

# ViewPoint

## CONNECT

PACIFIC  
UNION  
COLLEGE  
VOL. 3



## SPRING ENROLLMENT GAINS SET STAGE FOR STRONG FALL

by *Laura Gang*

This year's theme at Pacific Union College was "Revival"; certainly, there's no better metaphor for renewal than spring.

Likewise, there's optimism on the horizon for PUC. This spring has seen the highest number of new students enrolling in the last 10 years. Additionally, Economic Full-Time Equivalent (EFTE) enrollment has increased each quarter this year—something which has never happened in the college's modern history.

Many factors have contributed to these successes. Kharolynn Pascual Smith, director of orientation, transitions, and retention, said the return to pre-pandemic conditions has made it possible for many students to move forward with their college plans. Pascual Smith regularly checks in with her students and helps them through difficult obstacles. That kind of personal care is another reason students are more likely to stay.

PUC enrollment counselors have also worked with genuine care and purpose to build relationships and be actively present at youth events. Director of Recruitment Pauline Cidro said her team's strength is customer service. "We make sure our students know that we are their go-to people, ready to provide

them with ongoing support as they go through their decision-making processes."

Retention of returning students is currently tied for the highest rate in recent history. Director of Admissions Craig Philpott said this is a significant growth component. PUC cares about each student and their success in life—beyond grades. "This messaging is already having an impact on our current students," Philpott said.

Online offerings and programs on other campuses are also supporting growth. Philpott said there is a growing number of "drive-in" students—new and local new-transfer students who are choosing PUC as their college. Many of them are nursing and healthcare students. The online BSN program has also attracted working nurses. "Gradually, we are developing a customer base that is seeking the education products of PUC without a commitment to residential campus programs or lifestyle," Philpott said.

This good news has far-reaching effects. Commitments for next fall are the highest they've been in five years. Philpott said spring typically predicts growth for the fall quarter—particularly the number of returning students combined with solid retention and growth in online and off-campus programs.

This rise in enrollment and retention did not just result from the hard work of PUC's enrollment staff. It was because of faculty, staff, and others who took extra time with students and kept PUC in prayer. "It truly is a team effort!" Pascual Smith said. 🙌

## WINNERS ANNOUNCED IN PUC'S FIRST HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST

by Ally Romanes

The department of English at Pacific Union College held its first annual Emerging Voices of the Pacific Union essay contest. The contest began on March 12 and included high school students from Seventh-day Adventist academies and junior academies in Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, and Utah.

Students had until April 21 to submit a personal essay about a time they found beauty in an everyday or unexpected place. PUC English professors selected three winners from approximately 80 entries.

PUC congratulates the winners of the Emerging Voices essay contest. The winners are:

**First Place:** Joshua Nielson, a senior from Rio Linda Academy, wrote an essay titled *Whispers of a Ghost Town* about a town called Bodie. Judges were greatly impressed with Nielson's strong sense of description, place, and his unusual approach to thinking about beauty and discovery. His work is a fantastic representation of the beauty of California, and his voice as a writer shines through. Nielsen received a \$1,000 scholarship and a \$500 prize.

**Second Place:** Yieby Shade, a junior from San Gabriel Academy, submitted *Layered In Between*. The essay is about the beauty and sentiment found in food and how it's sustained her family during troubling times. Judges appreciated Shade's strong sense of description and detail and how the essay connected small details to larger themes of family and connection. Shade received a \$1,000 scholarship and a \$300 prize.

**Third Place:** Ancheska Balbalosa, a freshman from San Fernando Valley Academy, wrote *Rollie Pollies* showing how beauty can be discovered in unexpected, minuscule crevices. The readers praised Balbalosa's strong sense of description and voice, as well as the sense of creativity and fun throughout the essay. He received a \$1,000 scholarship and a \$200 prize.

The English department was thrilled by the creativity, joy, and thoughtfulness of the essays they received from high schools across the Pacific Union.

"These students have demonstrated not only strong writing skills but also an aptitude for observation and reflection about the beauty in God, nature, their communities, and their lives," said Catherine Tetz, assistant professor of English. "In a world that increasingly devalues writing and creative expression, it's deeply inspiring to read the incredible work of our next generation of writers." 🌱



### » EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Professor of Nursing Susan Bussell was honored as PUC's 2023 Educator of the Year at a special ceremony in May. Bussell joined the PUC faculty in 2005 and has served in many roles for the department, including as director of the ASN program.

"From the moment Dr. Bussell set foot on our college campus, she has been a beacon of light and a source of unwavering support for her students," Professor of Nursing Tamara Tirado said of her colleague.

Nursing student Mazie Contreras also paid tribute to her beloved professor. "Your classroom is filled with enthusiasm for the subject," she said. "Thank you so much for the care that you poured into our educational journeys and future success."



### » STAFF MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Chris Vance, information technology support services operations manager, was named PUC's Staff Member of the Year. Vance was honored during an award ceremony in May for his tremendous work overseeing and handling the campus' information technology systems. One of his strengths is his amazing communication skills—all while juggling responsibilities with different departments and offices. There is no doubt this award for Vance is well-deserved.

# Q&A

SARAH FRANKLIN, '23

## VISUAL ARTS STUDENT DESIGNS SET FOR PUC'S JERICHO ROAD

by Ally Romanes

Near the beginning of this school year, auditions were in process for *Jericho Road: A Musical Event*, which tells the story of two young individuals who fall in love, get married, have a child, and face problems throughout their relationship. Sarah Franklin, who graduated in June with a B.A. in graphic design, saw this as a fun chance to work on props and set design.

Sarah also took on creating the artwork and advertisements for the production. All these duties created an excellent opportunity for her to use the material in her portfolio as she finished her senior year at PUC.

**How long did it take to complete the art for this show?**

**What did you enjoy the most about this experience?**

I completed all the advertising artwork over winter break, and it probably took me around 30 hours. For the set design, we've been working all quarter. I really enjoy working with other people on a project and helping them make their vision come to life.

**Do you have a favorite art piece from the show?**

If I had to pick an individual piece from the show, I'd say the tree from the wedding scene, which turned out beautifully. Bethanee (Tabura) did most of the carving



and painting of the tree trunk, which was made of several layers of foam, and we worked together to add the vines and leaves to the branches. We also added string lights to create a whimsical look that fits the wedding scene nicely.

**What have been the most important things you've learned from your classes, professors, or mentors?**

One of the most important things I've learned as a visual arts major is to take inspiration from anything and everything. As an artist, I am constantly absorbing the environment I'm in—people, objects, architecture, colors, shapes, shadows, lines, graphics, words, lyrics, you name it. Being an artist means you are always taking in your surroundings and looking at the world from different points of view. It also means you are processing all this information in a way that is unique to you and relaying these new perspectives to others in a way that moves them or makes them think differently. 🌱

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and student life resources, and our dedicated faculty. And the power of your individual gift is multiplied when combined with the generous gifts from hundreds of other donors who make the same choice to pledge their annual support. Make your gift today, and ensure tomorrow for PUC.



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