December 2, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to December 2013!

As we move toward the close of fall semester, I have dedicated some of my time to reading a spate of recent literature on higher education—its value, its cost, its purpose, and its future. These span various media outlets and constituent groups: some represent our elected officials or their appointees; others represent scholars and leaders in the field; others are public figures who have obtained visibility and voice; and others are friends, colleagues and relatives in our own living rooms and university spaces. All are worth hearing and each is grounded in personal or perceived experiences.

As I read the literature and listen to the conversations, I am struck by what seems to be a common denominator: accessibility. Access to higher education is one of the primary conduits to addressing our critical domestic and global needs. I am proud that the University of La Verne is one of the accessible institutions that graduates students with the skills, competencies, and values to meet the needs of our communities, to enhance our students’ lives and the lives of so many others. Every day I hear our students and alumni talk with pride about their love for La Verne and their own accomplishments in their professions and communities.

I am reminded of my participation alongside 12 other national leaders in higher education as part of a 3-year think tank titled, “The Project on the Future of Higher Education.” Our convener, Dr. Al Guskin, was convinced that the successful future of higher education depended on two interdependent variables: the delivery of quality education and the reduction of costs. Throughout my participation, I was insistent on a third variable for
the equation to be successful: sustained vitality and quality of life for faculty, staff and administrators. Today, as I reflect on La Verne’s 2020 Strategic Vision, I am proud that we threaded this three-part equation throughout our future: (1) quality education for all students; (2) fiscal responsibility throughout the university; and (3) sustained vitality and quality of life for all of our staff, faculty and administrators.

As we end this calendar year, we need to continually engage in sincere, civil and productive conversations to pursue these three themes with three questions:

1. How can we ensure that all La Verne students receive a quality education, regardless of their age, degree program, college or location?

2. How can we help the University of La Verne be fiscally responsible, and reduce costs in appropriate areas to ensure an affordable and accessible education?

3. How can we help La Verne’s faculty, staff and administrators maintain vitality and a positive quality of life?

As I end my Thanksgiving break, I am once again reminded of our remarkable institution with faculty, staff, administrators and students who choose to work and study with each other. We are all connected to one another through the mission and vision of our university, and a values-based, high-quality education that is accessible, affordable and prepares students to be global leaders. It is this connection that unites us in our commitment to the success of all. I give deeply felt thanks for all you do for each other and for the university. As we slide into the holiday season, I urge you to celebrate with joy and caring for each other.

Sincerely,

Devorah Lieberman, Ph.D.
President