



Office of the Provost

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Dear SPU student,

I wanted to reach out and give you some updates about Seattle Pacific University, particularly as we work through our presidential transition. You may know already that the Board of Trustees has appointed me Executive-in-Charge of the institution, and we expect that in the coming weeks an interim president will be named. This individual will continue in a leadership role as we maintain current priorities around academic excellence and meaningful student experiences to equip you for your future. The interim president will work with Senior Leadership to shepherd SPU during a search process for a new president – a process that generally takes some time due to the nature of the search and the position itself.

SPU continues to be in a strong position financially. We are fortunate to benefit from generous donors and our endowment continues to grow at a healthy rate. This, paired with early signs indicating the potential of strong freshmen enrollment next academic year, contribute to our ability to provide student scholarships and excellent academic offerings.

We're looking ahead with cautious optimism that Autumn Quarter will resume in-person learning and life together. The care and diligence of our undergraduate residential students in particular has meant our COVID infection rates are relatively low – this is a credit to your commitment to the health of the whole community. I also acknowledge that this year has demanded a resiliency that has likely depleted you. The prayers of our faculty and staff for you persist – for your well-being,

health, and ability to finish the year strong. And if you are a graduating senior, you are especially held in our minds and hearts as you finish your program of study.

Among these other updates, I wanted to share the news that earlier today, the Board of Trustees communicated a decision that I know some of you are closely following. At the Employee Forum held this morning, the Board of Trustees Chair Cedric Davis informed faculty and staff of the board's recent decision to keep in place certain conduct expectations for faculty and staff related to human sexuality.

To be clear, no changes have been made to expectations directly connected to student behavior. Still, I am mindful of how this news about the board's decision will be greeted. There are students among us who may feel a sense of relief that our policies are not changing, while many others are likely to experience frustration, disappointment, or even anger.

Please know that administrators and faculty will continue to walk with and work for you, doing what we can to ensure that SPU remains a Christian university that is committed to pursuing our Christ-centered calling to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly together with God and one another.

For those of you who would benefit from spiritual care and pastoral presence during this time of uncertainty, know that our [University Ministries](#) team is here for you. There are multiple opportunities to pause, pray, process, and meet together in community. These are detailed on the [UMin website](#) and include:

- The Prayer Labyrinth and Stations of the Cross remain set up for personal times of reflection on the lawn and streetscape between Demaray Hall and Marston-Watson Hall
- Students-Only Small-Group Processing Opportunities: Facilitated by UMin and local church pastors and spiritual directors
  - General Process Group: Tues., April 13, 7 p.m.
  - Affirming Process Group: Wed., April 14, noon
  - Residential Process Group: Thurs., April 15, noon
  - General Process Group: Fri., April 16, noon
  - Welcoming Process Group: Wed., April 21, noon
- John Perkins Center Drop-In Support: Tuesdays, April 13, April 20, May 4, May 18, and June 1, noon-1:30 p.m.
- Chapel: SPU Community Gathering of Honest Prayers, Tues., April 20, 10:30 a.m.

- If you'd like one-on-one support, the UMin Team is here for you. We have also partnered with local church pastors and spiritual directors to provide additional care as you wrestle with all the layered challenges of this quarter. Please visit the [UMin website](#) for information on the local pastors and spiritual directors and appointment request forms.
- Take a 10-minute break for a time of communal Breath Prayer on [Instagram](#) on Mondays, April 19, May 3, May 17, 12:30-12:40 p.m.

In gratitude for each of you,

Dr. Laura Hartley  
Provost and Executive-in-Charge

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