November 6, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

This month, I invite you to literally “pause” as we enter the last six weeks of the term. Take a moment to reflect on where we have been, where we are now, and where we are going. I am pleased that the University of La Verne is becoming more of a destination of choice for our students and that we continue to ask, “How can we deliver a quality education that meets the needs of our students and prepares them to be successful and contributing citizens?”

Last month, during the State of the University Address, I presented data that addressed areas of change over the last five years at the University of La Verne. These data documented the following areas of growth between 2008 and 2013: undergraduate and graduate students (+845/+11%), number of full-time faculty (+48), average full-time faculty compensation (+20.17%), average part-time/adjunct/overload faculty compensation (+17.46%), and growth in campus acreage (+12 acres). Reflecting on a five-year perspective offers the opportunity to measure how far we have come and the inspiration for addressing our areas of need in the future.

Each of your contributions has created an institution that I frequently describe to others as “remarkable.” Here are four short recent examples of what inspires me to continue to focus on that five-year reflection and an ever greater La Verne future:

About 10 days ago, I attended the La Verne Experience retreat and witnessed a room full of full-time and part-time faculty and staff, each committed to creating an educational model that brings the best of the University of La Verne’s mission to every student, regardless of major or college, graduate or undergraduate.

Last week, I walked among full- and part-time faculty, staff, administrators and students as each explained their scholarly activities during the “Research Day” poster session. The Campus Center Ballroom was hardly able to hold the number of posters on display, and each poster had a small crowd of individuals interested in reading and/or hearing about the researcher’s work. I was profoundly impressed with the number of research projects underway that contained elements of interdisciplinary work between faculty from different departments and colleges, as well as research teams comprised of both
faculty and students. These activities change lives, further connect students to faculty, enhance critical thinking and reinforce lifelong learning. This is an example of how our research becomes a public good.

Friday, I witnessed a group of approximately 25 faculty, staff, administrators, and Trustees spend hours poring over the beginning strategies for furthering the Campus Master Plan Initiative and to thread it into our adopted 2020 Strategic Vision. Their time and commitment was evident in the questions they asked and the sense of commitment to an initiative that will serve everyone.

On Sunday, La Verne hosted presidents representing six Brethren Colleges from across the country and the Brethren Seminary. At dinner for this group, Carol Stephenson, Department Associate in the Department of Music, brought our men’s a cappella singers (The Lordsburg Brothers) to perform. Joining us was our campus chaplain and the pastor from the La Verne Church of the Brethren. They were all highly impressed with our students. I watched the joy and pride in our students faces as they performed and felt the beauty of what they were able to produce together. Following their performance, each told their moving stories of why they came to La Verne and why they continue to attend the University of La Verne.

The common denominator among each of these examples is that we are a university where we “achieve more than they ever imagined.” I use that phrase often; it is because it rings true.

Thank you each for your continuing commitment to the University of La Verne.

Sincerely,

Devorah Lieberman, Ph.D.
President