Aspiring to a New Century of Strength

The Future of Biola University

2010 - 2020
Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves, when our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little, when we arrive safely because we have sailed too close to the shore. Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly to venture on wider seas where storms will show your mastery; where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars. We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes; and to push in the future in strength, courage, hope, and love.

- Sir Francis Drake
Introduction to the University Plan

The reach and impact of Biola University has greatly increased during our first century of service. Today, students attend Biola from all 50 states and more than 44 countries. They are drawn to the University to explore knowledge from a biblically integrative perspective, to study with our distinguished faculty, and to pursue an education that will prepare them in both mind and character for living, thriving and serving in the 21st century. Our long-standing commitment to educational excellence, whole person development and an integrative biblical worldview positions our university for a new century of strength, and we look to the future with confidence in who we are and bold ambition for where we will go.

Our aspirations are clear. As an internationally recognized comprehensive university, we aspire that all Biola University graduates, from the baccalaureate to the doctoral level, will be equipped in mind and character to fulfill the good works for which God has created them. We aspire to be a university with a global conscience, serving the world in the name of Christ with conviction, courage and compassion. We aspire to be a university in which the community itself is intentionally designed and empowered to develop each student, not just intellectually but in all aspects of life. The combined effect of achieving these aspirations is that as a university we will make an ever more extensive and significant impact on the world—an impact that has the potential to eclipse anything seen in our first century of service.

In order to guide the university to this end, President Barry H. Corey has identified—after extensive listening and conversation with the campus community and our constituents worldwide—four enduring commitments. Referred to as “presidential directives,” these priorities, together with specific initiatives that flow from them, will guide our conversations and decisions for the coming years:

1. We will be a Christ-centered university distinguished for upholding an integrative biblical worldview through our leadership, scholarship, curriculum, teaching and voice.

2. We will be a university respected for our academic quality, the professional competencies of our graduates and the vitality of our community.

3. We will be a university intentional about Christ’s command to love God and to love our neighbor, doing so by preparing students to understand and serve the needs of our world.

4. We will be a university that practices sound financial management, addresses the rising challenge of affordability, and secures the funding to carry out the plans of the university.

Each of the four directives is a clear reflection of Biola University’s promise to provide the highest level of education to our students from a deeply biblical perspective. Underlying all of our priorities as we plan for a new century of strength is our historical commitment to our mission, to biblical fidelity, and to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

At Biola University, we have the foundation and deeply held convictions to guide us forward in this new era, just as our forebears did in our first century. We must remain faithful, even as we explore uncharted territory and expand in ways our founders might never have dreamed. We must move forward with a shared bravery and winsome spirit, meek but not timid, forceful but not combative. We must remember that we are for something greater than ourselves, not against something lesser. It is for Christ and his purposes in this world that we aspire.
Our Mission

Biola University’s mission is a statement of who we are—our reason for being. It defines why we exist and it undergirds our actions and strategies. Classical educators like John Henry Newman and Robert Maynard Hutchins have expressed hope for institutions like Biola, as they navigate the turbulent waters of a changing world, in the adoption of and enduring commitment to a distinct and clearly expressed purpose that provides the center and circumference for learning, research and service. Such a purpose, reflected in our mission statement, draws us together and motivates us toward excellence.

The mission of Biola University is to provide biblically centered education, scholarship and service—equipping men and women in mind and character to impact the world for the Lord Jesus Christ.
Biblical Fidelity:
Our Core Commitment

This divinely inspired Word will ever be the source of truth which will inspire
all of the Institute’s activities, furnishing from its exhaustless resources the
instruction which is to enable the Institute to send forth Bible workers
“furnished completely unto every good work.”

— Lyman Stewart 1913

Biola University stands or falls by its faithfulness to the Bible. The men and women who founded
the school in 1908 as a Bible Institute did everything they could to identify themselves publicly
with the teaching of the Bible. They carved above the archways of the original BIOLA building
in downtown Los Angeles the words of Psalm 119:89: “For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in
heaven.” At the cornerstone ceremony for the Institute in 1913, founder Lyman Stewart declared,
“These buildings are not to be a monument to any man, but are to forever stand solely for the
promulgation of the eternal truths of God’s Holy Word.” Biblical fidelity is deeply ingrained in
our heritage.

At today’s Biola University, our faculty, administration, and board of trustees are no less resolute
in our continued belief that, though the grass withers and the flower fades, the Word of the Lord
endures forever. For centuries, the veracity of the Bible has been under siege. This is no less so in
our own time. Biola University, however, remains prepared and energized to defend and reach
out with the truth of God’s word and the practical love it empowers.

In a recent essay commissioned by the president for our Centennial Celebration, faculty members
Dr. Fred Sanders and Dr. Matt Williams noted that:

Biola has undergone many changes in the century since its founding. The school has
transformed itself into an enterprise the founders did not foresee: it became a
University rather than remaining a Bible Institute, it moved to a larger property
outside the urban core, and its enrollment grew remarkably. But there is still a Bible
Institute at the heart of this Christian university, and the outlines of the original
mission are still evident, precisely in the area of biblical fidelity.

Though Biola University has, indeed, undergone many changes in its first one hundred years,
God’s Word remains at the heart of what we do and who we are as ambassadors for Christ in the
world. We will continue to lead with a biblical worldview, holding his Word high and with great
respect as the Good News for a world that needs redemption. We are committed to being a voice
that is humble and helpful, speaking the truth with clarity and compassion.
Directive 1

*We will be a Christ-centered university distinguished for upholding an integrative biblical worldview through our leadership, scholarship, curriculum, teaching, and voice.*

Our purpose as a Christian university is to equip students in mind and character, to help them connect the rigorous work of the mind to the Spirit’s work in the heart, and to facilitate in them an intellectual and spiritual transformation. All of our programs and academic models of scholarship, curriculum and teaching are focused on this end.

At the heart of our work is an integrative biblical worldview—a view of the world that recognizes God as the creator of all things and the redeemer of all things. This worldview seeks to enthrone Christ as King in every aspect of the created order and every sphere of human endeavor. There is no place in which he does not belong, there is nothing over which he is not pre-eminent.

As such, we facilitate, promote and disseminate biblically grounded thinking and scholarship in all disciplines in order to better serve the academy, the Church and the culture with thoughtful biblical perspectives. Convinced that the study of God’s *Word* must be joined with the study of God’s *world*, our faculty and students are expected to integrate their biblical worldview into each academic discipline they pursue and every aspect of their daily life.

This has long been a noted strength of Biola University. In order to ensure even greater strength for the future, we have recently initiated *The Office for the Integration of Faith and Learning* to enhance our efforts at helping our faculty teach and model to their students a distinctively Christian vision of their field, and to equip them to educate students captured by that same vision.

We also recognize the need in our day for a clear voice speaking beyond the campus walls from a biblical perspective about the issues that move our own culture and the cultures of the world. To help meet this need, we are establishing a *Center for Christian Thought*. This Center will function as a collaborative think-tank, facilitating the highest level of biblically informed scholarship on the important issues of our day, and positioning Biola to address these issues from a well-reasoned, deeply integrative biblical perspective. Our hope is that people—from the board room to the assembly line, from the academy to the pew—will be able to look to Biola as a resource to help navigate the world's increasingly thick forest of religious and moral ideas, and that this Center will offer a clear-headed, biblically guided way through.
Directive 2

We will be a university respected for our academic quality, the professional competencies of our graduates and the vitality of our community.

The community at Biola University has a strong sense of mission. Our mission statement is prominently displayed across our campus and included in every course syllabus. It is both referenced in conversations and invoked when making decisions. It is indeed why most employees and students come to Biola. From this mission flows our commitment to academic quality, student learning and the vitality of our community.

We are committed to educational excellence—providing opportunities and resources for faculty and students to identify their callings, carry out their scholarship and creativity, and realize the contributions they can make to the world. We place high value on knowledge that is integrated and connected, scholarship that is relevant and groundbreaking, and classroom instruction by professors that is thoughtful and inspiring. Academic quality at Biola University is evidenced by the significant number of faculty who participate in professional conferences, receive research grants, publish books and articles in scholarly journals, and participate in sabbaticals and integratively focused study leaves.

We also expect our faculty to speak into the lives of students, to serve as mentors and role models who help students develop a character and lifestyle that is authentically Christian. We seek to produce thinking Christians who are professionally prepared, broadly educated, demonstrate competence in knowledge and skills appropriate to their fields, and articulate and live out a biblical worldview. As we prepare our graduates for taking their place in the world, we must think creatively and broadly as entrepreneurs of fresh ideas and doable plans to advance Christ’s kingdom in every vocation—from science labs to Washington think tanks, financial firms to concert halls, sports fields to counseling centers. We will seek to further expand our impact through new and enhanced programs, majors and degrees.

Finally, we must continue to foster a vibrant and versatile academic community—one that encourages each person to excel in the diverse and unique callings that God has given us. Our entire community will flourish as artists are celebrated, athletes are cheered, leaders are nurtured, scholars are challenged, and meaningful partnerships and relationships are given opportunity to form. We will thrive when we collectively hold ourselves accountable to the highest standards in every aspect of university life, as we seek to bring about life transformation, and as we grow in our ability to live and love like Jesus did.
Directive 3

We will be a university intentional about Christ’s command to love God and to love our neighbor, doing so by preparing students to understand and serve the needs of our world.

The love of Christ calls us to the things of this world. From the beginning, this idea has been central to Biola University’s mission. As our world grows smaller and more complex, we must prepare our students to take ever-more courageous and intentional steps in the name of love. We must confront them with suffering. We must expose them to local and global cross-cultural realities. We must broaden their horizons. And we must equip them with tools they will need to make a difference.

We must remember also that loving our neighbor means more than just “serving the world” in some broad, impersonal, trendy way. It is about knowing our neighbor and loving him or her in spite of whatever barriers or differences we might perceive. Neighbor includes the homeless person as well as our roommates and friends. It includes the Samaritan woman at the well, the beaten man left by the side of the road, and the thief on the cross. And it includes those we come into contact with and those we have to seek.

Loving our neighbor can, and for many in our community will involve confronting some of the world’s toughest problems with the hands and voice of redemption—poverty, corruption, moral decay, spiritual hunger, disease, conflict, broken families, stewardship of God’s creation, and the preservation of that which is beautiful.

As a university that equips our graduates and sends them out to serve, our desired outcome and the focus of our work is an inherently consistent inner life manifested in a lived-out spirituality that we call character. It is from this depth of God-inspired character that the love of Christ flows most freely and most genuinely. Our vision is that the love of Christ spills out from our classrooms and halls and into the streets and darkest corners of the world.

This ambition takes courageous faith, a winsome witness and a biblical worldview that is integrated into all fields of study, and it takes people of prayer leading and supporting Biola.
**Directive 4**

*We will be a university that practices sound financial management, addresses the rising challenge of affordability, and secures the funding to carry out the plans of the university.*

Biola is a financially sound and healthy university, fulfilling its mission with focus and energy. God has continuously demonstrated his great faithfulness to this institution for more than a century, allowing us to thrive through both abundant times and lean times. He has blessed us with a growing community of generous supporters who see the value of investing in biblically centered education and Biola’s distinctive strengths. He has given us a heritage of wise leaders who have managed our finances, our building projects, our investments and our growth with prudence and long-range vision. Because of all this, Biola is on steady financial footing today.

As we look to our future, aspiring to a new century of strength, we recognize that the changing landscape calls us to innovative ways of fulfilling a time-honored mission. This is the direction we believe God is leading us. In the coming years, we will use innovation rooted in sound fundamentals to confront head-on the issue of affordability—significantly reducing the burden faced by our students and their families. We will build several long-planned, much-needed facilities—dramatically improving our ability to meet students’ educational needs. We will also seek to expand considerably our endowment, giving us greater financial freedom to pursue the ambitious initiatives laid out in this University Plan.

The needs are indeed great, and will require a fundraising campaign that will dwarf anything in Biola’s history. Yet we move forward in obedience, bolstered with a spirit of prayer and profound faith that God will accomplish his plans beyond our expectations and outside of our own presumptions as to how. As faith becomes sight through prayer-bathed campaigns, each of us will be strengthened in faith, learning to trust all areas of life to a God who provides.

In all of this, we reaffirm our commitment to sound and solvent financial management. We recognize that everything we receive is entrusted to us by God as an investment for his Kingdom. We know that each dollar represents the hard work and sacrifice of our students, parents, alumni and partners. We take nothing for granted. Rather, we commit ourselves to faithful, biblical stewardship—making the most of what we have been given in pursuit of the world-changing plans and purposes that God has for Biola University.
Our Prayer

Dear Lord,

May this community of believers at Biola University be a branch always grafted to the Vine, Christ our Redeemer.

Preserve our deepest desire to remain in you and to let your words remain in us. Our prayer is to remain in you as we covenant to be a people of prayer and obedience, of surrender and humility, of love and service. Our prayer at Biola University is to let your words remain in us by living under the Truth of your Word, our guide and our standard.

Over the course of the past century, your faithful servants made decisions to remain when at times the tug was to do otherwise. Protect us from the smug notion that we are capable by ourselves. We aren’t. Remind us, dear Lord, that apart from you we can do nothing of lasting value. Nothing.

May no enticement wrench us from our desire to remain. As the pull intensifies, and it will, may we cling to the Vine, remaining in you and commending ourselves to let your words remain in us.

And, Lord, as a community resolved to remain, we believe your promise that we will bear fruit both abundant and lasting. This fruit will be for your glory, certainly not our own. When we remain we also receive. For you have instructed us—so long as we are remaining in you and your words are remaining in us—to ask whatever we wish and it will be given.

We give thanks for the convictions that have enabled Biola University to remain. We also give thanks for the courage to approach you expectantly. Keep us kneeling before you as a community of prayer. Keep us trusting that you will provide the sustenance for our needs. Give us the faith to believe you will do wondrous works in the days before us. Give us the gratitude to thank you for all we will yet receive.

We dedicate to you our planning and our resources. This planning document has been the product of many months and many voices. It is not a perfect document. We know that. It will change and we will learn. But, Lord, it is the work of a community who loves you and wants nothing less than for you to be glorified. It is yours.

From our posture of remaining in conviction and asking in courage, Lord, we pray your blessing upon our plans, our decisions, and our steps. And we wait in expectation for that which we will still receive.

All this we pray in the name of Christ our Lord. Amen