A Message from the President

Dear friends and supporters,

I hope you enjoy this winter issue of SUA Founders, which includes various stories on recent happenings at Soka University of America. I want to express my most heartfelt appreciation to all of our donors who supported the University. Through your generous contributions, we can continue to provide a high quality, educational program for the future leaders of peace.

I would also like to thank all the participants who attended SUA’s second annual Peace Gala held this past October 7. The event was a tremendous success with nearly 500 guests in attendance. As a result, we raised approximately $600,000 in support of Soka University’s Student Scholarship Fund. I am happy to announce that we have set the date for our third annual Peace Gala for Saturday, October 13, 2007. I look forward to your joining us for this magical evening that celebrates and supports our students and their futures. Please be sure to mark your calendars.

As you will read throughout this issue, the fall 2006 semester has been very productive at Soka University. We have hosted a number of lectures which have been well received by our students and the community and have also contributed greatly to the academic excellence of our university program. With support from the Linda and Luis Nieves Family Foundation, the International Studies concentration has hosted a series of lectures on various topics such as building community in Asia-Pacific and Hollywood depictions of American anti-Semitism. In addition, on October 23, the Pacific Basin Research Center held its Distinguished Speakers Series with Stephen Haggard, Director of Korea-Pacific Program of the University of California at San Diego, who spoke on the timely subject of North Korea’s nuclear tests. We also hosted a special lecture by Dr. Nel Noddings, Lee L. Jacks Professor of Education at Stanford University, who gave a lecture entitled, “Happiness and Education.”

In addition to focusing on their academics, our students have been participating in a number of extracurricular activities, including their annual Spirit Rally held at the start of the semester that provided them with a wonderful opportunity to show their class spirit and unite as a student body. Moreover, in an effort to raise funds for student club activities, over the Halloween weekend almost 100 students organized the annual Haunted House event, attracting over 1,000 guests from the local community to the Aliso Viejo campus. Most recently, the entire student body held their sixth annual Student Festival under the theme, “Still Defining SUA.” During this event, our students not only celebrated their Soka culture through performances but also held three dialogue sessions to reflect on the founding spirit of our university and further strengthen their determination to build a unique, international culture on campus. I am always impressed by our students for holding such activities that enable them to walk away with a deeper appreciation for being at SUA, as well as for all those who support their Soka education and contribute to founding this university.

On behalf of our students, faculty and staff, I would like to convey my deep gratitude for your belief in our students and support of their education to develop into global citizens who may contribute to the lives of those around them and the world at large. I wish you and your families a happy and healthy new year. Thank you once again.

With sincere appreciation,

Daniel Y. Habuki
President
Soka University of America
The Pension Protection Act of 2006

BENEFITS BOTH YOU AND SOKA UNIVERSITY

If you are 70½ or older the Pension Protection Act of 2006 can benefit you and SUA. Under the Act, you can make a gift to a qualified charitable organization like Soka University of America using funds transferred from your individual retirement account (IRA) without paying any taxes on the distribution.

Your gift can be accomplished by simply sending a letter (see below) to your IRA administrator and will result in your ability to maximize the benefit of your IRA dollars. Plus, making a gift now enables you to jump-start your legacy and witness the benefits of your generosity to SUA. But remember, this opportunity only lasts until Dec. 31, 2007.

Benefits of the Pension Protection Act of 2006
- The charitable distribution counts toward minimum required distributions.
- The transfer generates neither taxable income nor tax deductions, so even those who do not itemize their tax deductions receive the benefit.
- You may transfer up to $100,000 per year from your IRA.

Date

Name of IRA Custodian
Address
City, State Zip

Re: Request for Direct Charitable Distribution from Individual Retirement Account

Dear [Custodian]:

Please accept this letter as my request to make a direct charitable contribution from my Individual retirement account number [Insert number] as provided by the Pension Protection Act of 2006. Please issue a direct transfer of funds in the amount of [Insert amount] payable to Soka University of America (which is a public charity and is not a donor advised fund or a supporting organization) at the following address:

Soka University
1 University Drive
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656
Attn: Linda Safran

In your transmittal to the charity, please memorialize my name and address as the donor of record in connection with this transfer, and copy me on your transmittal. It is my intention that this gift complies with IRC 408(d)(6).

If you have any questions regarding this request, I can be reached at [telephone and/or email address]. Thank you for your prompt attention to and assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone Number
2006 Peace Gala

ENVISIONING A WORLD OF PEACE

Grammy award-winning saxophonist and composer Wayne Shorter entertained a crowd of almost 500 guests at the gala.

On Saturday, October 7, 2006, the second annual Peace Gala, Celebrating a Vision of Peace was held at 6pm on the Soka University campus. With nearly 500 guests, the venue had to be changed from the Athenaeum to the Recreation Center in order to accommodate the larger audience. The Rec Center was transformed into a stylish Jazz-inspired night club to complement the live entertainment provided that night by renowned Grammy award-winning saxophonist-composer Wayne Shorter, who was accompanied by his good friend and fellow musician Herbie Hancock.

The night began with the silent auction, where attendees were able to enjoy cocktails and delectable hors d'oeuvres, while making silent bids on exclusive auction items. Patrick Duffy, perhaps best-known for his role as Bobby Ewing on TV’s Dallas, generously consented to be the Master of Ceremonies again at this year’s fundraising gala. After greeting the guests as they sat down for dinner, he introduced Soka University of America President Danny Habuki, who made welcoming remarks to the audience. SUA Alumni, Nathan Gauer, Class of 2005, and current SUA student Tahereh Haddadi, Class of 2009, each spoke briefly that night about their Soka experience and touched the crowd with their inspiring stories.

After dinner the live auction began with a bang. With amazing items including an autographed guitar, a diamond Peace Dove brooch, a golf outing with Patrick Duffy, an unbeatable Napa getaway, and a brand new car, the live auction was a great success.

Emcee Patrick Duffy delights gala guests by auctioning a bottle of his private label scotch that was created especially for him.

Herbie Hancock and student Jacqueline Mills present an autographed guitar to winning bidder, T. Hong.

The nearly $600,000 in proceeds from the evening will provide much needed scholarships for Soka University students from around the world who have come to SUA to experience our unique educational vision.

The magical evening was a grand accomplishment with amazing attendees that flew in from all over the globe and wonderful entertainment provided by Grammy award winning musicians, Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock. However, the need for scholarships for our students here at SUA continues to grow, so the work must go on. The date for the 3rd Annual Peace Gala will be Saturday, October 13, 2007. We hope to see you there!
Thank You

On behalf of the 2006 Gala committee, we would especially like to extend our deepest thanks and gratitude to all of the volunteers that dedicated their time and energy in helping out that night. We wouldn't have been able to do it without you.
Volcano erupt while bathing in a natural hot spring, driving through the many misty cloud forests high in the mountains, or hiking through the jungle to find wild waterfalls, Costa Rica definitely deserves its 'Oh so beautiful' label. But one weekend trip touched me especially, and has probably forever changed my life.

Durika is a self-sustainable commune/Biological Reserve located in the mountains of Southern Costa Rica, which is dedicated to preserving the natural balance between man and nature, and replenishing areas of the woods devastated by deforestation. After years of hard work to create the community, Durika opened its doors to visitors. To me, the collective philosophy and methods of this community are a living example of Soka Education. They truly understand the importance of ecological preservation and exert an incredible amount of effort each day as a model for the global community. Also, their philosophical emphasis on conscientiousness is completely in line with the founding principles of SUA: to make sound decisions regarding consumption in order to support, as opposed to denigrate, the environment. And all of their efforts are for the sake of the next generation, a simple yet easily forgotten principle in today's society. I left Durika with a magnified understanding of the crazy, materialistic, and actively destructive global civilization that we have created, and am trying to keep their lessons alive through a more pure personal life. I even quit drinking coffee... wow, I know. But regardless of all the beautiful sights Costa Rica has to offer, there has been one overwhelmingly distressing aspect of my stay: the intense cultural and economic influence of the United States.

The main economic stronghold of Costa Rica is tourism, and the main contributors to this economic activity are the North Americans. Anywhere in Costa Rica you will encounter North American foreigners; therefore English is very important to the country and its people. Many natives have told me that it is close to impossible to find a good job in Costa Rica without knowing English. It feels like part of Costa Rican culture is to cater to English speakers, Europeans included, which has left little room for their own cultural traditions to flourish. Television and movies are almost completely US productions, just translated (or simply given subtitles) and released a few months or years after release in the US. The materialistic culture prominent in the US
also been adopted here within the last few decades, so that every neighborhood has a huge mall, or a line of shops that all sell the same thing. And of course, fast food pervades. McDonalds, Burger King, Wendy’s, Pizza Hut, Papa John’s, Domino’s, KFC, TGI Friday’s and more, have found a home here. With this influence, Costa Rica is struggling to remain an autonomous cultural entity, or at least to fuse the new aspects with their own cultural history. But even their cultural history is hard to separate from foreign powers when you travel to provinces like Limon, whose cultural roots stem from the immigration of Chinese and African workers to support the US endorsed railroad project, and later, the United Fruit Company’s environmental exploits for the mass production of bananas.

At this point in my stay, my observations, feelings, class lessons, conversations, and travels have coalesced into a grand lesson regarding the sheer clout of my country’s Imperialistic tendencies. More than ever, I realize the enormous destructive potential that the US wields in the world, and, consequently, I more acutely understand the enormous responsibility resting in the hands of SUA to transform the US cultural landscape, for the betterment of its cultural and economic associates the world over. Costa Rica is strengthening my resolve to ensure the success of Soka education, for sure.

Finally, I respect SUA profoundly for requiring Study Abroad of its students! While abroad, stripped of all the material and environmental comforts I have spent a life time building up around myself, I am able to clearly see my core, my fundamental Self. While abroad, I have been forced to face the sole potential comfort left, my Self, with all my strengths to rely upon, and all my weaknesses to challenge and change. Study Abroad is one of the best things that has ever happened to me for the fact that I can develop a self-consciousness larger and stronger than any environmental misfortune that may come my way.

Alumni Profile
HOPE WHITE

Five months before she graduated from SUA in May of 2006, Hope White knew she wanted to pursue an internship that would take her abroad and allow her to utilize her new found skills. The perfect opportunity presented itself when Linda Biehl was a guest lecturer on campus.

Linda Biehl is the mother of Amy Biehl, a Fulbright Scholar who was murdered in 1993 while fighting apartheid in South Africa. The four young boys that killed Amy participated in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and were awarded amnesty. Two of the four men are now employed by the Amy Biehl Foundation in Capetown, South Africa.

Following the lecture, Hope met with Linda and expressed her desire to go to Capetown and intern with the Amy Biehl Foundation. She didn’t know exactly what she wanted to do but she did know she wanted to help show young people an alternative to violence.

Hope’s assistance was needed to write grants requesting money to help secure funds for the struggling foundation. Although Hope had worked with the Boys and Girls Club in San Juan Capistrano during her days at SUA, her job was proofreading, not writing, grants. Upon arriving in South Africa Hope went directly to the library and read all she could about writing grants.

Hope was astonished at the severely low level of poverty and high level of violence that existed in the townships. She never went out alone and only felt comfortable venturing into the townships when she was accompanying the teachers from the Amy Biehl Foundation. These dedicated individuals provide after school educational programs for disadvantaged youth in the hope that they will learn to use their time productively as an alternative to violence.

Hope says that “SUA opened my eyes and heart to want to go to different countries to help others. It provided me with the determination to do something to make a difference even if I didn’t have experience.” She felt that while a student at SUA she learned how our lives are all connected and that doing something to help someone else causes us to grow.

Hope is applying to Law school for the fall of 2007 and waiting to hear if that grant she wrote gets funded.
I decided to come to SUA before it was built, before the faculty or the first class had been chosen, and before the curriculum was molded. All that I knew about the university was its ideals and that I would have a chance to pioneer them. My brother, who is one year older than I am, also desired to come here. Friends and family, deeply concerned about our futures, criticized our plans of attending SUA, because the university was too new, it was too expensive, it was not accredited, and therefore, the chances of our diplomas being meaningless was too high. SUA was too much of a risk. When the time came for my brother to apply, he let nothing hold him back; he applied. Shortly after, he was accepted and entered the class of 2007. Through his victory, he inspired me to let nothing come between my goals and me. A year later, I entered the class of 2008.

Not a day goes by here that I forget how fortunate I am. Because of SUA, I have been able to live and learn with my peers from around the world. Superb faculty put all of their effort into teaching me not only about philosophy, chemistry, mathematics, politics and literature, among many other topics, but also about life itself. SUA has given me the opportunity to travel to different parts of the United States, Singapore and Canada to attend conferences and to New York City to study at the United Nations headquarters. I have learned lifetimes of knowledge and wisdom because of SUA and I continue to learn more every day. The most significant lesson that I have learned here is how to live happily and how to live a meaningful life.

Because of the opportunities that I have received at SUA, I have begun to focus my studies on creating sustainable development in the world, especially in developing countries. This includes not only peace building and creating stable governments, but also creating infrastructure, clean water and air, and clean energy. I have been working with the United Nations Association and Model United Nations on our campus to help increase awareness of global issues and volunteer in the community to further international cooperation for sustainable development. In the future, I would like to go to one of the top graduate schools for development studies.

I owe an immense debt of gratitude to everyone who helped me accomplish and continue to pursue my dreams and goals. Staff, Donors, Faculty, Fellow Students, Family, and everyone else who contributed to SUA, Thank you.
Peace Matters

FIRST UNITED NATIONS STUDY TOUR

"Only one word could describe my experience as part of the UN study group: Overwhelming," says Tommy Yotes.

Indeed, attending over thirty briefings by a variety of United Nations officials, scholars, and NGO leaders at the New York UN headquarters may very well be defined as overwhelming. And to the ten students who participated in the Inaugural United Nations Study Tour between May 31st and June 9th of this year, the experience was also an empowering one. "Meeting UN officials and hearing about their struggles allowed me to put human faces and inspiring experiences on what I saw as an overwhelming bureaucracy, and realize how their work can positively affect people's lives," says Masako Delalieu (08).

Funded by the Nieves Family Foundation, the study tour started last April, when the Office of Student Affairs called for applications and chose ten participants from the student body. Masako Delalieu (08), Daisuke Fuji (07), Hideki Hagiwara (07), Yoshimi Horimoto (08), Jacqueline Mills (08), Masatoshi Mochizuki (09), Lisa Saperstein (07), Ognjen Sevic (07), Takako Shimizu (07), and Tommy Yotes (09) along with Dean of Students, Dr. Jay Heffron, met with leading UN representatives, including UN Under-Secretary General Anwarul K. Chowdhury and joined in discussions about areas such as governance and public administration, human rights and human security, the environment and sustainable development, disarmament, and UN peacekeeping.

"I was encouraged by meeting with people who are working every day to achieve global peace," says Takako Shimizu, who applied for the tour while she was studying abroad in China. Jacqueline Mills concurs, "All of the UN officials, academics, and NGO leaders we met are devoting their lives to creating peace through international cooperation." Because of this experience, both students solidified their intentions of pursuing a career within the United Nations after they graduate from SUA.

During the briefings, the presenters expressed their concern that the UN was at a historic crossroads, a crisis of legitimacy that threatened its very survival. At the suggestion of Pera Wells, Secretary General of the World Federation of United Nations Associations, the students prepared a statement advocating broad public and private dialogue to bolster the United Nations as the world’s premier intergovernmental organization for peace.

"Everything we learned at the UN strengthened my conviction that this organization serves as an optimal outlet for the noble aspirations of Soka students and would benefit from the contributions of people like ourselves," says Lisa Saperstein. She adds, "We met individuals who have a broad vision that extends beyond the murky present and engage in responsibilities that many others hide from." Saperstein, as well as the other students, feel very fortunate to have participated in the tour and hope it will become a longstanding tradition at SUA.

By Lili Castilla
(with collaboration of Lisa Saperstein and Jay Heffron)

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Faculty Profile

DR. GAYE CHRISTOFFERSEN, FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR AND GLOBAL CITIZEN

It's not every day you can take a class from a professor who has taught in Beijing, Turkish Cyprus, Taipei and Vladivostok...and who has twice been selected as a Fulbright scholar.

Meet Dr. Gaye Christoffersen, Associate Professor of Political Science at SUA, who teaches classes like International Relations of Pacific Asia and Political and Social Change in Pacific Asia. She enjoys teaching at Soka because "Students have such a wildly enthusiastic interest - because they know they are all going into Study Abroad." Gaye was attracted to SUA because of the small liberal arts college environment and the 9:1 student/faculty ratio, which makes teaching "more stimulating." She enjoys the student/teacher interaction and dialogue. She also appreciates SUA's core value of peace, since she has worked with the United Nations Association (UNA) for many years.

Gaye is the advisor to the United Nations Association's Young Professionals club at SUA and serves on the board of the UNA of Orange County.

What makes teaching at SUA special? "The sincerity and integrity of the students and their dedication to studies and topics," Gaye explains with a smile. "Soka University is a place where you can grow intellectually and fulfill all your potential, and both students and teachers are here to help you do that."

Meet Soka's New Coaches

TRACK & FIELD, CROSS COUNTRY, AQUATICS AND SOCCER

Karla Bailey, the new Head Coach for Track & Field and Cross Country, brings years of coaching leadership to the Soka Track program. Karla has produced 5 Division II all-conference runners and National Championship participants. Her runners were Carolinas State Champions and Southeast Region Team Champions. Karla was named the 2001 NCAA Div II Southeast Region Coach of the Year, Carolinas Virginia Athletic Conference Coach of the Year and was a Finalist for the National Coach of the Year. Karla received her BA in Kinesiology from California State University Northridge, her MA in Administration from Central Michigan and is a long-standing member with the US Track Coaches Association.

Ron Turner is the new Director of Aquatics, Head Coach Men's and Women's Swimming. Coach Turner brings 20 years of national level coaching leadership to the Soka Swim program. He has produced 3 YMCA National Top-10 combined team finishes, including winning the combined Team Title at the 2006 short-course YMCA National Championships. Ron's swimmers have won many national titles and have succeeded as national and Olympic Trials qualifiers, plus a 2005 U.S. Swimming 18 and under National Champion. He was the 2004 and 2006 North Carolina Coach of the Year and was awarded the 2005 American Swimming Coaches Association Award of Excellence. Ron received his BS in Communication from Tennessee University and is a long-standing member with the American Swimming Coaches Association.

Marine Cano, in 2005, was named founding Director of Soccer and Head Coach of men's and Women's soccer at Soka University. He comes from the University of California, Irvine, where he led the women's program for 12 years. He guided his squad to the Big West Conference title in 1998. Prior to UCI, he had a very successful 10 years at the helm of the Cal State Dominguez Hills men's and women's program, including a NCAA Division II national championship with the women's team.
Please remove this calendar and use as a handy reference for SUA events.
All events open to the community.

2007 Calendar of Events

JANUARY 26
Jazz Monsters Concert with The Mike Garson Trio, Founders Hall, 7 pm, $10 for adults, free for under 18. Tickets sold at the door. info@soka.edu

FEBRUARY 23
Jazz Monsters Concert with The Gilbert Castellanos Quartet, Founders Hall, 7 pm, $10 for adults, free for under 18. Tickets sold at the door. info@soka.edu

MARCH 9
Jazz Monsters Concert with Noel Jewkes, San Francisco Jazz Legend, 7 pm, $10 for adults, free for under 18. Tickets sold at the door. info@soka.edu

MAY 5
Soka University's 6th Annual International Festival, 10:30 am - 5:30 pm. $5 for adults, free for under 18. Free parking but carpooling encouraged. Enjoy over 750 international musicians and dancers performing on three stages, art exhibitions, storytelling, street painting, yoga and dance demos, exhibitors, international food, games and activities. Registration now open for exhibitors. info@soka.edu

MAY 25
Jazz Monsters Concert Under the Stars with Trio Paradiso, Outdoor Campus Green Stage, 7 pm, $10 for adults, free for under 18. Lawn Seating. Bring blankets, low beach chairs and a picnic, or come early and have dinner at the Soka Bistro which opens at 5:30 pm. ($10 for all you can eat.) Reservations for Soka Bistro may be emailed to appetit@soka.edu. Tickets for concert sold at the door. info@soka.edu or call (949) 480-4081

MAY 27
Graduation of the Class of 2007! Tickets required for admission.

For more information on these events, please contact Soka University of America at (949) 480-4000 or visit www.soka.edu.
SUA's 6th Annual International Festival

MAY 5TH, 2007

Soka University's annual International Festival is held on the first Saturday of May, celebrating the anniversary of SUA's dedication on May 3, 2001. The Festival, which is now part of Orange County's Imagination Celebration (www.ocimaginationcelebration.org) features international food, dance, music, storytelling, street painting, art exhibition openings, ceramic sales and demonstrations, yoga workshops, a library book sale, games, inflatable rides and over 100 non-profit and business exhibitors.

Attendees are encouraged to wear international attire and to celebrate their own heritages. Admission is $5 for adults and free for under 18 to encourage family participation. Over 4000 people attended in 2006. They enjoyed watching 760 volunteer musicians and dancers from many cultural traditions performing continuously on three stages from 10:30 am to 5 pm. All performers receive complimentary admission and a festival t-shirt as thanks.

Almost all SUA students on campus (about 350 since half of our junior class is abroad) participate in some way in this festival: as volunteers, as performers, and as student club exhibitors.

All proceeds from the Festival go to the SUA Education Fund. Don't miss the International Festival on May 5th! See www.soka.edu/festival for more information.