

Pacific Union board unaffected by local impact of development

September 25, 2012 • [Nancy Carter](#)

I am writing with regard to Dr. Heather Knight's letter about Pacific Union College's land development plans and Measure U ("[PUC committed to neighbors](#)," Sept. 9).

Who was she really trying to appease by writing that letter? I suspect the Pacific Union College board of trustees that advises her.

Only two of the board's 21 members live in Napa County, and a large percentage of them are developers. Since the intentions of Pacific Union College are the intentions of the board of trustees, it is abundantly clear why they feel no compunction to adhere to the "slow growth" policies of Napa County.

Nor would they be concerned with the enormous tax burden falling on the local taxpayers resulting from the subsequent population increase in a rural area only accessible through several narrow, two-lane roads.

Their plans are clearly not driven by an interest in education, the environment, or any other concerns of our local community.

Under the guise of concern for Napa County taxpayers, Knight threatens that county taxes will be swallowed up by the "legal fees and administrative costs" of opposing their plans — revenue that would be better put toward fixing roads and public safety.

This is curious since it is precisely these issues, among others, that will become problematic and potentially disastrous in the long run if the board's plans are pushed through, costing Napa County taxpayers dearly and creating ongoing difficulties that the geographic realities of Angwin and Howell Mountain are not able to support.

The increased tax burden, safety issues, and other practical concerns resulting from increased development in Angwin will include bussing school children twice daily up and down Deer Park Road, a strain on St. Helena schools, water shortage, the need for paid law enforcement and firefighters for this increased population, and so forth.

Many of us remember the terrible fire that devastated the mountains on the eastern side of the valley in the 1970s, destroying several homes.

If there were any such fire or other catastrophe, which becomes more likely with increased population, there would be total gridlock on that road, hampering or even preventing aid and rescue.

Any costs issuing from the threat of legal action from Pacific Union College's legal team would be loose change compared with the ongoing expenses to taxpayers to absorb this burden on our current county infrastructure.

Dr. Knight sets aside a portion of her letter to mention her pride in Pacific Union College's positive ranking by U.S. News and World Report (as if it were the worth of Pacific Union College that is to be put to the ballot) and the beautiful landscape surrounding the campus, but seems not to realize the negative impact Pacific Union College's planned development project will have on both.

Carter lives in St. Helena.