



8-29-2013

## Letter - Pacific's Bold Future

Pamela Eibeck  
*University of the Pacific*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/presidential-communications>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Eibeck, Pamela, "Letter - Pacific's Bold Future" (2013). *Presidential Communications*. 37.  
<https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/presidential-communications/37>

This Correspondence is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Presidential Communications by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact [mgibney@pacific.edu](mailto:mgibney@pacific.edu).



## Pacific's Bold Future

*August 29, 2013*

### **Town Hall Speech - "Pacific's Bold Future"**

Welcome back as we start another academic year at University of the Pacific. It is wonderful to see our new students arrive in Stockton. Our new law students started two weeks ago in Sacramento and our new dental class started this summer in San Francisco.

Each fall, I enjoy meeting the parents of our freshmen, and each year I enjoy hearing story after story from parents as they applaud the seamless transition we give our freshmen. But this year, I heard a story from two parents that was particularly telling.

They were disappointed in the information provided on the website for parents. After sharing this with a staff member at orientation, the next morning they were pulled aside by the web developer and spent an hour describing the improvements they thought were needed on the web site.

These parents were so impressed by our commitment at University of the Pacific to improve how we serve our students and their parents. Thank you all for sharing in that spirit!

Today I am going to talk about the future of our University and the four institutional priorities that will move us forward in bold directions over the next 18 - 24 months. In a nutshell, our future is all about our students' success. Two years ago, we identified important strategic directions, captured in our strategic plan by looking into the future and seeing the rapidly changing landscape for higher education.

It is interesting that President Obama spent last week discussing with the nation the very same issues we discussed then. There has never been a time when a college degree is more important - and yet college is seemingly less accessible, less affordable, and less successful.

- During the last 20 years, while family income has increased 7%, the cost to attend college (after grants & scholarships) has increased 52%!
- Students and their families are paying a larger fraction of their college costs with student loans - in fact, nationally, student college debt now surpasses credit card debt.

- Students want to know that, if they take out loans for four years of college, that they will graduate. Yet, nationally, only 59% of freshmen actually receive a degree in 6 years.
- Students and their families are now asking "Is college worth the cost anymore?"

We know that a college education is a wise investment, and that it prepares a graduate for a meaningful life and a successful career - including a lifetime of learning and greater earnings. But college students and their parents aren't so sure anymore- they expect to see evidence of the value they will get out of college.

They expect an excellent education and costs held down. They expect immediate benefits after graduation, such as a good job or entrance into a good graduate school, and they expect the long term benefits - preparation for a better life and a great career. Students want confidence that the school they are attending is "worth it".

The good news is that University of the Pacific is all about serving our students well - it is our mission, it is why each of us is here. And our Strategic Plan, *Pacific 2020*, is about serving our current and our future students better.

- Build the reputation of our academic programs for excellent value
- Offer new programs that will serve new students - especially adults in Sacramento and San Francisco
- Improve our students' success - academic completion and graduate outcomes
- Build our capacities so that we can achieve those goals.

Our strategic future is about making what is good about University of the Pacific, our commitment to our students, even better.

Last spring, we made important promises to our students. We chose to improve affordability by keeping our tuition increases low - the lowest undergraduate increase in 12 years. We chose to focus and align our programs this year - to be sure that what we do, we do very well. We chose to be the best stewards of our student's tuition - by finding money for our new initiatives not by raising tuition, but by finding cost savings in our current budget. These were important and bold actions - and we are on our way to be a better University.

At our leadership retreat in June, the Cabinet, deans and strategic planning committee met to discuss what the most important next steps are in the next 18-24 months. The message was loud and clear: we must take actions fast in these four areas:

1. Focus and align our programs.
2. Launch new academic programs
3. Improve student success
4. Advance through philanthropy

Each of these priorities will move us forward in important ways.

## **1. Focusing and aligning our programs.**

Our effort to review all of our programs, from administrative to academic, is the most important priority this year. It is the first and necessary step toward excellence in what we do - whether an academic degree program or student services. It is also the necessary step to see how we can be more cost effective in how we do our work. We will be making hard choices to focus on efforts that best serve our students; are aligned with our strategic future; and are the wisest use of our resources. As a result of these reviews, we will be a much better university because of your involvement.

For example, this summer, groups of people from Stockton, Sacramento and San Francisco met for half-day retreats to discuss how they could collaborate more effectively, do a better job and spend less money, whether it was human resources, financial aid or communications. You will see the results of that good thinking tomorrow when the administrative reports, along with the Vice President and Provost recommended actions, are released to the University. I am proud of the collective commitment of our staff to our students.

Our academic programs are now starting their reviews, and I am confident the faculty will be deeply engaged and make important contributions to strengthening our academic programs.

## **2. Launching New Academic Programs**

We need to offer new academic programs that students want because of their quality and their relevance - especially in Sacramento and San Francisco where we can reach adult students. Our reputation for strong health programs, and our presence in three cities, gives us excellent opportunities to attract new students.

We have two new programs - the Master of Sciences in Law that started in Sacramento two weeks ago, and the Master of Arts degree in Food Studies, targeted for San Francisco, going through the approval process now.

There are three other programs that are being planned this year:

- Establishing a Graduate School of Business & Policy in Sacramento
- Offering an Audiology degree program in San Francisco
- Creating a new School of Health

And other good ideas are being considered by schools. We are well on our way to becoming a 3-City university where we offer a wide array of high demand programs in all three of our cities.

And this year, we celebrate the completion of our new San Francisco campus at 155 5<sup>th</sup> Street. After 3 years of planning and renovation, our new building will house the dental school in

July, and will have space for other University programs on the first floor. Thank you to the people that worked so hard to design and renovate this building - especially Vice President Cavanaugh, the Provost, and the team from the dental school. In March, we will invite faculty and staff from Stockton and Sacramento to visit and tour the new building.

### **3. Improve student success.**

At University of the Pacific - an expensive private university with a reputation for caring about our students - the success of our students must reflect our values and our mission. We want every student to succeed at Pacific. Last year, only 63% of freshmen actually graduated from Pacific in 6 years, yet our aspirant peers have 79% of their students graduate.

There are two important initiatives to help our students succeed to graduation and beyond:

#### Early Alert:

- We will launch an Early Alert system that allows faculty to easily inform advisors and the Referral Center if freshmen are demonstrating poor academic performance early in the semester. The system will be piloted in Spring 2014 and implemented in Fall 2014.

#### College to Career.

- "College to Career" will integrate career planning, faculty mentoring, and academic advising into each student's academic experience from the moment they arrive at Pacific. This will allow them to be intentional and effective in discovering their career interests and plan-fully link their learning in their major with experiential learning opportunities such as summer internships or research projects. They can then articulate their skills and abilities in a job interview so that each graduate is as successful as they can be.

We can make student academic and career planning success a hallmark of the Pacific experience.

### **4. Advance through Philanthropy**

Let me tell you a story: Bob Powell, and his wife Jeannette, were very successful developers in Sacramento. They came from humble beginnings and neither of them went to college, but wished they had. With no children, they wanted to leave their estate to where it could make the biggest difference. They believed in University of the Pacific, and they wanted to help young people attend our fine university. But they also believed that others should help too - so most of their extraordinary gift of over \$100 million dollars will provide a match if someone else donates an endowed scholarship or an endowed gift for an academic program.

This fall, we will announce the Powell Gift in October when the gift is fully received. We will begin a Powell Match campaign - build donor enthusiasm and fundraising momentum, and we will prepare to launch the university's comprehensive campaign next summer. We will achieve Bob and Jeannette's

dream - enabling more students to attend University of the Pacific.

Because of your efforts, University of the Pacific has a bold future. We will focus what we do in order to best serve our students, offer new programs to new students, improve the academic and career success of our students, and through philanthropy, build support for our students and their education.

We are on our way to becoming one of the best universities in California, because of your dedication to our student's education and to their success.