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Opening Remarks

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Thank you Sandy. On behalf of my husband, Christopher Callahan, the President of the University of the Pacific and everyone at the University, we are pleased to support this meaningful and impactful initiative. The Messages of Peace initiative is important to University of the Pacific for many reasons:

- Community involvement is a university hallmark. For the past 10 years, we have worked with the Stockton Unified School District and other districts in San Joaquin County, as part of the Beyond Our Gates program, supporting childhood literacy and education. We are so pleased to work with Stockton Unified students once again in the Messages of Peace program.
- We are pleased to work with Sandy Huber and The Grupe Company, who through their passion and generosity have created a true community treasure with the World Peace Rose Garden in Stockton.

This garden, which I have had the privilege to visit a few times, brings life, beauty and a calming sense of hope and inspiration to all those who visit. The garden is a gathering spot to ponder the richness and possibilities of life. I encourage you to visit.

- The Messages of Peace initiative also provides an opportunity for Pacific students to support our local community. Today, students from our Community Involvement Program (CIP as we like to call it) will be your mentors.
 - CIP students are from Stockton
 - They are also first-generation college students, which means they are the first person from their immediate family to attend college.
 - The University of the Pacific provides scholarships and other opportunities for these students.
 - In turn, those students engage in and learn the value of community service.
 - They are an inspiration to not only their Pacific colleagues and their extended family and friends, but they also demonstrate that a college education is a realistic dream for **all** students.
- The Messages of Peace Program also allows Pacific to highlight our extraordinary Library and Learning Center, which has recently undergone a major transformation. Although this program is virtual this year, the library staff has used some of the technology available in our Library and Learning Center to create real-life experiences for the Messages of Peace experience. We are hopeful that you will all be able to visit our library in person soon, to experience all it has to offer.

As part of this program, Students will consider – and write about – world peace and what it means to them. This topic is even more important today, with the challenges the world has faced this past year. Remember that with challenge comes opportunity, especially when approached with a positive attitude and an open heart and mind. There is something especially poignant when young minds dream about how to make the world a better place.

Students - today you will begin the process of using the power of **your** words and **your** concept of world peace to create **your** personal messages. We are looking forward to hearing from **you**.

As you prepare to write today, consider the words of Amanda Gorman, the National Youth Poet Laureate who was so inspirational in her recent Presidential Inauguration Day speech.

- “For there is light. If only we are brave enough to see it. If only we are brave enough to be it.”
- “And so we lift our gazes, not to what stands between us, but to what stands before us.”
- “If we merge mercy with might, and might with right, then love becomes our legacy.”

You all have the opportunity to be a leader. I encourage you to open your hearts - and minds - to share your thoughts and dreams – and to inspire others.