INTRODUCING
The Class of 2010!
84 SUA Graduates Embark
On a New Journey Toward
Global Citizenship
A Message from the President

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to this issue of SUA Founders. I hope you enjoy browsing through these pages to take a closer look at Soka University of America (SUA) as I share a few recent highlights.

In May we held the Commencement Ceremony for the Undergraduate Class of 2010 with 84 graduates receiving their Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Arts. We were delighted to have Dr. Paulette Bethel, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas to the United Nations as our commencement speaker. Her wonderful address on gender equality (see www.soka.edu for the text) inspired the audience because she truly embodies the qualities to which our graduates can aspire as global citizens. Dr. Bethel is also a friend and supporter of the university, welcoming and warmly encouraging the SUA students who participated in the United Nations Study Tour sponsored by the Luis and Linda Nieves Family Foundation.

On May 1st we held our 9th Annual International Festival commemorating the dedication of SUA on May 3, 2001. This year’s festival was attended by 6,500 participants, 222 exhibitors and over 1,000 international musicians, dancers and other performers. We also shared the many unique aspects of our university with our festival guests through student presentations and projects. At the same time, many of our students, staff and faculty were exposed to new and refreshing cultural performances from many local ethnic communities in Southern California.

We are truly indebted to all of you who support our students and the university. Currently over 90% of our students receive some form of financial aid. Your generous support directly helps our students to be able to attend and experience all that SUA has to offer, including our Learning Clusters. These three and a half week intensive courses provide our students the opportunity for real world, hands-on research and experiences. They collaborate, closely with faculty, which is a key element of our Soka education. This year, students traveled nationally and internationally to study and understand crucial issues covering a broad range of topics including political science, sociology, environmental science, gender and sexuality, and jazz. In January we had Learning Clusters studying “New Orleans Post-Katrina: Citizens Initiatives,” “War in Uganda: Causes, Consequences & Solutions,” and “The Implementation of Aquaculture in Peru,” just to name a few.

In closing, I am reminded that this year’s Commencement Ceremony marked an exciting milestone in our university’s history. It was the last one held in the Recreation Center, because we will move this ceremony to the new 1,000-seat Performing Arts Center in 2011. The construction of the Performing Arts Center and Classroom Building are well underway, and they serve as constant reminders that this university is supported by so many sincere individuals around the world offering their support to SUA. The completion of the Performing Arts Center and Classroom Building next year for our tenth anniversary on our Aliso Viejo campus will signal the launching of an exciting new decade of growth for Soka University of America.

We will continue to do our best to offer the highest level of academic excellence and access for all students, regardless of ability to pay, so that we can continue to foster future leaders for peace. We wish you and your families the very best and thank you again for your generous support.

Sincerely,

Daniel Y. Habuki, Ph.D.
President
Save the Date

SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Celebrating a Vision of Peace

SIXTH ANNUAL PEACE GALA

October 9, 2010
Five-thirty in the Evening

Featuring Grammy Award Winning Artist

JUDY COLLINS

The mission of Soka University of America is to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life.

For reservations or sponsorship information, please contact:
Linda Kennedy 949-480-4072 or lkennedy@soka.edu

Proceeds benefit the SUA Scholarship Fund

TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE NOW!

Purchase your tickets at http://gala.soka.edu

General information: www.soka.edu
On Friday, May 28, 2010, Soka University of America graduated its sixth undergraduate class! 84 students from around the globe are embarking on a new journey toward global citizenship.
Aftfter graduating from SUA in 2007, Yoko Kono earned a Master’s degree in International Comparative Education from Stanford University’s School of Education. Despite the extremely demanding one-year program taught by professors who were top researchers in the field of education, Yoko felt very prepared by her academic experience at SUA. According to Yoko, “The skills that I developed during my SUA career became the foundation for graduate school and my current job. The professors at SUA strongly emphasized reading, research and writing skills. The Capstone project during my senior year introduced me to the full research cycle which prepared me for my advanced thesis in graduate school.”

After graduation Yoko was selected as the D. J. Huang Fellow and sent to a small, rural town in Hunan Province, China to teach English. The Ou Yang Yu Middle School (OYY) is a secondary school (junior high) in Xintang that serves approximately 3,000 students from poor, rural areas. OYY is a boarding school funded by a philanthropist who grew up in the area. The students attending the school have class everyday from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Adjusting to a new culture, diet, housing and daily life was difficult for Yoko, but her study abroad experience during her junior year in Nanjing, China gave her a good idea of what to expect. She was not afraid of living in a foreign place, but was pretty nervous about teaching and putting the theoretical framework she learned at Stanford into practice in the classroom.

Every week she taught 13 classes to 7th and 10th grade students. Each class consisted of 35 to 45 students. Trying to get a room full of 7th graders to sit down definitely tested Yoko’s patience. She kept them interested when she introduced Western culture and international holidays.

In addition to teaching, the fellowship included a budget to plan and implement service projects to meet the needs of the school community. Some of the projects Yoko worked on included inviting experts to teach about HIV/AIDS, nutrition and smoking cessation; fundraising for the distribution of eye-glasses; and publishing a magazine of student writing and artwork in both English and Mandarin.

During her year at OYY Yoko learned that most students wanted to further their education. These young people from very humble backgrounds knew what a privilege it was for them to receive an education and despite financial hardship, their parents were investing in their children’s education. Despite low odds for success due to inequitable access to quality learning, larger class sizes (average 60) and poor diet compared to their urban counterparts, the students are very resilient.

Yoko is very appreciative that she had such a rare opportunity to be part of an effort to improve the education of disadvantaged youth in China. The experience solidified her enthusiasm for education and international development. The values, world outlook and hopes that she cultivated while at SUA continue to be the source of her passion for working for the happiness of humanity through education.

Yoko is now interning at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Bangkok’s Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau working for programs related to secondary education. She hopes to continue working to improve the quality of education for youth internationally.
Learning Clusters are among the most unique and popular academic programs at Soka University.

A Learning Cluster is a research seminar where students work in teams with faculty facilitators to investigate a specific question. It is designed to bridge theory and practice as well as elicit an educated outcome or response.

Learning Clusters occur in 3.5-week block periods to take full advantage of opportunities for field and service learning.

With the generous funding from the Luis and Linda Nieves Family Foundation, Learning Cluster students from selected classes had the opportunity to travel nationally and internationally to study and understand crucial issues firsthand. For example, students ventured to New Orleans, Guatemala, Panama, South Korea, Japan, China, Peru, and Brazil as part of their Learning Cluster experience.
Ever since high school, I often felt as if I was walking on a tightrope, and at any moment a faulty step could send me over the edge. Because I was studying to become a musician, my high school life was full of auditions, rehearsals, performances, and lessons; and life as an undergraduate at Soka University of America (SUA) was just as busy. By the time my sophomore year came, I felt like I needed space to take a deep breath and get my feet on solid ground again, and leaving SUA and the United States was an idea I welcomed whole-heartedly.

I began my study abroad with a two month stay in Taiwan, studying at the National Taiwan Normal University. It was my first time living outside of the United States, and I fell in love with Taiwan. Looking back on those two months, everything was a golden memory. I had great classmates and a really great Chinese class that took my language ability to the next level (and I suppose encouraged my "sissy" Taiwanese accent). I spent hours taking advantage of access to the amazing music library at National Taiwan University, and I had time to catch up on sleep and TV shows (what else was there to do during Typhoon Morakot?). I enjoyed one of the best nightlife scenes in Asia with plenty of SUA classmates nearby, and I had the opportunity to get a lot closer to my relatives living in Taipei. More than that, I liberally took alone time as I needed and enjoyed many afternoons in coffee shops, thinking and reflecting on my life. I liked having such ample freedom to decide my schedule and do things spontaneously, and I learned to overcome my guilty feelings when I decided to just relax in my dorm instead of going out with groups of friends. One of my final days in Taiwan, I went paragliding over the beaches and ocean of Taiwan. The feeling of being suspended in the air at the mercy of only a light breeze and a parachute while breathing in the clear air was amazing. My overall experience in Taiwan was one of learning about myself, and of deepening a sense of strength and peace.

Then, in August, I moved to Nanjing, China to begin my actual study abroad program at the prestigious Nanjing University. I might not let myself believe it at the time, but looking back, that transition was pretty hard and challenging. China was significantly different from Taiwan. The first few days, I found myself depressed while looking at the chronically polluted skies as I was used to constant sunshine in Taiwan and at home in California. I did not think I could survive the cold and snow.
Culturally, I found that my Taiwanese background and recent experiences in my time in Taiwan would in fact do little to prepare me for modern Chinese life. Linguistically, I struggled quite a bit as I had to switch from using traditional Chinese characters to using simplified ones. My language challenges were further compounded by a painful and recurring ear infection that deluded two doctors in Taiwan and the Chinese hospital. My German doctor at the international clinic treated the infection by stuffing my ears with gauze. One week into living in China, I was walking on the streets of Nanjing nearly deaf!

Throughout my six months abroad, I often wondered if I was fully living my study abroad, and if I was doing the ‘right’ things. Since study abroad is required for all undergraduates, we always hear stories from the upperclassmen about their experiences. I often wondered if I was making enough effort to make new friends or study enough Chinese, or if I had big goals or was being a good host daughter. I wondered if I was changing as a person on study abroad. I realized though, that study abroad is ultimately a different experience for each person, and that I needed to approach it without any preconceptions. Somehow, study abroad gives us exactly what we each individually need. For me, I mostly needed to re-ground my life by having space and alone time free of responsibilities, and to regain my calm. Although at times my classmates must have been wondering why I was such a hermit, I am at peace knowing that I did what I needed to do for myself as I faced my second decade of life, and the middle of my undergraduate career.

Furthermore, seeing myself in the context of another culture allowed me to develop a great appreciation and understanding of my upbringing and cultural background, and for my friends and family that always supported me in finding the right path growing up. I now have a sense of pride in myself and my family. I realized one night at the end of my study abroad that I am now much stronger emotionally and mentally than I was before.
On Saturday, May 1, 2010, Soka University of America celebrated its 9th Annual International Festival.

At the International Festival more than 6,500 guests enjoyed over 1,000 musicians and dancers performing on three stages and over 200 non-profit, craft and business exhibitors!

The 2010 International Festival was a part of the Orange County's Imagination Celebration, presented in cooperation with Arts Orange County and the Orange County Department of Education. This year we were privileged to present international food from several nations, exhibitors, games and activities, an art exhibition, ceramic sales and demos, a children’s play area with Superslide, Bounce House and Bungee Trampoline, student project presentations — and much more!

If you were unable to attend the festival this year, please plan to join us next year on Saturday, May 7, 2011, as we celebrate the 10th Annual Festival here on the SUA campus!

For more information, contact Wendy Harder at info@soka.edu or (949) 480-4081.
Brief Introduction:
Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Michael Allen Weiner has forged his way through academia as a published author, researcher, mentor, father and friend. But his impressive resume is not limited to academic accomplishments. Weiner has traveled to more than 50 countries, honing his skills as an educator as well as a global citizen. When asked to impart a piece of advice to SUA students, Weiner had this to say:

“Seek your passion, whatever it is that makes you feel most alive. Don’t study a subject just because you think it’s going to open a particular door or make you a lot of money. Look for something that really inspires you. You have the rest of your life to regret it if you don’t. The decade of your 20s is the time to do that.”

1. From which institutions do you hold degrees, and in what field?
- Dual Honors BA Degree (Chinese History and Sociology) from Sophia University in Tokyo.
- Ph.D. from The University of Sheffield in the United Kingdom, with research completed at Tokyo and Hosei Universities in Tokyo.

2. What attracted you to SUA?
- The small student body and the ability to work with individuals as well as groups of students.
- The mission statement, and the ability to create, encourage, and provide students with the skills necessary to be global citizens.

3. Favorite thing about SUA?
- The students and the sense of community.

4. In your experience, what do you think distinguishes a Soka Student from students at other institutions?
- They are engaged with the material, ask informed questions, are genuinely interested in developing the skills associated with critical thinking, and assume a role in university life at SUA that is rarely evident elsewhere.

5. Who/What would you consider to be a source of inspiration for you?
- My Ph.D. supervisor, Martin Collick, who taught me how to write.
- My father, whose inability to achieve his own goals motivated me to fulfill mine.
- My eldest daughter, whose courage continues to be a source of inspiration for me.

For more information on Prof. Michael Weiner, you can visit his website at http://faculty.soka.edu/mweiner
I’ve heard about a charitable vehicle that would provide me income during my lifetime. Can you tell me more about this?

The vehicle is known as a charitable trust. By transferring assets including cash, real estate or securities into an irrevocable charitable remainder trust you and/or other beneficiaries can receive income for a term of years or for life. Upon yours or the beneficiaries’ death the remainder in the trust is distributed to SUA.

How do I donate real estate to Soka University?

If you are interested in donating real estate to Soka University such as your residence, vacation home, farm, commercial property or undeveloped land, please contact Linda Kennedy, Director of Philanthropy, at 949-480-4072.

What if I want to continue to live in my home?

Through a vehicle known as a retained life estate, a donor can transfer a personal residence, vacation home or farm to SUA and continue living or using the property. You would enjoy current tax savings that usually characterize only charitable gifts given during someone’s lifetime.

How do I make a bequest through my will or living trust to Soka University?

The following is suggested wording to use to make a bequest to SUA:

“I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to Soka University of America, located in Aliso Viejo, California, the sum of $___________ (or ___% of the residue of my estate—or other real or personal property appropriately described) to be used by SUA as it shall deem advisable to best promote the University’s goals and mission.”

You can also designate a specific program or purpose in the language of the will.

How do I donate appreciated securities to Soka University?

If your stock is held in a brokerage account, send a letter of instruction to your broker or banker with a full description of the securities and your gift’s intended purpose. Securities can be sent electronically using the following transmittal instructions:

Option 1 -

If your securities are held in a brokerage account, have your broker or banker contact Ms. Dita Shemke at Morgan Stanley Smith Barney for electronic instructions regarding transmitting your donation into the Soka University of America account.
Her information is provided below.

Ms. Dita Shemke
Morgan Stanley Smith Barney
28202 Cabot Road, Suite 150
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677
Direct (949) 365-5303
Email dita.shemke@mssb.com

Option 2 -
Send a letter of instruction to your broker or banker with a full description of the securities and your gift's intended purpose.
Send, fax or email a copy of the letter to Linda Kennedy at Soka University.

How do I go about setting up a named scholarship for students?
The minimum level to establish a named scholarship is $100,000 which will provide partial funding for a student for a year. In addition to having your name associated with the scholarship fund, you will be recognized as a "Founders Circle" donor. You can make your gift by cash, check, securities, real estate or other tangible property that can be easily converted to cash.

How do I purchase a named seat in the new performing arts center?
You can name a seat in the new performing arts center by making a gift of $10,000 to the Envision Campaign. When you name a seat, a permanent brass name plate bearing the inscription of your choice will be affixed to the back of the chair. Each name plate has space for 2 lines with a maximum of 23 characters per line.

You can dedicate a seat:
• As an individual, couple or family
• For your children, grandchildren or parents
• In memory of a loved one
• With the name of your business or organization
• Marking a birthday, anniversary, graduation or other special occasion
• Honoring a mentor, teacher or someone else you admire living or deceased
• with a quote

Locations for seat donors will be reserved on a first-come, first-reserved basis from the front of the theatre. (Seat name recognition does not guarantee that seat for future performances.)

How do I give online?
You can make your gift online at http://fundraiser.soka.edu
Soka University of America accepts American Express, JCB, Master Card and Visa.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Soka University’s Director of Philanthropy, Linda Kennedy, would be pleased to assist you in finding giving strategies that will fulfill your personal, family and business charitable goals.

Linda Kennedy
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Soka University of America
1 University Drive
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656
949-480-4072
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lkennedy@soka.edu

Please visit our “Donors and Friends” website at www.soka.edu to learn more about the various ways that you can make a gift to SUA.
We are happy to report that construction on the new Performing Arts Center is going very well. In fact, we are progressing on budget and ahead of schedule. Exterior work is nearly complete, the green roof is underway, and the photovoltaic cells are being installed. Additionally, plans for new donor walls have been finalized. The architect has developed an entirely unique etched glass design that will forever bear the names of those special contributors to SUA. We can’t wait to share it with you.

Don’t miss your opportunity to be a part of SUA history!
Contact Linda Kennedy for details at (949) 480-4072 or at lkennedy@soka.edu.
2010 calendar of events

MAY 22, 2010
ClassWorks 2010
Soka University's Student Art Show
Date: 05.22.2010 - 08.20.2010
Time: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Location: Founders Hall Art Gallery, 1st Fl

JUNE 15, 2010
Obstacleism by Farr Ligvani
Date: 06.15.2010 - 08.05.2010
Time: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Location: Founders Hall 2nd Floor

JUNE 28, 2010
Soka University Recreation & Fitness Sports Camp
Date: 06.28.2010 - 07.30.2010
Time: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Location: Recreation Center, Pool, Athletic Fields

JULY 26, 2010
Soka Kids Track Camp
Date: 07.26.2010 - 07.30.2010
Time: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Location: Soka University Track and Field

AUGUST 11, 2010
Orange County Textures -
In the footsteps of Madame Modjeska by
Leonard Myszynski
Date: 08.11.2010 - 09.03.2010
Time: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Location: Founders Hall 2nd Floor

AUGUST 27, 2010
Jazz Monsters Concert with the Gil Castellanos Quartet
Date: 08.27.2010
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Location: Campus Green Stage - Lawn seating

SEPTEMBER 10, 2010
“Specters of Culture: Argentinian Post-dictatorship Art” by Sebastian Chillemi and Pablo Salvada
Date: 09.10.2010 - 01.07.2011
Time: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Location: Founders Hall Art Gallery

OCTOBER 9, 2010
Celebrating a Vision of Peace Gala with Judy Collins
Date: 10.09.2010
Time: 5:30 pm
Location: Recreation Center

OCTOBER 22, 2010
Jazz Monsters Concert with the Gary Foster Quartet
Date: 10.22.2010
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Location: Founders Hall

NOVEMBER 19, 2010
Jazz Monsters Concert with the Mike Garson Trio
Date: 11.19.2010
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Location: Founders Hall
Don’t miss your opportunity to Take a Seat

Envision opening night. As the audience walks along Peace Walk toward the performing arts center, a glow emanates from a lofty, glass-enclosed hall. In the airy, light-filled lobby, there are sounds of an orchestra tuning. Entering the audience chamber, the theatre darkens and the murmur of voices drops to a hush. A violin solo softly fills the space.

You don’t have to be a violinst, an opera singer, a dancer or actor to play a starring role at the Soka University Performing Arts Center. Instant recognition awaits you when you take your seat by making a gift of $10,000 to the Envision Campaign.

When you name a seat, a permanent brass nameplate bearing the inscription of your choice will be affixed to the back of the chair.

But don’t wait -- only a few seats remain.

TO MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY, please contact Linda Kennedy in the Development Office at (949) 480-4072, or at lkennedy@soka.edu.

You may also make your gift online at http://seatcampaign.soka.edu. We accept MasterCard, Visa, JCB and American Express.

Congratulations!

ALUMNI MAKE HISTORY FOR THE FUTURE

In February, SUA Alumna Heather Davis (’08) took it upon herself to spearhead an endeavor to raise $10,000 from Soka Alumni for the Take a Seat Campaign. Her hope was to have a seat in the Performing Arts Center named for SUA Alumni. Her efforts paid off in record time! Donations from SUA Alumni around the globe poured in. As a result, a seat in the soon-to-be completed Performing Arts Center will be named to reflect the dedication of its students.

Publisher
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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 cscherfgaha@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.