



Dear Pacifica Community,

Happy New Year, and welcome to 2025! I hope these past few weeks allowed you to pause, reconnect, and recharge—with yourself, your loved ones, and the beauty surrounding us. As we step into this new chapter together, may we carry forward a sense of renewal, inspiration, and curiosity for all the possibilities this year holds.

Did you know 2025 is the Year of the Snake in the Chinese zodiac? I've been reflecting on this, which stirred a memory for me. Years ago, I attended a seminar where the snake was explored as an ancient and often misunderstood symbol. Revisiting my notes recently, I found myself inspired by the quiet wisdom of this enigmatic creature. This reflection raised a question that feels as relevant now as ever: How do we listen to the soul's voice in these pressing times, allowing it to guide us with integrity and purpose rather than being swept away by the restless whispers of fear?

The Snake offers four lessons that resonate deeply with Pacifica's mission, values, and our commitment to depth psychology. As I reflect on these teachings, I want to share how they've shaped my leadership journey and the insights I've carried forward about this ancient wisdom.

- Moving close to the earth, the snake *connects deeply to what grounds us*. Its deliberate, fluid movements speak to the balance between staying rooted and embracing transformation. This duality reflects Pacifica's mission: remaining anchored in the rich traditions of depth psychology while evolving toward new ways of knowing and being.
- The snake's ability to *hold tension gracefully*—between rigidity and fluidity, containment, and freedom—mirrors the psyche's capacity to navigate complexity. Leadership, too, often requires this delicate balance: creating spaces where opposites can coexist, where diverse perspectives are not only welcomed but seen as essential for growth. These spaces of inquiry allow us to explore the multifaceted nature of human experience, just as Pacifica does.

- When the snake sheds its skin, it offers a powerful metaphor for renewal. This act isn't about rejection but release—*letting go of what no longer serves to make space for deeper, more meaningful growth*. I've found this lesson invaluable in my leadership: learning to let go of outdated practices or ideas while fostering a culture of imagination and transformation. This echoes Pacifica's dedication to fostering growth that ripples outward, addressing cultural and planetary concerns.
- Perhaps the most striking lesson comes from the snake's unblinking gaze—its perpetual awareness of what lies beneath the surface. This attentiveness mirrors depth psychology's commitment to exploring the unseen forces that shape our lives. Leadership, too, requires this kind of presence: *looking deeply, even when it's uncomfortable, to find clarity and move toward understanding and healing*.

The wisdom of the snake is woven into Pacifica's mission: to stay grounded yet visionary, to hold tension with grace, to transform through release, and to remain attuned to the soul's quiet urgings. These lessons are especially relevant when higher education faces seismic shifts—emerging technologies, evolving societal values, and urgent calls for equity.

As we step into 2025, I invite you to join me in reflecting on these questions inspired by the snake's teachings:

- What in your life or work longs to be shed to make space for what is becoming?
- How will you stay rooted in purpose, even as you stretch toward transformation?
- What tensions are you holding, and how might they reveal new insights?

In alignment with these themes, we begin this year with intentional, thoughtful action at Pacifica, guided by our 2030 Strategic Plan, *Onward Together*. Our focus for 2025 is clear: expanding our impact, enhancing student outcomes, empowering organizational development, and elevating fiscal sustainability to ensure a thriving academic community. These priorities are not just goals but reflections of our shared commitment to growth, reflection, innovation, and the well-being of everyone in our community. Here are some of the key initiatives already underway:

Ensuring Institutional Legacy & Student Support, we begin 2025 by completing a rigorous three-year recertification process with the U.S. Department of Education, securing approval for the next five years. This significant milestone ensures our students continued access to federal financial aid, empowering them to pursue their academic and professional aspirations. We commend Tracie Teague, Director of Financial Aid, and her team for their exceptional work ensuring that Pacifica's Depth Psychology education remains a pathway to transformation for all.

Empowering Organizational Development, we are transforming our operational systems and the backbone of serving our students, faculty, and staff through implementing a new

Student Information System, Jenzabar One. This new system will unify student information, financial aid, and institutional operations with its integrated platform. The adoption and implementation of this cutting-edge, cohesive program, which will carry into 2026, represents a shift in how we align our tools to fulfill our mission. Griff Jones, Senior Director of IT, said, *“Jenzabar One is not just a system upgrade; it’s a transformation. It aligns technology with our mission, simplifying processes and fostering greater connection and collaboration. It gives us the tools to focus on what truly matters—supporting students and empowering faculty and staff.”* We thank Griff and his team for their visionary leadership in bringing this initiative to life.

Enriching Faculty Experience is essential to nurturing an academic environment where educators flourish as mentors, thought leaders, and collaborators. The comprehensive revision of the Faculty Handbook, initiated through the faculty Omnibus Resolutions, addresses key areas of shared governance, faculty needs, and alignment with institutional policies. This initiative exemplifies Pacifica’s commitment to creating a clear, transparent, and well-structured framework that equips faculty with the resources and guidance necessary to fulfill their roles effectively while fostering shared governance that acknowledges their contributions to the institution. With the strategic guidance of Stevens Strategy and Bahara Stapelberg (General Counsel and VP of Policy) and close involvement of the Office of the Provost, faculty body, and Office of People, Culture, and Belonging, the project is expected to be completed by spring 2025. Upon completion, the updated handbook will strengthen Pacifica’s academic foundation and ensure faculty are fully supported in their scholarship.

Elevating Fiscal Sustainability, our partnership with Phoenix Philanthropy, and the ongoing feasibility study for a major fundraising campaign will position Pacifica to expand scholarships, enhance programming, and strengthen infrastructure. These efforts reflect our dedication to ensuring financial growth and amplifying our commitment to tending soul in and of the world as a world-renowned leader in depth psychology. The recent \$20,000 contribution to the Pacifica Promise Program, bringing the total to \$27,000, exemplifies the generosity of our Board of Trustees and community support of the Pacifica Promise Program. These funds will advance the principles of depth psychology in underserved Central Coast communities.

Guided by our values and rooted in depth psychology, the office of the president and CEO's strategic priorities for 2025 will center on:

-  Investing in mental health initiatives to support students, faculty, and staff.
-  Harnessing Pacifica’s rich history and depth psychology expertise to enhance student experiences, faculty scholarship, and research impact.
-  Forging transformative partnerships that align with our mission and expand learning, teaching, and service opportunities.
-  Laying the groundwork for a major fundraising campaign to expand scholarships, strengthen programming, and ensure long-term growth.

At Pacifica, we understand that each community member is an ambassador for student recruitment and retention, contributing to our mission of fostering creative learning and research in depth psychology. One immediate way to support Pacifica is by sharing the opportunity of [Pacifica Experience Day on January 24, 2025](#). This event showcases our programs, faculty, and transformative learning environment. Your participation in spreading the word helps us welcome new voices into our community. Additionally, I encourage you to read my latest thought leadership piece published in Forbes, titled [“How Depth Psychological Practices Can Transform the Way You Lead in 2025 and Beyond”](#). This article reflects Pacifica’s mission to extend the principles of depth psychology into leadership and organizational practices, inspiring broader impact. *For the latest on Pacifica news, programs, events, and Extension and International Studies offerings, visit: [Pacifica News](#) and [Pacifica Extension & International Studies Offerings & Memberships](#).*

Every priority mentioned in this message reflects a commitment to tending to the soul of Pacifica—our people, our mission, and the communities we serve. Transforming how we work reduces inefficiencies, giving our faculty and staff the space to engage more deeply with their purpose. By leveraging technology, we create tools that free us to focus on connection, creativity, and care. Griff’s reminder resonates across all we do: *“Technology is only as powerful as the people it serves.”* At Pacifica, everything we build and invest in supports our shared mission of creating spaces for transformation and growth.

Remember, the snake moves forward not by force but by flowing with the earth’s contours. Its wisdom reminds us that leadership—and life are not about rushing but moving thoughtfully, courageously, and with integrity. May we, too, carry these lessons forward as we embrace the challenges and possibilities that lie ahead.

Thank you for your ongoing devotion to Pacifica’s mission. As we journey onward together, let us do so with clarity, purpose, and trust in the extraordinary work we are called to do.

Joyfully Serving,



Dr. Leonie H. Mattison, Ed.D, MBA
President and CEO

