

Mission Statement

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.



To Teach, to Shape,

POINT LOMA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY ADOPTS NEW

The emergence of these three simple but profound concepts to describe the mission of Point Loma Nazarene University has led to the recrafting of the university's mission statement. The university board of trustees approved the new statement in its spring 2003 meeting in March.

The mission statement will guide the university's strategic planning process and shape plans for aspects of university life including academic programs, student and spiritual development, community life and facility growth. The final document emerged from over a year's work and deliberation by the President's cabinet, the strategic planning committee and the board of trustees with input from faculty, staff and representative students.

The new statement replaces the previous mission statement: "Point Loma Nazarene University provides higher education in the liberal arts and preparation for service and leadership in selected professions for students who desire such an education in an environment of vital Christianity in the evangelical and Wesleyan tradition."

"'Teach, shape and send' has been at the heart of my work for my entire career at PLNU. I teach with the greatest excellence possible because the students are entrusting a major part of their career to me and four wonderful years of their lives which cannot be returned to them if I fail. I am concerned about shaping morals and character because these are at the heart of a successful and meaningful life. I am concerned about the quality of the product that we send out from PLNU. One person with compassion, honesty and confidence in Jesus can make a difference in the place of work and in the world, not only because of their skills, but because of what is at the soul of their lives."

Vic Heasley
Professor of Chemistry

"While I am first and foremost a teacher, the second verb, 'shape,' provides a healthy reminder that the university experience is not just about what happens in the classroom. In reality, students often learn more from us by the modeling that takes place in our offices and in casual conversation.

"'Teach, shape and send' represents an enormous job, a job that demands the work of many people. But what a worthwhile job to have!"

Hadley Wood
Professor of French and Literature

"To 'shape' reinforces PLNU's whole person approach, pushing students beyond intellectual accomplishment to accepting high moral and social values. To 'send' focuses on the purpose of the whole educational experience—to serve God and man by striving to make the world a better place."

Dwayne Little
Professor of History

"To teach is to create spaces of hospitality for students' imaginations to grow. To shape is to create spaces of silence in which students' inner voices are awakened. To send is to create spaces of freedom where students are empowered to use their voices in meeting the needs of the world."

Brad Strawn
Associate Professor of Psychology

to Send

MISSION STATEMENT

“The new mission statement brings clarity by reaffirming that as the university has strengthened its academic status, a corresponding stronger commitment to modeling and shaping Christian character has also been made. The new statement makes the relationship between learning, thoughts and feelings and behavior obvious.”

Sandy Foster

Associate Professor
of Family and Consumer Sciences

“The ability to say what we are about in three words calls us to more succinctly say how we meet the mission. I am excited for the revisions to the mission statement as they now include graduate and professional programs and off-site locations. This means that our work will be considered a part of the mission.”

Jo Birdsell

Dean of Education
Associate Professor of Education

“The shaping that occurs here...comes from our challenging students to make inquiries, to question, to grow, all in the context of a Christian community, so that they will become the people God intended them to be. As for sending, I am proud of how we send people into all walks of life and all corners of the world so that they can be engaged in the culture they are in, providing salt and light to an oftentimes tasteless and dark element of society.”

Dean Nelson

Professor of Journalism and Writing

“A mission statement such as PLNU’s frees me to live a life of authentic faith as a student-based teacher. I must consider

their needs as I think about, plan for and deliver the knowledge I have that can help them become better thinkers, writers, communicators, learners, scholars and followers of Christ. It encourages me to provide literature through which students can experience other cultures, see truth about our human existence and experience traces of God in it. It gives me permission to facilitate introspection in students and challenge them as they search within to discover what they think and believe, so they can articulate their thoughts clearly. It empowers me to encourage students who struggle with and question their faith to consider the higher call and continue on toward the mark. Most importantly, the mission statement calls me to remain on my knees, for I cannot be effective and accomplish this mission alone. I am dependent upon God’s mercy, grace, wisdom and guidance as I live a life of faith inside the classroom and out—each and every moment of each and every day.”

Charlene Pate

Assistant Professor of Writing

“Every university aspires to teach and send, but it is the goal of helping to shape students that makes teaching at PLNU unique. Each day, we are called upon to make ourselves living sacrifices, to model for our students what it means to be a Christian today and in turn to shape their Christian faith and character. It is both an exciting privilege and a daunting responsibility, but it is what makes this mission meaningful.”

Paul Kinsman

Assistant Professor of Art and Design

Mission Context

The university, established in 1902 by the Church of the Nazarene, offers quality liberal arts and professional programs on its main campus in San Diego and select graduate and professional programs throughout the denomination’s southwest educational region.

Core Values

- Excellence in teaching and learning
- An intentionally Christian community
- Faithfulness to our Nazarene heritage and a Wesleyan theological tradition
- The development of students as whole persons
- A global perspective and experience
- Ethnic and cultural diversity
- The stewardship of resources
- Service as an expression of faith

Context and values