SUA FOUNDERS
Soka University of America Benefactors & Donors

CELEBRATING
A Vision of Peace
10th Anniversary Peace Gala
DECEMBER 2014

The Art of Mapping: Twenty-Five Years of Paintings by Spelman Evans Downer
Date: 09.11.2014 - 01.02.2015
Time: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Location: Founders Hall Art Gallery

Aliso Viejo Holiday Show “Voices of Peace”
Date: 12.06.2014
Time: 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Na Leo Holiday Concert
Date: 12.12.2014
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

All-American Boys Chorus: “Sounds of Christmas”
Date: 12.14.2014
Time: 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

JANUARY 2015

Emanuel Ax, Solo Piano
Date: 01.09.2015
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Community Cinema at Soka University – A Path Appears
Date: 01.15.2015
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Location: Pauling 216

Mary Stallings, Jazz Vocalist
Date: 01.16.2015
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Pacific Symphony featuring Chee-Yun Kim, Violin
Date: 01.18.2015
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Aliso Niguel High School Solo and Ensemble Concert
Date: 01.23.2015
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra
Date: 01.24.2015
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Muriel Anderson and Stanley Jordan
Date: 01.31.2015
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

FEBRUARY 2015

Dale Kristien and Bill Hutton
Date: 02.08.2015
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Orchestre de la Suisse Romande
Date: 02.12.2015
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

2015 Soka Education Conference
Date: 02.14.2015 - 02.15.2015
Time: 9:30 am - 6:00 pm
Location: Pauling Hall 216

Kaulana Na Pua
Date: 02.15.2015
Time: 3:30 pm - 5:30 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

International Guitar Night
Date: 02.20.2015
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Ziba Shirazi
Date: 02.21.2015
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Dori Caymmi
Date: 02.27.2015
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

MARCH 2015

Chamber Music|OC
Date: 03.01.2015
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Charo
Date: 03.08.2015
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Aliso Niguel High School Spring Festival of Music
Date: 03.13.2015
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Academy of St Martin in the Fields
Date: 03.14.2015
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Trio Con Brio Copenhagen
Date: 03.21.2015
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Pacific Symphony featuring Mayuko Kamio, Violin
Date: 03.29.2015
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

APRIL 2015

Daniil Trifonov, Solo Piano
Date: 04.12.2015
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

The Other 3 Tenors
Date: 04.19.2015
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Fred Hersch, Solo Piano
Date: 04.26.2015
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

MAY 2015

14th Annual International Festival
Date: 05.02.15
Time: 10:30 am - 5 pm
Location: Soka University

Pablo Ziegler Quartet
Date: 05.09.2015
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

Soka University’s 2015 Commencement Ceremony
Date: 05.22.15
Time: 2:00 pm
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center

By invitation only
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.

This past August, we welcomed our newest undergraduate Class of 2018 and the graduate Class of 2016 to Soka University of America (SUA). The undergraduate Class of 2018 is comprised of 101 students from 15 different countries, including Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Czech Republic, India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain and Sri Lanka. From the United States, our students come from 21 different states. For the new Educational Leadership and Societal Change MA program, we welcomed 6 new graduate students from countries including India, Africa and the U.S. Since expanding our Soka Opportunity Scholarship (SOS) program, more students were able to enter SUA this year. We could not maintain our generous financial aid program without our wonderful donors, like you, who support the Soka Education Fund.

Also this fall, we received official news of SUA's rankings in the U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges 2015 Rankings. I am very pleased to share with you that we are again tied for 41st in the national liberal arts college rankings. We also ranked #1 in faculty resources and #1 in financial resources. SUA placed #5 in Ethnic Diversity among National Liberal Arts Colleges and #1 for Foreign Student Factor. Finally we came in at #5 for Best Value among the top National Liberal Arts Colleges. Although these rankings are subjective, I am proud to see SUA's competitive rankings for a liberal arts program that is only 13 years old. This is a reflection of all of the hard work and effort being put in by our students, faculty and staff and I share this information with deep appreciation for their efforts. At the same time, your contributions have enabled us to achieve the #1 ranking in financial resources and #5 in best value.

I am pleased to share that we held the inaugural Dialogue on Culture of Peace and Non-Violence together with leading figures in the field of peace on October 2nd at SUA. October 2nd also marks the United Nations’ International Day of Peace and the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. It is also on this day that the university founder, Mr. Daisaku Ikeda, took his first trip outside of Japan to the United States where he began to make efforts to spread peace throughout the world. On this day, we were honored to welcome back Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, Former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations, who chaired the event together with the support and leadership of SUA’s Dean of Faculty Ed Feasel. The dialogue participants included distinguished leaders working for peace in their respective fields including education, science, law, medicine, social media and more. With this in mind, I look forward to continuing to advance our academic excellence into the future.

We also held the 10th annual Peace Gala on Saturday, October 12, where we welcomed 500 guests to our campus and raised proceeds for our student scholarships. This year, we welcomed Broadway star, Ivan Rutherford, for a powerful performance including songs from Les Miserables and much more. I heard from many new Gala participants that despite their experience attending other fundraising events, SUA has a special culture of care evident throughout the evening with the presence of many volunteers, performers and the powerful student experience.

We are truly fortunate to have such generous donors and supporters who believe in our university’s mission to foster future leaders who will become contributive citizens around the world. Thanks to your support, 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. 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
The tenth anniversary Peace Gala, *Celebrating a Vision of Peace*, was held on the SUA campus on Saturday, October 11, 2014. 500 guests attended and helped raise $600,000 for the evening, bringing the total funds contributed toward scholarships from the Peace Gala over 10 years to $6.1 million.

Guests were welcomed to the Soka Performing Arts Center lobby where they were able to enjoy drinks and hors d’oeuvres with friends while shopping at the silent auction. A line of SUA students thanked the attendees as they transitioned to the second portion of the evening. The Josho Daiko Club, SUA’s Taiko drummers, entertained guests before they entered the Recreation Center that had been transformed into a sophisticated night club. The Soka Singers kicked off the program with two songs, “We Shall Be Free” and “Freedom.” SUA sophomore Prakash Bista then took the stage to share the incredible story of his journey from a remote village in Nepal to the SUA campus. (Read his story on pages 6-7.)
Good evening, my name is Prakash Bista and I am a sophomore here at SUA. I was born into a very poor family from a small remote village of Lalu in the foothills of the Himalayas in Nepal, elevation 6,500 feet. As a child, going to school was not an option because the nearest school was a distance away and I was expected to stay home and help my family. My day would start out climbing up the hill for thirty minutes to fetch water, then going into the jungle to collect firewood to bring back for cooking and heat, and then cutting grass for our buffalo on the land near our house. Electricity, city buses and cars on paved roads were things I had never heard of. Despite this, I had a happy childhood, very much a boy having fun and getting into trouble pulling all kinds of pranks. I remember, one incident when my dad caught me smoking with my childhood friends and put cow dung in my mouth. I have never forgotten that lesson or the taste. I don’t recommend you try it.

Speaking of my father, when I was 8, I was able to travel with him and some neighbors to buy household items, in the nearest town, a 100 mile, four day journey, each way by foot. I was mesmerized being in a city with real streets, vehicles and electricity. But what really captured my attention was seeing school children my own age, dressed in uniforms, carrying book bags, then being picked up by a school bus. I stood there in shock and was almost left behind by my father who came back to find me. In that moment my life shifted because I realized I wanted to be one of those students, and told my father that I wanted to go to a school. This realization might have been accidental or an unconscious desire that I had never realized before. My father who was in construction having failed 10th grade four times and my mother who was illiterate, discussed for a month and finally enrolled me in a boarding school in my district 20 miles away.

Going to school changed me on many levels. I learned about morals, and having a passion for learning so I could become a contributive person in society. On top of that, my thirst for learning was stimulated and for the next five years I was the top student in my school. That being said, I have to talk about the backdrop of the political situation in my region of Nepal while in school. When I was in the seventh grade, the Maoist communist guerrilla insurgency was in full force. The school I was attending shut down when some communist guerrilla threatened to bomb it down and planted a huge bomb nearby. So, I returned home, when I got there, my home was already destroyed by the government forces; the communist guerrilla made our property their office “without our consent.” Because there were so few options for youth from the villages, many of my friends joined the communist army.

I will never forget when two people were killed right in front of me. Also my uncle and my cousin, high ranking communist commanders, were also killed in the war. I managed to have dialogue with some of the Maoist guerrillas, telling them stories in Nepali while they shared Chinese Communist books of war in English.

I did not want war!

I never believed killing people would bring peace and make the society better. So there at my shut down school, I told my father I wanted to study further. Because of my grades, the principal of my school was able to help me get a full scholarship to a high school in the capital of Kathmandu, 500 miles away. There, I was safe. I was among the students from all over Nepal. During my five years of studies, I went home only once. But, the good thing was I was able to continue my education until the tenth grade, receiving full tuition scholarship, for being top in my class each year. In my tenth grade, I even received an award from Chowdhury Group, the largest business conglomerate in Nepal for being the top performer in academics and extra-curricular activities among students in Nepal. My father was so excited for me when I told him that I wanted to further my education in America after my senior high school. My joy however was short lived as my dad’s spine was crushed by a falling boulder. Then my dad became paralyzed and passed away in 3 months. Around the same time my mother was diagnosed with Rheumatic Heart Disease which was at the incurable stage. She took her last breath with her head on my shoulder. Having lost both of my parents in such a short time, my heart felt broken. Coupled with having missed 9 months of school already I decided to return to my village permanently.
You have my commitment to make the world a better place.

THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY PEACE GALA

With these heartaches, I realized that none of us knows when we will die! I felt that I had to make a difference right then, so in memory of my parents’ hopes for me, at 19, on the site of bombed out house, I established a service-oriented primary school. It truly took a village to create a school, because with their help we cut bamboo for walls and carried the fallen stones from my house and built the foundations. We created it and named it Modern Model Residential School.

Over time, with a $30,000.00 loan and going door to door to promote it, my whole village helped to not only raise those funds, but also helped build the first concrete building with electricity, computers and TV using modern solar power which helicopters had to fly in from the nearest town. It became a model school in three years and helped my village leap into the 21st century.

Then with stronger conviction, I decided to return to Kathmandu to pursue higher education. After a few months, USEF-Nepal opportunity program funded by the US enabled me to apply to American universities. While surfing the internet, I found many opportunities for an education, but when I discovered the Soka University website, it was immediately obvious that SOKA was the only place that would provide me with the tools to change the world. I immediately applied and to my great happiness, I was accepted. Because of the liberal scholarship available, I became a proud member of the class of 2017.

Coming here was an explosion of new experiences visually, technologically, socially and most important to me educationally. The professors were welcoming and available; I could even drop by their offices to chat. The classroom size was not only small and intimate but was an actual forum to chat. The classroom size was not only available; I could even drop by their offices to chat. The classroom size was not only available, I became a proud member of the class of 2017.

When I returned to Nepal this summer, my village greeted me happily and with much excitement. Everyone wanted to hear about my experiences at Soka University and in America. I had so much to share about my life here. I had returned to Nepal for two months with two very specific goals to accomplish. Firstly, I had received a Pacific Basin Research Center summer grant at Soka to do an educational research in my district of Kalikot, which is made up of 30 villages. Despite heavy monsoons, I and two volunteers from the capital city reached out to 15 public high schools in different villages, and tested basic literacy skills in English and mathematics among the students of the fifth, eighth and tenth grade. We hope the research will be a useful tool for the government to plan and implement educational policies.

Secondly, I focused on finalizing locations for two more schools we are building next year. The short term goal of Modern Model Residential School team is to build ten sustainable model schools in our district in the next four years. Let me explain to you why these schools are so important in bringing a revolution in education to developing countries like Nepal. I would like to go into just a little detail.

Our schools are non-governmental, private and service oriented schools. At our schools, parents who have jobs or secured means of income pay as little as $100 a year for their children’s tuition which includes books, uniforms, and a meal a day. Parents who do not have a means of income volunteer 30 days a year at our school, building infrastructure and working school operated business ventures like goat farming or the copy and stationery center. Finally, orphans and those who come from critical family backgrounds get all expenses paid by the school. We partner with organizations, individuals and impact investors to build and expand this great network of education to create a social impact changing the lives of thousands of youth and their families in need of support.

Let me end my experience today with a quotation by the founder of SUA Daisaku Ikeda, which has been a powerful motivation for me to be passionate and bold in my work for creating these schools:

The proud mission of those who have been able to receive education must be to serve, in seen and unseen ways, the lives of those who have not had this opportunity.

This is why I build schools. I have had to overcome major obstacles to receive a tremendous education. In gratitude, I want to foster new generations of students with the same opportunities that were firstly provided to me by my parents and secondly you, the donors of SUA, who have made it possible for me to stand here today.

Upashibit sabailai brieday dekhnai dhanyabad. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.
SUA Director of Philanthropy Linda Kennedy served as the Mistress of Ceremonies and led guests through the evening. President Danny Habuki shared news of the latest U.S. News & World Report Best College Rankings 2015 with the crowd and thanked more than 200 volunteers composed of students, staff, and community members who had made the evening possible. Auctioneer DawnMarie Kotsnois returned for the ninth time and helped raise more than $45,000 during the live auction and another $154,900 with the fund-a-need campaign.

Broadway star Ivan Rutherford, who has performed the role of Jean Valjean in Les Miserables more than 2,000 times, dazzled the audience with a rendition of Broadway tunes. Finally, local artist Derek Bordeaux ended the evening performing his version of many Motown hits to the delight of the students and guests on the dance floor.

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the tenth anniversary of the Peace Gala a huge success.

Mark your calendar now for the Eleventh annual Peace Gala, Celebrating a Vision of Peace, Saturday, October 10, 2015.
Study Abroad

**Scott Bower** chose to spend his study abroad semester in Lima, Peru, with hopes to improve his Spanish while meeting new people and to learn more about Peru’s vibrant culture. Although he encountered many challenges like a chaotic transit system, a long commute to school, and humid weather, he felt truly privileged to live in such a beautiful and interesting place.

The university Scott attended was huge in comparison to SUA and contributed to his experience being different from what he had anticipated. The campus was more like a small town, and he was one of approximately 60 students in each class. Furthermore, the classes were lecture based with no room for individual interaction. At first he struggled because in two of the classes he was the only international student. Although proficient in Spanish, he found the professors spoke very fast, and often he was not able to understand them. This was complicated by the fact that the professors did not have office hours; in fact, during the first week of class he had to wait in line for three hours just to get his homework assignments. At this point Scott began to realize one of the true benefits of SUA is the small class sizes and student professor ratio of 8:1.

Scott states that his most meaningful experience in Peru occurred when he was a volunteer at a girl’s shelter in the province of Cusco. There were 25 girls between the ages of four and fifteen. His work consisted of teaching English and building dignity workshops. And he had fun bonding with the girls while playing volleyball. Scott presented the shelter with a new volleyball net in appreciation for the unforgettable experiences he had with the girls.

Scott summed up his experience by saying, “I believe that study abroad for SUA students is the preliminary test to discover how Soka education manifests in society through our actions. Our unique experiences challenge perceptions of ‘the other,’ peel back the layers that imbricate our stratified world, and garner newfound friendships and/or contacts that will aid us in the future.”
Please provide a brief background about yourself.

Growing up in western Canada, I actually did not leave my island very much. Early in my education I developed an interest in Southeast Asia when I came across a Southeast Asian studies course. It was a unique course compared to the general educational studies I was undergoing. I found the course to be very interesting, and I was intrigued to further my studies in the subject. In particular, I found Indonesia to be especially interesting because it is the largest Muslim country in the world with a liberal democracy system, yet it still lacks much attention from other countries. After completing my undergraduate studies, I moved to Bangkok for an internship at Forum-Asia, a Thailand-based human rights NGO. During my internship, I worked on a project related to Indonesia. Living between Bangkok and Sumatra for a year and a half was a very different experience that opened my eyes.

From which institutions do you hold degrees?

I began my studies at a community college because I did not have the money to attend university. Working my way up with good grades and scholarship, I transferred and completed coursework in 2003 with a double bachelor’s degree in Southeast Asian history and comparative politics from the University of Victoria. Afterwards, I worked for President Carter at The Carter Center and later the European Union as an election observer. After this time in the field, I went back to pursue my master’s degree at the University of British Colombia and continued on to complete my Ph.D. I was hired as I completed by Ph.D., and have been fortunate to work at Soka since 2011.

What attracted you to SUA?

Adventure! Having lived in Thailand and Indonesia for several years, but never in the US, I thought Soka would provide a wonderful adventure for me. Particular curriculum interests included things like study abroad, learning clusters, the opportunity to work closely with and to mentor students, and the opportunity to take students to conferences. I thought it was exciting that Soka has one foot off campus. I also found learning clusters to be unique. Professors pick topics that they themselves may not be specialized in and learn together with the students. Professors here continue learning together with the students.

What distinguishes Soka students in your opinion?

Students at Soka learn the ability to socialize, listen, articulate, and provide constructive criticism at a very high level. The small class size forces students to speak up and encourages even those who are shy to find their voice. For every upper division course that I teach, I take Soka students to a conference. Seeing them interact alongside Graduate students is very encouraging. Watching students interact outside Soka is very rewarding as a professor because I have the opportunity to see that students will leave Soka having learned a very valuable skill: how to interact with people.

What inspires you?

When I know that a student is struggling with a concept and then, through discussion with peers and with their instructor, finally understands, it is most inspiring and rewarding for a professor.

Do you have other reflections about your experience as a faculty member at SUA?

My most memorable experience as a professor was the learning cluster entitled “Mass Transit in Comparative Context” that I taught in January 2013. This course took us from Vancouver, down the west coast, and back to Soka, exploring how transit affects society, the economy, and the environment. We learned and examined much about the transit system in California, but students also obtained many life skills throughout the course. Students built friendships with one another as they worked together towards a project, and that was a wonderful experience.

As the Associate Director of the Pacific Basin Research Center (PBRC), I have been given many opportunities to travel and spread the word about Soka. I support and organize on-campus events, bringing speakers to the campus community and award students and faculty summer research grants. Working closely with Bill Ascher, the director of PBRC, I have joined an editorial team to support book publications. Professors at Soka have an important mission to spread the word about Soka to the academic community. Because of our donors at Soka, we are able to make magic possible. Students are fortunate to have many opportunities to learn both in and out of the classroom by observing theories in action.
Shane Barter, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Comparative Politics
Associate Director of the Pacific Basin Research Center
Despite having already graduated from a university in South Korea with a bachelor’s degree in mathematics, Eun Yi Chung was intrigued by SUA’s mission statement and the emphasis placed on global citizenship. She thought SUA offered a great opportunity to challenge herself in a completely new environment while helping her to discover her future path in life. Eun Yi states, “It was through my relationships with fellow SUA students and the amazing support we received from the faculty and staff that I was able to find value in my challenges. I feel that I grew so much as an individual during my four years at SUA, my challenges were ultimately a springboard that pushed me forward towards my dreams.”

Eun Yi went on to earn a MS in statistics and a PhD in economics from Stanford University. Currently she is an assistant professor of economics at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Her main responsibilities are to conduct research, teach courses in econometrics, and serve as a committee member for doctoral students. In addition she supports the administration by helping on the faculty search committee. She lives with her husband in Urbana, Illinois.

One of Eun Yi’s fondest memories at SUA was the midnight snacks provided by the founder during finals week. She will never forget his sincere care for each of the students at SUA.
Kyoko Akitaya Hincapie was studying for her master’s degree in linguistics at the University of London when Soka University of America announced the opening of the graduate program in applied linguistics on the Calabasas campus. She jumped at the chance to continue her studies and to help shape the brand new Soka University of America. She was proudly accepted into the first class in 1994.

When asked to describe the top things she learned while at Soka that will influence her for the rest of her life, Kyoko replied, “I learned from my professors’ humanistic behaviors that teachers should serve their students and give their all for the students’ learning and success.” She also referred to the strong relationships forged with her professors and classmates. One of her fondest memories is the night before the submission deadline for her thesis when all of the professors stayed on campus to provide support until all the students had completed their projects.

After graduating from SUA, believing that psychology and counseling skills are helpful in the field of education, she studied counseling psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University, earning another master’s degree in 2003. After working as an English teacher and a college counselor, among other things, she has returned to teaching Japanese. Today she teaches part-time at The New School in NYC and William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey.

Kyoko resides in Closter, New Jersey, with her husband, Juan, and their three children, Yuichi (9), Nobuko (7), and Yoko (4). She stays connected with her SUA classmates through Facebook.
On October 29, 2014, the Soka Changemakers program at SUA presented Outrageous Acts of Peace: The role ordinary people must play in transforming violence to peace. Leymah Gbowee, winner of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize shared her journey from aspiring student to feisty world leader in front of a sold-out audience at the Soka Performing Arts Center.

As featured in the award winning documentary, Pray the Devil Back to Hell, Gbowee’s non-violent movement of Christian and Muslim women culminated in the exile of unscrupulous leader Charles Taylor, and the election of the first female head of state in Africa since Cleopatra. It began on a dusty football field near the fish market in Monrovia, Liberia, where she sat every day, dressed in white, with thousands of women – mothers and grandmothers – praying, singing and fasting. They protested so they could have peace after 14 years of brutal civil war that had killed their men, turned their girls into child prostitutes and little boys into ruthless soldiers.
Changemakers attend Net Impact Conference

The Net Impact Conference is a leading forum for students and professionals who want to tackle the world’s toughest social and environmental problems. This year, the theme was breaking boundaries – leaving limits behind, forging unexpected alliances, and exploring creative solutions to transform the world. Five SUA students in the Soka Changemakers program won grants to attend the conference that took place in Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 6th, 7th and 8th.

"[It] gave me a taste of what the real world feels like," said sophomore Kenichi Morita. "It helped me see possibilities in the world where I didn’t see them before."

One of the most important parts of the conference was allowing students to network with young professionals who are creating meaningful careers. It was an amazing opportunity to hear about current projects and businesses that have goals to positively impact society.

“I have learned about social entrepreneurship before,” said junior An Pho. “Although I understand how meaningful it can be, I never honestly thought that I would be able to launch my own start-up social enterprise. However, through workshops and discussions [I learned] there are many opportunities for anyone who has a dream and passion…the idea of being a social entrepreneur is, in fact, totally feasible!”

“When you are faced with such a situation,” Gbowee said, “you ask yourself: Do we sit or do we fight? If we don’t fight, we will die. If we fight, we might die. We wanted to leave our children with the narrative that we died fighting for their freedom.”

Gbowee took the stage with international law professor Karima Bennoune, author of Your Fatwa Does Not Apply Here: Untold Stories from the Fight Against Muslim Fundamentalism, and moderator Ross Frenett, from the Against Violent Extremism Network.

Onstage, Gbowee and Bennoune engaged in a spirited conversation about war, peace, terrorism, Ebola, women’s rights, and the relationship between forgiveness and accountability, to a packed audience that included over 300 local high school students.

Soka Changemakers’ community events are produced to create meaningful opportunities for students and community members to engage with innovative leaders, change agents, social enterprises, and other purpose-driven organizations.
The United Nations’ International Day of Non-Violence is a global observance held annually on October 2 to coincide with Mahatma Gandhi’s birthday. This year, SUA participated by hosting a dialogue on building a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence with 15 international peace activists. Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury convened the dialogue on campus in the Athenaeum. After a welcome greeting from President Danny Habuki, participants introduced themselves, shared what brought them to their peace work, and discussed how to encourage the growth of the Culture of Peace in our society. The day ended with a wrap-up session during which Soka students were part of a question and answer exchange with the dialogue participants.

A common thread in the discussion throughout the day was the experience of heart break. The participants agreed peace work is about opening the heart to a larger group of people than is usual in our daily lives. Sandra de Castro Buffington, Founding Director of Global Media Center for Social Impact at UCLA, believes this opening of the heart to new people happens best
with storytelling. Her center brings together script writers from around the world who have transformative stories to tell.

Cassandra Vieten, President of the Institute of Noetic Sciences and a scientist at the Mind-Body Medicine Research Group in San Francisco, agrees that storytelling is a powerful tool in changing people’s hearts.

Philip M. Hellmich, Director of Peace at the Shift Network, shared how his Peace Corps works with villagers in Sierra Leone broke his heart when he saw their suffering after a civil war. His mission is to help people transform their inner experiences to international action.

Kevin Clements, Chair of Peace and Conflict Studies and Director of the New Zealand National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Otago in New Zealand, contributed the favorite quotation of the day: “Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity” (Simone Weil). His work focuses on building politics of compassion. He reminded us that we are hardwired not just for fear, but also for bonding.

Azim Noordin Khamisa used the raw pain he felt following his son's murder to commit himself to ending the cycle of violence among youth. He and the grandfather of his son's murderer created the Tariq Khamisa Foundation to reach out to young people. He encapsulated the theme of the day with a quotation from the Persian mystic Rumi: “God will break your heart over and over and over, until it stays open.”

Michael Nagler, Professor emeritus and founder of the Metta Center for Non-violence, uses his voice to contribute to a new story that is grounded in nonviolence. He reiterated a theme of the day: Don’t use will power to do the right thing, shift your world view and consciousness so you CAN’T avoid doing the right thing.

Luis Nieves, a Soka benefactor, provided an inspirational and concrete example of building a business with the Culture of Peace. He has made respect the cornerstone of his business by creating an atmosphere in which all employees respect not only their clients but their co-workers and themselves.

Tetsushi Ogata, from the first graduating class of Soka University, came to the dialogue as a lecturer in Peace and Conflict Studies at UC Berkeley. He is involved in genocide prevention, especially integrating theory and action. He is glad that a positive index for peace has been developed since traditionally only negative peace (the absence of war) has been studied.

Bettina Hausmann experienced the history of non-violent change when the peace work she and her parents engaged in helped bring down the Berlin wall in 1989. She knows firsthand that when we pull together we can make foundational change. In her position as the Director of the San Diego Museum of Art, she is involved in bringing peace studies into school curriculum and the arts.

B. Jeannie Lum, editor of the Journal of Peace Education and professor at University of Hawaii, asked how we can go from being embedded in a culture of war to a culture of peace. She has discovered we can do it with our actions. Everything we do creates our reality. She has found that experiential learning has the best results for her students.

Borislava Manojlovic has been a conflict resolution practitioner with the United Nations in her native Croatia and Kosovo. She sees collaborative learning as the solution since it encourages us to really see the OTHER.

Mikiko Otani is an international human rights lawyer in Tokyo. She does outreach with lawyers, judges, university students, and the general public. She discussed how the Human Rights of the Child UN Declaration was resisted and then enacted in Japan.

Gail Thomas, Professor of Sociology at Soka, started her peace work when she marched for civil rights in the south in the 1960s. She brought up the issue of low income students not getting the enriched peace culture education in their schools. She suggested creating small schools within large schools through dialogue.

Edward Feasel, Dean of Faculty and Professor of economics at Soka, discussed how Soka was developed to be a model of melding East and West in a university to create global citizens. He mentioned the university’s pride in having the largest percentage of international students in the US.
As we launch the new MA program, I wish to dedicate these words to you: Harness the power of education and use it to create hope and value for humankind.” With this message of encouragement from Daisaku Ikeda, the founder of SUA, six students in the university’s new Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and Societal Change embarked August 4, 2014, on an exciting two-year program of studies, beginning with an inaugural seminar concerning the overarching themes of the program led by Distinguished Visiting Professor Fenwick English and R. Wendell Eaves, Sr., Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. After a full day of orientation on Friday, August 1, students participated on Saturday in the 20th reunion of the graduate school, during which the director of the new MA program, Professor Jay Heffron, remarked: “To those who have gone before us, thank you for laying the foundation for our own great future development. We definitely took a page from your playbook when we developed the new MA Program, adopting as our own the global sweep of its interests, the rigor of its research pursuits, and the underlying humanism of its mission and intent – in our case, the development of educational leaders who can help bring about positive societal change wherever they are.”

At a dinner reception for the new class, Jay Heffron read a message of congratulations from the University’s founder, which read in part: “I ask that you, as pioneers of education for global citizenry who will go on to create hope-filled value for the future of mankind, spend the next two years engaged in meaningful scholarship. Please know that my thoughts are always with you as I follow your progress, earnestly praying that each of you will become key agents of change in a renaissance in education.”

Prince Heto, a student from Ghana, remarked: “As a child, I made a vow to show the youth of Africa that under our circumstances we can build the kind of society we want and live the kind of lives we want, irrespective of all the constraints in our lives…I will do my utmost best to understand the transformative power of education, so that together with my cohorts I can harness this power to create hope for each person, to redirect society toward peace and the harmonious coexistence of all humanity.” Another student, Alankrita Chhikara from India, remarked: “I am committed to spending the next 2 years, as the founder said, in ‘rigorous scholarship,’ excelling in my studies and spreading the values of Soka education taught to us by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Josei Toda, and Daisaku Ikeda.”

Applications are now being accepted for admission to the second cohort of MA students, the Class of 2017. For more information about the MA program visit: www.soka.edu/academics/academics-overview-ma-program
On September 2, 1994, the Soka University of America Graduate School welcomed to the original SUA campus in Calabasas, California, the first students in the master’s degree program in second and foreign language education. Twenty years later, on August 2, 2014, twenty graduate school alumni gathered on the SUA campus in Aliso Viejo to celebrate the 20th anniversary of their alma mater. Alumni traveled from as far away as Canada, Japan, Russia, and Taiwan to attend the celebration, many of them bringing their families.

In August of 2014, the SUA Graduate School (now on the Aliso Viejo campus) opened to welcome the first class of students enrolled in the new master’s degree in educational leadership and societal change program. The students in this program were included in the celebration and were warmly greeted by the graduates who came before them.

Daniel Sasaki (Class of 2005) oversaw the one-day program as Master of Ceremonies. He led the participants through class roll calls, a photo slide show, and the singing of “The Light of Hope.” At the luncheon, Dr. Tomoko Takahashi, the founding and current Dean of the Graduate School, shared the history of the graduate school and congratulated all the attendees for being part of the graduate school’s history. She noted: “The new Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and Societal Change signifies the beginning of a new chapter of SUA history.”

The day concluded with a mini lecture series by alumni and professors. Graduate School Visiting Professor Dr. Fenwick English spoke about educational leadership; Daniel Sasaki spoke about Soka education; and Jonathan Epstein, a former graduate school professor, talked about classroom methodology.

The reunion was a joyful gathering of old friends and new friends, during which alumni renewed their determination and purpose as SUA graduates.

“As we launch the new MA program, I wish to dedicate these words to you: Harness the power of education and use it to create hope and value for humankind.”

– Daisaku Ikeda

Fenwick English, asked to share his impressions of the new program, responded: “There are about 550 institutions in the U.S. that provide training in school administration, but Soka will be unique because of its emphasis on Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s inclusion of the concepts of beauty and goodness as part of the purpose of education. With those elements, leadership has to become more than simply management technique. It is what connects Soka education to the well-being of the larger human society across the globe. Educational leaders committed to that goal will be true international beacons of hope.”

During the first week of classes, students were able to attend the annual meeting of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) held on the California State University Channel Islands campus. Accompanied by Professor English (former president of the NCPEA and the recipient in 2013 of its Living Legend Award), students were given the opportunity not only to learn firsthand of the latest developments in the field, but to meet leading scholars and researchers from around the United States. Professors English and Heffron conducted a panel at the conference entitled “East Meets West: Soka University of America’s New MA Program in Educational Leadership and Societal Change.”
As we approach the end of 2014 we are reminded of all the generous benefactors whose gifts have helped build a truly unique educational institution – a university that graduates young men and women who go out into the world, serving others locally and globally, dedicated to the cause of peace. Many of our donors desire to leave a lasting legacy to ensure that Soka University of America flourishes for centuries to come. To honor those who include Soka University of America in their estate plans, the university established the Legacy Society.

Too often estate gifts are unrecognized because they come at the end of the donors’ lives. The Legacy Society provides a way to recognize and thank donors during their lifetimes. You may always choose to remain anonymous in your philanthropic support of SUA. However, participation in the Legacy Society can be an inspirational experience and may encourage others to look toward the future and how they too can help ensure the vitality and viability of Soka for generations to come.

By including SUA in your estate plans, you may also enjoy tax advantages and do more than you ever dreamed possible. Through careful planning you can maximize the impact of your assets and ensure that these assets will be distributed according to your wishes upon your death.

There are several ways you can include SUA in your estate plans, including:

Making a bequest through your will or revocable trust
Naming Soka as a beneficiary of and IRA or other retirement plan
Making Soka a remainder beneficiary of a charitable remainder trust
Establishing a charitable lead trust designating the charitable distribution to SUA
Making SUA the owner of a paid-in-full life insurance policy

To gain membership in to the SUA Legacy Society, simply notify the university about your gift intention of $5,000 or more. But the most fulfilling benefit of becoming a member of the Legacy Society is the satisfaction of knowing your legacy gift will impact the future of Soka University of America and in doing so, the future of the world.

If you would like to join the SUA Legacy Society or would like additional information about making a gift to SUA through your estate plans, please contact Linda Kennedy, Director of Philanthropy, at 949-480-4072 or lkennedy@soka.edu.
### 2015 Soka Lions Athletic Schedule

#### SWIMMING & DIVING

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>Soka vs. Lake Forest College</td>
<td>Aliso Viejo, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/16-1/18</td>
<td>Colorado College Classic</td>
<td>Colorado Springs, CO</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>Soka vs. College of Idaho</td>
<td>Aliso Viejo, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/18-2/21</td>
<td>PCSC Championships</td>
<td>La Mirada, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/4-3/7</td>
<td>NAIA Championships</td>
<td>Oklahoma City, OK</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/23</td>
<td>Lion’s Intrasquad Meet</td>
<td>Aliso Viejo, CA</td>
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<td>1/31</td>
<td>Concordia Indoor</td>
<td>Irvine, CA</td>
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<td>2/7</td>
<td>Bronco Invitational</td>
<td>Boise, ID</td>
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<td>2/14</td>
<td>Soka LCQ</td>
<td>Aliso Viejo, CA</td>
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<td>3/5-3/7</td>
<td>NAIA Indoor National</td>
<td>Geneva, OH</td>
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<td>Championships</td>
<td>Occidental College</td>
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<td>3/13</td>
<td>Oxy Distance Carnival</td>
<td>Point Loma Nazarene</td>
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<td>3/21</td>
<td>Point Loma Invitational</td>
<td>San Diego State</td>
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<td>Aztec Invitational</td>
<td>UC San Diego</td>
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<td>4/3-4/4</td>
<td>California Collegiate</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific University</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Invitational</td>
<td>UC San Diego</td>
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<td>4/17</td>
<td>Bryan Clay Invitational</td>
<td>Occidental College</td>
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<td>4/24-4/25</td>
<td>Triton Invitational</td>
<td>Gulf Shores, AL</td>
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<td>5/9</td>
<td>Oxy Invitational</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/21-5/23</td>
<td>NAIA National Championships</td>
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The TEDxOrangeCoast Annual Conference was held on the SUA campus September 19 and 20, 2014. Approximately 1,500 guests attended the program based on the theme of “Tipping Point,” featuring the popular 18-minute talks. Additionally, guests were offered immersive experiences where they could interact with exhibitors, speakers and each other in casual social settings. The conference speakers included a 13-year-old pianist (local prodigy Umi Garrett), a 15-year-old scientist, Olympic athletes, Hollywood actors and CEOs of innovative companies.

In the Soka Performing Arts Center, the concert hall lobby was a bedrock of idea sharing and engaging conversations among speakers, guests and exhibitors. In the lobby some of the highlights included Tipping Point boards where guests could write out the game-changing moments in their lives, a 3D printer, and a large structure made from water bottles. The event consisted of five sessions with a total of 40 speakers and several performances over the course of two days. SUA students, faculty and staff were able to participate in this idea inspiring event.

In July, the Association for Leadership in Educational Facilities awarded its highest institutional honor – the 2014 Award for Excellence in Facilities Management – to Soka University during the annual conference and 100th Anniversary celebration in San Diego. The Award for Excellence is designed to recognize and advance excellence in the field of educational facilities.

“In Campuses that receive the Award for Excellence are true leaders in educational facilities management,” said David Cain, Chair of the Awards and Recognition Committee. “These institutions demonstrate a commitment to providing a strong learning environment that supports its educational direction.”
Soka University’s 14th Annual International Festival

May 2, 2015
10:30 a.m. - 5:00 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 thanks Edison International for providing STEM Scholarship Grants for students in the Environmental Studies concentration and a second grant supporting Capstone Projects for seniors.

Soka’s new rankings in US News & World Report’s “Best Colleges 2015”
#1 in Study Abroad
#1 in Faculty Resources
#5 in Diversity
Top 5 Best Value National Liberal Arts Colleges
Top 7 West Coast Liberal Arts Colleges
Also, Soka was ranked as Top 10 Best Colleges in California in USA Today

The new look of www.soka.edu with its complete re-design!