April 17, 2012

Dear Colleagues:

As we near the end of the spring semester, I bring to you this current “President’s Pause,” which is not intended to be a “newsletter,” but rather a substantive communication providing timely information on the following recent and important issues related to the university.

**WASC VISIT:** We continue to be energized by the late March visit of our accrediting body, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), from which many positive observations emerged. Overall, the WASC team expressed great appreciation for the strides we have made since their phase one visit two years ago—the “Educational Effectiveness Review.”

The Chair of the WASC team observed that our positive energy on campus is “palpable,” and that the university “should be very, very proud,” and we are. The WASC team commended us for such things as genuine care and concern for our students; that we demonstrate clearly that we are one university, four colleges and 11 campuses with one mission; that the La Verne Experience will further unify us in our common mission; that there is unwavering support and effective action by our Board of Trustees; and that the 2020 Vision is focused, energetic and purposeful.

I anticipate that we will receive their full written report within a few weeks. We will have an opportunity to respond to any inaccuracies that appear within the report. Following that, the report will go to the WASC commission for final review and recommendation regarding our accreditation and next scheduled WASC site visit.
**THE LA VERNE EXPERIENCE:** The La Verne Experience initiative is progressing well on several fronts. The Steering Committee continues to work on the launch of the La Verne Experience, which is scheduled for fall. All entering freshman will participate in FSLE (The First Semester La Verne Experience). Each of the 22 FSLE’s comprises two connected discipline-based courses with an accompanying writing intensive course. Each student will have the option to register for one of the “3 connected courses” which will be their FSLE (pronounced ‘fossil’). We are seeking to have community engagement components related to each FSLE beginning at Orientation. The fall will also see the initial implementation of portions of the “La Verne Experience” for non-traditional students, as well as common, co-curricular professional activities for our graduate and professional students. We will continue to develop the La Verne Experience for the remainder of the undergraduate years and related co-curricular programs, and for the graduate and professional programs.

The La Verne Experience Steering Committee has completed a concept paper that articulates this experience for every segment of our students. The committee will present this document to both the Faculty Senate and Faculty Assembly. The Provost will present and seek full endorsement of the conceptual framework for the La Verne Experience from the Board of Trustees at their spring meeting.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING:** The 2020 Vision continues to evolve. Dr. Richard Simpson, Professor in CBPM and an expert in strategic planning, has generously assumed the role of facilitating this process for our campus. In an effort to be inclusive and thorough, Professor Simpson and members of the 2020 Vision Steering Committee have met with many groups and constituents across our 11 campuses—facilitating sessions with all levels of administration, faculty, classified, trustees, students and alumni. The next iteration of the 2020 Vision will be presented to the Board of Trustees for their input and come back to the full campus for final review in fall 2012. I anticipate the completion of our 2020 Vision by the close of fall semester 2012.

**GRAND OPENINGS:** Vista La Verne, our new residence hall, is nearing completion and will address a strong need for improved student housing on
campus, while fulfilling a major component of our 10-year Master Plan. We are planning an opening celebration for students on August 29 and a grand opening celebration for the campus community on October 18. Another exciting grand opening is not far off: the renovated Ortmayer Stadium, which will have a major impact on athletics, sports science, intramural sports and other applications. The renovated stadium, which has a grand opening scheduled for September 15, will welcome home five La Verne athletic teams. It will be exciting to once again watch our student-athletes compete in the stadium.

**CITIZENALUM:** The University of La Verne has become a charter member of CitizenAlum—a national initiative affiliated with American Commonwealth Partners (ACP). This broad coalition of colleges and universities, community colleges, K-12 schools and community partners promotes civic education, civic mission, and civic identity throughout education in America. The ACP is part of the coordinated effort called “For Democracy’s Future” with the White House Office of Public Engagement, the Department of Education, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and the Civic Mission of Schools. The initiative was launched at the White House in January with the goal of reclaiming education’s civic mission.

This is an exciting opportunity for La Verne to be a part of a national initiative and to connect with hundreds of other institutions that will be participating. Our Alumni Relations staff is forming a University of La Verne “CitizenAlum Team” and is already partnering and developing plans with the Community Service Subcommittee for the La Verne Experience and others in Academic Affairs.

**ANNUAL BUDGET:** The budget development for Fiscal Year 2012-2013 is on schedule. The Enrollment Management Division, in cooperation with with the Provost and academic deans, finalized the enrollment projections for next fiscal year. Our President’s Executive Council (PEC) identified and agreed to the Tier I fixed and variable costs. I have met with each Vice President and have reviewed their recommended top priorities. A preliminary draft budget was presented to the Board of Trustees Finance and Budget Committee, as well as the Senior Management Council. Having
received feedback from each of these groups and the PEC, we are moving toward concluding with a balanced budget for 2012-2013. The next Budget Advisory Group meeting is scheduled for April 18, after which I will review the finalized draft budget to make my recommendations to Board of Trustees Finance and Budget Committee on April 26 and the Board of Trustees on April 27.

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT REPORT: The University has exceeded its overall enrollment target for 2011-2012 and we are preparing for the entering class of 2012-2013. Applications for traditional undergraduate programs continue to arrive and should surpass 8,000 applications. We expect to welcome La Verne’s most qualified and geographically diverse class in fall 2012.

We anticipate that main campus master’s and doctoral programs, as well as programs offered through RCA, will meet their enrollment targets next year. We faced a challenging environment for the programs offered by the College of Education and Organizational Leadership this coming fall, both on the main campus and within RCA. Regional prognosticators anticipate that this downward trend of enrollments in education programs will begin to reverse in 2012-2013 and they will begin to meet their enrollment targets. Applications for the MBA program continue to grow and are at an all-time high.

The College of Law’s marketing, publications, and public relations functions are being integrated with University’s central Enrollment Management and Public Relations units for the first time. This integration will allow the University to develop a more uniform brand and identity in the future. This integration will also allow the main campus to develop a better understanding of the College of Law and its administrative processes.

--COLLEGE OF LAW: The College of Law is moving ahead following the news that it has received provisional accreditation approval from the American Bar Association. Recruitment is under way for the entering class of fall 2012, which will start classes in August. Graduating law students are offered a first time supplemental bar preparation program that meets every Saturday. This program will continue until the bar exam in July,
complementing the commercial bar preparation courses that all students are encouraged to take.

Provost Greg Dewey is assembling a search committee to lead the recruitment of a new Dean of the College of Law.

**FINANCIAL AID TOPS $30 MILLION:** Despite a challenging economy, we continue to advance in providing generous financial assistance to our undergraduate students. We have increased the total earmarked for aid during 2012-2013. We expect that more than $30 million in tuition assistance will be accepted by our incoming freshmen, transfer students and returning undergraduate students.

Total institutional aid for 2012-2013, derived from a number of sources, has increased nearly 40 percent from three years ago. We expect next year’s enrollment to slightly exceed 2,100, also an increase of about 40 percent from 2008. More than 90 percent of our undergraduate students receive some form of financial aid. Each award is based on a complex model that integrates need and academic merit.

It is important for us to remember that the California Grants (Cal Grants) for our students are still under scrutiny by the State legislature. The legislature has not finalized the financial amount that they will dedicate to private institutions in California. In the past, our students could receive up to $9,000 from the State of California. This may be reduced by 40 percent per student. As we prepare our budget for FY 2012-2013, it is critical that we anticipate and prepare for the possibility of reduced financial assistance from the State. If the state reduces Cal Grants it will severely impact the financial ability for many students to attend La Verne.

**SPRING COMMENCEMENT:** I am delighted that the esteemed Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, III, will be our 2012 Commencement speaker. Dr. Hrabowski, president of the University of Maryland at Baltimore County (UMBC) was named by TIME Magazine as one of America’s 10 Best College Presidents (2009). Under his leadership, UMBC was ranked as the nation’s No. 1 “Up and Coming” university, and also ranked among the country’s top colleges and universities for commitment to undergraduate teaching in 2009 and 2010 by U.S. News & World Report.
JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF LA VERNE IN THE NEWS: The University of La Verne and some of our outstanding people have been featured in the news recently. In February, professor of political science Jason Neidleman helped promote awareness and discussions on social justice and human dignity at a lecture series organized by the University of Notre Dame. La Verne’s Debate Team, led by assistant professor of speech and debate Ian Lising, culminated its weekend-long centennial celebration with a debate about capital punishment, just as it did exactly 100 years before — to the day. The University of La Verne has been selected to host the National Debate for 2012-2013. This is a testament to the success of our debate students and the year after year consistent quality of our debate coaches. Once again, the university partnered with the Ontario-Montclair School District as part of its Promise Scholars program. This college day visit, designed to provide students and their parents with information about the campus and offer them a one-day college experience, attracted approximately 160 students and 20 parents from De Anza Middle School in Ontario. There is more news in the areas of grants, the College of Law and alumni. You can read all about it using this link to our Public Relations web page: http://laverne.edu/advancement/public-relations/in-the-news/.

AND LAST, ANOTHER FIRST: On July 1, 2011 I began my tenure as La Verne’s 18TH president with tremendous respect for the university and I will conclude my first academic year with increased enthusiasm, belief and commitment for our future. I anticipate that the ground swell of energy and dedication to our new initiatives will only continue to increase. I also express my sincere appreciation to each of you for all you have done to welcome me, to support my family, to engage in quality work and new initiatives, and to meet the needs of our students. We really are four colleges, 11 campuses, one university, one mission!

Sincerely,

Devorah Lieberman, Ph.D.
President