

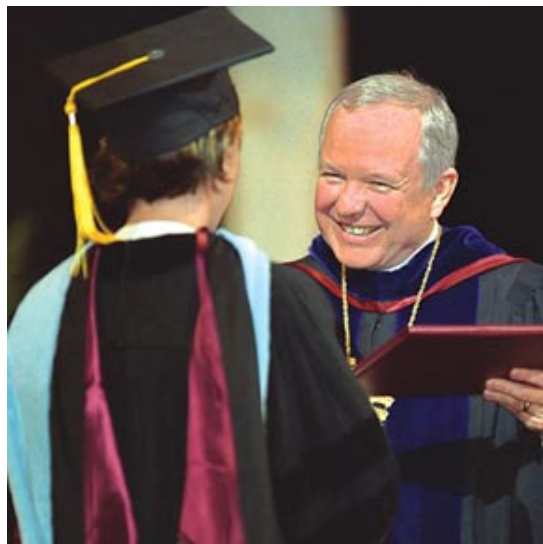
SEATTLE PACIFIC UNIVERSITY Response



Summer 2002 | Volume 25, Number 3 | From the President

Don't Hold Back

New Mission Statement Calls SPU to Be Grounded in Faith and Open to the World



AT THE MAY 2002 MEETING of the Board of Trustees, we adopted a new mission statement for Seattle Pacific University. This is the final step of a six-year process where we have sought to define and articulate our vision for this great institution. Here is the new statement that will guide and focus our work into the future:

Seattle Pacific University seeks to be a premier Christian university fully committed to engaging the culture and changing the world by graduating people of competence and character, becoming people of wisdom, and modeling grace-filled community.

This is an enormously satisfying moment for me, a culmination of many years of work. Six years ago, I asked the SPU community to engage with me in a grand conversation about who we are and what we want to become. We worked hard on that process, talking together, reading and reflecting, writing and speaking. That grand conversation produced what I believe is a compelling, urgent and clear vision about our purpose and our future. Now it is time to align our mission statement with our vision, the last step of a vigorous and meaningful process.

Our vision says that we make some core commitments — competence, character, wisdom and community — and these are the tools with which to make a real difference in the world. Our vision says we do not do our work for ourselves; our focus is outward. We are called to serve. We ground everything we do on the transforming power of Jesus Christ, and then, as an outstanding Christian university, we engage the culture around us, stepping up to the table as change-agents for good. This is who we are. This is what we seek to become. And now our mission statement clearly reflects our vision.

I believe passionately in what we are trying to articulate here. I believe the task is urgent and that our call is very clear. I say often that we will seek to be faithful and obedient to God's call for this place and this time, and this vision is our sincere effort to do just that. "This place and this time" — we must always remember that a calling has a context. We seek to understand this place and this time very well, so that we may shine the light of the gospel more effectively.

I have been reflecting on a wonderful passage from Isaiah 54:2 that I think expresses so powerfully and beautifully what our vision for Seattle Pacific is all about: "Enlarge the site of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; / Do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. / For you will spread out to the right and to the left, / And your descendants will possess the nations /And will settle the desolate towns."

Most certainly we must strengthen our stakes, sink them deep, make them steady

HIGHLIGHTS IN OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Commencement 2002

Graduates celebrate their hard-earned diplomas — and create The Class of 2002 Endowment.

Baseball: Genesis to Numbers

Professor of History Bill Woodward is on a lecture tour throughout small-town Washington for "Inquiring Mind," a popular project of the Washington Commission for the Humanities.

Tiffany Bricks Project

Alumni, friends and members of the SPU community are invited to purchase and inscribe a brick from the former Tiffany Hall. Funds will directly benefit student scholarships.

Varsity Pair Rows to Gold

The Falcon women's varsity pair crew shell rowed to its first national championship gold medal in the Dad Vail Regatta.

My Response

Nick Glancy, Class of 2002, writes about September 11, the Gospel of John and J.R.R. Tolkien in this new *Response* department.

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and strong. Our stakes ground us, center us, anchor us to our Christian roots, our history and our faith.

But we are called as well to be radically open to the world around us. This is a text of exuberant openness, and I like that a lot. "Do not hold back" — be bold and aggressive. Throw the curtains wide open, lengthen the cords and enlarge the tent. Don't think too small, because the prospects are breathtaking.

And then comes the promise: If this is your posture — anchored by deep rootedness and yet boldly engaging — your influence will spread out, the results will be concrete, and you will make a difference for generations to come.

Something like this has been the vision for this institution from the very beginning. We have said it differently at various points in our 111-year history. But basically we were founded to shine the light in this community and around the world. And that remains our calling today.

This exciting new format for *Response* is yet another way in which SPU is "throwing the curtains wide open" and bringing the gospel to bear on the issues of the day. We will not hold back. This is our vision for the future. And now our new mission statement says it clearly.

— **BY Philip W. Eaton, President**

— **PHOTO BY Daniel Sheehan**

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