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Michael Escobedo, head coach of men and women's basketball at Pacific Union College, prayed for the opportunity to use his passion for basketball as a vehicle to share his faith and the message of Christ. He says his current role at PUC fulfills that dream.

"God delivered like He always does," Escobedo said. "Watching these young men and women grow as individuals and learn about God and life through the game is what it is all about. I'm very thankful to have a platform to play a small part in that."

Escobedo has actively been involved with basketball throughout his life, playing in four college basketball programs, including MidAmerica Nazarene University, Allan Hancock College, Mendocino College, and Multnomah University. He coached youth basketball in China for nearly a year and also directed basketball camps with the 1 Dream Foundation and NBA players Patrick Beverly and Horace Grant. He served as the lead assistant for the men's basketball program and as an assistant coach for the women's program at Mendocino College. Additionally, Escobedo and his wife, Katherine, own and direct ESCO Sports International Inc., a world travel company that directs international sports trips and that so far has taken approximately 100 athletes to China, Hungary, Ireland, and Hong Kong.

Now at PUC, Escobedo recruits student athletes that can succeed both on the court and in the classroom, maintains high academic standards for his teams, schedules games, conducts fundraisers, directs practices, and moves forward with the ultimate goal of growing the players as men and women of Christ.

"The vision I have for both the men's and women's basketball programs at PUC is to create a winning culture on and off the court," he said. "Winning in the sense of playing and living the right way. Working hard, having faith through adversity, getting up when you're knocked down, and serving others. I pray that both basketball programs can ultimately be a reflection of Christ."

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*By Staff Writer*