

Donation spurs multifaith university in Claremont

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Looking to support "tolerance and respect among religions," a United Methodist couple has upped its total donation to \$50 million to launch a multifaith university that will educate professional leaders for churches, synagogues and mosques while providing those future clergy with insights into interreligious issues.

The Methodist-affiliated Claremont School of Theology announced May 16 that philanthropists David and Joan Lincoln, who earlier donated \$10 million, would be honored in the institution's name—Claremont Lincoln University—as classes begin this fall. Only the seminary will receive money from United Methodist agencies.

"We are overwhelmed by this incredible gift," said Jerry Campbell, president of the Claremont School of Theology. David Lincoln, a graduate of California Institute of Technology who worked in aerospace and at entrepreneurial enterprises, serves on the theological school's board of trustees.

While future rabbis, imams and ministers will take courses required by their traditions, they will also have opportunities to become acquainted with peers in other faiths.

The university will also offer master's and doctoral degrees in comparative religion, politics and religion, conflict resolution and sustainability studies, officials said.

A week before the university announcement was made, the *New York Times* reported that Pitzer College, one of the seven Claremont colleges within walking distance of the seminary, will offer a major in secularism this fall. The new department of secular studies is headed by sociologist Phil Zuckerman, who has written extensively on secularism.

Campbell said that development—though unknown earlier to the multi-faith university planners—was a "welcome addition" to viewpoints in the community's intellectual mix.