

August 2025

Dear Loyal Leo,

It is my privilege to thank you for the generosity and trust you place in the University of La Verne. Your philanthropic support furthers our mission and directly enhances the student experience—and we want to ensure you see the full impact of your investment.

That's why we are launching a new monthly communication series for donors we're calling, "**Because of You...**" Each month, you'll hear from a campus leader who will share how your giving is making a real difference at the university and for our students.

The voices you'll hear from will offer a glimpse into the heart of the university, as we share examples of how your philanthropy propels teaching and learning, discovery and transformation, and spirit and belonging within our Leopard community. Whether it's a student thriving because of scholarship support or a faculty member advancing vital knowledge due to new resources, the impact is real—and it's **Because of You...**

Letters will be sent to you monthly by email and bimonthly by mail, and all will be available and saved online at univ.lv/because. This web page has links to upcoming events you're invited to attend, past donor impact reports, and a form to update your contact information. It will also be used to share supplemental and supporting materials that may accompany or be referenced in some of the monthly letters.

This month, I especially encourage you to visit univ.lv/because to view our new University Scholarship Fund Annual Report. For many years, we have created annual reports for our named scholarship funds, and this year we added a new report for the critically important University Scholarship Fund. Each year, hundreds of gifts of all sizes are made to this fund and pooled together to provide financial aid to our students who have the greatest financial need. This collective support produces a tremendous impact by making a University of La Verne education accessible to those students who could not otherwise afford it. In fact, during this past academic year, 761 donors made gifts totaling \$665,000! That amount benefits several hundred new and returning Leos by reducing or eliminating their need for student loans. Perhaps most importantly in this report, you'll get to meet a few of the amazing student recipients and read—in their own words—a little about who they are, how they're involved on campus, and how scholarships make a difference for them.

By giving you this monthly insider perspective on the university, we hope the “**Because of You...**” series brings your generosity to life, communicates our profound gratitude, and affirms the essential role donors like you play in our shared future. If you have feedback on this new series or want to let us know who on campus you want to hear from, please contact Russel Heskin, director of donor relations, at rheskin@laverne.edu or (909) 448-4359.

Thank you for being a Loyal Leo!

Warm regards,

Sherri G. Mylott, Ed.D.
Vice President of University Advancement



September 2025

Dear Loyal Leo,

The University of La Verne Office of Alumni Engagement has a simple goal: to help build and nurture a community of lifelong learners; and whether you're one of our 90,000+ alumni, a current or former parent, a friend, or some combination of these, as a donor you are a critical part of our community. Your generosity and commitment are responsible for making our Leopard community thrive, and for that, we are deeply grateful.

The impact of your giving is felt in every corner of our community. From student success initiatives to campus enhancements, your investment ensures La Verne remains a place where students excel, alumni lead, and our community flourishes. I see firsthand every day how your support creates a ripple effect that leads to this impact. Your donations provide scholarships and other resources that motivate students to work hard and get involved in campus life. These students then graduate onto successful careers and return to campus as engaged alumni to inspire the next generation of students to succeed. **Because of you**, our community becomes more connected, the university's reputation grows stronger, and the value of every ULV degree is elevated.

The beauty of all this is that, whether we've met in person or not, we are all connected by our shared dedication to the University of La Verne's core values. And when we do come together as one community, it is something special to behold; so please feel welcome to join us at any one of our many [events](#) or for our online [lifelong learning webinars](#). In just a couple weeks, we'll be hosting our annual [Homecoming and Family Weekend](#), October 3-5, 2025. There are several events throughout the weekend to celebrate every member of our community. It is truly a special time to revel in being a Leopard, and I hope you can make it!

Thank you for believing in our mission and empowering our students, faculty, and programs to thrive. And thank you for helping us continue the important work of making this a place we can all proudly call home.

With immense gratitude and admiration,

Lucero Rojo, MS '16
Assistant Vice President of Alumni Engagement



October 2025

Dear Loyal Leo,

I write this to you in my first semester as the University of La Verne's new Provost, or chief academic officer. I came to this position after working at public universities, where costs are offset by the State of California. It's hard to beat the CSU for access and affordability; on some campuses students pay less than half of the actual cost of their degrees. But there's a downside: for all its magic the public sector is still government work, characterized by red tape and an architectural emphasis on concrete.

So coming from there to here, the first thing I noticed was the beauty. The City of La Verne is at that optimal distance from the big city, adjacent to limitless possibilities but feeling like a college town. It's especially striking that the community and campus are so porous; the servers at Café Allegro know most of my colleagues, and the local barber and barista are both students. This summer I felt like I traded Ayn Rand for Normal Rockwell.

But then, with the start of the semester and the return of students, the vibe gets vibrant. It turns out this beautiful space that looks so exclusive actually isn't: educators and students of all backgrounds are sincerely welcomed, contribute right away, and belong. You have to wonder how ULV does it, that secret sauce that brings the serene, classical college experience within reach of so many, enriching us all.

The secret, of course, is our donors. For a surprising number of our students, net tuition approaches what they would pay at a CSU. Your gifts and bequests keep the campus gorgeous and the learning relevant, supporting cutting-edge faculty research, guest speakers and symposia, and of course, scholarships for students. Some are here paying, yes, less than half the cost of their degrees. And even for those at full price, the benefits of this cultural and socioeconomic diversity are enormous. Our graduates leave ULV unusually ready for a borderless, interconnected world, where they'll work with colleagues, clients, and customers who are nothing like themselves.

So, thank you. What I most love about this place, and the reason I hope to stay for a while, is its uncanny ability to bring this first-class education to the full spectrum of the people who want it. We do that in a thousand different ways, every day.

But mostly, it's **because of you.**

Ken O'Donnell
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs



November 2025

Dear Loyal Leo,

When I first arrived at the University of La Verne, I knew I wanted to continue the journey of leadership and service that began in my high school's student government. I didn't expect, however, how quickly ULV would feel like home, or how deeply it would shape who I am becoming. During orientation, our Dean of Students recognized me from my previous involvement in student leadership and encouraged me to get involved with ASULV, the Associated Students of the University of La Verne. That moment set me on a path that has defined my college experience.

As a Political Science major and History minor in the Honors Program, I've been fortunate to study under professors who are both accomplished and deeply committed to their students. The small, discussion-based classes have allowed me to connect with faculty and peers in ways that go far beyond the classroom. Here, I've increasingly developed the skills to think critically, challenge ideas respectfully, and engage in dialogue that broadens my perspective. These are lessons I know will stay with me as I pursue a career in public service.

More than 95% of traditional undergraduates at the University of La Verne receive financial aid. I am proud and fortunate to be among this group. As a scholarship recipient myself, I know firsthand how transformative donor support can be. **Because of you**, I can dedicate more of my time to studying, serving, and growing as a leader rather than worrying about how to make ends meet. Your generosity has opened doors to opportunities that would not have been possible otherwise, from being a member of the Model United Nations and Phi Alpha Theta (our national history honor society), to joining the local UNA (United Nations Association) Pomona Valley chapter, to serving in ASULV previously as Vice President and now as President.

Through ASULV, I've had the privilege of working closely with faculty, staff, and administrators to ensure that student voices are heard and valued. I've seen how your support touches every corner of our campus, whether through scholarships, student programs, or the resources that keep our community thriving. Each initiative, each success story, and each student achievement reflects your belief in the potential of ULV students.

The University of La Verne is a special place because it combines academic excellence with a genuine sense of belonging and community. Here, professors know your name, peers cheer for your success, and your identity grows. That environment exists **because of you**.

Thank you for believing in us, for investing in our growth, and for helping make ULV the place it is today. **Because of you**, students like me can learn, lead, and serve with confidence and purpose.

Sincerely,

Evan Lyons

University of La Verne '27 | Political Science BA | History Minor

ASULV President 2025-2026

Phi Alpha Theta 2025-2027

ULV MUN 2024-2027



December 2025

Dear Loyal Leo,

As I reflect on my 48-year journey with the University of La Verne, first as a shy, first-generation international student from war-torn Lebanon and later as an administrator serving at multiple positions, I am overcome with gratitude and humility. My parents sent me to the American Armenian International College, associated with what was then La Verne College, because they wanted a safe and nurturing environment where I could learn and thrive far from the uncertainties of home. What began as a leap of faith became a lifelong relationship with an institution that shaped my values, character, and sense of purpose, and provided me with a truly unique opportunity to raise a family.

When I first stepped onto campus, I found more than a college. I found a community of faculty and administrators that welcomed me, believed in me, and inspired me to grow and succeed. Those early days taught me that this institution is not just a place of learning; it is a place of belonging. That sense has stayed with me throughout every stage of not only my professional life, but also my personal life. This is where I met my wife and where I watched my two sons graduate. Between the four of us, we hold eight ULV degrees (soon to be nine). We are Leos for Life, and the same values that drew me here continue to guide my family today.

Now as Vice President of Administration & Finance and Chief Financial Officer, I have seen us evolve from a small regional college into a nationally recognized university. Financially, our operating budget of \$17 million in 1985 grew to more than \$200 million today, and an endowment of less than \$1 million in 1985, grew to \$195 million. This growth over the years has allowed us to expand academic programs, modernize facilities, and extend our reach to serve students regionally and internationally; yet through every change, the spirit of this university has remained constant, grounded in inclusivity, compassion, and service. As I prepare for my retirement next month, I do so with confidence in the university's future. We are in a position of financial strength with a track record of positive operating margins, and our strategic priorities continue to center on student success, access, and financial sustainability.

In my decades at the University of La Verne, I have had the privilege of witnessing how your donations have strengthened the university and transformed lives. **Because of you**, students receive scholarships that make education accessible; and faculty and staff are empowered to innovate, build programs, and create life-changing experiences. Gifts large and small have fueled opportunities that ripple far beyond our campus. Your belief in our mission sustains us. It is because of your trust, commitment, and generosity that we continue to thrive and serve as a beacon of hope and an opportunity for future generations.

Like you, I give back, too; and I personally do so, because I have lived the La Verne story. I have experienced firsthand how your philanthropy enables education to transform a life. Thank you for being part of that story and for believing in our students, our mission, and our future.

Because of you, the University of La Verne continues to inspire, to empower, and to shine.

Wishing you and your families and friends, peace, joy, and gratitude this holiday season.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Avo Kechichian '80 '85

Vice President of Administration & Finance / Chief Financial Officer

