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New associate dean to oversee student involvement

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▲ Elden Ramirez

Elden Ramirez named Lake Union executive secretary

FIRST HISPANIC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO SERVE THE LAKE UNION CONFERENCE

On September 14, the Lake Union Conference Executive Committee convened virtually to receive the recommended name of Elden Ramirez for executive secretary. Ramirez, who was confirmed with very strong support from the committee, becomes the first Hispanic executive secretary in the Lake Union.

"I am excited that Elder Ramirez has decided to accept and look forward to working with him," says Ken Denslow, Lake Union president. "He's a spiritual leader who is 'sold out' to the mission of the church. This Union will be blessed not only by his administrative skills but his ability to lead through relationships."

Denslow chaired the meeting, his first since his election as Lake Union president on June 9, following the departure of

Maurice Valentine to the North American Division. Steve Poenitz retired on June 6, which created the vacancy which Ramirez now fills.

"I am humbled by the confidence the Lake Union Executive Committee has placed in me with this ministry assignment," said Ramirez, upon learning of the voted decision. "I look forward to serving the beautiful constituency of the Lake Union Conference. I pray and trust in God that together we will continue to proclaim the Good News of salvation to a world that is in desperate need of Jesus."

Ramirez comes to us from the North American Division where he was voted as Undersecretary in October 2020 and has been serving in that capacity, responsible for the Secretariat functions that include general calls, and interpreting, developing and revising church policies. Previously, in 2017, he was elected president of the Montana Conference; prior to that position worked at the division as director of the NAD's Office of Volunteer Ministries from 2013 to 2017. While serving at the Division, Ramirez provided direction and oversight to the Office of Volunteer Ministries as NAD Secretariat. In this role, he was responsible for guiding student missions, which serves as the resource and processing center to all NAD Adventist colleges and universities. He was instrumental in connecting volunteers throughout North America to mission opportunities across the NAD and around the world.

Prior to joining the NAD, Ramirez served as youth director and assistant to the president for the Central California Conference (2005 to 2013), providing leadership in strategic planning, finance, board management, personnel, fundraising and program delivery. He also served the Iowa-Missouri Conference as a pastor, church planter and departmental director. During this time (1996 to 2004), Ramirez led several ministries at the conference, including Health Temperance,

National Service Organization, Youth and Young Adult Ministries, Camp Ministries (as executive director) and Family Life.

He speaks English, Spanish and Portuguese, and has experience in graphic design, media content creation, and radio and television production.

Ramirez is married to Jenny, a registered nurse who has been his right hand in ministry. Together they are the parents of two daughters — Elennie, a junior in college, and Jasmine, a senior in high school. ■

Debbie Michel, editor of the Lake Union Herald, with North American Division.



▲ Philip DeLeon

New associate dean to oversee student involvement

The Division of Campus & Student Life welcomes Philip DeLeon as associate dean for Student Involvement, Leadership & Activities. He will oversee the strategic direction, implementation and assessment of programming and services that maximize student engagement and leadership development.

"We are so pleased that Philip has chosen to return to campus," says Frances Faehner, vice president for Campus & Student Life. "As a younger alum, it is his vivid and fond memories of Andrews University that fuel his desire to serve a new generation of students."

DeLeon, who holds a Master of Public Administration, most recently served as the manager of Patient Experience, Guest Services and Interpretation Services at Garnet Health Medical Center (GHMC) in New York. He provided oversight to GHMC's comprehensive program, driving patient satisfaction.

"We're excited to have Dean DeLeon bring the passion and skills he honed while enhancing the patient experience to creating a first-rate student experience at Andrews," says Steve Yeagley, assistant vice president for Campus & Student Life.

During his ten years in healthcare, DeLeon founded several initiatives that continue to positively impact patient satisfaction and community outreach,

including Holiday Cheer, and Beyond the Walls of 707, an employee outreach program resulting in thousands of gifts to community members in need during the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons.

He also implemented video interpreting services throughout the Medical Center, outpatient facilities and medical group, allowing limited-English, deaf and hard-of-hearing patients the ability to be seen and heard by someone who speaks their language.

When COVID-19 forced restricted visitation at hospitals across the country, DeLeon's team suited up and facilitated virtual visitation for hundreds of patients and their families seven days a week. It was sometimes the only connection patients had with their families during the height of the pandemic.

As Andrews University begins to emerge from the pandemic, DeLeon will again look for ways to provide connection. "God didn't design us to live remotely," he says. "I can't wait to see how He will

bring the campus back to life this year, and I look forward to being part of that renewed energy and experience."

Students, student leaders and their sponsors can connect with Dean DeLeon in his Campus Center office. "I'm eager to meet members of our campus community and hear about their experience at Andrews University," he says. "Everyone's input and ideas are welcome."

In addition to leading the Office of Student Involvement, Leadership & Activities and overseeing the University's 60-plus clubs and organizations, DeLeon will serve as general sponsor of the Andrews University Student Association and consultant to the Andrews University Graduate Student Association. He will work collaboratively with colleagues across the Division of Campus & Student Life to address students' emotional, spiritual, physical and social needs. ■

Jeff Boyd, Media Relations manager, Andrews University

Public campus ministry in Wisconsin makes adjustment and reaps windfall

During last school year, the COVID-19 pandemic was an opportunity for the Adventist Christian Fellowship team to stop and reevaluate mission on the campus of University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

ACF advisor/coordinator, Joshua Guerrero says, "I believe God used this unprecedented year to open our eyes and turn what seemed like an evil situation into good, revealing to us how to truly start a gospel-multiplying movement on campus, impacting people personally."

One of the students with which the ACF group connected was an agnostic who had deep hesitations about Jesus. They



▲ Hunter (center) was baptized by Stevens Point Church pastor Justin Spady (left), and Joshua Guerra was on hand to witness.