

Azusa Pacific University

Though some debate the value of higher education, research continues to demonstrate the long-term economic value of postsecondary education. According to the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, DC, the pay disparity between college graduates and those who did not attend college reached an all-time high in 2013. Although it is important to consider the long-term economic value associated with pursuing higher education, it is even more important to consider the *purpose* of higher education.

At APU, this purpose is associated with cultivating difference makers. To make a difference in an increasingly global society, students need to understand the world around them. Whether students are completing their first year as an undergraduate or their final year of doctoral coursework, I am confident they have achieved much more than mastery of core competencies in their subject of study.

An education at APU affords students an education experience that is focused on four central outcomes:

Competence: Students engage in comprehensive and relevant scholarship, gain knowledge of human culture and the physical and natural world, and exercise intellectual and practical skills.

Character: Students focus on character development, faith integration, spiritual formation, and developing a Christ-centered, biblical, and theological model of reasoning.

Community: Students participate in a meaningful service-learning community, explore personal and social responsibility, and have the opportunity to live and learn within a community of diverse perspectives.

Critical Thinking: Students engage in collaborative assignments and projects, experience meaningful access to transformational education, and critically evaluate and apply knowledge, in and outside of the classroom context.

In his book *How Christian Faith Can Sustain the Life of the Mind* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), Richard Hughes made a compelling statement about the call to search for truth:

We have no choice but to search for truth. After all, when we view ourselves in relation to God, we understand how abysmally ignorant we really are. And if the Bible points beyond itself to an infinite God, we have no choice but to engage in serious conversation with a variety of conversation partners, for we know that all perspectives may well shed light on God's eternal truth. And if the Bible points beyond itself to an infinite God, we have no choice but to engage in critical thinking, for we must now discriminate between competing worldviews and perspectives as we seek to understand more fully the nature and the glory and the will of our Creator.

As you prepare to become difference makers, these undergraduate (<https://nextcatalog.apu.edu/undergraduate>) and graduate and professional (<https://nextcatalog.apu.edu/graduateprofessional>) academic catalogs serve as the guiding documents for your education journey at Azusa Pacific. We also invite you to learn more about who we are as a mission-driven institution and what it means to be part of our faith and learning community (<http://www.apu.edu/about/faithandlearning>). If you have any questions about the programs listed within, please contact the appropriate department.

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