

Diversity Message Summer, 2022.

Throughout the year, you have received various messages accentuating different aspects of diversity. Whether it be individuals, concepts, or movements, each diversity message brought something to light. As a student of La Sierra University, it is an honor to write the last diversity message you will receive for the academic year. It is only fitting that the final diversity message has to do with the university we call home.

My time at La Sierra has allowed me to cross paths with remarkable individuals. People challenged my way of thinking and presented me with different worldviews since they came from - different worlds. This taught me two key lessons. One: assumptions are the *lowest* form of knowledge; Two: you do not need to *believe to understand*. So much can be learned simply by lending a listening ear or persisting through a conversation that challenges how you see the world. A myriad of enlightenment can be garnered if we look at the diversity our university has to offer when we amplify the voices of our multitude.

Often, we hear the affirmation that La Sierra University is the most *diverse* institution in the nation; indeed, it is true. A mosaic of nationalities and worldviews thrive in an oasis flanked by mountains around us. However, what I implore all those reading this message to consider is a question, what have we done with this affirmation of identity? Rather, where do we go from here? In all that has transpired in the world, namely the last two years, if there was ever a time, now we must ask ourselves who we wish to be.

We stand at a critical juncture in society. The difference is now a source of argument; to disagree is to hate. At times it is challenging to navigate a polarized society content with indifference and dissonance. However, I would make the case that our *diversity* is the very possession that will be our guiding light in this period of darkness. We can learn to appreciate difference by embracing and acknowledging the diversity we bring to the world. By leaning into the variety, we get to our campus and the globe, we can find ingenious solutions to navigating the adverse realities of life. *We cannot have unity without a difference*. Each of you brings a life experience different than those around you; use it to enrich your life and seek to learn the life experience of others. It has been a pleasure to attend La Sierra University and add my life to the mosaic of diversity we have to offer.

Grace & Peace in the Hereafter, L. Steven Dorsey III