16: Pacific Seminars: In Search of the “Good Society”  
*By Paula Sheil ’75*  
Pacific’s highly acclaimed general education trilogy, Pacific Seminars, is helping students integrate theoretical education with citizenship and personal values.

18: Funding Positive Impact  
*By Joyce McCallister*  
An engineering major gets hands-on experience while helping to provide important medical technology to clinics in developing nations.

20: With Only One Word  
Incoming students are challenged to define themselves using only one word.

24: Time to Say Thanks  
*By Joyce McCallister*  
Four professors are honored by the Pacific Alumni Association for their mentoring of students and alumni.
The Value of a Pacific Education

By Pamela A. Eibeck, President

The school year is well under way, and our three campuses are humming with activity. It’s another exciting year at University of the Pacific. The most competitive admissions process to date has yielded one of the strongest first-year classes in our history, and U.S. News & World Report has again ranked Pacific a top 100 university. We are thriving even in these uncertain times.

Yet families across the nation have been deeply affected by the economic downturn. For many, sending children to college requires great sacrifice. It is understandable that some parents and students might wonder what makes a college education worth the cost. What does education do for our lives as individuals? How does it benefit our communities?

According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the kind of education we provide at Pacific — one that is broad and deep, that integrates a wide range of disciplines while facilitating long-term engagement with specific issues and approaches — is life enhancing. It helps us develop intellectually, socially and ethically. It allows us to engage with the wealth of the world’s knowledge. It helps us become independent and discover who we are. Education teaches us how to work with others, and prepares us to assume our civic responsibilities.

Liberal education is the philosophy of education that encourages broad study and critical thinking, and focuses on social and intellectual development. “Liberal” is not used here in its contemporary political sense. Rather its root is the Latin liber, meaning “free.” Liberal education frees and opens the mind. This approach to teaching and learning has a long tradition within the American higher education system. A 21st-century liberal education is even more robust than its precursors of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Whereas in the past liberal education focused on the western world, today its scope is global and multicultural. Whereas in the past it was the province of an elite few, today it is available to all. And, whereas in the recent past it has been called impractical, today we recognize its usefulness.

A liberal education teaches us critical and creative thinking, communication skills, ethical reasoning and community engagement. It instills high-level skills that transfer from job to job and experience to experience.

And it might surprise you to hear that it’s also a critical component of the best professional education. University of the Pacific has shown that students preparing for graduate study in pharmacy, dentistry or law can do so in a liberal, or mind-opening way. No matter what our students are interested in or what paths they intend to take, they’ll get their best start at Pacific.

Visit my website at www.Pacific.edu/President or find me on Facebook.

I welcome your ideas at president@pacific.edu
Enjoying Pacific Review

I just wanted to send my congratulations on the summer issue of Pacific Review. It is an outstanding edition, well put together and interesting to read. Too often I just skim through the Review. I attended College of the Pacific so long ago that I do not recognize any of the faculty, students or activities at the school. (I say “College of the Pacific” because I graduated in 1946!)

I attended the class reunion when we were granted membership in the Half-Century Club, and the A Cappella Choir reunion that established a scholarship in J. Russell Bodley’s name (he conducted a joint choir at a concert that weekend, I remember).

This particular issue was so interesting I read it cover to cover. I certainly enjoyed reading about the new President of the University. What an outstanding woman we have as President! Each article had the same appeal to me as a reader. Thank you, staff and writers, for the fascinating read. A job well done!

— Connie (Cochran) Drake ’46

On the Inter-American Program

I enjoyed the article about Pacific’s Inter-American Program as it has developed and is developing over the years. I well remember the one course I took in Covell — alas, I have forgotten the name of the sprightly Peruvian woman who taught it — and I applaud your efforts and those of the University to foster inter-American cooperation, a subject dear to my heart.

I was surprised that there was no mention of the Inter-American Studies graduate program under Dr. Walter Payne that existed for some years. I was privileged to be one of the students with Dr. Payne, and I have always felt that we who were in it received a very special education. I was an elementary teacher in Stockton at the time, and I received my master’s degree in inter-American studies with a major in history in June 1968.

For some time, I served as a bilingual community counselor for Stockton Unified and, after retirement in 1976, I continued to read and study about Latin America and travel widely there, with much time in Mexico. Bravo for the University’s recognition of the importance of this field, but please don’t forget this part of the University’s history!

— Elizabeth Stone O’Neill ’56, ’58

More Thoughts on Venezuela

Brady Norvall’s letter to the Pacific Review was treading into an arena of partisan politics. Though the typical reaction in the states is to demonize Hugo Chavez, probably the truth is closer to the middle gray. I have one friend from Venezuela who vehemently dislikes Chavez; I have another friend living there who wrote a book about Chavez and, if anything, lionizes him. Mr. Norvall’s blanket statement regarding the thousands of instances where Chavez pillaged the arts and muted and punished the people should be supported with evidence.

I rather like Hugo Chavez for having the guts to criticize President Bush regarding the war in Iraq; for surviving the coup against him; and for offering heating oil to the residents of the northeast United States several chilly winters ago.

The conventional wisdom about Chavez might not always be true. To rephrase Mr. Norvall, it should not be assumed that our great alma mater either embraces or disparages Venezuela’s policies.

— Roger Goldblatt ’72, ’73

We’d like to hear from you!

Pacific Review welcomes signed letters of 200 words or less from readers. We reserve the right to edit all letters. Please send correspondence to:

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