February 11, 2015

Dear Campus Colleagues,

This past weekend the Board of Trustees held their annual retreat. This year’s focus was on the importance of understanding external national and state realities while accelerating our own institutional goals and furthering our distinction and relevance.

As the Board and University plan for the future, we must be cognizant of the external realities that will continue to have a significant impact on the future of the University of La Verne. We are entering a time of shifting demographics with fewer high school graduates, increasing national skepticism about the value of earning a degree, and the rebounding UC and CSU systems. Concurrently, our regional private institutions are redefining and restructuring their curricular and co-curricular programs. Fortunately, we anticipated many of these external realities and pressures when we developed the 2020 Strategic Vision, which is one strand of ‘The Braid.’

The three intersecting and interdependent strands of ‘The Braid’ are: 1) The 2020 Strategic Vision, a campus-wide collaborative effort, which reinforces our shared goals and priorities; 2) The Campus Master Plan, a project that has been a concerted effort between the campus community, our neighbors, and the City of La Verne; and 3) The Comprehensive Campaign, which is entering the feasibility study phase and will be the leading fundraising initiative to turn the vision of the strategic and master plans into reality.

A major discussion at the Board Retreat revolved around ‘The Braid.’ These three major initiatives, with academic programs at the center, will be the guide for our campus over the next several years. These initiatives will bring the University of La
Verne successfully into the future. Individually, the initiatives are fairly abstract ideas, but woven together, they provide strong answers to the ‘how’ questions: How will we support academic excellence? How will we increase reputation and visibility? How will we improve dedication to financial and human resources? How will we improve our facilities and use of technology? The Board looks to accelerate implementation of ‘The Braid’ in order for the University of La Verne to achieve greater distinction and relevance.

Additionally, I am pleased that the Board of Trustees approved the recommended 2015-2016 budget. It is important to note that next year we do not anticipate an overall increase in the number of students attending the University at the graduate or the undergraduate levels. Therefore, as an enrollment dependent institution, we do not anticipate increased revenue from additional students. However, compensation and benefits remain a strategic priority and the 2015-2016 budget includes general increases for all full-time employees (in good standing) of 2.1%, as well as longevity increases, reclassification increases, tenure and promotion increases, and an increase in adjunct and overload salaries. Including the 2015-2016 average compensation pool of 3% for our regular employees, I am pleased to share that faculty and staff compensation has increased 24%, in the aggregate, since July 2010 and adjunct compensation has increased 30%, in the aggregate, over that same period. This strategic priority is reflective of the trust that the Board has in the quality and commitment of our faculty and staff.

Trustee Ray Skelton summed it up beautifully when he summarized his recent experience attending the national AAC&U conference in Washington, DC. He expressed that the University of La Verne is on target with the themes of the higher education discussion, and that we do not have time to fall out of step. In fact, we need to pick up our step. There is a sense of urgency among all higher education institutions to remain at the forefront of these trends. I applaud each of you for your tremendous work and efforts to achieve and accomplish all that we have throughout the past several years, and I look forward to working side by side to help the University of La Verne thrive.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Devorah Lieberman, Ph.D.
President