Celebrate a Vision of Peace
JANUARY 2013

Takacs Quartet w/ Joyce Yang
Date: 01.16.13
Time: 8:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Community Cinema at Soka University – Soul Food Junkies
Date: 01.17.13
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Pauling Hall 216

The Phil Norman Tentet
Date: 01.18.13
Time: 7:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Vancouver Symphony Orchestra
Date: 01.28.13
Time: 8:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

FEBRUARY 2013

Opera a La Carte – “The Pirates of Penzance”
Date: 02.09.13
Time: 8:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

The Kenny Werner Trio
Date: 02.15.13
Time: 7:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Malama O Ke Aina, Malama O Ke Kai
Date: 02.16.13
Time: 8:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

2013 Soka Education Conference
Date: 02.16.13 - 02.17.13
Time: 9:30 am
Location: Pauling Hall 216

Barry Douglas – Piano
Date: 02.19.13
Time: 7:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

MARCH 2013

Academy of St. Martin in the Fields
Date: 03.03.13
Time: 3:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Apollo’s Fire – “Come to The River”
Date: 03.10.13
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Tafelmusik “House Of Dreams”
Date: 03.14.13
Time: 7:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Community Cinema at Soka University – Wonder Women!
Date: 03.28.13
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Pauling Hall 216

All-Star Tribute to Jimmy Wyble
Date: 03.29.13
Time: 7:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

APRIL 2013

Shesh Besh (Arab/Israeli Ensemble)
Date: 04.06.13
Time: 8:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Nathan Aweau
Date: 04.13.13
Time: 8:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Jeremy Denk – Piano
Date: 04.14.13
Time: 3:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

MAY 2013

12th Annual International Festival
Date: 05.04.13
Time: 10:30 am
Location: Soka University of America

Community Cinema at Soka University – The Revolutionary Optimists
Date: 05.09.13
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Pauling Hall 216

Class of 2013 Commencement Ceremony*
Date: 05.24.13
Time: 2:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center
*By invitation only

Purchase your tickets at:
https://performingarts.soka.edu
Dear Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to SUA Founders, our special newsletter for our donors and friends, filled with updates on recent university happenings and events. I hope that you enjoy browsing through these pages and see all that Soka University of America (SUA) has to offer.

We welcomed our newest undergraduate Class of 2016 to Soka University of America (SUA). This year’s freshmen class is comprised of 104 students (plus one exchange student from Guanajuato, Mexico), representing a total of 12 different countries, including Canada, Chile, France, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Malaysia, Peru, Philippines, Taiwan, United States and Vietnam. I am always surprised to hear the many reasons our students choose to attend SUA. One of the popular responses from this year’s freshmen includes our mandatory study abroad program, and, for the first time, a student shared that the Learning Clusters attracted them to our undergraduate program. Another student shared how she was encouraged to apply after her sister attended a concert at the Soka Performing Arts Center.

In September, to celebrate the return of the entire campus community including students, faculty and staff, I hosted the University-wide Award Ceremony and Welcome Dinner where we announced the recipients of our academic excellence awards and scholarship recipients. At this event, one student shared her experience regarding an internship in Shanghai after receiving the SUA Summer Internship Grant. This newly established grant program has been set up to allow students to gain meaningful work experience in their field of interest well before graduation. Selected recipients will be eligible to receive up to $4,000 to enable them to pursue great internships in their field of interest, without having to worry about summer earnings, since many worthwhile summer internships often do not provide summer stipends. I truly feel this generous program, along with the opportunities currently offered at SUA, resonate with the essence of Soka Education and its aim to focus on the happiness and development of each learner’s potential.

Also this fall, we received official notification of SUA’s rankings in the U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges 2013 Rankings. I am very pleased to share with you that we tied for 49th in the national liberal arts college rankings, up from 64th last year. This places SUA in the top 50 liberal arts colleges in the country, as well as, Top 8 on the West Coast. At the same time, we ranked #1 in Faculty Resources and Foreign Student Factor with 42% of our students coming from other countries. We also placed #2 in Ethnic Diversity and #8 in Best Value School. The Best Value School category truly reflects our commitment to affordable, quality education based on the determinants that the school be above average academically while costing considerably less than other schools with the need-based grants and scholarships. It is very gratifying to see such high national rankings when our university is only 12 years old. It is through your sincere contributions that we have been able to make this happen.

The Eighth Annual Peace Gala was held on Saturday, October 13, following the conclusion of our Board of Trustees’ fall session. At this year’s Gala, we welcomed 536 guests to our campus and raised $500,000 net for student scholarships. Ron Glass returned as the Master of Ceremony as we welcomed Rock ‘n Roll Hall of Fame inductees Cornell Gunter’s Coasters, for an exciting performance bringing many of our students and guests onto the stage and the dance floor. As you know, the gala has many returning benefactors each year, while also introducing many new guests to SUA to broaden our Soka network of friends. Many of them shared how they were truly impressed by the diversity of supporters and of the student body. I truly believe that this exemplifies the unique quality of who we are, from several different backgrounds and cultures, from all walks of life. As a university supported by ordinary people, I am reminded by the university founder, Mr. Daisaku Ikeda’s words, “SUA is a university built by the people, for the people.”

On behalf of the entire SUA community, I would like to express my appreciation for your generous contributions throughout the years enabling students from around the world regardless of need to study at SUA. Through your support, we are able to carry on the dream envisioned over 80 years ago by the founder of Soka Education, Mr. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, and the university founder, Mr. Daisaku Ikeda. We will continue to do our best to offer an outstanding education that will foster the future leaders for peace and society. On behalf of the students, faculty and staff, we wish you and your families the very best this holiday season.

Sincerely,

Daniel Y. Habuki, Ph.D.
President
The 8th annual Peace Gala, *Celebrating a Vision of Peace*, took place on the campus of Soka University of America on Saturday, October 13, 2012. With more than 120 student, staff, and faculty volunteers supporting the event, 536 guests were welcomed and $500,000 was raised for student scholarships. Clothilde V. Hewlett, a member of the SUA Board of Trustees, served as the honorary chair of the 2012 Peace Gala Committee.

The evening began with a cocktail reception and silent auction in the Founders Hall Art Gallery. Afterward, guests moved to the Recreation Center via a candlelit walkway lined with students thanking guests for their support.

The program began as Monserrat Sepulveda (Class of 2013) shared the transformative power of Soka Education as she disembed from her past experiences of traveling around the world to escape her reality to now become the hope-filled global citizen determined to help society. Handrio Nurhan (Class of 2015) spoke of his appreciation for the donors and credited them solely for making his SUA education possible through the Soka Opportunity Scholarship program (SOS) and loans available to international students. He concluded by performing “Nessun Dorma” from Puccini’s Turandot, amazing and thrilling the audience.

Ron Glass returned for the second year as Master of Ceremonies, graciously leading guests through the evening. A special dinner with NBA hall of fame inductee Jamaal Wilkes and a Stratocaster guitar autographed by Sirs Paul McCartney and Elton John were the highlights of the live auction. The evening concluded with a lively performance by Rock ’n Roll Hall of Fame inductees Cornell Gunter’s Coasters, who delighted both guests and students on the dance floor.

The 9th annual Peace Gala will take place on Saturday, October 12, 2013. Tickets can be purchased online at http://gala.soka.edu or contact Linda Kennedy at 949/480-4072 or l kennedy@soka.edu.
Good evening, my name is Handrio Nurhan and I’m from Jakarta, Indonesia, the world’s fourth most populated nation and largest Muslim majority country spanning over 17,000 individual islands, with over 300 ethnic groups speaking more than 726 languages.

As a young man, my dream was to work for the United Nations. I had a great thirst for knowledge and a love for reading. In fact, it was this love of reading in junior high school that led me to some of the writings of the founder of the Soka Schools, Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, which then led me to the knowledge of the Soka Education School System. I was so impressed with what I read that I first dreamt and then determined to go to Soka University in Japan.

As I strived in high school to excel in my classes and even represented my school by winning many national debates, the reality of going to a university in Japan seemed grim, because my family was struggling with grave financial difficulties, and so was my country. Indonesia was trying to recover from the Asian economic crisis beginning in 1997, which also contributed to the fall of the Indonesian dictator Suharto, bloody riots, ethnic persecutions and a devastating tsunami. My family could hardly pay for my high school tuition, so going to a university abroad seemed impossible.

Many people tried to convince me to stay in Indonesia, but I did not listen. In fact, I intentionally only applied to Soka University in Japan. I would not give up my dream and worked diligently doing many different jobs simultaneously to help pay my tuition. In fact, from the kindness of a family friend, I received the initial funds to go to Soka University, so I enrolled. However, even with that generous help as well as a scholarship in the form of a monthly allowance and a 30% reduction in tuition, I could barely survive. I had to work several jobs on and off campus to help me pay the remaining tuition, living expenses and rent.

Between studying in my third language, Japanese, and my indispensable part-time jobs, I did manage to keep my grades passable. However, I was always frustrated because I wanted so badly to learn and excel academically in order to reach my full potential. So I found myself in a cycle where I worked hard doing jobs that paid for something but in the end I could not optimally do well.

A light in the tunnel came when I applied for and was tested, interviewed and selected for a semester exchange program with Soka University of America. I was so ecstatic to experience two Soka schools, each very unique. I not only had the opportunity for this academic experience in my life, but I was able to finally concentrate just on my studies. The small class-size facilitated many inspiring moments of dialogue with my professors and fellow students. In that one semester, I can avow that my life changed. At the end of my exchange program, I learned about the Soka Opportunity Scholarship, which provides full-tuition for students with an earned family income of $60,000 or less, and the fees for room and board can be covered with loans from the University, and all of these are eligible for foreign students as well! It was unbelievable.

I met with President Habuki, who kindly referred me to SUA Provost Takahashi. The day that I visited her turned out to be the registration deadline for the last SAT exam of the year. Provost Takahashi encouraged me register on the spot, otherwise I would have missed the opportunity to apply to SUA for that year; but thanks to her encouragement, I completed my application and was accepted.

I would, of course, have to start over as a freshman because SUA does not accept transfer credits. I returned to Japan, determined to pay back the large debts I had accrued as a student. I worked two tutoring jobs. I also had a third job that was physically challenging as I helped deliver large appliances all over Tokyo. It all paid off and I am proud to report to you that I paid all of my debts before leaving Japan.

I stand before you as a sophomore today, enjoying every bit of my time here. I’m learning French, my fifth language! I’ve visited Turkey to study secularism and Islam in comparison with Indonesia. There have been so many intellectual stimulations: the flood of culture and art and the beautiful and meaningful relationships with fellow students, professors, and staff here. I have learned through my experiences so far, to never be afraid of changes and to dream new dreams and seek new possibilities. Thus, I am contemplating to be a researcher for the United Nations, or a professor that inspires students.

I am at this first-rate institution of higher education, which is only possible for me, thanks to you, the generous donors. I thank you from the bottom of my heart—ma kasih!
Kasia Grycuk was born in Scotland and grew up speaking the English Language. When she came to the U.S. to study at SUA, she was completely unaware of any language barriers. It was easy to understand her professors and her new friends because everyone spoke English, and the culture wasn't so hard to understand when it was explained to her in her native tongue. However, when it came time for her study abroad semester in Harbin, China, she didn't have a clue about what to expect. In fact it wasn't until she actually arrived at her new school in China that she realized just how important communication is and how very difficult it was to communicate in a foreign language. Add to that the culture shock of being in a totally unfamiliar social setting, and you have a recipe for feeling very uncomfortable.

Kasia felt that in order to become a true global citizen as outlined in the SUA mission, it was important to break through cultural barriers and investigate the stereotypes she had accepted throughout her life. She had never experienced being a foreigner, and standing out as a westerner in China helped her begin to understand how uncomfortable visitors to her home country of Scotland must feel.

The young Chinese woman with whom Kasia shared a room during her stay in Harbin provided the opportunity to engage in intimate conversations about their different perspectives on topics such as education, family, religion, and society. Witnessing how people on the opposite side of the globe speak, act, and think has really opened her eyes concerning what it takes to be a global citizen: the ability to understand and respect humanity regardless of the language spoken.

The experience of study abroad in China, combined with Kasia's concentration in the study of humanities at SUA, has ignited her curiosity to question and ponder aspects of everyday actions that seem normal in her culture but, in actuality, are not accepted or practiced in others.

As the first SUA student to travel to Peru for the study abroad program, Sarah Randolph was full of excitement at what the next four months at Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú would bring. She took a course on ecotourism in which she learned about utilizing the natural beauty of various locations as the primary attraction for tourism. This would make tourism more sustainable as nature is always renewing itself and bringing something new to the location.

At SUA, small classes are filled with lively dialogue guided by a professor. Classroom learning combines with individual work to produce well-rounded students. It was a new experience for Sarah to find herself in a university where much of the work is done in groups and there is a more distant relationship with the professor. Sarah felt this teaching experience forced students to take greater responsibility for their share of learning as they maximized resources and critical thinking skills to find answers in their groups as opposed to being guided by the professor.

Being far away from home, study abroad taught Sarah how to have patience with herself and to “extract profound significance and joy from mundane everyday things.” Expecting to become fluent in Spanish through her study abroad program, Sarah eventually concluded that for her there is no such thing as fluency. Every day, there was something new to learn. Sarah said, “I have learned that I can extract as much value from a simple, lonely ride on the public transport as I can from an exciting excursion or inspiring conversation. Everything depends on perspective, and one becomes hyperaware of this fact when studying abroad.”
Justin Sandoval thought that a semester abroad in Kansai, Japan, would provide him with an opportunity to improve his ability to speak Japanese, but he was surprised to find it would do much more: it would change his life.

Born and raised in the United States, Justin has good command of the English language. Even though he had studied Japanese for two years at SUA, as he boarded the plane for his stay in Japan, he realized that he had little confidence in his ability to speak and understand the Japanese language. Additionally he was a bit apprehensive that he would feel like a minority among the Japanese people and his host family who spoke no English.

Justin said, “Perhaps the most satisfying development has been my ability to better understand and speak the Japanese language. For me one of the most rewarding experiences is when I learn a phrase or grammar rule in class then instantly start to hear it around me or have the opportunity to apply what I have learned in a real life situation, it makes the learning so relevant. That is why studying abroad is so essential to learning a new language.”

He says that learning a new language has helped to build his imagination. If he is not able to express himself in English because the audience cannot understand him, he must use his limited knowledge of Japanese. He finds himself forced to reinvent concepts previously taken for granted in his native tongue and put them into a new language that is rooted in a different historical, cultural and social context.

The absence from SUA for a semester made Justin appreciate SUA even more. He missed the beautiful campus, the profundity of friendships, the intimacy and depth of the classes, the quality and openness of the professors, and the drive and uniqueness of the students. And Justin now realizes just how much his time at SUA has transformed him. He entered SUA as a high school student with no knowledge of what he wanted to do with his life. During his three years at SUA he has been guided to find his true interests through examination and experimentation which have left him with an enthusiasm for life and learning. Justin concluded by saying, “I’ve never been more convinced than now this is the best university in the world.”
Soka Women’s Cross Country Team Wins the California Pacific Conference

On Friday, November 2, 2012, on the campus of William Jessup University in northern California, seven members of the Women’s Cross Country team defeated teams from seven other universities to capture the first conference title in any sport for SUA. For the first time in the history of athletics at Soka University of America, the Soka Women’s Cross Country team (the SUA Lions) won the California Pacific Conference (CAL-PAC).

With five SUA Lions placing in the top 12, the team now advances to the NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) national competition in Vancouver, Washington. The team was led by Lauren Clemens (2015) and Angelica Rosales (2013), who were named All-Conference and placed 4th and 5th respectively.

Also on that day, Gigi Charlson Freeman (Head Coach, Track & Field and Cross Country) was named cross country coach of the year by the Cal Pac Conference, the first coach at Soka to receive such honors. Gigi, who has headed the SUA Track and Field and Cross Country teams since 2010, said: “I am honored to have received this award and notoriety for our program. It proves we are headed in the right direction. The determination and hard work put forth by our lady Lions and assistant Coach, Patrick Boivin, has catapulted us in to our first winning season.”

The California Pacific Conference (CAL-PAC) is a college athletics conference in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). For women, Cal-Pac sponsors basketball, cross country, golf, soccer, and volleyball.

SUA held its inaugural SUA in NYC event in Manhattan, New York on Saturday, November 10. Approximately 150 guests, comprised of donors, alumni, and prospective students, joined in the festivities, which included drinks and hors d’oeuvres. The short program included a welcome and an introduction of the SUA Peace Gala by Linda Kennedy, SUA’s Director of Philanthropy, followed by President Danny Habuki thanking donors and praising alumni for their accomplishments. Steve Dunham, Chair of the Board of Trustees and Tariq Hasan, Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees, shared their appreciation for the generosity of our donors. Jimmy King, Coordinator for National Student Recruitment, spoke about his role and experience with prospective students and current alumni. The evening concluded with Isamu Yoshioka (Class of 2005) recounting highlights of his journey from SUA through medical school to become the first SUA alumnus to receive his MD. Donors enjoyed their time meeting alumni and learning about the ways graduates are using the education they received at SUA. The alumni enjoyed meeting the generous people who helped make their education possible at SUA.
Summer internship work is a wonderful way for students planning to pursue a career immediately following graduation to jump start their preparation by obtaining work experience in their field of interest. Unfortunately, many internship programs do not come with a paycheck, and most students need to make money during the summer in order to sustain themselves throughout the regular school year. To address this need, SUA introduced the Summer Internship Grant Program. Here is how it works: once a student has secured an internship, s/he works with Jennifer Cunningham, Manager of Career Services, to submit appropriate paperwork to be eligible for the program. The student must work at least 8 weeks for a minimum of 20 hours per week. Selected students will receive between $2,000 and $4,000 depending on the terms of their internship.

These are a few of the students who benefited from the Summer Internship Grant Program last summer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Location of Internship</th>
<th>Industry Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miho Isobe (2014)</td>
<td>Baobab Financial Services</td>
<td>Tamale, Ghana</td>
<td>Microfinance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keiko Mawatari (2013)</td>
<td>CRCC</td>
<td>Beijing, China</td>
<td>Environmental Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melody Murakami (2014)</td>
<td>Uganda Village Project</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>NGO/Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miho Saito (2014)</td>
<td>Create Common Good</td>
<td>Boise, ID</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zuleyka Shahin (2014)</td>
<td>Public Concern at Work</td>
<td>London, UK</td>
<td>Public Policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An Experience by Miho Saito (Class of 2014)

As one of the recipients of this new summer internship grant program, Miho Saito chose to work at Create Common Good in Boise, Idaho, an organization that helps refugees and at-risk immigrants assimilate into the United States through sustainable agriculture and culinary training. During her two month internship, she learned how to teach English, cook, market her farm produce, and help manage the organization. The internship not only helped Miho find an objective for her career, to create a world that upholds the highest respect towards all lives, but also recognize what it entails to be a true global citizen. Going to a location where diversity does not exist, Miho challenged herself to erase all borders of race, gender, and stereotypes and to see each individual as a human being worthy of respect. This summer internship has changed Miho’s life, and will surely continue to affect SUA students positively, giving them another opportunity to understand and live the mission statement of SUA, global citizenship.
Bridge Buddies – SUA Students Helping Future SUA Freshmen

Mentoring is a big part of education at SUA, and that doesn't just apply to professors and their students. One undergraduate student with a big heart and great idea wanted to do something that would help future SUA students. The idea was the springboard for Bridge Buddies.

Soka University of America offers college preparatory “Bridge Programs” for students who are speakers of English as a second language (ESL). Currently, there are two distinct Bridge Programs for international students who have applied to the undergraduate program. One is the Summer Bridge Program, an intensive two-month summer program for students who feel they need some extra English language study prior to entering the SUA undergraduate program as freshmen. The other is the Extended University Bridge Program (EUBP), an intensive two-semester program for students who have been conditionally admitted to SUA.

A new support system developed on campus this year between undergraduate students and Extended University Bridge Program students. This program is affectionately called the “Bridge Buddies,” a peer-tutoring program initiated by one student who found others wishing to volunteer their time to support future SUA freshmen. The Bridge Buddies program currently consists of two juniors and six seniors who work with their buddies for one hour per week, helping them polish up their individual English skills. Some students volunteer because they hope to enter the Peace Corps and work with communities where English education is often vital. Others hope to join the JET program following graduation from SUA. (The JET Program aims to promote internationalization in Japan’s local communities by improving foreign language education and developing international exchange at the community level.) Other students simply want to give back to their peers. As one senior explained, “During study abroad I realized the importance of having conversations with native speakers.” Bridge Buddies is one way for SUA students to provide non-native English speakers with an opportunity to safely immerse themselves in English conversation.

Please provide a brief background about yourself

I am originally from Texas, and sometimes my accent still shows through. In college I was a dreamer and a wanderer, and it was not until I was halfway through my undergraduate program at Austin College that I declared philosophy as my major. I was instantly engaged and had a concern for issues of medical ethics, equality, and feminism. When I began my work at Texas Tech University for my master’s degree in philosophy, I focused my studies on feminist philosophy and applied ethics while continuing my work with the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas. It was during these early experiences, working on court cases such as the Tulia Texas drug case that I really began to understand how inequality worked. When I began to work on my doctorate at Texas A&M University and also a women’s studies certificate (studying gender and sexuality), I was asked by my dissertation chair, Dr. Stjepan Mestrovic, to help him with research pertaining to the Abu Ghraib abuse trials. I found it fascinating, and this topic became the focus of my dissertation and first book, *Fallgirls: Gender and the Framing of Torture at Abu Ghraib*. I currently research war crimes and use social theory, feminist theory, and gender and queer theory to make sense of abuse.
From which institutions do you hold degrees?
My bachelor’s degree is from Austin College in Sherman, Texas. It is a school very similar to Soka, from which I hold a liberal arts degree with a concentration in philosophy. I studied abroad in Italy and wrote my capstone on ethics of physician-assisted suicide. My master’s degree was obtained from Texas Tech University, and my doctorate and my women’s studies degree were both earned at Texas A&M University.

What attracted you to SUA?
One of the main attractions to Soka was the diverse student body. I experienced this early in elementary school at Hamilton Park, and I was excited to find it at Soka. Also, the institutional commitment to non-discrimination at the student and faculty level regarding gender identity and sexual orientation was important to me as a lesbian-queer and activist in the LGBTQ community. Lastly, I remember seeing the job advertisement, printing it out, and running downstairs to share it with my mother when I was on the job market. My exact words were, “I want to work here! This is the perfect school for me! Look at the small classes! The mission statement! The mentoring opportunities! It’s me!” Turns out, I was right!

What distinguishes Soka students in your opinion?
Soka students are hard working and dedicated to asking questions and do not give up until they have found several answers. I also find Soka students to be a very strong community to each other as well as to me. It is truly amazing the ways in which social bonds are realized here. We are a learning community on top of a hill, teaching and growing together!

What inspires you?
A sense of wonder inspires me, as does fighting injustice, exposing it, alleviating it, or even just talking about it. My past and present mentors inspire me (and the relationships I still have with them), as do my dogs, my friends and colleagues, my connections to the members of the Soka community, and the ways in which I am growing as a person simply by being a part of Soka every day. I can’t help mentoring students who are close to me. I am absolutely proud of them when they succeed and go on to become adults. I enjoy playing a role in that process! I like to think that we create beauty in the world together and that these ongoing creation processes at Soka are affecting others in a positive way.
The building is built. The construction fence is down. You can actually see inside the windows and begin to imagine the sights and sounds that will fill the hall.

This is what it felt like the first two weeks of my time as the new General Manager for the Soka Performing Arts Center. The anticipation and excitement were palpable. But the big question was, what do we want to present in this amazing space? It’s perfect for classical music concerts. With acoustics by one of the best acousticians in the world, how could you NOT present classical music? But it’s also wonderful for amplified music with an audio system designed and engineered by the same people that retrofitted Walt Disney Concert Hall and designed the systems at the New World Center in Miami. What about choral music, or dance? Can you do theatre in the concert hall? So many possibilities for such a versatile space!

With such great potential, the job of narrowing down exactly what should be included in the first season was daunting. For inspiration and guidance, I referred to the mission statement of the university: To foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life. With this simple, yet profound, statement in mind, I set about creating a season that attempted to fulfill that mission.

The season needed to be global in scope, so I needed to include artists and groups from around the world. It needed to be global in structure, meaning that it needed to include music, dance and theatre aspects. It needed to be global within the disciplines, so it needed to include classical, jazz, contemporary; solo, duo, quartet, quintet and larger ensembles.

The season needed to be contributive – contributive to the academic life of the university, contributive to the promotion and awareness of the university within our community, contributive to the education and happiness of our community, contributive to the vibrancy of the arts in our region.

So, with this in mind, I set about bringing together a season that included the St. Petersburg Symphony from Russia, the New Zealand and Tokyo String Quartets, acrobats from China and a group from Ireland that has been making musical headlines for 50 years. But I think that the one event that really spoke to all of these needs at the same time was the presentation of “Water is Rising.”

Water is Rising is a group of musicians from the Pacific atolls of Tuvalu, Tokelau and Kiribati. Through their music, their dance and photographic images, they shared with the audience the immediacy of the effects of global warming. These people have already lost half of their land mass to the rising oceans. Their water supplies are threatened or already inundated with sea water. They brought forward the reality of their situation with grace, with the joy of their culture, and with artistry. They kindly spent time with our own students, talking about their situation and what was being done to mitigate the problems. And they spent time with students from neighboring schools, sharing their art and their experiences. We were able to combine Environmental Studies, International Studies, Social and Behavioral Sciences and the Humanities all in one program that was entertaining and enlightening.

The first season was an amazing amalgam of artists from around the world. Audiences were both big and small, but appropriate for the type of presentations that we had. We served over 26,000 people over 93 events in both the concert hall and black box theatre. Events ranged from our grand opening to recitals by our students at the end of each semester. We hosted events by our own faculty and students as well as presentations by schools and businesses.

So, when it comes to programming for the Soka Performing Arts Center, there are many options. But there is one guiding principle: Be a global citizen and lead a contributive life. All of the pieces will come together to help create an exciting and entertaining experience at the Soka Performing Arts Center.
Investing in Education

The mission of SUA is to “foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life.” With that mission in mind and the help of our generous donors around the world, the Office of Financial Aid partners with students and their families in order to ensure that a Soka education is accessible to all admitted students. At other universities, international students usually do not have the same opportunities for financial aid that US students have. This is primarily because federal aid cannot be awarded to foreign students. Because the Soka Opportunity Scholarship (SOS) is funded by donations from SUA supporters and disbursed by our Financial Aid Department, the financial playing field is leveled for international students. In an effort to promote greater diversity and access, SUA has designed a comprehensive merit and need-based financial aid program that ensures the fair distribution of institutional, state, and federal funds.

The traditional Soka Opportunity Scholarship (SOS) provides full tuition ($27,214 in 2012-13) for students whose annual family income is $60,000 or less. In an effort to promote greater diversity and access to higher education for both domestic and international students, the income ceiling for the SOS has been raised, and students from higher income brackets are now eligible to receive a prorated scholarship. As a result, 100% of the incoming Class of 2016 received some form of grant or scholarship from SUA.

Thanks to your generous support, the Soka Education Scholarship is available to ALL admitted students.
After graduating from SUA in 2007, Padma Gollapudi entered Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, California to pursue studies in economics. The thought-provoking classes at SUA and the professors' convictions that innovations in economics and careful economic policy creation would make a positive contribution to society inspired Padma to teach economics. In 2009 she graduated with a master's degree. She continues to study at Claremont, where she is currently writing her dissertation for a Ph.D. in Economics.

Padma chose to study economics because she believes most of the social and economic issues plaguing society cannot be solved solely through the traditional approach to economics. Quite like her education at SUA, the graduate studies program at Claremont has helped her study economics in the traditional sense in addition to understanding social issues from the perspective of other disciplines and ways of thinking.

Padma chose to become an educator when she observed the university founder, Daisaku Ikeda, interacting with young people. She was touched by the joy and confidence he inspired in young people from around the world. Discovering her love for economics, she dreamed of one day teaching at the university level. Her dream becomes a reality this spring as she becomes an adjunct professor teaching Introduction to Economics at SUA. Padma is the first undergraduate alumna to return to her alma mater as a professor.
Ways to Give

The students, faculty and staff at SUA welcome donations of any amount and all contributions are recognized with a thank you letter/tax receipt. We keep cumulative track of all donations made and honor our generous donors by placing their name on various walls when their donations total the following:

- **Benefactor** at $5,000 (location: Ikeda Library)
- **Silver Benefactor** at $10,000 (location: Ikeda Library)
- **Gold Benefactor** at $20,000 (location: Founders Hall)
- **Founders Circle Benefactor** at $100,000 (location: Peace Fountain)
- **Founders Circle Platinum Benefactor** at $250,000 (location: Performing Arts Center)
- **Founders Circle Diamond Benefactor** at $500,000 (location: Performing Arts Center)
- **Pillar of Soka Education** at $1,000,000 (location: Performing Arts Center)

For additional information about making a gift to Soka University of America, please contact Linda Kennedy, Director of Philanthropy, at 949.480.4072.
A Gift for Tomorrow

Legacy Society Gifts

The Legacy Society encourages donors to think beyond their lifespan to make certain that the mission and vision of Soka University of America will continue and thrive.

If you include Soka University in your estate plan and the value of the planned gift is a minimum of $5,000 you will immediately be recognized as part of the Legacy Society.

Two planned gifts that are especially appropriate (and perhaps beneficial to the donor) when the charitable midterm federal rates are low, like they are now, are the Charitable IRA rollover and the Retained Life Estate.

Charitable IRA Rollover

On December 17, 2010, Congress implemented a new law called the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010. A portion of this law allows taxpayers who are age 70 ½ or older to make gifts directly to qualified charities (like SUA) of up to $100,000 from their IRAs without having to declare the amount donated as taxable income. Note, however, the donors are not eligible to receive a charitable income tax deduction for the donation.

Life Estate

The retained life estate is a current gift of a personal residence or farm to a charitable organization while the donor retains the right to live there for the rest of his or her life. This gift works well for older donors who are in the last home of their lives which is fully paid for and they have no plans to dispose of the property. If you are considering leaving property to SUA as a bequest in a will or revocable living trust, you might consider creating a retained life estate instead. You will be able to take a partial tax deduction in the year you make the donation, yet retain the use of the property for life. The donor will be responsible for maintenance, upkeep, taxes and insurance through the term of the life estate.

If you are considering an estate gift to SUA please be sure to consult with your attorney, accountant or financial advisor as they are best suited to help you through the process.

For more information contact Linda Kennedy at 949-480-4072 or l kennedy@soka.edu.
Soka University’s
12th Annual International Festival
May 4, 2013
10:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

www.soka.edu/festival
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 going to our website www.soka.edu/giving/u.s.-donor-address-update.aspx or send an email to Coleen Scherf-Ghara at cscherfghara@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.

News Bites

SUA in U.S. News and World Report Best Colleges 2013 Rankings

- **Top 50** (49th) Liberal Arts Colleges in the United States
- **Top 7** in California & Oregon

In addition, SUA was also ranked:

- **#1** in Faculty Resources
- **#1 Foreign Student Factor** (with 42% of our students coming from other countries)
- **#2** in Ethnic Diversity
- **#8** in Best Value School

(The Best Value School category truly reflects SUA’s commitment to affordable, quality education based on the determinants that the school be above average academically while costing considerably less than other schools with need-based grants and scholarships.)

President Danny Habuki said, “It is very gratifying to see such high national rankings when SUA is only 12 years old.”

The U.S. News “Best Colleges 2013” rankings data are available at: http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/rankings/national-liberal-arts-colleges which also includes the methodology for these rankings.