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CHARLIE: THE AVIATION PROGRAM'S NEW VESSEL FOR SERVICE AND MISSION

by Marina Maher

Pacific Union College's aviation program awaits the arrival of Charlie, the longest-serving aircraft for the Seventh-day Adventist church in the South Pacific and possibly globally.

This Cessna 206 has served in remote and challenging corners of the world since it was brand new in 1976. Now, PUC anticipates that a fully-refurbished aircraft will continue to serve on campus and in the Northern California region and beyond.

The first Adventist plane to serve in Papua New Guinea was referred to as P2-SDA, with P2 being the country code for PNG. Because the aviation world uses the ICAO phonetic alphabet, pilots refer to Alpha for A, Bravo for B, and Charlie for C. When it came time for P2-SDC to be registered, it was affectionately nicknamed "Charlie" for short.

Charlie's story is very special to the people of PNG, Australia, and Vanuatu, considering its 50 years of service to the church and community there. Accumulating nearly 2.4 million miles and witnessing

the establishment of over 1,000 churches, Charlie has transported thousands of pastors, missionaries, laymen, and building materials to remote areas to construct churches, schools, and clinics. It also carried hundreds of doctors, nurses, and teachers to serve underprivileged people in underserved communities.

This aircraft has served in its own ministry through the Adventist church, contributing arguably more than any other aircraft worldwide. It has also trained many young pilots to safely navigate the challenging terrain, weather conditions, and airstrips. Many pilots have testified that God used, blessed, and guarded this aircraft, especially during times when it risked destruction upon landing at certain airstrips. Charlie remained within God's protection as it conducted medical clinics, transported critically sick patients to hospitals, and aided in establishing Adventist churches and clinics in these rural villages along the way.

Charlie is now ready for a new role. At PUC, Charlie will provide technically advanced training for pilot certification and open opportunities for service projects and recurrency training for pilots already serving in humanitarian roles. The aviation program has innovative dreams for Charlie for how this aircraft will inspire youth and veterans alike, cherishing a vision that dedicates and honors service to Jesus Christ.

Anticipating Charlie's arrival in the near future, the aviation program asks those willing to support, whether through prayer or a kind donation, to contribute towards the new addition to the fleet. 🙏



PUC'S BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT ENGAGES STUDENTS TO STUDY THE IMPACT OF REHABILITATION OF CLEAR

by Marina Maher & Dr. Scott Butterfield

The Pacific Union College biology department announced in November that its student education and monitoring program for grebes had been fully funded by the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA).

Scientist in Residence Dr. Scott Butterfield leads this program alongside Biology Professor Dr. Floyd Hayes and Chair of the School of Sciences, Aimee Wyrick. They will collaborate with PUC and Lake County high school students to participate in this scientific monitoring project, using drones and AI to study the recovery of Clear Lake's ecosystems.

"Our hope is that by building a monitoring program collaboratively with local high school students that is grounded in new and emerging technologies, we can create something that is sustainable for many years to come," said Dr. Butterfield.

After the Blue Ribbon Committee for the Rehabilitation of Clear Lake approved the project, the department received the full \$288,988 in funding and officially launched the project with CNRA in November 2025. The project is valid until June 2028.

While the department waited for the funding's approval, they have been working to establish partnerships with the Redbud Audubon Society, Upper Lake High School, Lower Lake High School, Robinson Rancheria, and other local community

members to foster student participation. To support this portion of the project, the department raised \$7,000 through its partnerships with Redbud Audubon Society.

"We plan to launch drone clubs at Upper Lake High School and Lower Lake High School in Winter 2026, focused on teaching the students about how drones work, how we will use drones to monitor grebes, and how AI may be used to analyze the drone data," said Dr. Butterfield. "We also plan to build paid internship programs at both high schools to provide students even more opportunities to participate."

This project will be integrated into classes at PUC, including those in Conservation Technology, Environmental Science, and Conservation Biology, which will provide students the opportunity to take part in scientific investigation, plan data collection and drone flights, collect monitoring data with drones, process and analyze drone data, create AI-based algorithms, participate in local community and high school outreach, and produce peer-reviewed scientific journal articles. 🌿

Give today. ENSURE TOMORROW.

Our beloved Irwin Hall has been a haven for learning for current PUC students and alumni, and it is now officially part of the future beautification of our campus.

Phase I of the \$239k Irwin Hall remodeling project includes:

- Cutting out 117 existing windows from the stucco building
- Replacing the 117 dual-pane windows
- Re-stuccoing the window cut-outs to match the existing texture
- Painting the exterior, stairs, and railings of the building

As of January 21, PUC has raised a total of \$, with a remaining balance of \$ to be fulfilled.

Please consider giving to help revive this special piece of campus history.



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puc.edu/give

MOTIVATED BY MISSION: PUC ALUM DAVID BANKS NAMED NEW ADVENTHEALTH CEO

by Ally Romanes



Throughout his 31 years at AdventHealth, becoming CEO of a major health system was not necessarily a role David Banks aspired to hold — but his leadership roles in hospital administration, divisional oversight, and as chief strategy officer prepared him well when the CEO opportunity emerged.

From Sonora, CA, Banks attended PUC in 1982, and his time at the college “did not disappoint.” Majoring in social work, he spent a year as a missionary in Korea, teaching English and Bible studies. This gave Banks a critical perspective when he returned to PUC, and he worked as a house parent for boys aged 6 to 9 who were wards of the state. During his senior year, he worked for a state senator at a nonprofit organization, sparking his interest in the not-for-profit sector and in supporting service organizations committed to creating a positive impact within society.

A favorite PUC memory of Banks was dating his now-wife, Janice (Lang) Banks. Although they were classmates at Monterey Bay Academy, they started dating in college. After graduating from PUC in 1987, they married.

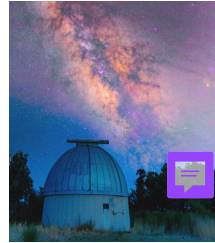
Banks credits PUC for preparing him for his graduate work at the University of Maryland, where he earned his master’s degree, which secured his first healthcare role at a psychiatric hospital. He started his career on the patient units and progressed to becoming the psychiatric hospital’s CEO, then the CEO of medical-surgery.

As AdventHealth’s CEO, Banks continues to serve and help those in need. “Being able to show up for people in those spaces and help find the solutions they need is rewarding,” he said. “We can’t win every time and cure every illness. What’s amazing about what we get to do is even when medical treatment runs out, being a faith-based Adventist institution means that when the medical conversation ends, the larger conversation continues around life, what happens next, and peace — being part of something bigger.”

“PUC gave me my future,” Banks continued. “The PUC experience integrated social, spiritual, and academic formation and gave me life and academic experiences. It was an amazing, well-rounded experience that, as Janice and I left and graduated, we were prepared to go into the world. PUC did that.” 🙌

YOUNG OBSERVATORY REOPENS AND OBTAINS NEW TECHNOLOGY

by Ally Romanes



After five years, the Young Observatory at Pacific Union College reopened. Through a donor’s generosity, those funds purchased a new telescope, a handheld computer for the older telescope, and parts to restore the original observatory telescope, ~~the~~ observatory to reopen. The new telescope is a 12-inch Celestron reflector mounted on a tripod, currently set up in the observatory parking lot. Since it runs on a battery, it can be set up anywhere, whether at PUC or elsewhere.

The telescope can serve more people during group visits, unlike the older telescope inside the observatory. This past fall quarter, hundreds of visitors enjoyed the newly opened observatory, which will also welcome back public Friday night observations this spring and summer.

Chair of Math and Physics James Robertson feels “thrilled and relieved” to finally have the observatory open. For a decade, the observatory housed a 14-inch Celestron reflector telescope that served as a post-Vespers activity, during which Robertson, alongside Professor of Computer Science and Astronomy Bruce Ivey and Librarian Gary Shearer, hosted public observations.

Later, the telescope’s computer controls began to fail, and spare parts were unavailable during the COVID-19 pandemic. These unfortunate events closed the observatory and prevented it from reopening until repairs or a completely new telescope were installed. Even after the pandemic, telescopes and parts remained out of stock, and it was not until this past summer that they began to return to inventory.

Before the observatory is complete, an “off-grid” battery bank and a small solar panel to supply power still need to be installed, since the location is remote and no longer receives power from the “grid.” Facilities are working to upgrade campus power lines to improve reliability, which will be quite costly, and repair the road leading up to the observatory.

The observatory reopening allows PUC to continue its outreach, as it once did before. “Our department is small in numbers, but has the potential to make a huge impact on students and our community,” said Robertson. “Most people have a natural curiosity, especially for astronomy. PUC has such a wonderful resource in our rural, dark skies. It would be tragic not to share this with everyone who visits our campus.” 🙌



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 Aileen Bauer & Dwight Nelson

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