

**From:** SPU Board of Trustees <SPU-Board@spu.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 23, 2022 12:02 PM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Board of Trustees reaches decision on Employee Lifestyle Expectations



### Board of Trustees

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After careful consideration of multiple and complex concerns, the Board of Trustees has reached the decision to retain Seattle Pacific University's current Employee Lifestyle Expectations regarding sexual conduct.

"We want the community of SPU to know that this was a thorough and prayerful deliberation," says Board Chair Cedric Davis. "While this decision brings complex and heart-felt reactions, the Board made a decision that it believed was most in line with the University's mission and Statement of Faith and chose to have SPU remain in communion with its founding denomination, the Free Methodist Church USA (FMC), as a core part of its historical identity as a Christian university."

The Board acknowledges that there is disagreement among faithful Christians on the topic of sexuality and identity. However, the decision means SPU's employee conduct expectations continue to reflect a traditional view on biblical marriage and sexuality, as an expression of long-held church teaching and interpretation of scripture.

Reaching this decision is the culmination of months of in-depth processing and an active process of reflection, including a review of the extensive report by the SPU LGBTQIA+ Work Group, comprised of staff, faculty, senior administrators, and fellow trustees. Each member brought diverse perspectives, knowledge, and experiences. The work group presented an exceptional body of work that contained compassionate theological and academic approaches spanning several options for the Board of Trustees to consider. In addition to considerations regarding employee conduct expectations, the work group report included possible options regarding the Statement on Human Sexuality (SOHS). The Board did not have sufficient time in our deliberation to discuss the SOHS at

this meeting, and we recognize that this is an issue that still requires attention.

The SPU Board also considered the motion that was recently passed by the FMC Board of Administration clarifying that a university would not be considered for any level of affiliation with the Free Methodist denomination if such university altered its hiring policy to permit hiring of individuals living a lifestyle inconsistent with the Free Methodist *Book of Discipline's* teachings on sexual conduct. Two members of the SPU Board, who also serve on the FMC Board of Administration, voluntarily recused themselves from discussion and voting on the motion regarding SPU's Employee Lifestyle Expectations.

While the SPU Board has landed on a decision that reflects a prayerful and sincere commitment to the well-being of SPU's identity as an orthodox, evangelical, Wesleyan, and ecumenical institution of faith and learning, there is also sober acknowledgement of how this news will be received. To provide a place for further explanation and discussion, a town hall is planned for later this week. As soon as details are finalized an invitation will be sent to the SPU community.

Seattle Pacific remains committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion for undergraduate and graduate students, welcoming and supporting each student — including our LGBTQIA+ students — to support their academic pursuits, faith journeys, and life together. To that end, we continue to strive to create a community where all belong and receive the support they need to thrive.

Finally, you will also be receiving the usual post-board report summary later today or tomorrow.

— SPU Board of Trustees



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