

Opportunity Profile

# FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY



FRESNO PACIFIC  
UNIVERSITY

# ABOUT FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

André Stephens, Ph.D., began his presidency of Fresno Pacific University in July 2022, recognizing enrollment declines, financial uncertainties, and faculty and staff morale concerns in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stephens anticipated some administrative changes and was prepared to make them. Due to the depth of the challenges faced by FPU, structural changes were implemented during the initial provost search process. These changes included the consolidation of five schools into two, led by a team of deans and associate provosts.

In light of these circumstances, Fresno Pacific University is embarking on a renewed search for a provost. We are committed to finding an individual who can not only adapt to current conditions, but join a new and dynamic President's Cabinet in actively contributing to shaping the future of FPU. Despite the challenges being faced, this presents an exciting opportunity

for transformative leadership that will contribute to the growth and success of the students who attend Fresno Pacific University.

Fresno Pacific University offers undergraduate and graduate programs that couple academic preparation and a strong ethical foundation with a community that honors Christ and supports students. Traditional and adult students study on the main Fresno campus, which includes Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary, or at regional campuses throughout California's Central Valley, as well as online. FPU's strong graduation rate includes its Hispanic and first-generation students, each making up more than half of the student body, and the university is a proud Hispanic Serving Institution. FPU is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and the seminary is accredited by the Association of Theological Seminaries. *U.S. News & World Report* and others rank the university highly academically, in social mobility and among best values.

The Pacific District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches controls the university, delegating governance/policy decisions to the FPU Board of

## DID YOU KNOW?

more than  
**2,900**

**Traditional undergraduates and seminarians as well as adults** seeking bachelor's and master's degrees in evening programs

**13:1**

**Traditional undergraduate student-faculty ratio**

**4th**

**in the social mobility category in *U.S. News & World Report***

over  
**\$65m**

**FPU's annual budget**

Trustees. The board provides governance and oversight through the Office of the President and collaborates with the FPU Foundation Board and the Seminary Standing Committee. All employees express a personal Christian commitment. More about the Mennonite Brethren, including the *Confession of Faith*, which FPU shares, at ***Confession of Faith – USMB***



## A UNIVERSITY BUILT ON AN IDEA

*The Fresno Pacific Idea*  
([fpu.edu/about/our-mission/fpu-idea](http://fpu.edu/about/our-mission/fpu-idea)) defines our commitment to Christian higher education.

### **A Christian University**

We seek to be a collegium centered upon Christ and his church, committed to the ideals of God's Kingdom and to the integration of faith, learning and action into the arts, sciences and professional studies.

### **A Community of Learners**

We recognize the importance of the interpersonal dimension of learning, believing that community grows out of common commitments and that learning is the result of interaction between persons, ideas and experiences.

### **Prophetic**

We believe that to be prophetic is to serve the church and society by engaging in dialogue with and critique of contemporary culture and practice through informed reflection that contributes to wholeness, justice and reconciliation.

## DID YOU KNOW?

66%

**Four-year graduation rate**  
Includes Hispanic and first-generation students

20%  
below

**Low graduation debt rate**  
Traditional undergraduate debt rate is 20% below the national average

## DID YOU KNOW?

4 YR

### Graduation Guarantee

Gives qualified students a head start on their career

58%

### Hispanic student population

FPU is a proud Hispanic Serving Institution

59%

### First-generation students

Traditional and adult programs help students become the first in their families to achieve a university education

over 50%

### Students eligible for Pell Grants



## ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

FPU prepares students for leadership in professions, communities and congregations through a variety of academic programs.

### Team of Associate Deans and Associate Provosts

To pursue new opportunities for FPU, the provost will lead a team of deans and associate provosts championing the strategic priorities of student success, advanced learning and diversity, equity and inclusion. The two schools will be led by deans and the other areas will be led by associate provosts.

### School of Graduate and Professional Studies

- Graduate and undergraduate study leading to professions and advanced study. Areas include business, education, kinesiology, nursing, social work and programs at Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary.
- Offerings in sync with the needs of employers—including businesses, schools, hospitals, nonprofit corporations and churches—for both new professionals and those wishing continuing education.

### School of Arts and Sciences

- Undergraduate programs such as natural sciences, criminology, psychology and the humanities, as well as general education courses that provide students the foundation to become well-rounded, informed and contributing members of their community.
- Learning focused on connections between disciplines that address the issues of the region, such as the relationship between agriculture, the environment and food insecurity.



## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

### **The Central Valley Teacher Prep Partnership**

A career pathway for UC Merced students who wish to enter the education profession by enrolling directly in the FPU teacher education credential program.

### **AIMS Center for Math and Science Education**

Independent nonprofit agency that makes research accessible to teachers so they can inspire students in new ways.

### **Clinical Pastoral Education of Central California**

Seminary partnership that qualifies students as chaplains in a variety of settings.

### **On-Site Counseling**

Quality, affordable counseling to FPU students, other individuals and groups as well as supervised experience to MFT students and recent graduates.

## CENTERS SUPPORT CENTRAL MISSION

Each of FPU's three centers focuses on a part of its central mission: faith, service and education.

### **The Center for Professional Development**

Provides distance learning for about 10,000 people annually in education, business and other fields through in-person and online workshops, certificates and personal and corporate training.

### **The Center for Community Transformation**

Connects the strengths of FPU with the resources of the region to transform cities through entrepreneurial and outreach programs.

### **The Center for Anabaptist Studies**

Fosters communication about Anabaptist theology through academic scholarship, theological training and leadership resources.

# FRESNO & THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

## A place of possibilities

Fresno is the heart of the San Joaquin Valley, the nation's leading agricultural area. But the city—fifth largest in California and largest in the Valley—also enjoys a truly urban scene with tech, music, theater, museums and cultural venues and baseball. Its central location in the state is just hours away Bay Area, Los Angeles and three national parks, including the iconic Yosemite, as well as beautiful Pacific beaches and the snow-capped Sierra Nevada.

## A diversly rich community

Always a multicultural center, the region's rich mix of 80 nationalities began with Native Americans and embraced people from China, Scandinavia, Germany, Russia, Japan, Armenia, South and



Southeast Asia and a large Hispanic population. These and many other cultures make this metropolitan community of more than 500,000 people a true mosaic.

As so often happens, an area's strongpoints also present great challenges as well as opportunities. More than 100 languages are spoken by students in Fresno schools and many families move with the crops. FPU has long produced educators, businesspeople and

other professionals who become local leaders. Growth in adult programs has provided a way for the large number of adults with community college credits to attain a bachelor's degree—and go on to earn a master's.



**More on Fresno at**

***fresno.gov***

# THE FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY STORY

## Seeing a need for Christian leaders,

A group of Mennonite Brethren founded Pacific Bible Institute in 1944 with 28 students in a residence on Van Ness Avenue. By the time the school moved to its present location in a former cotton field at the corner of Butler and Chestnut avenues in 1959, a junior college curriculum had been added. PBI became Pacific College in 1960. In 1963, a four-year liberal arts program was introduced and in 1965 came full accreditation as a four-year liberal arts institution. Accreditation was extended to master's degrees in 1975, and Fresno Pacific College was born in 1976.

Seeking to make a still greater impact, in the early 1980s the college formulated the "Broadening the Base" plan to expand facilities, enlarge the curriculum and more deliberately relate to churches and students beyond the Mennonite Brethren. In an acknowledgment of its increasing growth, the college became Fresno Pacific University in 1997. By 2005 FPU had established regional campuses in Bakersfield,

North Fresno and Visalia to better serve working adults in bachelor's degree completion and graduate programs. The Merced Campus was added in 2012, and most FPU students now attend a regional campus. In 2010 the Fresno operations of Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, founded in 1955 on land adjacent to the main campus, formally became a part of FPU.

Like the region it serves, diversity is at the heart of FPU in the variety of ethnicities, social backgrounds and religious traditions among students, faculty, staff, alumni and supporters. The university meets these opportunities with a strong faculty and programs that both prepare students for personal success and serve the needs of the region.

We see the need for educated Christian leaders as even greater today than it was in 1944. Education that serves God and others remains our enduring core.

## DID YOU KNOW?

nearly  
80

### Majors & programs

Degree offerings in traditional undergraduate, bachelor's degree completion, graduate and seminary programs

15  
ONLINE

### Online programs

Bachelor's degree-completion, master's and certificates

over  
80%

### of professors hold doctorates

or highest degree in their field

BEST  
value

### FPU is recognized as a "Best Value"

by *U.S. News & World Report* and *Washington Monthly*



# DID YOU KNOW?

**HIGHEST  
Hispanic**

**Hispanic enrollment** among Council for Christian Colleges & Universities schools

**94%**

**of all undergrads receive financial awards**

FPU students receive scholarships, loans, grants and on-campus employment. More than \$15M in financial aid awarded in 2022-2023.

**NCAA  
DIV II**

**FPU's Sunbirds belong to the NCAA Division II**

with 16 men's and women's sports. The overall department GPA was 3.275. Several have gone to national tournaments, been named All-Americans and have had professional careers.

# DID YOU KNOW?

**1944**

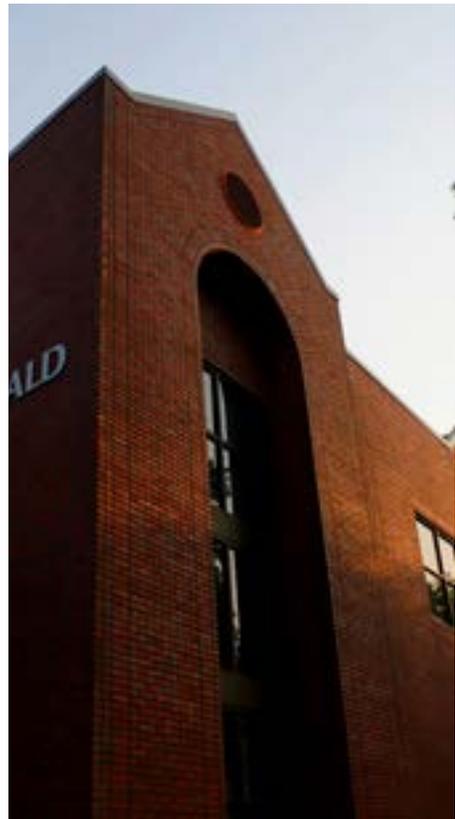
**Founded in 1944**

The only accredited Christian university founded in the Central Valley

**5**

**Locations in California**

Main campus in Southeast Fresno (includes Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary) and regional campuses in Merced, North Fresno, Visalia and Bakersfield as well as online





Fresno Main



North Fresno



Visalia



Merced



Bakersfield



Seminary

# FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY PROVOST SEARCH

## **Position Profile**

Fresno Pacific University (FPU) invites nominations and applications for the position of provost.

## **An Exceptional Opportunity**

FPU seeks an accomplished leader who is also an effective and selfless team player; someone who will be a respected leader in a Christian university serving traditional undergraduate students, adult degree completion students, graduate students, online students and continuing education students; a leader who welcomes the challenges of a university that is rapidly changing and who can comfortably work with the president and members of his cabinet to implement a progressive and evolving strategy for growth.

The new provost will possess the experience, skills and drive required to help shape the future of this innovative and progressive institution, while exemplifying the character and ethics expected in a highly visible and trusted university and community leader.

## **Opportunities and Challenges for the Next Provost**

### **Partner with a Visionary President**

President André Stephens is a person of deep faith who translates his beliefs into a

compassionate, caring vision for a community of learners, preparing students for the future, encouraging scholarship and serving the greater community. He is building a team focused on ensuring FPU's success now and into the future. His aim is to enrich communication, operating transparently while guiding the university through challenging times.

The provost will be a key member of the President's Cabinet and a critical advisor on academic matters. In that role the provost will serve as an advocate for the faculty who is able to ensure that effective student learning is always at the center of the university's focus. At the same time, the provost must be prepared to stand for the president in his absence, representing the administration, making tough decisions and communicating both good and bad news in a constructive and respectful manner.

Among the goals of President Stephens is to build a shared community vision based on open communication, transparency and trust. Progress is being made, but low morale remains a concern. The provost must be prepared to promote a positive outlook while encouraging open discussion of challenges. Solutions towards a transformative student experience must be sought, developed, embraced and followed through to completion.

The provost will engage all constituencies in productive dialog, accepting responsibility when things go wrong and celebrating successes as triumphs of community. She/he ensures the highest quality of a faith-integrated educational experience that aligns with the mission, vision and values of the university.

### **Lead Academic Transformation and Innovation**

The next provost will possess a true affinity for academe; an appreciation for Christian

higher education; and an understanding of the roles teaching and research play in achieving student success. The provost must be prepared to coordinate a complex, multifaceted academic operation that is able to innovate and adapt. This will require an appreciation for the needs of a wide variety of learners, expertise in leading program design, development and assessment, and an understanding of the applications of technology and other tools in teaching, learning and research.

One challenge will be to establish and maintain academic rigor and successful learning outcomes among groups who learn differently and approach higher education for different reasons. Pedagogy and andragogy must be adapted to each audience, as must the medium of delivery.

Another challenge will be to preserve what is unique in different academic disciplines while achieving university-wide clarity on the roles of teaching, research and service. On the one hand, faculty members need to be appreciated as individuals. On the other, standards and measures of performance must be commonly understood and consistently applied.

A third challenge is to grow enrollment. Fresno Pacific is an enrollment-driven institution at a time when competition for students is intense. Growing market share will require FPU to attract more non-traditional students and innovatively act to retain students who will persist to graduation.

Working closely with the president and members of the Cabinet, the provost will need to assess market demand and champion the development of new programs that draw new students to FPU. Some existing courses will need to be repositioned to support the general education curriculum or cross-disciplinary majors. The provost will also be prepared to sunset courses and majors that no longer draw students.

FPU students include traditional undergraduate learners; adult learners of varying ages seeking degree completion; seminarians; and people seeking graduate credentials. International educational partnerships offer opportunities to diversify and enhance programs. Provision of noncredit, collegiate-level credentials to employees of corporate partners and not-for-profit organizations, as well as to members of the general public, is also on the docket.

The next provost must be prepared to champion FPU's commitment to both traditional-age and adult learners, its commitment to quality education and its commitment to access, accomplishing all three through effective management of financially viable programs.

## **Embrace Diversity, Promote Equity and Foster Inclusion**

The population of the San Joaquin Valley – FPU's primary service area – includes 80 nationalities, speaking more than 100 languages. That said, FPU is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI); 58% of its students are Hispanic, many of them coming from Roman Catholic families. Fifty-nine percent of FPU students are first generation. Students praise the close relationships they have with faculty, but express concerns over accommodation for people with special needs.

The provost will understand that diversity is a strength for FPU and will work to increase the diversity and development of the faculty while reaching out to the greater community with programs that serve its needs. As a community of learners, FPU embraces diversity as a core value derived from our faith commitment as Christians. The provost will promote and support research-based diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) teaching and learning efforts and activities that enhance student learning outcomes and student success while contributing to the overall learning objectives of the institution.

## **Address Financial Challenges**

Like most tuition-driven schools based in a liberal arts tradition, FPU faces financial challenges. Discounting tuition to draw students has limited value. Athletics at the NCAA DII level is important as a recruitment and retention tool, but comes with attendant costs. As primarily a teaching institution, grant income generated by research is limited. The quasi endowment is not large enough to sustain the operating budget and a culture of philanthropy is still in the developmental stages.

Focused enrollment growth, combined with higher retention of existing students, will be the primary vehicle for balancing the budget in the foreseeable future. This needs to be made more prominent.

The next provost will work with the president and the Cabinet to develop additional income streams while operating within a balanced budget.

## **Be Transparent, Collaborative and an Effective Communicator**

Because FPU serves a wide variety of learners in multiple communities, the need for effective communication is paramount. Academic silos must be eliminated in favor of cooperation across the curriculum. Coming together to respectfully discuss academic issues and develop a commonly shared vision must become standard practice.

The provost cannot be everywhere but will understand the need for the academic leadership team to project a 24/7 presence that ensures that people have the information and support they need to function effectively within an extended educational community.

The next provost needs to be seen on the main campus, the four regional campuses and in all the communities FPU serves. The provost needs to be accessible to members of the FPU community, anticipating needs and being where needed, when needed.

Members of the FPU community understand that difficult decisions will need to be made and that all parties may not be satisfied with the consequences. The next provost will work to be as transparent as possible in making decisions and will effectively communicate the reasoning behind decisions that impact the university.

## **Champion Christian Higher Education**

Because of the quality and breadth of its programs, Fresno Pacific University draws a wide variety of students to its main campus and four regional campuses. It serves significant first-generation, DACA, military and adult learner populations. In addition, FPU includes Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary.

FPU strives to be welcoming to all, while remaining true to the Christian values expressed in the US Mennonite Brethren (USMB) Confession of Faith.

Fresno Pacific University is closely tied to the US Mennonite Brethren Conference and operates under the auspices of the Pacific District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches (PDC). Its Articles of Incorporation require that 60% of the Board of Trustees be elected by the PDC, and that the board chair be selected from the 60%.

The next provost will be committed to Anabaptist and evangelical ideals, including the reconciling power of God's Spirit, an emphasis on voluntary discipleship, obedience to Jesus as Lord, the global mission of the church, the church as the community of the new covenant, mutual care and holistic concern for members of Christ's body and the call to address, in pastoral and prophetic fashion, the peace and justice concerns of the world.

The provost will embrace *The Fresno Pacific Idea*, which reflects the university's interpretation of what it means to be a community of learners

committed to a distinctive vision of Christian higher education. She/he should appreciate the sacred call of Christian higher education and its transformative power and be determinedly focused on student transformation and thriving.

### **Support Fundraising**

The advancement staff has been working to develop a culture of philanthropy through a series of initiatives including funding the Warkentine Culture and Arts Center, active retention of donors, increasing unrestricted giving and developing business and professional relationships.

The next provost will assist the president and advancement staff in communicating a passionate vision for the university that inspires donors.

The next provost will aggressively seek to build and strengthen relationships with all constituents, including students, alumni, faculty and administration, the community, local and statewide businesses and foundations.

### **Strengthen and Develop Partnerships**

The provost of Fresno Pacific University serves as not only an institutional leader but also a community leader and spokesperson. He or she will be expected to promote the university's visibility and reputation by demonstrating strong leadership and personal integrity.

The next provost will actively seek opportunities to increase awareness of the university and will effectively convey the university's unique academic mission, strengths and values to all constituents.

He/she will have the opportunity to not only strengthen partnerships with the greater Fresno community, but also identify and develop new ones there and in the communities where the four regional campuses are located.

Accomplishing this will require a provost who is as comfortable working outside the academy as within its confines.

## **QUALIFICATIONS & QUALITIES OF THE NEXT PROVOST**

The provost of Fresno Pacific University will be a servant-leader who possesses a terminal degree and a deep appreciation of the value of Christian higher education. The provost will embrace the USMB Confession of Faith and values of the Mennonite Brethren.

**In addition, the following qualities are desired:**

### **Leadership**

- Demonstrated successful experience in leadership positions in higher education. Experience in Christian higher education is highly desired.
- Direct experience in fostering a learning environment in which academic rigor leads to successful learning outcomes.
- A collaborative leadership style, demonstrated through the ability to provide leadership for a diverse university, bringing people together to achieve success in ever-changing circumstances.
- The style and experience of a planner and a doer. Someone who takes pride in assembling a team, setting clear, measurable goals and achieving success.
- The ability to innovatively lead and administer the academic programs of a university that serves a diverse population.
- Experience building and motivating effective teams — appreciating the nuances of leading both faculty and administrative operations.

- Capacity for strategic thinking and innovation.
- Ability to drive consensus but also be bold and decisive when appropriate.

## **Relationship Building And Communication Skills**

- The ability to develop relationships and work comfortably within the Mennonite Brethren community.
- The ability to build trust and respect across multiple constituencies (students, parents, alumni, faculty, administration, trustees, community and strategic partners).
- The ability to develop and nurture partnerships across the university and with external organizations.
- Effective and open oral and written communications.
- The ability to listen respectfully to a wide range of constituents.
- Ability to achieve buy-in and active support for bold actions.
- The ability to adjust style to communicate effectively to a wide range of constituents.

## **Fundraising**

- A genuine interest in all aspects of fundraising.
- The ability to enthusiastically influence various donor constituencies.
- Enthusiasm to convey the FPU vision to inspire transformative gifts.

## **Business Acumen**

- Experience operating in a complex educational organization.
- Experience managing budgets and financials at a detailed level.
- An understanding of the value of data-driven decision making.
- Strategic planning experience at an academic institution.

## **Personal Characteristics**

- The highest ethical and moral standards in both professional and personal life.
- Commitment to the theological (Anabaptist) distinctive and mission of the university and evangelical ideals.
- Demonstration and commitment to integration of faith and learning.
- A passion for diversity and justice.
- Perseverance, work ethic and drive to build a legacy of success.
- Intellect, curiosity and open-mindedness.
- Eagerness and stamina to serve 24/7 as an institutional advocate and spokesperson.
- Humility and a sense of humor.

# THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The Fresno Pacific University Provost Search Committee will begin reviewing and evaluating applications as they are received and will continue to accept and review credentials until a new provost is selected. To ensure fullest consideration, candidates are advised to submit their materials by **February 9, 2024**.

Dr. Richard A. Wueste ([richard.wueste@agbsearch.com](mailto:richard.wueste@agbsearch.com)) of AGB Search is assisting with this search. Nominators and prospective candidates are encouraged to contact him.

All application materials should be submitted through the AGB Search portal system at: **Fresno Pacific University Provost Search**

Questions regarding the application process should be directed to:

**[FPUProvost24@agbsearch.com](mailto:FPUProvost24@agbsearch.com)**

## Materials must include:

- A **Letter of Interest** that responds to the Opportunities & Challenges for the Next Provost and the Qualifications & Qualities of the Next Provost sections of this profile.
- A current **CV or resumé**.
- The **names and contact information** (telephone and email) **for five references**, none of whom will be contacted until a later stage of the search or without the formal permission of the candidate.

All inquiries and applications will be received and evaluated in confidence.

