The President’s Pause

July 15, 2013

Dear Campus Community,

I write this President’s Pause as I fly back from Washington, DC. A year ago, I began to send this monthly communication as a way to share with you my professional and personal thoughts about the campus community: our campus activities, campus climate, and national higher education trends and their impact on our university. It is my way to informally share a piece of myself with each of you.

While in Washington, DC, Vice President of University Advancement Myra Garcia, Interim Director of Public Relations Alisha Rosas, and I met with the editors of four higher education publications. Each publication and organization has extensive national influence and broad higher education readership. I wanted the editors to learn more about the University of La Verne: our history, distinctive students, faculty and staff, curricula, and our intended future accomplishments and contributions to higher education. I believe that we not only met, but exceeded the goal of introducing our university and piquing their interest to learn even more about our institution. By the end of each meeting, we were discussing either feature articles they were interested in writing about the university or articles they were interested in having us submit for publishing. Exciting! I anticipate that these meetings and articles will lead to further national visibility for us.

Following the day of meetings, we hosted a University of La Verne alumni reception. I discovered that the University of La Verne has 700 alumni in DC and the surrounding region. Despite the pouring rain, a bomb scare in the parking structure next to the building of our reception, and delayed or cancelled trains into the DC area, the alumni event was successful.

The reception was a tremendous opportunity to connect or re-connect with alumni. The alumni in attendance commented on how honored they were that the university came to them, as some had never been back to campus or were not able to visit as often as they would like. Those that attended included alums that graduated from the Alaska campus (and have never been to the La Verne campus, but are bringing their high school child for a campus visit as they consider colleges to attend), some who were active debaters and who met for the first time that night (and who are now interested in
planning a reunion for all debaters who live in the DC area; alums from the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s; and two current members of the Board of Trustees who live in Washington, DC.

During the reception, I read an email to the alumni that I had received the day before. It was forwarded to me by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and was sent to them by the grandparent of an incoming freshman. For me, this particular email represents some of the most distinctive elements of our remarkable university: welcoming, warm, caring, and that every student is special to our staff, faculty and administration. The email is copied below. I am confident that as you read this, you will feel the pride of being a member of this community.

Dear Lili,

Thank you for your very swift and clear reply. Annie, my wife Judy, and myself, have been extremely impressed with President Lieberman and her administrators, like you. Thanks to people like you, we feel like we have "died and gone to heaven."

Our extremely positive experience began with a call to Admissions several months ago when we were going to remove the University of La Verne from our list of potential schools. Hervey Malone encouraged us to submit an application as your university looks at many things besides grades. Then we met Matt Rinehart when we visited your university. He offered to review Annie's preliminary information. We sent the information, Matt reviewed it, and he gave us another "green light" to apply for admission. Lately, Rose Jarbigian took her valuable time to help us understand "funding." Lili, when you started your reply to my e-mail message with, "Thank you for reaching out to me!" I thought "WOW," because those few words really touched me. I had to wipe a tear or two from my eyes.

If all of the above wasn't enough, your university was the first to accept Annie, the first with something like Spotlight Weekend, the first to send a financial aid award letter, and the only one to follow up on her decision on whether or not to attend the University of La Verne. SOAR was also a very positive experience.

Speaking of Spotlight Weekend - that cemented Annie's decision that, out of six schools, La Verne was the place for her. Grandma Judy and I had already come to that conclusion, but it was Annie's decision--she made the right decision.
I trust that you are enjoying the summer months, relaxing and renewing for fall semester. I look forward to seeing you on campus throughout the rest of the summer and as we approach our fall 2013 semester.

Sincerely,

Devorah Lieberman, Ph.D.
President