

SAGU Becoming Nelson University

Our FAQs address your most pressing questions about SAGU's exciting name change. From the reasons behind the decision to the impact on our community and beyond, we cover everything you need to know. This transition marks a significant milestone in our history. Whether you're curious about the selection process, the timeline for implementation, or how this change might affect you, we've compiled answers to guide you through this transformative period.

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Why is SAGU Changing its name?

After a deliberate and prayerful process involving various stakeholders such as the Board of Regents, faculty, staff, donors, alumni, and students, the University has decided to change its name.

The decision stemmed from a four-year conversation initiated in 2020. Survey results indicated strong support for a name change, emphasizing improving employment opportunities, missionary access, fundraising, regional visibility, and recruitment without compromising the institution's core values, including its affiliation with the Assemblies of God and its spiritual distinctiveness.

The change aims to reach more students in a Spirit-filled environment and make a more significant impact on the world. The University's commitment to equipping students spiritually, academically, and professionally remains unwavering.

We have explored the possibility of changing our name many times during our nearly 100-year history. In fact, since its founding, the University has been known by several different names:

- In 1927, P.C. Nelson founded Southwestern Bible School in Enid, OK.
- In 1931, Shield of Faith Bible School was founded in Amarillo, TX, and Southern Bible Institute was founded in Houston, TX. The Amarillo and Houston schools merged in 1940 to become South Central Bible Institute (SCBI).

- In 1941, the Enid School merged with SCBI to become Southwestern Bible Institute (SBI).
- In 1963, SBI became Southwestern Assemblies of God College (SAGC).
- In 1976, an alternate name to Southwestern was initially approved by the Board, but later tabled.
- In 1996, as the institution set out to declare university status, a new direction was considered again for a name change before simply changing from SAGC to Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU).

With each change through the decades, our institution has expanded its influence while retaining its core identity. The board, alumni council, and the majority of our faculty and staff believe the University will again benefit from a name change as it approaches the centennial celebration in 2027 and prepares to step into the next 100 years.

What is the process for selecting a new name?

The process we used was deliberate, prayerful, and thorough. Key points:

- **Four-Year Journey:** We spent nearly four years gathering insights and opinions from our university community.
- **Expert Guidance:** A professional naming firm joined us to ensure the new name reflects our rich heritage and history.
- **Community Involvement:** Board members, alumni associations, faculty, staff, students, and donors all contributed their thoughts through surveys and focus groups.
- **Decision and Approval:** In April 2023, the Board of Regents unanimously voted to adopt a new name. The United States Patent and Trademark Office gave its approval in October 2023.

This process has been a testament to our community's dedication to preserving our

past while steering toward a promising future.

What is the time frame for the name change to take effect?

Changing our university's name takes time. Here's how we're making it happen:

- **A Thoughtful Process:** We're not rushing. Instead, we're taking careful steps to ensure everything goes smoothly.
- **Engaging Our Community:** Expect to see updates across digital and print platforms. We'll be launching several campaigns to spread the word of our new name far and wide.
- **Keeping You Informed:** Transparency is key. We'll share updates at every important step, keeping everyone in the loop.

The big switch happens on August 1, 2024. We're working hard to have everything ready, but some updates may still be underway. We're navigating this change together, inviting our entire community to be part of this exciting new chapter.

Will the University's core identity be changing?

Our new name won't alter the core essence of who we are.

While the new name will not include "Assemblies of God," our deep-rooted commitment to our fellowship with the Assemblies of God and our shared convictions remain unchanged.

The name “Nelson University” is a nod to our founder, the late Peter Christopher Nelson, whose life story was guided and based on the same AG principles.

The transition from Southwestern Assemblies of God University to Nelson University marks an exciting chapter in our institution's rich history, one deeply rooted in our founder's visionary legacy. From our institution's inception in 1927, P.C. Nelson championed a holistic vision to equip students for diverse roles in ministry and the marketplace. His timeless vision aimed to deepen students' understanding of the Word of God and nurture a closeness with Christ, fostering individuals ready to serve in various capacities, from the church to the marketplace to global missions.

Reflecting on our heritage, it's evident that our institution has consistently aligned with P.C. Nelson's forward-thinking philosophy. The ethos encapsulated in his statement, "The whole Gospel, for the whole world," has resonated through the decades. It echoes in our contemporary efforts to empower students as influential leaders, imbued with the Spirit, impacting society and fulfilling the Great Commission.

The decision to transition our beloved institution's name to Nelson University is a testament to our commitment to the values and principles embedded in our foundation. This shift does not alter our core identity but positions us strategically for the future. It honors the visionary contributions of P.C. Nelson, aligning with the historic tradition of naming educational institutions after prominent figures.

Together, we eagerly anticipate the unfolding of this new chapter and the remarkable days that await us as Nelson University.

Why Are We Changing the Name Now?

Our decision to change our institution's name at this juncture is not arbitrary but a strategic step to prepare for the next century of success. In the constantly evolving landscape of higher education, adopting a new name signifies our commitment to adapt

and thrive, ensuring our continued relevance in academia and the faith community. The timing of this change is significant, aligning with present-day needs and trends to better serve current and future students. It also reflects a broader shift in the faith community away from denominational names, preserving our spiritual heritage while meeting the dynamic academic and spiritual needs of students. Furthermore, the timing of this name change aligns perfectly with our upcoming centennial celebration in 2027, adding significance and momentum to our institution's rich history and future aspirations.

How will the financial implications of this decision be addressed?

The university's leadership stands firmly confident that this change will strategically position our institution for a successful future, offering benefits that far outweigh any associated costs. The costs associated with this strategic action will be spread over many years. Several key leaders have donated large gifts to initiate and underwrite this process, demonstrating their dedication to this pivotal transition.

We continue to work to add to these initial commitments, and ongoing fundraising initiatives are underway. Visionary leaders recognize this investment opportunity and are eager to contribute.

No Tuition, fees, or charges in the 24-25 Fiscal Year are being directed toward the name change. All costs related to the name change will be funded by donations.

This financial strategy has been designed to carefully steward the investment. Make no mistake – these are pivotal investments into the long-term success of this University, and we are confident they will pay God-designed dividends.

Our institution's rich history is full of testimonies of unwavering faith and individuals

who specifically prayed for divine provision during times of financial need. Their trust and reliance on God's divine guidance carried them through and yielded incredible breakthroughs for the University. As we reflect on the spiritual heritage upon which this university was built, we are now moving ahead with that same trust and dependence on God. Without a doubt, we are faithfully confident that He will continue to bring in provision from His storehouse.

What factors have influenced the name change?

The following factors have served as an impetus for the name change:

- **Including "Assemblies of God" in the current name poses potential barriers** to prospective students who would be a great fit for the University but are unfamiliar with the AG denomination and never pause to explore who we are.
- **Including "Assemblies of God" in the current name poses potential barriers for missionaries** wishing to enter closed countries or job-seekers wanting to obtain secular careers.
- **The current name, Southwestern Assemblies of God University, is quite lengthy** at 37 characters. This can be tedious to write out on job applications or limited-space forms.
- **The different pronunciations and letter inflection placement in "SAGU" yield several iterations**, causing discrepancies and confusion.

What impact will the name change have on the University's brand, logo, mascot, or colors?

We are working hand-in-hand with our branding partners to ensure that our new university brand stays true to who we are at the core. Purple will remain our primary school color, and our beloved Lion mascot, Judah, symbolizing strength and resilience, will remain unchanged.

As we craft and refine each aspect of the Nelson University brand, we look forward to introducing a visual representation reflecting our commitment to excellence. As we begin to unveil our new identity, we're taking the opportunity to introduce our centennial vision to a broader audience.

Our primary focus is ensuring a steady influx of new students in the coming years while retaining our existing student body, so that our University can continue to grow and shape the future.

How will the name change affect diplomas and other official University-related documents?

Your academic achievements will hold their value, whether under our old name, "Southwestern Assemblies of God University" (SAGU), or our new name. All existing diplomas remain valid official documents. If you'd like a diploma that displays "Nelson University," we're happy to reissue it upon request. Starting with the class of 2025, all graduating students will receive diplomas bearing the name "Nelson University."

Do I need to change the name of my alma mater on my CV/resume?

You don't need to change our university's name on your CV or resume. The value of your degree remains intact, regardless of our name change. However, if you want to highlight our institution's most current name for clarity or showcase the recent update, feel free to list both the new and former names. For example:

Nelson University (formerly Southwestern Assemblies of God University)

This method helps those familiar with our previous name understand the transition

while ensuring your credentials are up-to-date. Remember, updating your CV or resume with "Nelson University" is optional, not required.

Will the University get a new web address/website?

Yes. The new address will be www.nelson.edu. The transition to a new web address involves technical changes to the domain name, and the university's IT and marketing departments are handling this process.

The University will communicate the new web address to its stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the public. This information will be shared through official communications, announcements on the existing website, social media, emails, and other channels to ensure a smooth transition and to avoid confusion among users.

Will the name change affect the FAFSA application process?

The name change will not directly impact the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) application process for students. The FAFSA relies on the school code the U.S. Department of Education has assigned, which remains unchanged despite a university's name change. **The code used for our university will continue to be 003616.** Students can also confirm the accurate school code by checking the FAFSA website to avoid confusion during the application process.

What will the name change mean for partner sites?

Our partner sites will continue to receive the same level of support and partnership from our institution. Partner sites that previously utilized the SAGU name would replace SAGU with "Nelson," and the appropriate title. For example, SAGU Valor would become Nelson Valor.

This will allow us to maintain consistency and align with our new name and brand. We value our partnerships and look forward to continuing to partner together to achieve our mission of advancing the kingdom.

How will we communicate the name change to current and prospective students, alumni, and the general public?

We are developing a comprehensive communication plan with our consulting partners. Because this is a multi-step process, the communications will take place in various forms (digital and print) and over a period of time so that we can be sure to keep everyone informed and up to date.

Will the University's website, social media accounts, and mailed communications be updated with the new name? If so, what will that be?

Yes. We will update our website and social media accounts to reflect our new name. This process will involve updating a wide range of materials and platforms, from our website to our official social media accounts and beyond.

To ensure that this process is as smooth and efficient as possible, we will establish an internal task force that will work closely with outside professionals to develop a comprehensive plan for updating all of our materials and platforms in a timely and effective manner.

We understand that this will be a significant undertaking, but ensuring that our new

identity is reflected consistently across all of our communications and outreach efforts is important. This complex process will require time and effort to execute correctly. We ask for patience as we work to ensure that all changes are made professionally and efficiently.

Will the name change affect accreditation?

No. The University's status of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees will remain unchanged. For a full list of the University's accreditations and memberships, please visit <https://www.sagu.edu/about/accreditation/>.

Will the name change affect athletics?

No. The name change will not affect athletics, and our athletic department will continue to excel in physical effort, self-discipline, and Christian testimony in the arena of sports.

How should current employees/students refer to the University on their resumes or LinkedIn profiles to reflect continuance at the same place of employment or schooling?

Employees and students should update their resumes or LinkedIn profiles to reflect our new name. Doing so helps maintain accuracy and clarity for anyone viewing their profiles or resumes.

However, to ensure a seamless transition and to avoid confusion, consider using both the old and new names for a transitional period. For instance, list employment history

with the “Southwestern Assemblies of God University” followed by a notation indicating the name change and “Nelson University.” This acknowledges our institution’s history while emphasizing our current identity. For example:

Southwestern Assemblies of God University (now known as Nelson University)

OR

Nelson University (previously Southwestern Assemblies of God University)

Over time, as the new name becomes more established, consider phasing out the reference to SAGU.

Will the Harrison Graduate School be changing its Name?

Yes. Harrison Graduate School will become Nelson Graduate School.

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