

# Warner Pacific University

*By Sue Kopp*

Warner Pacific University opened in 1937 as Pacific Bible College in Spokane, Washington. Within three years, founding President A.F. Gray moved the growing college to the south side of Mount Tabor in Portland. As the curriculum embraced a liberal arts focus, the institution was renamed Warner Pacific College in 1959, and Warner Pacific University in 2018. Gray believed that the true value of Warner Pacific was “expressed . . . in the kind of contribution the college has made to the spiritual and intellectual development of its students, and its contribution to the well being of society.”

The name honors Daniel Sidney Warner, who helped lead a reform movement establishing the Church of God (headquartered in Anderson, Indiana). The university continued under the leadership of Otto F. Linn (Ph.D., University of Chicago) and Milo Chapman (Ph.D., Graduate Theological Union). The mission of the school was to “be Christian, an accredited liberal arts college, with programs oriented to careers of service and true to the founding church.” In recent years, the university has moved toward recognition of its urban identity, its commitment to diversity, and its responses to social challenges. These characteristics match the institution’s theological heritage within the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition.

Warner Pacific University is the only Church of God institution on the West Coast, and as of fall 2022, it served approximately 692 students. Warner Pacific grants nine associates, thirty-five bachelor, and six master’s degrees. Significant alumni include State Representatives Vic Gilliam and Bill Kennemer; State Senator Rod Monroe; Lyla White, executive director (retired) of the Pasadena Playhouse; Dean Senner, CEO of AOptix Technologies; Jay A. Barber Jr., former executive director of the Oregon Health and Science University Foundation and president emeritus of Warner Pacific University; and Brian Jean, member of the Canadian House of Commons.

## Sources

Warner Pacific University. [www.warnerpacific.edu](http://www.warnerpacific.edu)

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The Oregon Encyclopedia

[https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/warner\\_pacific\\_college/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/warner_pacific_college/)