March 4, 2014

Dear University Colleagues,

This past weekend we experienced the power of the positive. The University of La Verne Scholarship Gala on Saturday, March 1 raised over $500,000 in scholarship funds for La Verne students. More than 700 people came together for a positive cause – supporting our students’ education and cultivating the future leaders of our communities. I am pleased that this year’s event garnered more financial contributions to support student scholarships than any prior La Verne gala.

At the Gala we heard our students’ personal stories of both challenges and triumphs, and we honored the Hafif Family Foundation for their charitable work in the community and with our students. The Gala was a chance to think positively about our assets, rather than focus on our deficits.

Marisol Morales, our Director of Civic and Community Engagement, always stresses the importance of “ABCD” – Asset-Based Community Development. She believes that when you approach a situation or opportunity with the question “What is working?” rather than, “What is not working?” you are more likely to establish a positive conversation and constructive outlook. This perspective and approach (widely accepted and implemented in the field of community engagement) can also help our work together as a university community.

We are nearly half-way through the spring semester. While we have some obstacles to overcome, much at the University of La Verne gives us reason for tremendous optimism – such as our work with students, our faculty accomplishments, our vision as a university, our program development, our increased national recognition, and our graduates’ accomplishments. You, the faculty and staff, are the assets that I see on a daily basis, providing the rich educational experience for our students. This is what the student speakers celebrated at the Gala.

Regardless of challenges that arise, the University of La Verne is an institution that provides broad access to a quality academic and co-curricular experience for our students. They graduate with the strong values of this institution and carry the heart of La Verne into their
professional careers and throughout their lives. Let us all remember our ‘ABCDs’ (Asset-Based Community Development) and the power of the positive.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Devorah Lieberman, Ph.D.
President