

*We present this letter to the ASSP Senate as a proposal for approval to send a letter on behalf of our student organization to the Board of Trustees. We would like to note that in 2018-19 ASSP Senate passed proposal 2018-2019-004 NF Student Mental Health and Theological Concerns: Rewrite Rhetoric found in Community and Lifestyle Expectations asking SPU to remove its Statement on Human Sexuality in its lifestyle and hiring contracts. We write this letter in 2020-2021 to 1) show continued ASSP Senate support for this issue in the present school year, and 2) again urge the board to remove the Statement of Human sexuality given its continued effects.*

To: the Board of Trustees

It is the continued consensus of the Associated Students of Seattle Pacific University that the statement on human sexuality does not represent the core values of the institution and the student body that we have agreed to serve.

The ASSP senate has addressed these concerns previously, in a proposed revision for the statement on human sexuality in the 2018-2019 academic year. This proposal was submitted to impress upon the austerity of the issue: *Student Mental Health and Theological Concerns: Rewrite Rhetoric found in Community and Lifestyle Expectations*, and was written in conjunction with the university club HAVEN, which provides support for the LGBTQ+ community here on campus. Citing the thoughts and words of our council's predecessors who drafted this document, "[by] recognizing God as the union of difference and diversity, it is then apparent that the diversity of humanity is in and of itself a reflection of God."

It is with this in mind that we present our thoughts to the Board.

There has been a continuous call for change during these past consecutive years from students who wish to see this policy amended. This was acutely evident in the recent protests organized on campus, and in the discussions and chains prevalent on social media. Rhetoric maintaining that the school does not affirm the LGBTQ+ community would be inaccurate for our communal identity even if this is the consensus of the administration - the student body has been clear about their support for inclusive policies for years, and the student body deserves to have their voices recognized in the management of how SPU operates. Couching prejudice under the auspices of Christianity does a disservice to students, who have decided over the last decade that the intolerance shown by the institution is negligent of our beliefs.

As stated in the 2018-2019 ASSP proposal to revise SPU's statement on human sexuality, "the diversity of humanity is in and of itself a reflection of God, and a part of the essence of Imago

Dei.” The Associated Students of Seattle Pacific affirm, as a community striving to echo the beauty of a God fully revealed through the trinity, through unity amidst difference, that “difference follows as beautiful, and as a reflection of Godself.” Allowing LGBTQ+ faculty, staff, and students to fully express themselves and be part of the ongoing work of building our campus community only allows for “the kingdom of God to be richened with the difference and diversity that binds creation together.” It is with these convictions that we continue our call for change in the hiring practices and statements put forth by our university.

The love we have for Seattle Pacific University is matched in intensity only by our desire to see it grow and evolve as a school of faith. The statements put forth and the policies enacted by SPU ought to reflect the kind of harmonious community we are striving to become: affirming, hospitable, and a reflection of the love God extends to all peoples. Our hearts are the last compass that point to policies of acceptance instead of rejection.

As representatives of the general student body who have paid attention to the voices of their constituents, it is the ASSP’s responsibility to inform the Board of Trustees that SPU’s exclusionary treatment of members of the LGBTQIA+ community — whether it be students, staff, or potential hires — does not reflect the widespread views of the student body. We trust that the Board will take into account the voices of the students in their decision.

Signed,

Rayna Martin, Senator for Emerson Hall (2024)

Cambria Judd Babbitt, ASSP Commuter Students Senator (2022)

Kolbe Logan, ASSP Senator for the Humanities (2021)

Carrie Cox, ASSP Ashton Hall Senator (2024)

Jojo Nguyen, ASSP Senator at Large (2023)