A Message from the President

Dear friends and supporters,

Welcome to the latest issue of SUA Founders. I hope as you browse through these pages you will enjoy learning about recent university happenings and developments over the past academic year 2006-2007, including the sixth annual International Festival, faculty and alumni news, and information on the upcoming Peace Gala.

As an institute of higher education, Soka University of America aims to provide our students with the type of academic knowledge and skills necessary to lead a contributive, successful life. As you may know, Soka University is one of the few institutions that provide financial aid scholarships not only to domestic students but also to our international students. Over 90 percent of our students receive some type of financial aid. We are also the first university in the nation to require all students to participate in a mandatory semester of study-abroad during their junior year. In addition, all freshmen receive a personal laptop to use throughout their college career. These unique programs are made possible thanks to your kindness in giving.

Another important element of Soka education is that, in addition to enjoying the rigorous academic environment at SUA, our students learn to have a sense of appreciation for all those who have supported their studies. Through my personal interactions with our students, I can attest to the fact that they are truly grateful for the generous support they have received from SUA benefactors around the world. I am proud that our students often take the time when visiting Founders Hall to enjoy the donors’ plaques on the walls, or make plans to visit benefactors during their winter or summer breaks in order to personally convey their appreciation. Thanks to your great example, our students seek to to repay their debt of gratitude and, in turn, contribute to the happiness of others.

I am truly grateful for your sincere contributions to our student’s education and Soka University. Thank you once again for your kind support and generosity.

Sincerely,

Daniel Y. Habuki
President, Soka University of America
2007 Tony Award-Winning Artist Duncan Sheik to Perform at the Third Annual Peace Gala

CELEBRATING A VISION OF PEACE

We are very pleased to announce that the third annual Peace Gala, Celebrating a Vision of Peace, will be held on Saturday, October 13, on our beautiful SUA campus. This year, we are thrilled to welcome Duncan Sheik, the Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter and Tony-Award winning composer of "Spring Awakening," winner of "Best Musical" at the 61st Annual Tony Awards.

Spring Awakening, conceived by Sheik and his collaborator, lyricist Steven Sater, led the evening with 11 nominations, winning eight awards including those for best musical, book, score, direction, choreography and best featured actor in a musical.

In 1998 Duncan was nominated for the Grammy Award for "Best Male Pop Vocal Performance" for his hit song "Barely Breathing," and has most recently been recognized for his critically acclaimed 2006 album, "White Limousine." His music library includes pop, musicals and film scores, from which he will perform selections along with material from Spring Awakening.

With all of this mainstream success, Duncan is firmly rooted in his belief of peace, and uses his remarkable voice and songcraft in numerous ways to effect change. We are truly honored that he has agreed to join us in Celebrating a Vision of Peace.

Individual tickets for the gala are $300, with tables for 10 people starting at $5,000. The funds raised by our Peace Gala's provide scholarships for Soka students from around the world. To purchase your tickets to this incredible evening, please contact Linda Safran at 949.480.4072 or e-mail lsafran@soka.edu.

6th Annual International Festival

Soka University of America celebrated its 6th Annual International Festival on May 5, 2007. 4,300 people attended the festival to visit the booths of 121 exhibitors, including street painting, story telling, Learning Cluster presentations, a graduation "Treasure Sale," student ceramic sale and ceramic wheel demonstrations, and hot glass-blowing demonstrations and sales.

This year featured the addition of "New Adventure Land" for children including traditional dress up, an obstacle course, a crafts center, a free play area, a bounce house and super slide; as well as photos with a mini-horse.

All attendees were invited to enjoy the talents of nearly 700 entertainers performing a broad range of international dance and music on three stages.
Study-Abroad Corner
AKRITI MACKER IN BARCELONA, SPAIN

Last month, when I met my much-awaited fellow classmates, freshly returned from their study-abroad destinations, I asked them, "So, how was study-abroad?" The look that I received in return was rather discomfited. After beginning my study-abroad experience here in Barcelona, Spain, I completely understand the reason for that look on their faces. It is absolutely impossible to answer that question in one or two words, phrases or even sentences. Although my study-abroad experience is only four weeks old, I have already experienced much more than I expected. Hence, answering the question with just "Awesome!" "Great!" or "Wonderful!" doesn't really do justice to the time spent studying abroad.

The shortest way I could possibly describe the purpose of study-abroad (at least the way I see it) is this: "to discover your TRUE self and the place you create for yourself in the world in an unprecedented manner." Allow me to explain these seemingly cliché phrases to defend their use. Four months of being in an alien country and experiencing its family life, speaking a third language, attending classes that require trains to get to every single day, not having any buffet lunches and chocolate-chip cookies to nibble at everyday, are just some of the things that create this experience, not to forget creating friendships despite the fear of failing to say a proper sentence in Spanish.

Experiencing these aspects of study-abroad makes you discover so much about yourself: traits you never knew you had; how your actions and behavior affect those around you; and how, and to what extent, you are influenced by your own or someone else's actions and behavior. Don't get me wrong: Study-abroad is also about discovering the place you are in and the culture that surrounds you; but in the process of doing so, you also end up discovering how you fit into all of it.

Now, let me tell you something about Barcelona. This lovely city lies within the state of Catalunya, Spain. As my sincere guide book says, it is a prosperous, youthful, fun-loving city: quite obsessed with its own image. The way I see it, the Catalan people truly do run the city. Their perspective on life is really dominant as well as evident in the city; for example, the directions north and south do not really exist in Barcelona. Instead, people orient themselves in terms of the mountains (called Tibidabo) or the sea (el mar). Public transportation is more than excellent, and the food is great, especially if you are a seafood lover. There is
so much to see in Barcelona in terms of history, culture, arts and entertainment (not to forget sports), that even a whole semester may not be enough to do so. A quick message to all those who will be studying abroad here in the future: You need to bring with you the following five things: camera, an electric converter/adapter for all things American, confidence in speaking Spanish, self-assurance that you will still live if you mess up the language and finally, a will to discover both the city and yourself.

Lastly, it is impossible to end this article without mentioning my immense gratitude for everyone who is responsible for sending us, Soka students, to our study-abroad destinations to experience so many things. I finally see why it is so essential for each one of us to experience study-abroad. It enriches our lives to such a great extent that we not only end up appreciating things otherwise taken for granted, but also learn the significance of taking that brave step towards willingness and responsibility, traits required crucially of all of us if we are to maintain SUA’s mission statement.

When I think about my life at SUA and how it has contributed to the person I am, and what I am accomplishing in life, I realize that I have received three important treasures from my experience at Soka University.

The first would be the friendships I developed. As friends, we constantly supported one another and developed together. I feel fortunate that I was able to share many struggles and achievements with them.

The second is my fellowship with underclassmen, and with the future students that I have yet to meet. As a member of the first entering class, I always tried to be willing to overcome all difficulties, contribute to the betterment of the school, and open up a path for those students who follow us. Such a sense of responsibility toward future students has enabled me to grow further.

The third treasure I gained is the debt of gratitude I feel toward those who support SUA, such as the faculty, staff, donors, and SUA Founder Daisaku Ikeda. SUA students are motivated to accept challenges, no matter how hard they are, because we feel deeply indebted to those who donated and supported us. The fact that each building on the campus was raised as a result of sincere contributions, reminds us that we are bequeathed the significant task of establishing a better future, which has personally provided me with a profound sense of mission.

After graduating from Soka, I obtained a master’s degree in International and Development Economics from Yale University and am currently attending a Ph.D. program in economics at Boston University. Although the programs have students from mostly top universities in the world, I truly feel the training and experiences I received at SUA enabled me to compete with these students. Because I went to SUA, I determined to further pursue education. Because of my education from SUA, I am able to enter these programs. And because of the overwhelming support I feel by so many people supporting SUA, I am able to work harder to respond to their hearts and expectations.

SUA has given me a life-long homework assignment, that is, to always consider how I may contribute to people, society and the world. My challenge has only just begun.
Faculty Profile
DR. ANTHONY MAZEROLL, PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGY

Dr. Anthony I. Mazeroll joined the SUA faculty in May 2002 and teaches core studies along with a number of earth-conscious courses including Ecology, Environmental Science, General Biology and Marine Biology. He is also a popular facilitator of SUA’s Learning Clusters, where students work in teams to propose, research and model constructive approaches to local, regional and/or global issues. Dr. Mazeroll facilitates Learning Clusters on: Human Impacts, Solar Energy, Sustainable Development and his most recent endeavor, Biodiversity in the Colombian Amazon.

Dr. Mazeroll has spent decades studying fish around the world. His primary focus has been the ecology of fishes in the Red Sea (Egypt, Israel and Jordan), but most recently he has re-directed his concentration on population genetics of fishes from the Amazon, prompting the January 2007 SUA Learning Cluster.

He has been the recipient of a Fulbright Research Fellowship to Jordan, and has received honors including West Texas A&M President’s Research Excellence Award, West Texas A&M President’s Teaching Excellence Awards and the Phi Beta Delta, Honor Society for International Scholars.

Imagine yourself waist deep in the waters of the Colombian Amazon River surrounded by piranhas swimming all around you. What do you do? If you were part of Dr. Anthony Mazeroll’s course, you would have a net in hand and you would be trying to catch them! During the January 2007 Learning Cluster, 10 students worked cooperatively with the scientists and staff at SINCHI (Instituto de Investigaciones de la Amazonía) in Leticia, Colombia, assessing fish biodiversity in the Amazon River.

SINCHI is a national institution, with research stations throughout the Colombian Amazon with a genetics lab in Bogota, dedicated to the scientific investigation
of organisms and the environment of the Colombian
Amazon. Scientists at SINCHI study all aspects of the
Amazon basin from plants, mammals, birds, reptiles,
amphibians, fish and microorganisms. They are also
concerned with the sustainable development of, and
human impacts on the Amazon Region. One of the side
projects at the SINCHI lab in Leticia is the production of a
hot sauce made from fruits and vegetables found in the
Amazon. This hot sauce is sold throughout Colombia, and
the proceeds from the sales help keep the labs running.

The students enrolled in Dr. Mazeroll's Learning Cluster
worked daily with the scientists collecting and identifying
fishes from the Amazon River system. In addition, the
students attended lectures and seminars on the ecology
and natural history of the Amazon. The students were
able to identify a total of approximately 65 species of
fish from the three black water streams from which they
collected fish.

This learning cluster trip to the SINCHI lab will not
be the last one. SUA has been asked to continue their
relationship with SINCHI and to bring back students every
year. Whether or not students will be able to return will
depend on their finances. All of the students, as well as
the professor, paid for most of the expenses out-of-pocket.
The students who want to be part of next year's class are
already trying to raise funds for the trip.
Planned Giving

FLEXIBLE OPTIONS BENEFIT YOU, YOUR FAMILY AND SUA

Have you wondered if the familiar charitable giving strategy of “checkbook philanthropy” is the best use of your money, but thought planned giving was a complex process designated for the rich and famous? Planned giving is easier than you may think, and appropriate for all levels of income. By choosing from a number of flexible options, you can influence how your gift is used, maximize financial and tax benefits, and establish a meaningful legacy for SUA. Rather than giving small amounts to a variety of charities, why not employ an organized approach to giving that actually works for you, your family, and supports the future students of SUA for years to come? Here are a few ways to do it.

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**Life Income Gifts Using Stocks, Stock Options, etc.**

A charitable gift annuity provides a way to make a gift to your favorite charity, and still receive an income for yourself or others. It is a contract under which a charity, in return for a transfer of cash or other property, agrees to pay a fixed sum of money for a period measured by one or two lives.

Peggy (71) and John (76) have grandson Lee (20) who attends SUA. Peggy and John have highly appreciated stock from the company for which John worked for 30 years. They can give $20,000 worth of the stock with a cost basis of $5,000 to SUA in exchange for a gift annuity. When SUA sells the stock there is no capital gains to pay since it is a tax-exempt organization. Peggy and John avoid the tax on the sale, receive annuity payments for the rest of their lives, receive an income tax deduction for the gift and support SUA. Also, a portion of their annuity payments will be tax-free, and a portion will be capital gains (a substantially lower tax-rate than ordinary income).
Life Income Gifts Utilizing Real Estate

A good option for utilizing real estate is a Charitable Remainder Unitrust (CRUT). A CRUT is a trust that receives cash or property from a donor, makes payments to a non-charitable beneficiary for a life, lifetimes or term of years; and then distributes what is left to charity. There are four types of CRUTs, including the popular Flip CRUT.

A Flip CRUT is the best option for real estate because the trust is only obligated to pay the lesser of the trust income or the unitrust amount after the property is sold. This avoids the problem of having to come up with the money to pay the unitrust amount pre-sale.

Sam (55) and Midori (53) have a daughter, Pam (25) who attends SUA. Sam and Midori own a piece of investment real estate they bought for $25,000 that is now worth $250,000. They can put it into a 5% FLIP CRUT and name SUA as the remainder beneficiary. By doing this, they will avoid the capital gains on the sale, receive an income stream for life, receive an income tax deduction, provide for their daughter for 10 years after their deaths and make a generous gift to SUA.

Endowment Funds and Sub Chapter S Corporations

A financial endowment is a transfer of money or property donated to an institution, with the stipulation that it be invested, and the principal remain intact. This allows for the donation to have a much greater impact over a long period of time than if it were spent all at once, due to compound interest.

A Sub Chapter S Corporation meets the IRS requirements to be taxed under Sub Chapter S of the Internal Revenue Code. This gives a corporation with 100 shareholders or less the benefit of incorporation while being taxed as a partnership.

Melissa (35) who recently sold her business that was held in an S Corporation. She sold the business for $500,000, liquidated the corporation and paid herself, as the only shareholder, the $500,000. Her cost-basis in the stock was $100,000, which means she has a $400,000 gain this year and will owe $60,000 in capital gains taxes, leaving her with approximately $440,000. Or she can give $100,000 of her proceeds to the SUA endowment and start the Melissa Fund. She will receive a $100,000 deduction, which can potentially save her $33,000 in taxes. She will also have created a lasting legacy that she can set up as she likes (in accordance with SUA’s guidelines for setting up named endowment funds), and that she can add to later in life or at her death.

To learn more about establishing a planned giving program that’s right for you, call Linda Safran at 949.480.4072.
SUA Graduation 2007

The third Undergraduate Commencement of Soka University of America took place on May 27, 2007 on the beautiful Aliso Viejo Campus. The stage was adorned with flags representing the many countries of the graduating students, where they received congratulations from the Mayor of the City of Aliso Viejo Carmen Cave, and from SUA President Danny Habuki.

The students were presented with a special message and video from SUA’s Founder, Daisaku Ikeda; and the commencement address, “Peace in Your Life, Peace in your Lifetime: A Humanistic Perspective on Global Peace Efforts,” was delivered by Carolyn McAskie, United Nations assistant secretary-general for peacebuilding support.

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Above – Carolyn McAskie delivering the commencement address. Right – Jazz flutist and Latin Grammy Award winner Néstor Torres congratulates fellow-countryman Alexander Aldarondo for becoming the first student from Puerto Rico to graduate from SUA. Bottom – It’s hats away as the commencement concludes.
2007 Calendar

July 21
Electronic Waste and Household Hazardous Waste Recycling Event
- Parking Lot A, 8 a.m. - 12 noon, sponsored by the City of Aliso Viejo and CR&R Recycling.

August 24
Jazz Monsters Concert Under the Stars - Outdoor Campus Green Stage, 7 p.m., $10 for adults, free for under 18, Lawn Seating. Tickets for concert sold at the door. info@soka.edu, 949.480.4081.

September 1 - December 31
Natasha Shoro Art Exhibition, Founders Hall Art Gallery, M-F, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Free. Opening Reception: Sept. 11 at 6 p.m. info@soka.edu

September 21
Jazz Monsters Concert with the Roy McCurdy Quintet, Founders Hall 3rd Fl, 7 p.m., $10 for adults, free for under 18. Tickets sold at the door. info@soka.edu

October 13
Soka University's Third Annual Peace Gala, 6 p.m. Entertainment by Tony-winning composer Duncan Sheik, $300. For more information, please contact Linda Safran at 949.480.4072 or lsafran@soka.edu.

October 19
Jazz Monsters Concert with the Jon Mayer Trio, Founders Hall 3rd Fl, 7 p.m., $10 for adults, free for under 18. Tickets sold at the door. info@soka.edu.

November 9
Music and Dance Workshop with HAIMan (cellist Francois le Roux), Soka Bistro Dining Hall, 9 a.m., free. Bring your instrument!

HAIMan Concert (with cellist Francois le Roux), Dining Hall Plaza, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., free

Jazz Monsters Concert with Roberta Piket's New York Trio - Founders Hall 3rd Floor, 7 p.m., $10 for adults, free for under 18. Tickets sold at the door. info@soka.edu, 949.480.4081

November 17
Lions Roar open house - for high and middle school students and their families, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., free. Come take a tour, try a class, meet faculty and students and enjoy lunch at Soka Bistro.

November 17
Tellabration - Story Telling Celebration presented by South Coast Storytellers Guild, Founders Hall, 7:30 p.m. Tickets sold at the door.

December 2
Celtic Christmas Faire, Recreation Center 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
President Daniel Habuki and students enjoy an afternoon on the Soka University of America Campus.

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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 e-mail to Coleen Scherf-Ghara at cscherfghora@soka.edu or contact her 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.