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Letter - President's Message Regarding the Jane Doe Lawsuit

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President's Message Regarding the Jane Doe Lawsuit

November 15, 2010

To the University Community:

Yesterday, the Sacramento Bee ran a story that criticized the way the University has handled a lawsuit, "Jane Doe vs. University of the Pacific," which was related to a sexual assault that occurred on campus in 2008. The lawsuit was dismissed by the U.S. District Court in Sacramento on September 17. The plaintiff is appealing, and the University expects the same outcome on appeal.

The Bee's story is highly misleading. I encourage you to read the University's response at www.PacificFacts.com <<http://www.pacificfacts.com/>> . There, you will also find a brief summary of what happened in the Jane Doe case, copies of some litigation filings, and information about Pacific's extensive assault prevention, victim-support and judicial resources.

As President, my highest priority is protecting the safety and welfare of all members of the University community so they can learn and work in a respectful and welcoming environment. I also expect that victims of any type of violence be cared for with compassion, and that we provide all the resources we can to help a victim cope with and recover from a traumatic incident.

While I was not President during this time, I have spent considerable time reviewing the facts and I am confident that the University provided the victim with the care and support that we all would expect. We had best practices in place for supporting her and adjudicating disciplinary procedures, we followed those practices, and we acted to protect the campus.

While we know we handled this well, we also know that we must always continue to build awareness of the dangers of sexual assault on college campuses. To that end, Pacific has augmented its educational programs with larger forums like our annual Keep It Consensual workshops and last spring's Enough Is Enough violence awareness symposium. Pacific Intercollegiate Athletics has increased its prevention programs in partnership with the Division of Student Life. I am also pleased that Pacific has just appointed its first full-time Director of the Women's Resource Center, Corrie Martin. Corrie will champion initiatives that deepen understanding of gender issues and improve the campus climate for women students, faculty and staff.

I know this situation has been troubling for many of you, as it has for me. Because no matter how appropriately we handled the incident, it does not change the fact that a student in our community was victimized. I share your deep distress over this. I also share your resolve to prevent any more violence on our campuses, and I am thankful to the dedicated staff and faculty who work hard on a daily basis to keep our learning environment safe and supportive.

Thank you for your support and dedication to University of the Pacific.

Sincerely,

Pamela A. Eibeck, PhD
President