SUA FOUNDERS
Soka University of America Benefactors & Donors

9th ANNUAL PEACE GALA

CELEBRATING a Vision of PEACE
JANUARY 2014

The Peking Acrobats
Date: 01.10.2014
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

The Diamonds and Billy Richards’ Coasters
Date: 01.12.2014
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

International Guitar Night
Date: 01.25.2014
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Muriel Anderson and Tierra Negra
Date: 01.30.2014
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

FEBRUARY 2014

Benny Golson Tribute
Date: 02.01.2014
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:30 pm & 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Stephanie Bettman and Luke Halpin
Date: 02.07.2014
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Pacific Symphony – Sundays At Soka
Date: 02.09.2014
Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

2014 Soka Education Conference
Date: 02.15.2014 - 02.17.2014
Time: 9:30 am - 5:30 pm
Location: Pauling Hall 216

George Kuo, Aaron Mahi, and Martin Pahinui
Date: 02.15.2014
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Bahia Orchestra Project
Date: 02.18.2014
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

MARCH 2014

Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra
Date: 03.01.2014
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Jupiter String Quartet with Jon Nakamatsu
Date: 03.02.2014
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

The Stars of Beatlemania
Date: 03.09.2014
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Community Cinema at Soka University – The Trials of Muhammad Ali
Date: 03.13.2014
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Location: Pauling 216

Jason Vieaux and Yolanda Kondonassis
Date: 03.14.2014
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

14th Van Cliburn Competition Finalist
Date: 03.23.2014
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

LOS ANGELES JAZZ QUARTET
Date: 03.28.2014
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

APRIL 2014

Amy Hanaialii – Remembering Napua
Date: 04.05.2014
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Eric Alexander – Harry Allen Quintet
Date: 04.11.2014
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Umi Garrett
Date: 04.13.2014
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Community Cinema at Soka University – The New Black
Date: 04.17.2014
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Location: Pauling 216

Midori
Date: 04.26.2014
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Community Cinema at Soka University – Medora
Date: 04.17.2014
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Location: Pauling 216

Community Cinema at Soka University – Las Marthas
Date: 04.20.2014
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Location: Pauling 216

Geoffrey Keezer Solo Jazz Piano
Date: 04.21.2014
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Dale Kristien and Bill Hutton
Date: 04.23.2014
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

MAY 2014

Soka University’s 13th Annual International Festival
Date: 05.03.2014
Time: 10:30 am - 5:30 pm
Location: Peace Lake area

Branford Marsalis
Date: 05.09.2014
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Class of 2014 Commencement Ceremony*
Date: 05.23.14
Time: 2:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

*By invitation only
DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

Welcome to SUA Founders, our special newsletter for 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 kicked-off the 2013-14 academic year in August by welcoming 112 undergraduate first-year students representing 16 different countries, including Nepal, France, Great Britain, Italy, Peru and South Sudan. From the United States, our students come from 17 different states with a majority representing California. The Extended University Bridge Program students represent 5 different countries including Spain, Brazil, South Korea, Peru and Japan. Through our freshmen and bridge students, I can see how diverse our student body has become. We still have room for more growth, yet, I believe the increasing diversification of our student body is proof that our Office of Recruitment is doing a tremendous job and SUA is building its reputation as a highly regarded academic institution. Because of the expanded Soka Opportunity Scholarship (SOS) that SUA offers, many freshmen were able to enter SUA this year. Soka University could not maintain the generous financial aid program that we now have in place without our wonderful donors, like you, who support the Soka Education Fund.

This fall, we received news of SUA’s rankings in the U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges 2014 Rankings. I am very pleased to share with you that we are tied for 41st in the national liberal arts college rankings out of 248 institutions, up from 49th last year. Again this year, we ranked #1 in faculty resources and #2 in financial resources. We also placed #5 in Ethnic Diversity among National Liberal Arts Colleges while we came in at #1 for Foreign Student Factor (with 39% of our students coming from other countries). Finally we came in at #5 for Great Schools at Great Prices (Best Value among National Liberal Arts Colleges), up from #8 last year. It is very gratifying to see such high national rankings when SUA only became eligible for the U.S. News & World Report Best College Rankings in 2011 and our campus is only 12 years old. I am reminded of the efforts of our faculty, staff, students and donors for your contributions to the development of our university. With this in mind, I look forward to continuing to advance our academic excellence into the future.

The ninth annual Peace Gala was held on Saturday, October 12, following the Board of Trustees’ fall session. We welcomed over 544 guests to our campus and raised $500,000 in net proceeds for our student scholarships. Ron Glass returned as the emcee, leading us through the special evening. The audience was delighted to enjoy a special performance by Grammy Award winning artists Esperanza Spalding and Terri Lyne Carrington with special guest Grammy Award winning jazz legend Wayne Shorter and Leo Genovese. With the exciting live auction and heartwarming student speeches, many of the participants expressed their excitement to return for next year’s Gala. Thanks to your generous contributions throughout the year, we are able to carry on the dream envisioned over 80 years ago by the founder of Soka Education, Mr. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, to provide students with an outstanding education for the sake of humanity’s future.

During the weekend of the Gala, the office of Career Services in collaboration with Soka Student Union’s (SSU) Graduation Department held the fourth annual Future Expo. Since the Expo was held during the weekend of the Board of Trustees fall session, one of our esteemed Trustees, Mr. Koji Hoshino, was able to attend as the keynote speaker. He is the President of Studio Ghibli, a Japanese animation film studio best known for the production of animated feature films including Spirited Away and My Neighbor Totoro. Supporting this event has become a tradition amongst our Trustees who have participated as guest keynote speakers in the past. Another great Expo tradition is our amazing alumni who attend and share experiences from their respective field of work. Three alumni returned to speak about their work in education and non-profit organizations. It is truly wonderful to see the collaborative efforts of our staff, students, alumni and Trustees in a unique event that better prepares our students for life after SUA.

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation to all of you and the university founder, Daisaku Ikeda, for bringing Mr. Makiguchi’s dream to fruition. I truly see the contributions that our students are making and will continue to make in society for the betterment of humanity. We are indebted to the many individuals around the world who share this same spirit, and we will continue to do our best to offer the level of academic excellence and access for all students regardless of need that will foster the future leaders for peace. I wish you and your families the very best.

Sincerely,

Daniel Y. Habuki, Ph.D.
President
9th ANNUAL PEACE GALA
The 9th annual Peace Gala, “Celebrating a Vision of Peace,” was held on the campus Saturday, October 12, 2013. The evening began with guests gathering at the Soka Performing Arts Center to enjoy cocktails and hors d’oeuvres while browsing the silent auction. They were then led across the bridge over Peace Lake lined by grateful students holding candles, thanking each guest for attending as they passed by, and then welcomed by the dynamic Josho Daiko Club (Japanese Taiko Drums) as they entered the venue.

The program started when two students who have benefited from the Scholarship Fund shared their experiences. The heartfelt stories served as a reminder of SUA donors’ unwavering dedication to the university, its mission, and the students.

For the third year, actor Ron Glass, best known for his role as Detective Ron Harris on the TV sitcom “Barney Miller,” served as emcee. Joan May and Dita Shemke returned as event co-chairs for the seventh consecutive year, with Carolina Shorter as the 2013 honorary chair.

Guests delighted to the featured artists for the evening – three-time Grammy winning jazz bassist, cellist and singer Esperanza Spalding, nine-time Grammy winning jazz saxophonist and composer Wayne Shorter, Grammy winning jazz drummer Terri Lyne Carrington, and acclaimed jazz pianist Leo Genovese.

A memorable highlight of the evening came during the live auction when a guitar specially autographed for the gala by musician, activist and philanthropist Bono was sold to one lucky bidder for $25,000. A Studio Ghibli “Spirited Away” package added $10,000 to the evening’s total.

This year, the Peace Gala attracted some new and notable attendees including basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Grammy winning jazz pianist Keiko Matsui and Les Misérables Broadway star Ivan Rutherford. They, along with 544 guests, helped raise $500,000 which will benefit the SUA Scholarship Fund and students from around the world.

Next year will mark the tenth anniversary of the Soka Peace Gala which will be held on Saturday, October 11, 2014. Tickets are available now at http://gala.soka.edu or by contacting Linda Kennedy at 949-480-4072 or lkennedy@soka.edu.
Good evening everyone, my name is Bryce Arenson and I am a sophomore here at SUA. I would like to share with you a broad sweep through my life that led me to be standing here tonight. My early childhood was wonderful, and growing up in Thousand Oaks, California was great. I was just a normal kid so full of energy and so blessed with a loving family. I have so many early memories of going to the beach, fishing with my dad, playing board games with my family, riding my bike around my neighborhood and especially playing soccer and baseball. As a child, you just expect life to go on and on with joy untarnished. This was not to be and just before my 5th birthday my left eye became swollen, it became black and blue as if someone had socked me in the eye. In fact that was the diagnosis of a build-up of fatty tissue under my eye. The swelling quickly got worse and I could no longer open my eye. My parents knew something was wrong and took me to the eye institute at UCLA. Even after more expansive tests, the problem was unsolved, so I was taken to an Orbital and Ophthalmic surgeon immediately. It was discovered that I had a tumor on the back of my eye, it was Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. My parents were in shock, as I’m sure most of the parents here tonight can relate to.

For me, March 5th, 1999, proved to be the beginning of an incredible ordeal and would mark the start of one of the toughest battles of my life. Doctors were able to get most of the cancer out, but because it was so deeply imbedded in my eye muscles, they couldn’t get all of it out. They continued to do CAT scans of all parts of my body while also putting a catheter in my chest for the soon to come chemotherapy treatments, which lasted for six months. Two days after my 5th birthday, when I should have been eating left over birthday cake, I was instead getting shots, and getting spinal taps which I still remember vividly and having my body pumped full of chemo.

And one more thing; my hair fell out and I was bald, a very common side effect of chemotherapy.

By my 6th birthday I was so fragile from all of the chemo and infections that my heart rate had sky rocketed with high fevers and I had low immune functions, completely unable to fight even the simplest of sicknesses. Now I had to be kept in isolation as my white blood cells were practically nil. Any illness could prove fatal. I am happy to say that on April 13, 2001, after two years of constant battle and struggle, I was declared 100% cancer free. When I came home, I had completely forgotten what my house looked like. It was the most awesome feeling to be home at last with my family. One lesson that I learned early on was to never give up, just as my parents never gave up on me. I have carried this determination throughout my life.

Moving forward, as I became healthier and more active, I returned to my first love, sports, and by seven years old I started playing soccer with gusto and I have never stopped playing since. I just love the game. In high school, I played very well. I set several records and scored lots of goals. Over four seasons of varsity ball I scored 64 goals and had 25 assists. In my senior year in high school, I led the league in scoring and was able to win team and league Most Valuable Player. At the same time I challenged myself to do well in my studies maintaining a 3.85 GPA. I also broke a Guinness World Record by speed juggling a soccer ball 524 times in two minutes, an accomplishment that I worked very hard for and that I am very proud of.

When it came time to look at colleges, I was so excited. My goal was to find a school where I could both play soccer at a high level and study at a university with challenging academics. I first heard of Soka when the men’s assistant coach here at SUA, Coach McLeish, contacted me via a recruiting site. He also came to one of my games where I got to meet him and talk to him about the opportunity of going to Soka. I had been looking at a lot of schools, so for the moment I just added them to the list. I did a bit of research on Soka and saw that they had very good academics. I also liked how the school promoted peace and other Buddhist principles without preaching religion. The philosophy of the education was so different than other schools I was looking at. Coach McLeish let me know that they were holding a soccer camp at Soka to look at and evaluate possible recruits for the 2013 class. During this soccer camp, we also got a tour of the campus and to be honest I was probably sold at this point. The campus was beautiful. It was icing on the cake. I knew that this was where I wanted to be. Now I’m a sophomore on the men’s soccer team and I absolutely love being a student here at SUA.

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I definitely enjoy the competition athletically and intellectually, I like being able to compete at a high level not only on the field but also in the classroom. From my childhood of ill health, I’ve never forgotten my determination to be victorious no matter what is happening in my life. I am very grateful with the opportunity that I have here at SUA and I WILL make the most of it.
Good evening everyone, my name is Daniel Smyth and I am a Sophomore here at SUA. I’m from the small town of Langley, British Columbia. I grew up in the quieter part of Langley, in a small house, where out on the lawn, standing guard as a reminder of my family’s past, was an old broken down coach bus, my parents’ first home. Neither of my parents had graduated from high school, my dad worked in construction and my mother a hairdresser. My grandfather left his family of eight children when my dad was a baby, leaving my dad to live a rough childhood where he worked outside the local pub shining shoes as a kid. Going to school was not an option for him. My mother also had a very difficult childhood, first with severe fits of epilepsy and then having to take on responsibility of her family at fourteen when her parents were hit by a drunk driver. Between her mother being wheelchair bound and the heavy prescription drugs she was on, reading and schoolwork was made very difficult. Trying to pave a way, she left home at 17 to move to the city. As you can see, both of my parents had to grow up at an early age with very little opportunities for education.

Despite all of these disadvantages, my parents did their best to provide a rich life of wonderful and sometimes simple experiences for my brother and I whether it was enjoying a sunset, sharing in projects around the house or playing sports. My childhood was in many ways very happy and looking back, I realize that I was a bit spoiled.

However, as I got older our household became a lot gloomier. I watched my dad struggle to support us, and make things financially better for the family. I also simultaneously watched him sink into uncontrollable alcoholism and become an unhappy tortured man. It seemed the more he drank, the more he worked, and the less we saw of him. During this time, I felt hopeless and angry. As time went on I experienced a period of anxiety and insomnia, enough so that I was put on prescription medication. But my real glimmer of hope was on the soccer pitch. From a young age (like most kids) I was determined to become a professional goalkeeper. I was told over and over again that, because of my small size, I didn’t stand much of a chance, however I was desperate to prove everyone wrong. My chance to do just that came in high school when I was invited to go to England to try out for two professional teams. My dream was there for the taking, and I was so excited, but just before I planned to leave for England, I was seriously injured in a game after getting kicked in the face. Because of the length of time it took to heal from my operation, I missed the chance I had been hoping to prove I could do what everyone else said I couldn’t, that I could battle through unfavorable circumstances and come out with something to show for it. But when I got to England, I totally flopped. For every one good day there seemed to be three or four bad ones. I felt discouraged and empty inside. I also realized that I needed more of an intellectual outlet than soccer and video games so I returned to Canada and temporarily enrolled in Trinity Western University as a Psychology and Music major, until I could get my Soka application in. Thankfully David McLeish, the assistant coach and recruiter here at Soka had been in contact with me since I graduated high school and continued to support me during my time at Trinity. I was really excited when I finally got into SUA with a scholarship and with the backing of everyone at the school – it had finally all come together.

I moved to SUA in 2012, but before I came my dad had been battling with cancer and was getting worse and worse. I felt torn being here and not supporting my family and felt I should be home, but my parents told me otherwise. They were so proud that I was here and would not let me pass up the opportunity to get a great education. In fact, when I gave the free SUA T-shirt that I received in the mail to my dad he wore it around the hospital all the time as a testament to his pride in me being here – my mom eventually dressed him in that shirt for his cremation.

Between my dad’s death, being away from the family and a disappointing season with the soccer team, I didn’t make a very good impression during my first semester here at Soka. I didn’t want to run away from my shortcomings though and I challenged myself to carry on, using my parents’ example, an example that has gotten me through some pretty dark days in sunny Aliso Viejo. And I think that without their example I wouldn’t realize how many people support Soka and treat this place the same way my parents have treated me. And that’s what makes it awesome. Because this school, like my parents, goes way deeper than status or wealth. Yes the campus looks nice, yes the scholarships are important, but I am learning here at Soka that the treasure of what’s behind this beautiful place and its financial support is the people themselves and their willingness to continue working with students like me. I now know that the world will not be changed by my athletic or academic performances, unless I first and foremost have the passion for others like my parents have, and all of you here in the Soka community have.

Thank you.
The mission of Soka University of America is to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life. - Daisaku Ikeda, Founder, SUA

How is a performing arts center part of living a contributive life? How can the Soka Performing Arts Center exemplify this noble mission placed before all of us at Soka University of America? We can give back to the community through the arts. We can give back by sharing the outstanding abilities of visiting artists, not only through performances, but by providing learning opportunities for our own students and students from the surrounding community.

In its inaugural season, the Soka Performing Arts Center provided several opportunities for students to interact with visiting artists. A special performance was provided by the “Water is Rising” company, whose performers spoke with SUA students about the perils of global warming on their islands in the Pacific. Local school children attended a special performance by the Pacific Symphony, and Ensemble Galilei traveled to local schools to perform for students.

The most challenging and rewarding collaboration to date was the performance in September of 2012 by Grammy winning jazz flutist Nestor Torres in conjunction with the Aliso Niguel High School orchestra. For this event, Nestor worked with orchestra director Albert Jeung during the summer months, planning and selecting just the right music for the concert: music that would be challenging for the students, but not so difficult that high school musicians would be intimidated. When Nestor arrived in Aliso Viejo the week prior to the concert, he spent five days rehearsing with the orchestra. The final result was an outstanding performance that would have pleased the toughest critics.

Continuing that commitment to living a contributive life, a special program will take place in January of 2014. The program is called “JazzReach – Sittin’ In and Groovin’ Out.” Members of a jazz group, the Meta Quintet, from New York City, will spend three days with student jazz musicians from Aliso Niguel High School, Tessoro High School, Dana Hills High School, and SUA. Together, these students will rehearse a number of musical pieces and share their knowledge during master classes. The final result will be a concert by all of the participants in the program, presented to the public on Tuesday, January 28, 2014 at 7:30 pm.

Please join us to celebrate this wonderful occasion as well as our full season of special performances to experience the embodiment of living a contributive life. Some of these student musicians may go on to become leaders of culture in their own communities, carrying on this tradition of sharing and giving back through their art.
Kiyoko Nakano Class of 2014

While studying at Soka University of America, Kiyoko Nakano was always comparing herself to her classmates and feeling as though she didn’t quite measure up. She felt that many SUA students had already discovered their purpose in life and the fact that she had not caused her stress. When she went to Ecuador for a semester abroad, Kiyoko discovered much more than an unfamiliar language and culture. She discovered her passion in helping others and experienced the feeling of true happiness.

Tourists to the Galapagos Islands generally experience the beauty of nature and clean main streets. Kiyoko however noticed huge income gaps and inequalities. Additionally she discovered that the locals suffer from a high rate of stomach cancer because of the consumption of unclean drinking water.

While at study abroad Kiyoko found time to volunteer at a rural school for disabled children. She was assigned a project to compile a book. The children would draw pictures and Kiyoko would install a biography of the child next to his or her art work. The book would then be sold to tourists and members of the community to raise funds that would help pay for school materials and utility costs. With children ranging in age from 4 to 23 and with various degrees of disabilities, extracting answers to questions about their lives was not always easy. But it was through this process of interacting with so many different young people that Kiyoko discovered she really enjoyed helping others.

With Ecuador as a backdrop, Kiyoko learned just how small her personal struggles were in the big picture of life. It was here that she learned to love life, or as the natives would say, “ama la vida.”

As a senior this year Kiyoko’s capstone project will encompass researching and writing on the topic of rights to education for children with disabilities in Ecuador. Following graduation Kiyoko hopes to pursue a position in the Peace Corps that will allow her to work in the field of education helping children.
Soka University of America offers a bachelor’s degree in liberal arts, with concentrations in environmental studies, humanities, international studies, and social and behavioral sciences. Within each concentration, students can pursue what they are passionate about without being confined to the borders of their discipline.

The environmental studies concentration fulfills one of Soka University of America’s founding principles: to “foster leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity.” The complex problem of how humans can sustainably live on the planet requires a broad, multidisciplinary approach, one that a liberal arts background is well suited to deliver. This concentration provides students a foundation in the scientific understanding of human/environment relations as well as an understanding of the philosophical, social, economic, and organizational forces that shape those relations.

The humanities concentration seeks to prepare global citizens by examining the breadth and depth of the human search for meaning, value, and creativity. In order to promote understanding among diverse groups of people, the courses in humanities explore how and why different perspectives about the world have arisen in different cultures and historical periods. The concentration is structured to show the ways in which the traditional disciplines of art history, history, literary studies, philosophy, and religious studies can address common topics and concerns through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches.

The international studies concentration aims to provide students with a firm understanding of the global arena, with special reference to Asia and Latin America. Students learn to integrate complex and diverse historical narratives with the study of national, regional, and global issues and gain critical knowledge of the global system through courses spanning a range of disciplines. International studies places particular emphasis on the acquisition of analytical skills in such areas as international relations, security and conflict resolution, human rights, media and communications, transnational migration, economic development and international trade, and the role of international and regional organizations.

The concentration in social and behavioral sciences strives to understand human lives, behaviors, and institutions in their social, historical, and cultural environments. The concentration embraces an interdisciplinary approach to examining the human condition, incorporating perspectives from anthropology, economics, political science, psychology, and sociology. SUA courses provide students with theoretical and methodological tools to examine and address social issues and concerns from multiple comparative perspectives.
Where are Soka students from?

- Argentina
- Canada
- United States
- Mexico
- Puerto Rico
- Peru
- Brazil
- Chile
- Argentina
- Venezuela
Please provide a brief background of yourself

I was born in Hawaii, but consider myself a Southern California native, having been here since the age of two. I always knew that I wanted to go into international relations and had hopes of working for the State Department or becoming a diplomat. With that mindset, I started my undergraduate work in international relations at the University of Southern California. After graduating with my bachelor’s degree and entering the real world with different jobs here and there, I was encouraged to become a teacher/researcher so that I could continue learning and also inspire students to find their own passion. International relations continues to be my passion to this day.

From which institutions do you hold degrees?

My bachelor’s degree is from the University of Southern California where I double majored in international relations and English literature. After working two years and taking the state department exam, I decided to pursue my master’s degree which matriculated into a PhD at the University of Denver. After my second year at the University of Denver, ethnic conflict was at its peak with different incidents around the world including the Rwandan Genocide and the breakup of Yugoslavia. In order to study in a location where I thought deep understanding of ethnic conflict existed, I entered the master’s program at the London School of Economics where I earned a degree in sociology. After completing my degree, I returned to Denver to finish the PhD program. Unfolding events and my long-term interest in international conflict and cooperation led me to study UN peacekeeping operations.

What attracted you to SUA?

When I came across SUA it was perfect. I had taught at the US Air Force Academy for two years while I was writing my dissertation. One of the best things about my experience there was that class sizes were limited to twenty students. The opportunity to give serious attention to undergraduate education and to individual students were both very important to me. Returning to Southern California was also a great perk.
What distinguishes Soka students in your opinion?

I enjoy interacting with the variety of students who attend Soka from all over the world. Soka students have strong motivation, curiosity, and energy to develop their intellectual abilities. They also have the ability to question their assumptions and are greatly interested in both interpersonal and academic growth. I enjoy creating opportunities for students to expand their capacity to learn. Also, seeing students from different backgrounds using dialogue as a tool to problem solve together is truly inspirational. Soka students are hardworking and take advantage of opportunities that are given to them.

What inspires you?

In my professional life, students and their work ethics inspire me to be a better teacher. Seeing students struggling with English as their second or third language making tremendous strides to develop their skills inspires me. Mentoring seniors who work hard on their research motivates me to be a good role model and to further pursue my research.

Lisa MacLeod is also the faculty coordinator for the UN Study Tours and serves as the advisor to the Model UN club on campus.

The generous financial support provided by SUA gives students an opportunity to participate in Model UN conferences without regard to the individual financial circumstances. This year we sent 15 delegates to the Intercollegiate Model UN conference at UC Santa Barbara and are making plans to send a smaller group of students to Canada for the North American Model UN Conference in February. By interacting with students from other universities, SUA students come to understand how special Soka is. Students who attend the UN Study Tours come back with a tremendous amount of insight. After meeting representatives from the UN, students are sometimes surprised that UN staff are often critical of their own organization. Students recognize value in this internal criticism, gaining further insight about the world. I strongly believe that students need a formal education and a way to develop interpersonal and life skills, both of which Soka offers.

The next UN Study Tour is scheduled in the Spring of 2014.

New Graduate School Program at Soka

In the fall of 2014, the SUA Graduate School will welcome the first class of students to its new program, Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and Societal Change. This program is designed to prepare students for advanced degrees and for leadership roles in public and private education, governmental and non-governmental organizations, or as entrepreneurs, particularly in the growing areas of educational media and publishing. Although the program does not qualify students for a teaching credential or administrative services credential, students will receive the preparatory education and training needed to pursue leadership positions in a variety of K-12 classroom settings, in managerial positions as principals and vice-principals, as administrators at the district level, or in public policy institutions around the world.

The application for the Soka Graduate School Masters of Arts in Educational Leadership and Societal Change is available online at www.soka.edu. The deadline for submitting an application is January 31, 2014.
From an early age, Julie Yoshimachi wanted to be a doctor. Even though she knew she would need to take additional courses following graduation from Soka, she applied and was accepted to the 2008 class.

After graduating from SUA, Julie moved back home to Washington, D.C., where she immediately began studying at Georgetown University, hoping to fulfill the additional requirements that would allow her to apply to medical school. Unfortunately, what she experienced were below average test scores and professors discouraging her from pursuing the medical field. Julie was forced to take a year off and rethink her dream.

Julie found employment as a scribe in a local emergency room where she worked closely with ER doctors overseeing the documentation of patient visits and acting as the physicians’ personal assistant. Julie stayed in this line of work for three years while completing pre-med coursework and always received top evaluations when her work was reviewed. She enjoyed working odd hours and observing patients in the ER because she saw the positive impact medicine had on a sick or injured person and, in turn, learned to appreciate her own life.

In the summer of 2012, Julie accepted a summer research assistantship at the Columbia University Medical Center’s Center for Pediatric Orthopedic Research where she worked beside top doctors. The work ethic and skills that Julie displayed impressed the doctors, resulting in an offer for a full-time position as a research coordinator. Julie gladly accepted the position and relocated to New York in October. She is excited to be a part of the team that will make a difference for patients with cerebral palsy.

Julie’s future plans include applying to medical school and pursuing her dream of becoming a doctor. She said that “without going to SUA, I would have easily been swayed by what others think I should do instead of what I really want to do. I would have given up on my dreams if it wasn’t for the humanistic training I received at SUA.” With sincere appreciation for the founder, her family, her fellow SUA alumni, staff, and donors, Julie continues to pave the way toward her dream.
Chingting “Charlie” Chen earned a Masters in TESOL from the SUA Graduate School. Charlie never forgot the day he arrived from Taiwan and was welcomed at the airport by SUA staff. He never forgot that every Friday SUA staff drove him and his classmates to the store so they could buy groceries, and he never forgot the gardeners who cultivated each plant with love and care on campus. At SUA, Charlie learned about peace by seeing and feeling it.

In the classroom, using basic TESOL methodology, Charlie learned how to give lessons to his classmates who acted as students and then critiqued his teaching style.

When Charlie graduated from SUA, he returned to Taiwan to teach college-level English. At first, he found it difficult to teach students who lacked interest and motivation in the classroom. Upon reflecting on what motivated him to learn English when he was a student, he began to incorporate real-life situations in his classroom. He utilized various audio visual technologies. For example, his students watched Testimonies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Women Speak Out for Peace, which highlighted the horror of nuclear weapons and hibakusha’s (atomic bomb survivors) cries for peace. He also assigned students to read a translated article about nuclear abolition by the university founder, Daisaku Ikeda, and stories written by hibakusha. By utilizing material that was taken from contemporary society, students were inspired to make the world a better place.

Charlie carries a message from his commencement ceremony close to his heart. The founder stated: “I would hope that you become protagonists in nurturing a culture of peace. Herein lies the responsibility of leaders and educators of the 21st century.”

When Charlie was a college student, his dream was to become a good English teacher; his education at SUA Graduate School has allowed him to realize his dream. Two years ago Charlie became a full-time lecturer and has always received top evaluations as a teacher. Charlie states that “Memories of SUA are my inner resource that helps me to cope with the challenges I face in my teaching career.”

“Memories of SUA are my inner resource that helps me to cope with the challenges I face in my teaching career.”
One of the principles of Soka University is to Foster leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity. The Environmental Studies concentration focuses on preparing students to live in harmony with nature.

On the SUA campus we have taken steps to ensure that as a community we are doing the best we can to preserve our planet for future generations. Some of the things we have done are:

- Replace 130-watt incandescent light bulbs with 17-watt LED bulbs to reduce our energy consumption

- Implement a food diversion program that locates 64-gallon roller containers in the kitchen and dishwashing area to collect food and other biodegradable waste. Once collected food waste is sent to certified organic farms to be used for composting toward food production.

- In 2012 the average diversion rate on campus for materials that were recycled or reused was 63%. For the 2013 calendar year we anticipate this number will rise to 70% or more.

- To control rodents and other prey SUA contracted with a company to provide nesting boxes for barn owls around the perimeter of the campus. The use of these owls to control the rodent population supplements bait boxes that use a vitamin D product instead of traditional rodenticides which have a detrimental effect on non-targeted wildlife such as bobcats.
Manhattan was the setting for the second SUA in NYC event. During the late afternoon of November 16, 2013, eighty-three SUA donors came from as far away as Oklahoma to mingle with sixty-one SUA alumni. The cocktail reception allowed benefactors an opportunity to meet face-to-face with young people who have benefited from their generous contributions. At the same time the alumni were able to directly express their appreciation for the important role the donors played in making their educational dreams a reality.

President Danny Habuki welcomed the guests and thanked them for attending. Tariq Hasan, Vice-Chair of the SUA Board of Trustees, thanked the donors for continually supporting SUA and congratulated the alumni on their successes. Julie Yoshimachi ’08 shared her struggles following graduation and then described her current position as a research coordinator in the Cerebral Palsy Center at Columbia University and her dream of completing medical school in the future.
To donate online:
Visit Soka.edu/giving

Ways to give:
Cash
Check
Credit Card
Stock Transfer
Wire Transfer (minimum $100,000)

The students, faculty and staff at Soka University of America 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.
None of us wants to think about dying. However, it is important to make sure that your family and other loved ones are provided for if anything happens to you.

Making a will is the only way to be sure that your family, friends, loved ones, your pets, and the causes you support are remembered and provided for in the way you wish after you die. If you die without having made a will (known as dying “intestate”), your assets will be distributed according to the rules of intestacy, and this may be very different from how you would have chosen. Leaving a will reduces worries for your loved ones. If there is no will, families are often left to deal with tricky legal issues such as inheritance tax, which adds to the stress of an already difficult time. The simple act of making a will ensures peace of mind for you and your loved ones.

You may also want to consider setting up a living trust. One of the benefits of a living trust is that it avoids probate. Even with a valid will, your estate will still go through probate, the court proceedings through which your executor distributes your assets according to your wishes.

A living trust, on the other hand, does not go through probate, which often means a faster distribution of assets to your heirs – from months or years with a will down to weeks with a living trust. Your successor trustee will pay your debts and distribute your assets according to your instructions.

To ensure a lasting legacy for the causes that you care most about, you may want to consider making a charitable bequest as part of your will or living trust. Soka University may be your only beneficiary or one of many.

Leaving us a bequest in your will or living trust is easy. Charitable bequests can be included in your will or living trust when you have one drafted, or you can add a bequest later by means of a codicil. Because a charitable bequest can take many forms, you have remarkable flexibility in how you make this designation. For example, you can leave:

- a specific asset
- a specific sum of money
- a percentage of your estate
- what remains of your estate after you have provided for your other beneficiaries.

Although not required, it is helpful to notify us that we are being named in your will or trust documents. In this way, you can be sure that your bequest will be executed in the manner you intended. Upon notification, your name will be entered in to the Soka University of America Legacy Society.

An outright gift to Soka University from your estate is entirely free from federal estate taxes. This means the university is able to use the full amount of the bequest. If it were left to an individual, a significant amount (up to 55 percent) might go to estate taxes.

For language to include in your will or trust, please contact Linda Kennedy, Director of Philanthropy, at 949-480-4072.
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SAVE THE DATE

Soka University’s
13th Annual
International Festival

May 3, 2014
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 cscherfgghara@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.

FALL 2013 | WWW.SOKA.EDU

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