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**From:** Interim President Pete Menjares <president@spu.edu>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 28, 2022 10:31 AM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Update on legal actions



**Office of the President**

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In the spirit of keeping our campus informed, I want to provide some context and information on a legal matter involving the Attorney General's office and our commitment as a faith-based university.

Seattle Pacific University is now in federal court to defend our right to hire Christian faculty and staff after Washington state's Attorney General has sought to obtain our internal communications and private employee information. This has compelled us to ask a federal district court to step in and protect our freedom to hire employees on the basis of religion. As a Christian university, we strive to resolve conflict without resorting to legal action, but legal action is already being taken against us. We discerned it was not only necessary but imperative to take this step.

Here is some history. In June 2022, SPU was notified that the Attorney General's office was beginning an investigation and had requested copies of confidential information related to employees and policies. It is our contention that the Attorney General's office has targeted the University because of our Christian beliefs, which is why we are asking the court to ensure we can protect our religious identity.

Our argument is based on some foundational history and principles. Seattle Pacific is a nationally ranked, private Christian liberal arts university and, as you well know, more than 3,600 undergraduate and graduate students gain an education combining outstanding scholarship with thoughtful faith. When hiring employees, Seattle Pacific requires regular faculty and staff to be Christians and to abide by the University's Statement of Faith as well as our Employee Lifestyle Expectations, which together shape the vision and mission of the institution as a Free Methodist

Church-affiliated university.

So while I am deeply aware our community is divided on our expression of Christian life as it relates to LGBTQIA+ and faithful Christian living, I believe we can be united in our desire to protect and defend the University's right within the law to hire to mission within a voluntary community based on a shared framework of faith. We do not want to lose that freedom. In the same way, we hope to protect our ability to practice a faith that welcomes students from all backgrounds — including historically underrepresented and marginalized groups — to cultivate deep, thriving relationships with Christ.

For over 130 years, our university has been guided by our Christian mission and purpose, and we aim to protect that tradition. The faith commitment of our faculty and staff is an essential foundation of our identity, and, indeed, the First Amendment has protected churches and other religious institutions' right to make faith-based decisions for themselves.

As always, please direct any media inquiries to [Tracy Norlen](#) in University Communications or to the [media page](#) for SPU, and I will keep you informed as the events unfold.

Prayerfully,

Pete



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