

## Claremont School of Theology back in good graces

### United Methodist Church leaders erase sanctions

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CLAREMONT - After demonstrating that it will retain its Christian character, the Claremont School of Theology is once again reinstated as "fully affiliated" with the United Methodist Church.

The University Senate of The United Methodist Church has lifted sanctions it imposed on CST in January, unfreezing \$800,000 in church funding to the school.

"We are extremely pleased that the University Senate has affirmed our school and our mission," said the Rev. Jerry Campbell, president of the CST. "I think that the review came about in the first place because some people were worried that we were turning a United Methodist-related seminary into something very different. But we were able to show the review committee that we had no such plans."

The University Senate placed CST on "public warning," claiming that it had failed "to consult fully" with church authorities about its plans to establish a multi-faith University Project. It also cited CST for not submitting recent financial audits.

The University Project, set to open this fall, is a graduate consortium where Christians, Jews and Muslims will pursue divinity degrees in their respective traditions.

CST had to prove that it will continue to educate Methodist ministers and remain affiliated with the University Project - but separate from other schools.

The University Senate did not specify why it decided last month to rescind its public warning and suspend the embargo on the funds, but Campbell said he was happy with the decision.

"We thought that the University Senate's on-site review went well," he said. "But all the same, their announcement came as a big relief. Our United Methodist ties are extremely important to us."

The University Project will better equip its Christian students for ministry in today's world, school officials said.

"We want to be able to facilitate love among our different traditions in order that we can begin to solve the big problems," Campbell said.

"This is not an attempt to mash together the faiths to create a watered-down religion that's acceptable to all but inspiring to no one," he continued. "If you come here as a United Methodist, we believe you will leave here as a United Methodist who better understands his or her neighbors, which in California and much of the world is a multi-cultural and multi-religious mix.

"Methodism has reached out to other denominations to promote justice in the world. In this tradition, Claremont was originally established to be intentionally ecumenical. We believe that reaching across religious lines, without abandoning our own beliefs, is in keeping with this heritage."