 7.75 meters). If he can jump that far, Merrill has a shot at beating Markus Rehm, an undefeated German jumper.

Merrill plans to compete in two more Paralympic games, and he dreams of ending his athletic career at home in Los Angeles in 2028. That goal, and his desire to bring glory to God, are what drive

“I was walking on it that first day, and jogging by the end of the first week. Once I knew I could run with my prosthetic, I just wanted to go back to playing sports. I allowed myself to be me again, to try everything, and not be afraid to fail.”

-Trenten Merrill '15

Merrill. “Faith is what helps me in the best and worst of times,” he said. “All this is meaningless without it. It gives me a purpose. It gives me the fuel to keep going. God created me to be an athlete. He hasn’t told me that I’m finished yet, so I’m going to keep going.”

Nathan Foster is a freelance writer and teacher living in Nashville, Tennessee. nate.k.foster@gmail.com

TRACKING MERRILL'S PROGRESS

7.08 meters

2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games jump

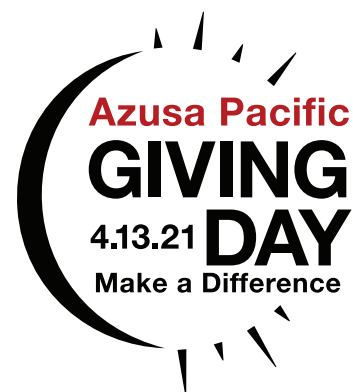
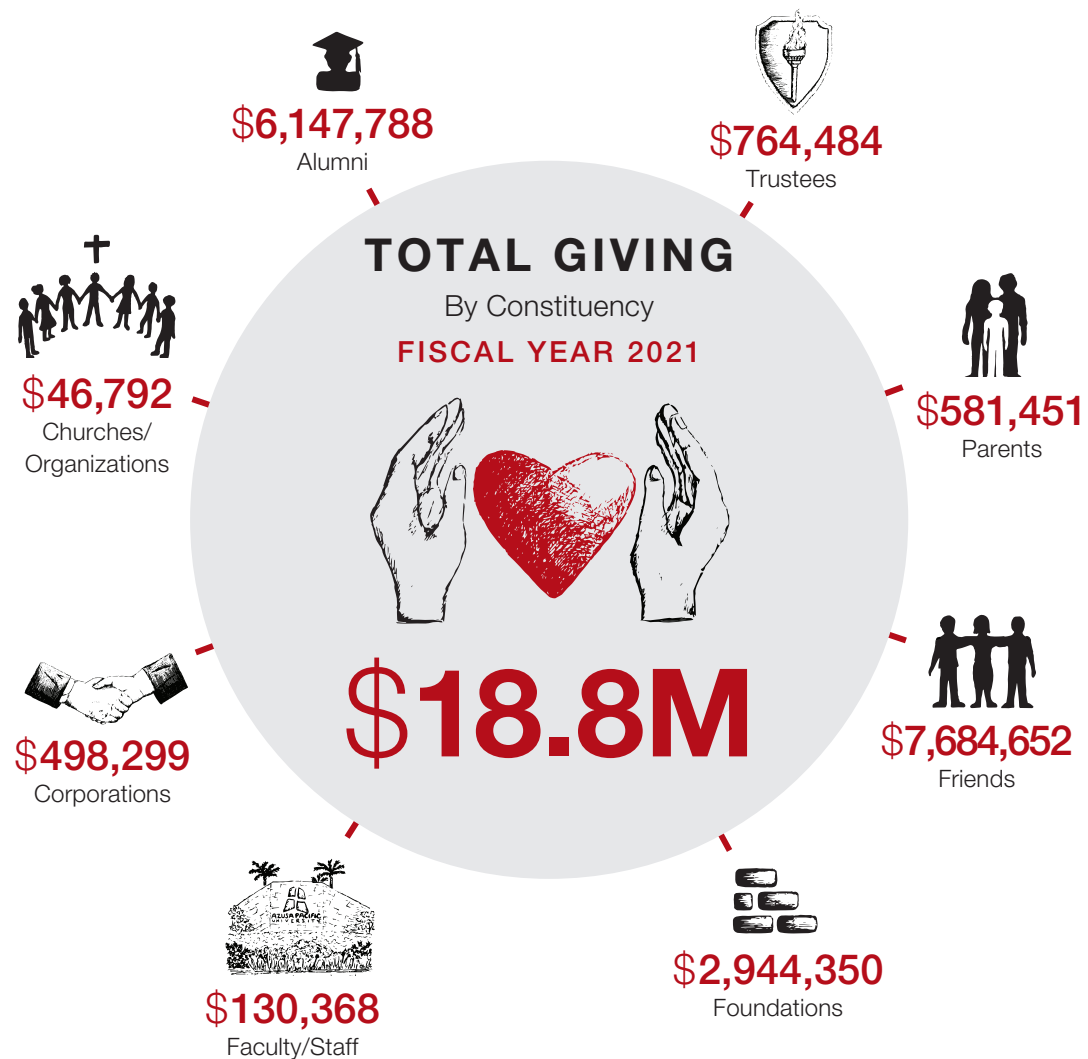
7.75 meters

Current personal best

8 meters

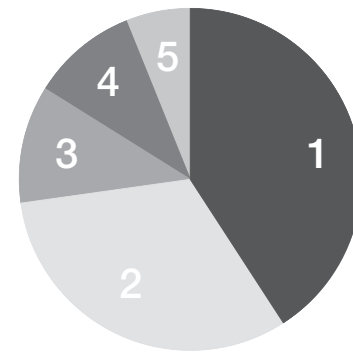
His personal goal

Donors Made This Possible



24 hours
1,154 donors
\$329,253 raised
92 areas, programs, and scholarships supported across the entire university community
463 alumni gave \$119,086
Gifts made from 37 states and 5 countries

Total Giving by Project



1. Unrestricted: \$7,774,671
 2. Endowment: \$5,925,856
 3. University Fund: \$2,033,239
 4. Restricted: \$1,779,218
 5. Capital: \$1,285,200
- Total: \$18,798,184**

Total Students

9,006

- 50% Undergraduate Students
- 50% Graduate Students

Graduates in 2020-21

4,350

FY21 Planned Gifts

\$12,334,160

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 scholars and leaders. Gifts take the form of gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, bequests, and other gift-planning vehicles.

Over time, these generous gifts have helped build today's endowment of more than \$100 million, which funds scholarships as well as academic and cocurricular programs and support.

For more information, call (626) 815-5071 or email legacy@apu.edu.

FY21 Matching Gifts

\$58,441.47

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 Ayodele Steward at (626) 387-5869 or asteward@apu.edu.

\$100,257,631
market value of the endowment

10,023
gifts given
in 2020-21

94.7%
undergraduate
students receiving
scholarships or
financial aid

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

Student Profile



KATHRYN TICKLE '24
Mathematics | Paradise, CA

Dear APU,

Thank you so much for your generosity and kindness. Without this scholarship, I could not attend Azusa Pacific University. APU has greatly impacted my life, providing a positive, welcoming community when I did not have a physical home.

In November 2018, I lost my house to the Camp Fire in Northern California. Shortly after, I applied for a scholarship at APU and interviewed on campus. During that weekend at APU, I found my new home. My family and I prayed that God would grant us the ability for me to attend APU, and through your generosity God answered our prayers. Your kindness changed my life, giving me hope when I had very little.

Along with a remarkable community, I have also been very impressed with APU's academics. Since my freshman year of high school, I wanted to major in math to someday become a math professor. I love computing calculations and theorizing with mathematical concepts, and APU is a great place for both. When I attended a preview weekend, Bradley McCoy, PhD, chair and professor, Department of Mathematics, Physics, and Statistics, shared about APU's commitment to helping students obtain internships and research opportunities. Later that year, I attended a Number Theory class taught by Sharon McCathern, PhD, associate professor, and was so excited by the material that I could not wait to be her student.

I am involved in a few different groups on campus. I am also a Math and Physics Fellow, a Math and Physics Center tutor, and an Honors College mentor. My discipleship group has helped me grow in my faith. I have started journaling my prayers and being more attentive to how God is speaking to me. My discipleship group leader helps us focus on relevant topics like trusting God and finding our identity in Christ. Being part of the Honors College has greatly aided me in my faith journey. Through studying great literary works such as Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*, I have learned how to pray more effectively and focus more closely on Jesus. Through my friendships in the Honors College, I have also made discoveries about myself.

Thank you for making all of this possible through your generosity!

“Your kindness changed my life, giving me hope when I had very little.”

Kathryn Tickle '24



New Commons Area Coming to West Campus

APU's West Campus offers a strategic location to create a vibrant communal space—a home away from home—because of its proximity to the university's largest student parking area as well as the growing number of graduate programs on this campus. Part of this space is being transformed into a new student commons, an engaging and inclusive area that highlights one of APU's cornerstones: Community.

With construction beginning in September 2021, and an expected completion in March 2022, the commons addresses two of the university's strategic priorities: Cultivating a Christ-centered, inclusive institutional culture that intentionally values people, diversity, and mutual understanding in community; and advancing the physical and virtual infrastructure to execute our mission and support our growth goals.

FOUNDATIONS AND GRANTORS

\$10,000 and more

- Butterfield Memorial Foundation
- California Community Foundation
- Capstone Legacy Foundation
- Carl E. Wynn Foundation
- Charles Koch Foundation
- Church of the Nazarene Foundation
- Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
- Gatherer Family Foundation
- Helen & Will Webster Foundation
- Hugh and Hazel Darling Foundation
- inFaith Community Foundation

- John Templeton Foundation
- Lilly Endowment, Inc.
- Merklin Family Foundation
- National Christian Foundation
- National Christian Foundation California
- National Christian Foundation, Inc.
- Paul K. Richter Memorial Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee
- Peter and Masha Plotkin Memorial Foundation
- Renaissance Charitable Foundation, Inc.
- The Ahmanson Foundation
- The Esther Foundation
- The Fletcher Jones Foundation
- The Tsern Foundation

BUSINESS/CORPORATE SUPPORT

\$2,500 and more

- Abbie Foundation
- America's Christian Credit Union
- Amy L. Magnusson, MD
- Bank of America Charitable Gift Fund
- Benevity Social Ventures Inc.
- Charles Schwab & Company
- Edison International
- Edward Jones & Co.
- Fidelity Brokerage Services
- Formillus Architecture
- Furniture Row
- Gawenda Seminars & Consulting
- Gilead Services, Inc.
- IBM International Foundation
- KPMG Foundation Giving Campaign
- KPMG Foundation Matching
- Larry W. Smith Ranch
- Morgan Stanley Smith Barney
- Global Impact Funding Trust Inc.
- National Financial Services LLC
- National Philanthropic Trust
- Northrop Grumman Corporate Citizenship
- Pacific Life Foundation
- PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Raymond James Global Account
- Raytheon Company
- Warren Companies

Cougars Sports Roundup

Men's Soccer Tops Biola for Conference Title



Azusa Pacific men's soccer finished the regular season on a six-game winning streak, going 12-2-2 overall (8-1-1 PacWest). The Cougars clinched their third consecutive conference title in dramatic fashion, winning 3-2 in overtime at Biola on the final day of the season to win the crown. The Cougars are seeded third in their region for the NCAA playoffs, and open the postseason at home against West Texas A&M on November 20.

Women's Soccer Finishes Successful Season



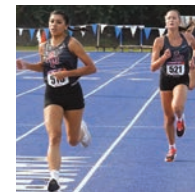
Azusa Pacific women's soccer ended the season with a record of 11-6-1 (6-3-1 PacWest), the program's most victories in a season since 2016. The Cougars recorded eight shutouts, including wins over CCAA contenders Cal State Los Angeles and San Francisco State, as well as eventual PacWest co-champion Hawaii-Hilo. The Cougars were led in scoring by senior Maddie Morrison, who tallied 9 goals and 5 assists.

Henington Sets School, Conference Records for Digs



Azusa Pacific volleyball entered the final week of the regular season with a 17-9 overall record, and 12-6 in the PacWest. The Cougars season has included a memorable five-set win at Biola and a road trip that saw them head to Hawaii to play six matches in six days. Annaka Jorgenson leads the team with 333 kills, while senior libero Bailey Henington became the Azusa Pacific and PacWest Conference career leader in digs, entering the final week with 2,467.

Cross Country Teams Finish Strong



Azusa Pacific's men's cross country team had its best-ever finish at the PacWest championships, finishing second behind top-six finishes from Nixon Korir and Josh Velasco. The Cougars finished fourth at the West Regionals two weeks later. The women's team had three runners in the top six at their conference championship event, with Mikayla Akers, Justine Stecko, and Briseida Garcia Meza leading the team to a third-place finish.

APU Athletics Administration Updates

Courtney Davis, PhD, and Paul Flores II have joined the administration for Azusa Pacific Athletics, and Bethany Blomquist will serve in a new role, director of athletics Gary Pine announced in early October. Davis was named the faculty athletic representative, Flores II is the new assistant athletics director of compliance, and Blomquist is transitioning from director of compliance/senior woman administrator to assistant athletics director for internal operations/senior woman administrator.

"I am excited to announce these changes to our administration," said Pine. "This trio already has enhanced, and will continue to enhance, Cougar Athletics through their work and dedication. We are blessed to have them join us."



Courtney Davis, PhD



Paul Flores II



Bethany Blomquist

APU Alum Wins World Series with Braves

Former Azusa Pacific baseball player Stephen Vogt '07 won the 2021 Major League Baseball World Series with the Atlanta Braves. Vogt, a nine-year MLB veteran and two-time All-Star, was traded from the Arizona Diamondbacks to the Braves in July. With the Braves, Vogt saw action in 27 games during the regular season and emerged as one of Atlanta's leaders in the locker room. While an injury ended his season earlier than expected, he remained with the team throughout their playoff run and eventual world championship.



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

A Crescendo of Opportunity

BY PETER COOLEY



The satisfying feeling of unwrapping the perfect Christmas present or opening a much-anticipated school acceptance letter—APU alum Erick Quintanilla '11, MM '13, had that same magical feeling the first time he opened a saxophone case in his 7th-grade band class. From the moment Quintanilla laid eyes on the shiny instrument, his world opened to new possibilities. For the first time, he experienced the power of music to inspire young minds. Little did he know that he would use his gifts and talents years later to lead his own school band program, enabling the next generation of young musicians to experience that same feeling.

Playing saxophone in middle school provided Quintanilla with a way to succeed in a difficult school environment. “Growing up in the '90s in midcity Los Angeles was pretty tough,” he said. “In my neighborhood, there was a lot of crime and gang issues. That being said, music was my outlet. I had music after school, and I practiced during lunch, so I was able to stay away from the wrong crowds.”

In high school, Quintanilla was prompted to join the All-District Honor Band and discovered his love for the tuba. Quintanilla recalls that at times when he was discouraged, his band director affirmed his potential, motivating him to keep pursuing his music studies.

“I remember there were times when I wanted to quit tuba,” he said, “but my band director told me, ‘You have to stick with it; I promise you, if you keep up with music, you will get scholarships and opportunities later.’ Little did I know, he was right—the tuba ended up helping me pay for college.”

It was also in high school that Quintanilla realized he wanted to become a music teacher. From his time in band, he knew he was called to pursue music for the rest of his life. After high school, he joined the United States Air Force, working as a musician and jet engine mechanic for eight years. Quintanilla was principal tubist of the 562nd Air Force band, as well as bass player and musical director of the Air National Guard’s only Latin/pop/rock ensemble, Fuego Azul. After his military service, Quintanilla studied at Azusa Pacific University’s School of Music, obtaining a BA in Music Teacher Education and an MM in Tuba Performance.

In reflecting on his education, Quintanilla credits APU for equipping him to be the teacher that he is today: “I really appreciate the *God First* mission of APU. All of my classes had that focus, and it greatly helped nurture not only my teaching and musical skills, but also my spiritual beliefs.”

In the fall of 2014, Quintanilla was hired at Hollenbeck Middle School as a long-term substitute music teacher. At this point, Quintanilla was simultaneously finishing his teaching credential. “Thanks to APU’s flexible program, I was able to finish my credentialing process during evenings while still working as a teacher,” he said. “This opportunity led me to landing a full-time music teacher position.”

When Quintanilla began working at Hollenbeck, he discovered that the music program was lacking good equipment and resources. Music equipment was old and in need of repair, with some instruments scantly held together by paper clips and duct tape. Rather than viewing these circumstances as debilitating, Quintanilla took this as a challenge to find a way to give his students a high-quality music experience.

“When I was first hired, the program was greatly lacking in leadership and equipment,” he said. “However, I knew my students had great potential. I envisioned a program that was competitive and inspiring, and the first step toward this goal was obtaining new instruments for the students.”

Quintanilla spent time researching grants and funding for new equipment. His former teacher and fellow All-District Honor Band Director, Tony White, recommended he look into the Mr. Holland’s Opus Foundation, an organization that helps schools secure grants and instruments for band programs. Through this organization, Quintanilla was able to secure multiple grants totaling \$170,000 to

“Music was my outlet. I had music after school, and I practiced during lunch, so I was able to stay away from the wrong crowds.”

Erick Quintanilla '11, MM '13



go toward new instruments and resources for the program. From these grants, the band was able to buy new instruments and equipment, go to festivals and competitions, and even perform at Disneyland’s California Adventure.

“In certain communities, music programs often get overlooked,” he said. “I wanted to make sure that students’ passion and ability could be highlighted, and these grants allowed this to happen.”

Recently, Quintanilla made a guest appearance on the *Kelly Clarkson Show*, where he shared his inspiring story. On the show, Quintanilla’s program received \$20,000 in donations from Pandora and the celebrity hosts. One of his former students, Lidia, was in the audience, with a special message for her teacher: “Thank you for making a big impact on my life. I thought that because I was a girl, I wasn’t going to do well on my instrument. I didn’t have the confidence, but you showed me that I have potential and that I can do anything I set my mind to.”

Just as his teachers poured into him, Quintanilla is making a difference in the lives of his music students. “I believe that our mission as humans is to serve each other. I learned to serve others well at APU and in the military, and now I’m blessed with the opportunity to serve others here in the communities that need it most.”

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Providing Healing and Hope

BY ABIGAIL REED



When Azusa Pacific University alumni Anthony '06 and Emily (Maarschalk '06) Walls met on an APU Mexico Outreach trip and were paired together to present to the local community on a public health topic, they had no idea that God would continue to use their partnership to serve the underserved. Nearly 18 years later, as a married couple, they work together as medical professionals running a life-changing nonprofit organization called Healthcare for Justice, which provides free, accessible health care to victims of human trafficking and domestic violence.

"Victims and survivors of trafficking often carry extreme fear of the system and people in power—including doctors' offices and doctors themselves," said Anthony. "In addition, some don't have the insurance or means to pay for care. We wanted to remove these barriers, and many more, by creating a safe and completely free medical clinic."

The Walls' sacred calling to care for these patients can be traced back to their time at APU. As they built a crucial foundation of scientific knowledge in classes and participated in service opportunities, God sowed the seeds that would eventually come to fruition with Healthcare for Justice.

"For both of us, our time at APU not only prepared us academically, but it stretched, grew, and challenged our faith—making our desire to follow Jesus deeper and more real," said Emily, who was an applied health major. "Today, my faith pours into my work caring for patients. I'm showing them the love of Christ."

When the couple continued on to graduate school, Anthony pursuing a Doctorate in Medicine at Boston University and Emily completing a Master of Science in Nursing at the MGH Institute of Health Professions, they were pushed to consider the difference they were hoping to make in their future careers.

"My time at APU revealed to me that our mission field is really how we show Christ's love to the people in our life—to the orphans and widows in our community," said Anthony. "In the midst of medical school, I realized I wanted to truly make a lasting impact in my patients' lives, showing them the Gospel through my love and service."

During this time of searching, they met a lawyer through connections at their church who started a safe home for survivors of human trafficking in Boston and offered ways to get involved. Anthony

and Emily were deeply impacted by this outreach, and they began to outline a vision of how they could love and serve this population.

After completion of their graduate programs, they moved to Ventura, California, where Anthony began his residency program to study family medicine and Emily worked as a family nurse practitioner. Although Anthony was busy with his work, God continued to remind him of the vision to serve the trafficked and abused, so he began making connections with government agencies and local nonprofits, joining the Ventura County Coalition Against Human Trafficking as a medical advisor.

Eventually, during Anthony's fellowship training, his mentor pushed him to adopt a community project—so Anthony began serving residents of local safe homes who were survivors of human trafficking. During the off hours at his workplace, a general practitioner family clinic, nonprofits referred residents to Anthony for free medical care. Unfortunately, more than 60 percent of patients did not show up to their appointments.

"I conducted a survey and discovered there was still a deeply rooted fear and distrust of the system, even when cost barriers were removed," said Anthony. "I knew something had to change."

He continued along his career path until a sudden change forced them to prayerfully reconsider their future—Anthony's mentor and supervisor decided to leave her position at the family clinic. God brought back to their mind their vision: a safe and completely accessible space for those who have experienced trafficking or abuse.

Even though they did not have a building, they decided to obey God's prompting by making house calls, caring for people where they felt most comfortable and at peace. When Anthony called the local district attorney, a fellow member of the Coalition Against Human Trafficking, to ask for a business address, they received a surprising response.

"The district attorney informed me he had something even better," said Anthony. "A large grant enabled them to open up a family justice center, and he offered us two rooms to open our clinic."

They moved in and officially opened their doors in June 2019, without any overhead costs or rent fees. Not only this, but their clinic rooms operate in the same building as 28 other aftercare agencies,



"For both of us, our time at APU not only prepared us academically, but it stretched, grew, and challenged our faith—making our desire to follow Jesus deeper and more real."

Emily (Maarschalk '06) Walls

from childcare to housing aid, providing a one-stop place of healing and support for all patients.

"We had thought this vision would be a long way off in the future, that we would slowly have to build up the means to make it a reality," said Emily. "It was undeniable that these events and doors opening were not orchestrated on their own. It felt divine."

Healthcare for Justice serves their patients by walking with them through the healing process and providing unlimited healthcare support all hours of the day. Their services include broad-spectrum primary care, including anything from a skin infection to managing high blood pressure, as well as preventative screening, treating diseases, and much more.

Recently, through the aid of donated funding, Healthcare for Justice initiated a more comprehensive trauma recovery program for patients struggling with psychiatric needs, including free access to a licensed therapist and research-backed tools such as trauma-sensitive yoga.

This trauma recovery program, along with basic medical care, has already turned lives around, as seen in the story of a young woman with a history of sexual trauma and violence. After receiving care from Healthcare for Justice for more than a year, she is back at work, contributing to her community, and continuing on the path of healing.

"This care enabled me to overcome barriers such as my trust issues with authoritative figures and strangers," said another patient, a victim of labor trafficking and sexual violence. "You made it possible for me to achieve better health physically, emotionally, and mentally."

Today, this patient is happily married, runs his own business, and sits on Healthcare for Justice's board of advisors to advocate for others, believing they all deserve the opportunity to heal and receive care.

Since opening the doors of their clinic, the no-show rate has dropped from more than 60 percent to around only 20, a massive success in reducing the obstacles and fear that keep trafficking and abuse victims from medical care.

"My hope for the future is that our work inspires others around the world to make a difference in their communities—identifying a need and using their passions and skills to show God's love," said Anthony. "Each community and population has different needs, and it is the tender and thoughtful work of Christ followers that can truly make a difference."

Abigail Reed '20 is a freelance writer living in La Pine, Oregon. abbiejreed@gmail.com

Virtual Networking: 4 Tips for College Students and Recent Grads



In the working world, it's all about who you know—or so the saying goes. This definitely has some merit, at least according to a recent Jobvite survey that found 37 percent of people discovered a job through their professional network.

Here are four ways you can bolster your online network.

1. CONNECT WITH PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS

When you are working to build your network virtually, you may wonder how to get started. Those with lots of contacts in their field or industry didn't wait for something to come along—they took action, which led to the opportunities they received later.

Here's a simple virtual networking strategy almost any student or graduate can use: commit to writing three individualized emails (don't copy and paste) to prospective employers every weekday until you find your first lead or job.

The whole process should take you about 45 minutes each day, including research. And over the course of just one month, you'll have sent more than 60 emails to different companies. That's a great way to take proactive steps to build your career contacts.

2. PROMOTE YOURSELF (THE RIGHT WAY) ON SOCIAL MEDIA

It's easy to think of platforms like Instagram and Facebook as separate from your professional life. The reality, though, is that many employers don't exactly see it that way! It's important to maintain an online presence—and crucial that your posts don't undermine your personality or abilities.

According to a CareerBuilder study, researchers found that:

- 70 percent of employers said they use social media to screen candidates before hiring
- 69 percent of employers will type a candidate's name into Google or other search engines before making a hiring decision
- 57 percent of employers said they were less likely to interview a candidate that they couldn't find online

3. BUILD AND OPTIMIZE A PROFESSIONAL PROFILE ON LINKEDIN

Of all the social media platforms, LinkedIn is the most important for virtual networking. As a recent graduate or current college student about to enter the job market, it should also be one of your top priorities to create a professional page on this platform. This includes:

- Filling out your profile completely
- Connecting with teachers, friends, and peers to start growing your network
- Using a professional profile picture
- Having past employers endorse skills on your page

Your page becomes like a virtual business card, which you can use to attract potential employers. It also allows LinkedIn's algorithms to match you to jobs or companies that fit your work experience and skills, effectively streamlining the job hunt for you.

Career experts say to use 40 or more words in your headline and summary to organically increase search engine optimization. And what makes for a professional photo that pairs well with your LinkedIn headline? Think natural light, high resolution, limited filters, and suitable dress to fit the part.

4. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALUMNI RESOURCES

Don't forget to maximize the institutional resources available to you! Azusa Pacific University's Office of Alumni Engagement is specifically dedicated to helping students stay in the loop after graduation, and the Career Center helps alumni connect with businesses and organizations that are hiring for jobs and internships. APU alumni stay connected via monthly newsletters, get notified of alumni events, and can sign up for Handshake, an online forum for career networking with fellow graduates and employers. Connecting with other APU alumni comes with an advantage: you share common ground with the contact or potential employer right away.

By positioning yourself as a professional and staying in control of your virtual networking options, you'll give yourself the best chance of landing a great job.

Stay Connected to the APU Community

Because you are a valued member of the APU community, Alumni Engagement has several ways to keep you connected. First, we invite you to join APU Connect (apuconnect.com). More than 5,000 alumni utilize this network to connect socially and professionally—joining interest groups, seeking or becoming a mentor, exploring job opportunities, promoting their businesses, and keeping up to date on the latest APU news and resources. Also, follow us on Instagram ([@apualumni](https://www.instagram.com/apualumni)) and Facebook ([@apualumniengagement](https://www.facebook.com/apualumniengagement)), and subscribe to our Azusa Pacific Alumni YouTube channel to watch Alumni Academy, where faculty and staff experts share thought-provoking information in their areas of expertise. Finally, take advantage of our alumni discounts on hotels, airport parking, car insurance, APU's IMT Computer Store and University Bookstore, and our new Alumni Perks (apu.enjoymydeals.com, code: APU1899). Visit apu.edu/alumni to learn more.



A History of Gathering Together


Through the decades, Azusa Pacific University has formed a sense of community by gathering in various venues, including classrooms, chapels, concert halls, and athletic fields, as well as in informal spaces such as the student lounge and snack bar in the Turner Campus Center (shown above). During winter 1980, due to torrential downpours, many gatherings were restricted to only indoor activities, resulting in more students congregating in the Turner Campus Center to play pinball, Ping-Pong, or pool. From spring 2020 to fall 2021, campus activities were again restricted, this time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After a successful

return to campus in fall 2021, APU once more enjoyed that familiar sense of community with face-to-face interpersonal interactions. On October 7, 2021, the university dedicated its new coffee shop, Shalom Café, located where the student lounge and snack bar once stood. Named in honor of late APU President Jon R. Wallace, DBA, and for the phrase that he so often used—"Shalom, Go With God"—this cafe will continue to remind the APU community there is the potential for sacred encounters in every interaction. Shalom.

Ken Otto, MLIS, professor, Head of Special Collections

“There is the potential for sacred encounters in every interaction.”

—Jon R. Wallace, DBA




From
Gratitude
to
Hope

Gratitude has a way of grounding us in the things that matter.
It's a seed of hope that can carry us through uncertain times.

Here at Azusa Pacific University, we are choosing gratitude and
finding hope in God's greatest gift to us, His Son, Jesus Christ.

Watch our community's journey from
gratitude to hope by visiting:

[*apu.edu/hope*](https://apu.edu/hope)



*May your unfailing love be with us,
LORD, even as we put our hope in you.*