Welcome to the latest issue of SUA Founders. As you can see from the pages of this newsletter, it is a very exciting time at Soka University of America. This past academic year, SUA witnessed tremendous growth as we launched the second phase in the university's development aimed at achieving an even greater level of academic excellence. On May 21st, we graduated the Class of 2006 as the first undergraduate class to graduate from SUA as an accredited institution. This would not have been possible without the kind and generous support of all of you, our precious donors.

As we look ahead to the upcoming academic year, we have a very talented group of students who will make up the new incoming Class of 2010. Also, starting this fall we will begin a new exchange program with Soka University in Japan, welcoming two students who will study abroad at the Aliso Viejo campus for one year. Next year also promises to be an exciting time as we graduate our last class of graduate school students at the Calabasas campus and transition the graduate program to the Aliso Viejo campus. The integration of both campuses will certainly enhance the overall culture and climate of Soka University of America.

With all of these programs slated for the new academic year, the Development Office has been working hard to provide another great opportunity to support our students this fall. On Saturday, October 7, 2006, the second annual Gala, Celebrating a Vision of Peace, will be held at the Aliso Viejo campus. Proceeds from the event will provide much needed scholarships for students from around the world who have come to SUA to experience Soka, or "value-creating," education. I hope you will join me at this most special fundraising event.

On behalf of the students, faculty and staff of Soka University of America, I would like to once again express my sincerest appreciation for your untiring support and generous contributions. I hope you enjoy this issue of SUA Founders.

Daniel Y. Habuki
President
Soka University of America
Celebrating a Vision of Peace

SECOND ANNUAL PEACE GALA
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2006
6:00 PM
SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA • ATHENAEUM

ONE PEOPLE. ONE WORLD.
EDUCATION IS THE KEY.
BE PART OF THE DREAM.

Master of Ceremonies
PATRICK DUFFY

Entertainment by Grammy Award Winning Composer and Saxophonist
WAYNE SHORTER

Proceeds from the evening will provide much needed scholarships for Soka University students from around the world who have come to SUA to experience the unique educational vision. In addition to enjoyable cocktails, delectable hors d’oeuvres, and a delicious dinner, attendees will be able to make a difference through a silent and live auction with wonderful items such as travel, cuisine, fine art, entertainment and sporting events, jewelry and so much more!

Tickets are $250 per person. Seats are limited.
To reserve your seat or to donate an item for the auction, please contact:
Linda Safran at 949-480-4072 or lsafran@soka.edu
On Sunday, May 21st, Soka University of America presented the graduating class of 2006 at its annual undergraduate commencement ceremony, held in the SUA Recreation Center. They are SUA’s second graduating class since the campus opened its doors in 2001, and of the 82 graduating seniors, 21 students completed cum laude. The group represented 15 different countries in a true celebration of diversity.

President Daniel Habuki welcomed the audience and expressed to the graduates, “You are truly the pioneers who wielded the power of hope. You have taken this power of hope and opened currents of hope rooted in optimism, reaching the hearts of many others.” The keynote speaker of the event was David Roselle, the President and Professor of Mathematics at the University of Delaware.

Roselle is a friend of SUA founder Daisaku Ikeda and spoke of the similarities between his school and Soka. Much like SUA, the University of Delaware is committed to certain values such as diversity, a welcoming atmosphere, learning, creativity, and respect for the diverse population that surrounds us. In schools such as these, valuable life lessons are being taught that can’t be found within the standard curriculum of other universities. Roselle stated that the importance of higher learning is “the value of education and knowledge, and the formation of lasting relationships.”

Senior student speakers at the ceremony included Ing Tang, from Singapore, who expressed her appreciation for the donors who have supported her over the years: “to the donors who have supported our impossible dream come true, thank you from the bottom of my heart.” Nobumasa Hiroi, who was raised in Brazil, quoted the founder by saying, “Even if you give up on me, I will never give up on you.” And from India, Kajal Gulati said, “Trust in my potential.” The students discussed their experiences at SUA and the incredible relationships they had formed with their educators, faculty, and fellow students.
The graduation also included performances by the Undergraduate Student Orchestra and Choir, concluding with Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy,” accompanied by a fireworks display.

In a powerful and inspirational message he wrote to the Class of 2006, Daisaku Ikeda asked that they “aspire hope where there is suffering, amplify unity where there is conflict, and propel progress where there is stagnation – and in doing so, usher in a truly global renaissance by fulfilling the roles which [they] were meant to fulfill.” These motivational words served as a memorable send-off for the students and their future beyond SUA.

Did you know...?

SUA seniors who are attending graduate school were accepted by schools such as: Cornell, London School of Economics, University of Illinois, Vanderbilt, Columbia University, University California Irvine, Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Antioch New England Graduate School, Boston University, Claremont, University of Pittsburgh, Temple University, George Washington University, USC, University of Iowa, Illinois Institute of Technology, Indiana University, New York University, Monterey Institute of International Studies, University of Delaware, University of Denver, University of Colorado, Pratt Institute, American University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Hawaii, George Mason University, Cal State Polytechnic University, Berklee College of Music, Sheffield University UK, Bradford University UK, University of London King’s College UK, University of London Birkbeck UK, University of Manchester UK, University of British Columbia Canada and the National University of Cornahue, Argentina.

Alumni Profile

NATHAN GAUER

As a high school student, a college education was nowhere to be found on Nathan Gauer’s radar screen. As a troubled teen, he ran with the wrong crowd and began to head in a direction that would make any parent cringe. By his junior year, he was dragging a 1.1 (D) grade point average. Nathan’s high school teachers and guidance counselors were equally pessimistic about his prospects for attending a 4 year university; he was told by one of them not to even bother taking the SATs since he didn’t seem capable of going to college.

Fortunately, Nathan reached a turning point in his life the summer before his senior year in high school. It was then that he began reading the writings of SUA Founder Daisaku Ikeda. Ikeda’s philosophy inspired Nathan to change his life at the very core. A key component of the change that occurred was Nathan’s reawakened desire to study. He tripled his GPA during his senior year and, after graduating, applied to a local community college in Virginia. There, he earned a 4.0 GPA two semesters in a row. He applied and was accepted to the first class of SUA in 2001.

While at SUA, Nathan balanced his studies by actively contributing to the campus community at SUA. He was the president of the student government during his sophomore year and was editor-in-chief of The Pearl—SUA’s student newspaper—during his final year. Nathan graduated Magna Cum Laude in May of 2005.

On March 14, 2006, Nathan learned that he was accepted to the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Beginning classes this September, he will obtain his Masters of Education in Risk and Prevention Youth Counseling. Nathan is confident the mistakes and negativity of his past will be the means by which he can connect with many troubled youth in the future.
SUA Students Study Abroad
DEVELOPING GLOBAL CITIZENS

and getting adjusted, students have said that they felt ready and were happy to do the semester-long program in their junior year.

Soka University’s mandatory Study Abroad and International internships (SAII) program allows students in their junior year to experience the life, culture, and educational experience of another country.

The Study Abroad/International Internship (SAII) experience occurs in a country in which the student’s language of study at SUA is one of the principal languages spoken. Classes are available in Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish. Before students are ready to study abroad, they are required to take the Language and Culture Program (LCP), which is designed to develop the new language of choice and to deepen cultural knowledge. With this program, they are better prepared to study in another country.

The SAII program at SUA expands students’ life experiences and broadens their worldview, holding true to the university’s mission statement of developing global citizens. While many universities around the nation also offer study abroad programs, SUA is different in that it is among the few four-year institutions that makes studying abroad a required component of every student’s course work. Since the freshman and sophomore years are a time for finding one’s niche...
The Study Abroad committee is made up of Director, Alex Okuda, Fran Fuji and five language professors, who find students the best programs in various parts of the world. They currently work with seven different providers, running programs in 10 countries and 20 cities around the world. In China alone there are four to five different cities where students are studying at any given time.

The Study Abroad/International Internship is beneficial to students on many levels, including being an opportunity to learn a new foreign culture and society, and to live a completely different lifestyle than that of their own country. Says Okuda, "The students tell me that they want to go to a study abroad location where no SUA student has been to and that they want to be as independent as possible. Mainly their idea is that they want to find out who they are and immerse themselves in the culture."

The first graduating class at Soka University of Japan began the tradition of giving a gift back to their University before becoming alumni. Equally determined to leave a lasting legacy and motivated by the students at SUJ, the first graduating class at Soka University of America established the "Class of 2005" scholarship fund. They challenged themselves to become Gold Benefactor donors, recognized for contributing $20,000, before their graduation. The students came together and planned to reach their goal by pledging $200 each to their growing scholarship fund. By doing so, they encompassed a sense of the sacrifice and selflessness that the dedicated donors of SUA have proved possible. On May 22, 2005 just before the procession began, their worthy goal was finally achieved. Later that evening, the class decided that as alumni they would continue to keep their scholarship fund open for 10 years in hopes of collecting at least $100,000, at which point they would be recognized as Founders Circle donors.

One year later, with the establishment of the Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo Alumni Association: Young Founders, the Class of 2006, inspired by the Class of 2005, collected over $50,000 to create the foundation for the Young Founders Alumni Merit Award. In the future some fortunate SUA students will be awarded Alumni Merit Awards in recognition of the effort made by their upperclassmen. This new tradition of supporting their alma mater is a practice the rest of the classes at SUA will continue for years to come.
Sports News at SUA
OLYMPIAN COACHES SOKA STUDENT-ATHLETES

On the cool morning of February 8, Olympic Triple Jump Gold Medalist Al Joyner conducted the entire practice for the Soka University Track & Field team. Joyner led the team in a rigorous warm-up followed by an exhausting conditioning session. "Our Soka students are to be commended for their efforts," stated track coach Scott Slade. "They did a great job."

Joyner concluded practice by saying, "You just did an Olympic workout today. I am heading down to the Olympic Training Center later today and am going to do the exact same workout with them. You should be proud of yourselves."

"We want to expose our athletes to great achievers to help them believe they can also achieve great things in life," Slade said.

"He showed us that our dreams are closer than we think. A guy that is an Olympic Gold medalist is telling us, 'I went through the same things you are going through.' It makes us realize that our dreams are attainable," said Soka athlete Zane Romano. "He made us feel like he cares about the athletes at Soka."

Added Lisa Saperstein, "Having someone as well-known in elite, international athletics such as Al Joyner volunteer his time at Soka, is an indication of where this new university is headed. As an institution in the works, whose athletes go up against teams with long-standing traditions, his presence served as a major source of confidence and pride for the athletes and lent major credibility, not only to the athletics department, but also to the entire Soka community."

Joyner believes in the value of teaching life lessons through the sport of track & field. His quote "What the mind can conceive, and the heart believes, the body can achieve" left a lasting impression on the Soka students.

Kendo Club Competes in Harvard Tournament

On Saturday, April 22, 2006, eight SUA students participated in the 10th Annual Harvard-invitational Shitoryu Intercollegiate Kendo Tournament. Kendo is the Japanese sport of sword fighting where Shinai (bamboo swords), along with protective armor are used. This equipment is used for training in place of the razor-sharp metal swords that Japanese martial arts are famous for. A very popular sport in Japan, Kendo developed from the fighting art of Kenjutsu, which dates back to the 11th century and was the most important martial art of the samurai.

The Soka students competing were: Alex Okinaka Meers, Emily Aoyama, Tenji Takino, Tomomi Arai Park, Shinichi Tagawa, Mieko Annaka, Jamie Thomas, and Koji Sakanaka Louis.

On Saturday, April 22, 2006, eight SUA students participated in the 10th Annual Harvard-invitational Shitoryu Intercollegiate Kendo Tournament. Kendo is the Japanese sport of sword fighting where Shinai (bamboo swords), along with protective armor are used. This equipment is used for training in place of the razor-sharp metal swords that Japanese martial arts are famous for. A very popular sport in Japan, Kendo developed from the fighting art of Kenjutsu, which dates back to the 11th century and was the most important martial art of the samurai.

The Soka students competing were: Alex Okinaka Meers, Emily Aoyama, Tenji Takino, Tomomi Arai Park, Shinichi Tagawa, Mieko Annaka, Jamie Thomas, and Koji Sakanaka Louis.

Prestigious universities such as Cornell, UCLA, Boston, Yale, George Washington, and the host, Harvard, competed in this tournament.

In team competition, Soka ranked among the best 12 of 30 teams fielded by 23 universities. Soka had a respectable record earning three wins, two losses, and a draw.

For individual matches, SUA's Tenji Takino placed first overall in the tournament, with a total of seven wins. Tomomi Park, Shinichi Tagawa, and Alex Meers also had notable performances in the competition. This was the first official tournament for five of the eight students partaking in this event, whose outstanding performances were commendable.
On May 6, 2006, Soka University’s 5th Annual International Festival featured over 600 musicians and dancers performing concurrently on three stages. There were 30 performing groups using a new layout plan that put all of the activities in front of the campus around Peace Lake. The performances represented a diverse assortment of dances from Ireland, Mexico, Greece, Spain, China, Japan, the Middle East, Hawaii, Africa and Alaska. It brought together cultures from around the globe and had a very family-friendly atmosphere with fun for all ages. Local high school orchestras and choirs from Capistrano Valley High School and Aliso Niguel High School also participated, including the Bella Cantore Choir and Madrigals. Other delights included an assortment of international foods that were provided by SUA clubs and local restaurant catering.

With over 3,500 attendees counted at the campus entrance, over a thousand more than the previous year, the event was a huge success. And although the majority of the guests were local residents from within the Orange and Los Angeles Counties, there were also some attendees from as far away as New York, Massachusetts, Alaska and Maryland.

The festival received recognition from several high ranking individuals including a resolution honoring Soka University’s 5th Anniversary, presented by Aliso Viejo Mayor Carmen Valicave on behalf of Orange County Supervisor Tom Wilson of the Fifth District. Assemblywoman Mimi Walters also sent a certificate commemorating SUA’s 5th Anniversary. An added first for the festival this year was being part of the Orange County Imagination Celebration offered in cooperation with Arts Orange County and the OC Department of Education. It is important to note however, that this event would not have been possible without all of the hard work and dedication of the students of Soka University that volunteered their time and energy to help make this event possible.
Spring Break with a Purpose
AIDING NEW ORLEANS AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

Soka University of America’s mission is to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to leading a contributive life, and 19 SUA students spent their entire Spring Break (March 13-17, 2006) doing just that.

Michelle Hobby, Housing Coordinator at SUA, not only helped organize the trip, but also accompanied the students to New Orleans and helped them throughout their journey.

The Soka students joined forces with over 4,000 other college students and volunteers through Campus Crusades for Christ to serve the needs of people in some of the most devastated areas in New Orleans. They helped gut old houses and build new ones, distributed food, and cleaned up neighborhoods. The work was hard, and the incentive came only from within.

There was no university credit for volunteering and all of the students paid for their own airfare; their lodging was an overpacked abandoned warehouse and their food FEMA rations.

SUA is very proud of these students for creating a new university tradition of service during Spring Break.

Students Meet in Hungary
DISCUSS WHETHER OR NOT THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE CAN BE RECONCILED

Soka University of America student Junya Tanaka was among 50 students and speakers from 16 different countries who gathered recently for a four-day conference in the beautiful medieval town of Köszeg, Hungary, to discuss the differences in politics, economy, culture and foreign policy between the United States and Europe. The conference, held April 15-19, 2006, was co-hosted by Brethren College Abroad (BCA), a group dedicated to promoting international understanding, awareness of global citizenship, and academic awareness through educational exchanges. This is the third annual International Student Conference on U.S.—European Relations that BCA and the Institute for Social and European Studies (ISES) have hosted.

Speakers from Britain, Hungary, Ireland, Switzerland, and the U.S., as well as a former European Commissioner and a representative of the Council of Europe, provided students with the broad historical context for their discussions. Students then put together their own international panels to emphasize their perspectives and questions about the future.
2006 calendar of events

AUGUST 1-30
The Reflected Environment - Dennis McGonagle
Monday-Friday 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. at Founders Hall

Class Works 2006 - SUA Student Art Exhibition
Monday-Friday 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. at Founders Hall

AUGUST 25
Jazz Monsters Concert - The Scott Martin Band
7:00 P.M. on Campus Green

SEPTEMBER 22
Jazz Monsters Concert - Charles McPherson Quintet
7:00 P.M. at Founders Hall

OCTOBER 7
Celebrating a Vision of Peace
Second Annual Peace Gala
6:00 P.M. at the Athenaeum

OCTOBER 13
Jazz Monsters Concert - Roberta Picket
7:00 P.M. at Founders Hall

OCTOBER 28
Lions Roar
Student and Family Open House
9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M. Campus-wide

NOVEMBER 28
Tellabration presented by the South Coast Storytellers Guild
7:30 P.M. at Founders Hall

For more information on these events, please contact Soka University of America at (949) 480-4000 or visit www.soka.edu.
Campus Arts

Photos from Janet Neuwald's Ceramics Workshop, made possible by a generous grant from the CDQ Millennium Cultural Fund.

Soka University of America
1 University Drive
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656
Tel: (949) 480-4072

Publisher
Soka University of America

President
Daniel Y. Hobuki, PhD.

Editor
Linda Safian

Managing Editor
Janet Vinograd

Assistant Editor
Tahereh Haddadi

Graphic Design
Rappaport Design

Photographer
Eric Mitsu Kimura

Have You Moved Recently?
We would like to keep you informed of the wonderful news from SUA, so if you have a new address, please let us know by sending an email to cscher@gaha@soka.edu or contact Coleen Scher-Ghara directly at (949) 480-4073. If you know someone who has mentioned they no longer hear from SUA, please make sure they contact us so we can update their information.