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Letter - Embracing Diversity and Inclusion

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A Common Fate

Good evening. I'm Pam Eibeck, President of University of the Pacific, the first university chartered in California. Pacific is proud to educate more than 6,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional students on campuses in Stockton, San Francisco and Sacramento.

Our mission has remained much the same for 165 years: to prepare students for lasting achievement and responsible leadership in their careers and communities. We believe that our graduates should be as prepared to lead their civic communities as they are their professions. Furthermore, we believe the two are inexorably linked--success in one leads to success in the other.

For that reason, a distinctive feature of a Pacific education is the Pacific Seminar series. In their freshman year, undergraduates--many are here tonight!--take two courses that ask: "What is a good society?" The students are challenged to explore hard questions: *What do we really want our society to look like? Why doesn't it? How can we get there?*

Similarly, in each of our graduate and professional programs-- law, pharmacy, dentistry, analytics, public policy and many more --students are asked to reflect on the social implications of their professional acts. *How can I improve the lives of those around me through my work?*

Tonight we have a unique opportunity to engage in this same process--unique because California hasn't had an open Senate contest in more than two decades. Tonight we'll hear from five candidates vying to represent California to the rest of the nation--and even the world.

It's fitting that we've come together in Stockton, the heart of the Central Valley: the region that feeds our nation and is critical to California's future. Pacific is very proud of our Central Valley roots. We are proud to educate and serve its people. Thirty-two percent of Pacific freshmen hail from a county surrounding our Stockton campus. Thirty-five percent of undergraduates are eligible for federal Pell Grants for low-income families. Nearly one in four students is the first in their family to go to college. And roughly seventy percent of Pacific students are students of color. Like all California's private nonprofit colleges and universities, we are deeply committed to helping students attain their dreams.

We are also proud of our commitment to going beyond our gates and into the community to increase early literacy, K-12 success, college readiness, public health, and myriad other social needs.

Tonight, as we listen to the candidates, I encourage you to ponder the same questions our students encounter in Pacific Seminar: *What is a good society? What should our government do to help create it? What are our roles in this process?*

But the process doesn't end tonight. On June 7th, and again on November 8th, we Californians will go to the polls and choose whom we want to represent us not just as Senator, but also as city council member, Mayor, Assembly member, U.S. Representative, President, and more.

When we go to the polls in June and in November, we do more than just decide who wins or loses. When we vote, we express our individual and collective judgment. We announce our hopes and dreams for our communities. More importantly, we fulfill a basic obligation to each other--the only real obligation we have as citizens in a democracy--to participate in self-governance.

And we affirm that we are a community that shares a common fate.

I thank our candidates for the thoughtful and compelling conversation to come. I also thank our partners, KCRA and the San Francisco Chronicle. To all the Pacific students in the audience - thank you for your civic engagement and intellectual curiosity. To our faculty, staff, alumni and friends: thank you for making Pacific great. Community members, thank you for many years of partnership. I send special thanks to the dozens of people who spent countless hours preparing for tonight.

And to all of you joining us at University of the Pacific, we welcome you and applaud your commitment to California's future.

Enjoy the debate.