



PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SYNODS AND CONGREGATIONS OF REGION 1 | 2021

A MESSAGE FROM ALLAN BELTON, PRESIDENT

Greetings from Pacific Lutheran University! Like so many of our church partners, PLU has spent much of the last year discerning how best to care for our community, both in-person and virtually.

Many of you may be familiar with our mission to “educate students for lives of thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership, and care--for other people, for their communities and for the Earth.” This year we have leaned deeply into our mission of care, drawing together to provide a quality learning and living experience in the midst of uncertain and tenuous circumstances. In May of 2020, the PLU Board of Regents approved a new five-year strategic plan for the university. The priorities established in this plan acknowledge and affirm our vocation and our commitment to be inclusive, rigorous and innovative, providing access to a transformative, lifelong and distinctively purposeful education.

These priorities are born out of our conviction that an education that deepens students’ understanding, expands their horizons of imagination, and increases their range of freedom and opportunity changes the world.

Part of our strategic planning work is already underway, and

much is still to come. Over the last year, our faculty tackled the challenge of aligning our academic programs to current and future enrollment, a difficult task for which they are uniquely equipped. This work is critical to ensuring our university academic offerings align with what students and society are seeking.

The difficulties of the pandemic have also given us an opportunity to develop new ways to engage students, embrace the digital classroom, and better understand the vision that students of tomorrow have about their college experience.

While our classrooms had to move to hybrid learning spaces for this academic year, we plan to return to in-person learning and campus life in the Fall. We will continue to follow public health guidelines, leaning on our partnership with our local healthcare providers, in order to keep our community safe.

I am proud to report that PLU has been able to host several vaccination events on campus, vaccinating thousands of community members. Students in the School of Nursing were able to help administer the COVID-19 vaccine, embodying the PLU mission in every way.

I am grateful for the partnerships and collaborations with local community organizations that have allowed PLU to play a role in providing equitable and timely access to the vaccine in our region.

In spite of all the difficulties of the past year, PLU continues to be a leader in providing access to higher education. I am proud to report that this year we were ranked in the top 10 across the country, and No. 1 in Washington State, for financial aid to ensure PLU is accessible as possible.

We are continuing to develop and enhance opportunities for financing a PLU education, including the Alumni Referral Scholarship, offering half-off tuition to dependents of nurses and K-12 educators, and creating the tuition-free PLUS Year for our current students to fully embrace the PLU experience after the pandemic.

This is the PLU I am proud of: A PLU committed to caring for the greater good, which we see in our strategic planning work, our campus life, and our community partnerships. It was a challenging year, but Lutes everywhere continue to engage in thoughtful inquiry and compassionate care so that all our communities may thrive. This is the PLU experience that you help make happen.

Thank you for your support and partnership!

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Office of Congregational Engagement
www.plu.edu/congregations