

HISTORY

The Azusa Pacific University System dates back to 1899 with the establishment of the Training School for Christian Workers, the first Bible college on the west coast, geared toward training students for ministry and service. By 1939, the Training School for Christian Workers began offering four-year degrees and was renamed Pacific Bible College. PBC continued the “God First” tradition and mission of the original school, but with expanded academic offerings. As the school grew, space became a pressing issue and, in 1947, moved to APU’s current location in Azusa, CA. After continued expansion and development of the new campus, the school was renamed Azusa College in 1957.

While the Training School for Christian Workers was evolving into Azusa College, a parallel history was unfolding. In 1903, the Free Methodist Church established the Los Angeles Free Methodist Seminary with a goal of providing a quality Christian education. By 1923, the school expanded and began offering college-level courses and changed its name to Los Angeles Pacific Junior College – the first private junior college in California. As academic offerings broadened, LAPJC achieved status as a four-year institution and became Los Angeles Pacific College.

In 1965, the Boards of Trustees of Azusa College and Los Angeles Pacific College approved a plan to merge the two schools. There was mutual agreement that the newly merged institution would take the name of “Azusa” from Azusa College and “Pacific” from Los Angeles Pacific to become known as Azusa Pacific College. The subsequent years saw rapid expansion of land, facilities, and student population. In 1981, APC president Paul Sago proposed to the Board that the college change its operating structure to that of a university. The Board unanimously approved the proposal and the change of name to Azusa Pacific University.

With the advances of technology and online education, APU saw an opportunity to expand the reach and accessibility of a Christian higher education to underserved student populations. In 2010, APU established Azusa Pacific Online University, which began offering classes in the fall of 2011. Following a merger with the School of Adult and Professional Studies in 2014, APOU became University College at Azusa Pacific University with a dedicated focus on serving the unique needs of post-traditional adult students.

In 2017, in order to continue to focus and serve the unique college needs and support of adult students, the Board of Trustees of both Azusa Pacific University and University College agreed that University College, as originally planned in 2011, would pursue independent, regional accreditation as a separate institution. In the spring of 2018, University College was granted regional accreditation with a new name, Los Angeles Pacific University (LAPU), thereby reviving the legacy of Los Angeles Pacific College, a Free Methodist college that has been founded in 1903 and had merged with Azusa College in 1965. LAPU launched its first semester with this new name in September, 2018. Since then LAPU has continued to expand its program offerings at both the undergraduate and graduate level, including competency-based education (CBE).