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## A Special Teacher Appreciation Day Message from Lila McDowell Carlsen

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Human Resources



*Seaver College Hispanic Studies Spanish Immersion Program in Córdoba, Spain*

Gabriela Mistral was a Chilean schoolteacher who rose to the highest levels of international prestige as a diplomat and poet, ultimately winning the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1945. Her poem "The Teacher's Prayer" (1919) encapsulates both her Christian faith and her holistic approach to teaching and caring for students. Mistral writes:

"Lord, You who taught, forgive me that I teach; forgive me that I bear the name of teacher, the name You bore on Earth.

Grant me such devoted love for my school that not even beauty's flame will detract from my faithful tenderness.

...

Help me to make one of my students my most perfect poem, and leave within her my most striking melody for that day when my own lips no longer sing."

I admire the posture of humility and devotion in Mistral's verses, written over a century ago from a rural girls' school in the southernmost point of South America (Punta Arenas, Chile). To Mistral, teaching was her ministry, and she relied on her faith and strength from God to sustain her work. I believe that teaching is one of the noblest of vocations and that it is a calling to a life of purpose and service.

I can think of so many teachers and mentors in my life for whom I am thankful. They have made a lasting impact on my education and spiritual formation, and it is an honor to carry forward their influence on my life through my own teaching, research, and service at Pepperdine. I also have the privilege of witnessing how our faculty across all of Pepperdine's schools, with programs around the globe, make meaningful impacts in their students' lives that will serve them well in their careers and beyond.

Our Pepperdine students are our most perfect poems. May all of our students and alumni be a lasting legacy of goodness, faithfulness, and service to others throughout the world.

**Lila McDowell Carlsen**

Vice Provost

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*"For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Proverbs 2:6).*



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