This message is in response to the anonymous alumni message questioning the values and traditions that the Lute crew upholds.

Being a second year rower, and completing my first year on the varsity team, I am personally shocked at the short sightedness of the remarks made about this crew. I would say that the Crew team at PLU, including men, women, varsity, novice, heavyweights, and lightweights are the closest, if not the strongest team at PLU. Under careful guidance of coaches, captains and veteran rowers, younger rowers are not just taught how to pull hard on an oar, but to honor what and who has come before us. We are taught how to win humbly and how to lose graciously.

There are still many values and traditions upheld on the Lute Crew. Novices are told the stories of previous crews. The trophies and banners remind us all of the many victories and championships that have come before us. The legend of Doug Herland is a constant reminder of why we get up at 4:30 AM, why we do uncounted laps around the lake and why we march out of the boathouse when it's raining hard and it's so dark on the water that the only visible objects are the flashing lights on the bow of the boats of the men and woman that are mentally and physically strong enough to endure this great sport. PLU men and women have battled every year for almost 3 decades to keep the Meyer & Lamberth Cups with us, and again this year we won.

Both varsity teams make certain to educate novice rowers during "Novice Week," held in the spring, as to what this sport and what this team is all about. It is at these times that unspoken bonds are created and timeless traditions are passed on.

The tradition of giving tanks to winning crews has become reserved mostly for the largest and most important regattas. If we all gave away tanks every time we lost, none of us would have the means to support ourselves (and we all know PLU is not a rich crew). This especially applies for some of the rowers that pulled 2 or 3 races on that Saturday so we could clench the conference championship. Tanks were exchanged at the Meyer/Lamberth Cup races, the WIRA championships during April and will again be exchanged at the PAC 10 races this coming weekend.

I cannot defend all the actions of my fellow rowers though. Side comments may have been made about another crew, but I assure you that this is not a common practice. We are taught to shake the hands of all crews and show them the respect we all share for this sport. We represent PLU on every trip we take and everytime we line up for a race. Coach Nelson has taught us to be the "dominate force" at our boathouse and has certainly been the most influential person on PLU crew in the last 10 years.

I think it's important that these issues be cleared up and thank this alumni for pointing out some possible shortcomings. I hope that this explanation would help to clear up what we have always held as traditions and values for us. I would also encourage any other alumni or rowers to add their comments onto this message string.