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## Dean's Letter - Education as a Social Act

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# Education as a Social Act

What must be done? What must we do? What must you do? What must I do? Our mission can mean many things to many people, but at the core, the college always arrives at the act of educating. That is what we do!

Coincidentally, if we take any of the many challenges we now face as a society and think about ways to address them, it will take little time to arrive at the fundamental need for education. We need to educate scientists who develop vaccines. We need to educate nurses who take care of the sick. We need to educate public health and social workers who help us understand and address the many symptoms of health disparities and inequities in our society. We need to educate historians and writers and artists to help us document, understand and interpret the moment we are living through. We need to educate everyone to listen to and honor the dignity of one another, to be empathic with others' experiences and struggles. We need to educate leaders to lead us into a better tomorrow. And we must stand against racism in all that we do.

Education in this context is not simply the delivery of knowledge—it is a social act, through which we help to build a resilient, compassionate, effective and moral community.

In the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (LAS), we are committed to that mission, and the pandemic has shown us how amazingly resilient we can be in meeting that commitment. Even while physically distancing, we continue to educate. The efforts deployed by our faculty and staff last spring quarter were extraordinary. We pivoted quickly and effectively from curricula delivered mainly on campus to curricula delivered mainly online. Our long track record of excellence in technology-mediated education has



served us well, and continues to do so as we keep the safety of our students as our top priority.

In the past, we have celebrated how our LAS faculty and staff have spoken on behalf of the voiceless. In this issue of Insights, we celebrate how they are helping our students find their own voices in times of social unrest.

Because of our new digital format, in this issue you will not only read about how our students wrote a communal poem about the Black Lives Matter movement but also be able to see and hear them perform their pantoum. I am sure you will feel the same sense of pride and hope that I felt when I heard them for the first time.

Our alumni continue to be a critical part of all we do. You continue to support our LAS family with your amazing testimonials, advocacy and financial resources. As you review this issue of Insights, please make use of the feedback button you will find at the end of every story to make your voice heard.

May the liberal arts be with you!

*Guillermo*

Guillermo Vásquez de Velasco, Dean

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