



July 1, 2022

Leah Duff and Tayler Hart, *Contacts for Sit In*

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, which is the governing authority of Seattle Pacific University (SPU), I want to respond to your petition and acknowledge your dedicated activism, which reflects steadfast dedication.

To address your questions, we need to first reiterate the ongoing commitment of Board and University leadership to the sincerely held religious beliefs at the core of our mission, which has not changed and informs everything we do as an institution. We further reaffirm our resolve to cultivate a distinctive positive learning environment encouraging rigorous academic inquiry based on a biblical framework of faith anchored on the person of Jesus Christ, the authority of Holy Scripture, and the tradition of the Christian Church throughout history.

That includes SPU's current employee lifestyle expectations regarding sexual conduct, which the Board has voted to retain. We acknowledge there is disagreement among people of faith on the topic of sexuality and identity. But after careful and prayerful deliberation, we believe these longstanding employee expectations are consistent with the University's mission and Statement of Faith that reflect a traditional view on biblical marriage and sexuality, as an expression of long-held orthodox church teaching.

Thank you for your understanding that certain key matters affecting the entire campus community require the Board to conduct a confidential vote, as was the case on this issue. This principle helps promote the freedom of each member to decide what they think is best. That further facilitates our desire for the Board to act and respond in a unified manner, even if not all trustees agree on a particular decision.

We recognize our response does not provide the answers you were seeking. In the midst of this deep and personal challenge within our SPU community, we remain committed to maintaining a welcoming community filled with grace, respect and compassion for one another and providing care and support for all of our students.

Dean Kato
Chair, Board of Trustees