

Statement from BOT Chair Cedric Davis during an online SPU Employee Forum, April 12, 2021

In connection with the February board of trustees meeting, SPU faculty, staff and students submitted extensive comments regarding SPU's position on human sexuality. The board very much appreciates the thoughtful, compassionate dedication to the SPU community. And we have also devoted many hours to considering the issues that were raised. We have prayerfully reviewed SPU's mission statement, statement of faith and statement on human sexuality and reflected upon SPU's longstanding affiliation with the Free Methodist Church. We've heard from bishops of the Free Methodist Church and experts in a variety of disciplines. We have carefully considered the faculty and staff survey results and messages submitted by the SPU community. And we have heard from faculty, staff and students through your representatives. We have also heard the lament and the high value placed on treating all people with respect and dignity.

Throughout this process, the board of trustees was keenly aware of the desire of many in SPU's ecumenical community to modify SPU's hiring policies. At the same time, the board is cognizant of historic orthodoxy and the Wesleyan and evangelical tradition in SPU's 130 year history. And in SPU's Statement of faith.

After careful consideration and thoughtful review, to remain in alignment with the board's understanding of SPU's statement of faith and to remain affiliated with the Free Methodist Church, the board declined to change SPU's employment policy related to human sexuality. We do recognize[we] very, very well understand that fellow Christians and other community members disagree in good faith on issues related to human sexuality, and that these convictions are deeply and sincerely held. We pray that as we live within the tension of this issue, that we can be in dialog with you all and others in the SPU community. We commit to continue to listen and to be in relationship with the SPU faculty, staff and students as we see God together and live out our calling to be a grace filled community.

Sincerely, from the entire board. I really appreciate, we really appreciate all that you all are doing within our community to make sure that everyone is, again, respected and shown dignity in how we carry out our work to be God's people and to be in community with one another.
