



# The Right Thing To Do

I just could not do it. It just did not make any sense. I had to come with another alternative to denying Luisa.\* In the spring of 2007 I was reading my quota of daily applications when I ran across Luisa's application. Her application showed that she was a stellar applicant. She was ranked number one in her class, had a perfect GPA, a rigorous curriculum (several honors and AP courses). She requested that we consider her SAT scores, which we do not require because Pitzer College (CA) is a test-optional institution; they were extremely high. She was very active in her school and local community. She was so well rounded! And to top it all she was Latina and first generation. What more could we possibly want of this applicant. Nothing! "Oops, this has got to be a mistake," I said to myself. But it was not. She was "undocumented." She had lived in California "illegally" for the last 15 years.

Our practice at Pitzer had been to inform students like Luisa that she could not be considered for admission since she would be classified as an "international student" and the college did not offer financial aid to international students. But, of course, she was not an "international student." I simply could not send her the standard letter letting her know that we could not consider her application further. Instead, I went up one floor to see the President, Laura Skandera Trombly. I handed her Luisa's application file and asked to discuss it in a couple of days.

President Trombly agreed that Luisa's application had to be handled differently. She authorized me to offer a full-tuition scholarship for all her four years at Pitzer! I was elated with her response. She asked that the Admission Committee develop guidelines so she could consider offering this scholarship

on an annual basis. This past academic year, we submitted a set of guidelines to offer the scholarship and she approved them.

We now ask high school counselors in California to nominate one student from their high school that we could consider for this scholarship. We received 78 applications from 78 students. We identified four outstanding candidates from this pool. It was one of the most emotional decisions we have had to make during my 12-year tenure at Pitzer College. All four would have brought unique experiences and talents to the entering class.

It is difficult for a young institution like Pitzer College to make such a bold move. Offering this scholarship means we will be dedicating over a quarter of a million dollars over the next four years to it. I am ex-

tremely proud to be part of a college that is willing to make such a commitment to very deserving students.

*\*Name has been changed.*



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from the University of Oregon, and received his Ed.D. from Seattle University (WA). Rodriguez has spent 35 years in admission, financial aid and enrollment management and currently serves as vice president, admission and financial aid at Pitzer College (CA). His recruitment territories include Hawaii, New Jersey, and a number of schools in the Los Angeles area.

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