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CELEBRATING
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11TH ANNUAL PEACE GALA
**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

### DECEMBER 2015

**GARDEN CONVERSATIONS, Paintings by Leslie Kenneth Price**  
Date: 09.14.2015 - 12.23.2015  
Time: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Location: Founders Hall Art Gallery  

**Lecture: “Latino Education: Economic Democracy and Radical Possibilities in the Age of Hyper-Poverty” by Rodolfo Torres, Ph.D.**  
Date: 12.02.2015  
Time: 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm  
Location: Pauling 216  

**South Coast Symphony presents A Night at the Opera**  
Date: 12.04.2015  
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**The All-American Boys Chorus presents Sounds of Christmas**  
Date: 12.13.2015  
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**Football We Trust**  
Date: 01.22.2016  
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**torres, Ph.D. of Hyper-Poverty” by rodolfo torres, ph.d. of hyper-poverty” by rodolfo torres, ph.d.**  
Date: 12.03.2015  
Time: 4:45 pm - 6:15 pm  
Opening Reception: 02.04.2016  
Time: 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm  
Location:-founders hall art gallery  

**South Coast Symphony presents Benjamin Smolen & The Brentano String Quartet**  
Date: 04.09.2016  
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**The Peking Acrobats presents Taimane and Kalei World Tour**  
Date: 04.01.2016  
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**Evans Associates presents Four By Four**  
Date: 01.24.2016  
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

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### MARCH 2016

**Delfeayo & Ellis Marsalis Quartet: The Last Southern Gentlemen Tour**  
Date: 03.04.2016  
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**Gabriela Martinez**  
Date: 03.11.2016  
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**MARCH 2016**

**Critical Conversations: "The Future of the Planet" with Dr. Vandana Shiva**  
Date: 04.26.2016  
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**The All-American Boys Chorus presents A Tribute to Tom Harrell**  
Date: 04.08.2016  
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**Soka University’s 15th Annual International Festival**  
Date: 05.07.2016  
Time: 10:30 am - 5:00 pm  
Location: Peace Lake area  

**ClassWorks 2016 Student Art Exhibit and J.W. Fike’s Photographic Survey of the Wild Edible Botanicals of California**  
Time: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Opening Reception: 05.19.2016  
Time: 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm  
Location: Founders Hall Art Gallery  
1st and 2nd Floor  

**Soka University’s 2016 Commencement Ceremony**  
Date: 05.27.2016  
Time: 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  
By invitation only  

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### APRIL 2016

**Storm Large and Kirill Gerstein**  
Date: 04.01.2016  
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**Soka University 7th Annual Luau**  
Date: 04.02.2016  
Time: 5:00 pm - 7:30 pm  
Location: Campus Green  

**globalFEST on the Road – Creole Carnival**  
Date: 04.03.2016  
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**Evans Associates presents That’s Life! A Toast to Sinatra on his 100th Birthday.**  
Date: 01.28.2016  
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**Evans Associates presents America’s Neil Diamond Live!**  
Date: 05.01.2016  
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**Yuja Wang**  
Date: 05.03.2016  
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**J.W. Fike’s Photographic Survey of the Wild Edible Botanicals of California**  
Time: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Opening Reception: 05.19.2016  
Time: 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm  
Location: Founders Hall Art Gallery  
1st and 2nd Floor  

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Location: Peace Lake area  

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Time: 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  
By invitation only  

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### FEBRUARY 2016

**Natascha Shoro and Anushe Shoro on: "The Essence of Being"**  
Date: 02.01.2016 - 05.07.2016  
Time: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Opening Reception: 02.04.2016  
Time: 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm  
Location: Founders Hall Art Gallery  

**Critical Conversations: An Evening with Henry Rollins**  
Date: 02.17.2016  
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**Evans Associates presents The Brentano String Quartet**  
Date: 04.09.2016  
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**Sundays at Soka with Pacific Symphony, Benjamin Smolen & Grace Browning**  
Date: 01.17.2016  
Time: 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

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### MAY 2016

**Evans Associates presents The All-American Boys Chorus presents Sounds of Christmas**  
Date: 12.13.2015  
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**Sonds at Soka with Pacific Symphony, Benjamin Smolen & Grace Browning**  
Date: 01.15.2016  
Time: 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**Don Menza Quartet**  
Date: 01.22.2016  
Time: 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm  
Location: Soka Performing Arts Center  

**Soka Community Cinema presents Indie Lens Pop-up – In Football We Trust**  
Date: 01.21.2016  
Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
Location: Pauling 216  

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**Purchase tickets for events held at the Soka Performing Arts Center at: www.performingarts.soka.edu**  
**For more information on all events, visit www.soka.edu**
Dear Friends and Supporters,

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

This year, we welcomed our newest undergraduate Class of 2019 comprised of 127 students from many different backgrounds and representing 17 different countries, including Brazil, Bulgaria, Ethiopia and Nepal. From the United States, our students come from 17 different states with a majority representing California. This year, we welcomed 15 Extended University Bridge Program students representing three countries including France, Japan and Taiwan. We also have six new students entering the second graduate Class of 2017 for the Educational Leadership and Societal Change MA program. These students represent four countries including Ghana, Japan, Vietnam and the United States.

In September, we received official news of SUA’s rankings in *U.S. News & World Report* Best Colleges 2016 Rankings. I am very pleased to share with you that we are tied for 45th 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 #4 for Best Value (just behind Amherst, Pomona and Williams College) among the top National Liberal Arts Colleges. With these rankings, I am reminded of the contributions from our generous donors with the #1 ranking in financial resources and #4 in best value.

I am pleased to share that we held the second annual Dialogue on the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence together with leading figures in the field of peace on October 2nd at SUA. 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 SUA’s Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty Ed Feasel. This year we welcomed Ms. Irene Santiago from the Philippines and Ms. Luz Mendez from Guatemala who contributed greatly to this year’s theme, “The Role and Contribution of Women in Fostering Peace.” Both women participated in bringing peace in times of great conflict as representatives of peace negotiations and gender equality issues in their countries. We are truly fortunate to offer such meaningful academic opportunities to our students.

The 11th annual Peace Gala was held on Saturday, October 10, where we welcomed over 400 guests to our campus and raised funds for our student scholarships. This year, we welcomed Broadway star, David Burnham, for a wonderful rendition of Broadway songs. Each year, we welcome back returning benefactors to the gala, while also introducing many new friends to SUA and Soka education. It always brings me great pride to hear many guests share their positive impressions of our university.

In closing, I would like express my appreciation to our donors and supporters who believe in our university’s mission. With 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 education for the sake of humanity’s future.

Sincerely,

Daniel Y. Habuki, Ph.D.

President
On Saturday, October 12, the Soka University campus celebrated the 11th annual Peace Gala. Welcoming more than 400 friends and guests, the night netted more than $460,000 for the scholarship endowment. With the support of over 150 student, staff, and faculty volunteers, the evening could not have been more successful. Live Auction items included: a 4.81 carat heart-shaped diamond necklace, a $5000 South Coast Plaza shopping spree, a guitar played and autographed by Sammy Hagar, a painting of the SUA campus specifically commissioned for the gala, a special edition Steif stuffed animal of Totoro and a vacation on Martha’s Vineyard. Linda Kennedy, Director of Philanthropy, hosted the evening as Mistress of Ceremonies. SUA senior Jaemin Park shared his journey to Soka. Broadway star David Burnham shared his talents with guests as he sang classic and modern Broadway songs.
Good Evening, my name is Jaemin Park and I’m from South Korea. I’m 27 and was born in the city of Cheong-Ju. My life has been an arduous journey from my home town to this stage tonight. I have many idyllic memories from early childhood: laying in bed with my comfy blanket, a warm breeze wafting through the window, mom’s beloved classical music playing on the old record player. My mother was a modern woman in 1960s South Korea. She had a big impact on my childhood. She not only finished high school which was very rare, but passed on to my sister and me great appreciation for art, literature, poetry, music and education. I think my mother recognized something in me that was similar to her own desires when I shared with her, that when I grew up I would help people everywhere and help to create peace in the world, maybe even work for the United Nations. Of course some would say these were just the musings of a child, but not to me. My mother always embraced my dreams. To encourage me, she even hung an enormous world map on the wall so we could look at all of the countries I would visit.

My father on the other hand is a very manly man who, although quite taciturn, is very prudent and thinks everything through before taking any actions. I always thought my father was Superman, impervious to everything and unstoppable. I realize now
that from my mother I learned to dream big dreams and from my father how to be pragmatic and prepare to take the necessary steps to attain them.

I was always an emotional and sensitive child. As I grew older I became aware of my parents’ struggles. My father worked long hours into the night but still lost one job after another. To maintain employment he had to work far away from home and could only come home once a month. On top of this, my mother had to work long hours to help support us.

Many of my friends lived in one house, had cars and a stay-at-home mother. The dad had a career that allowed him to return home at night. I was embarrassed as we had no car and kept moving, each time to a smaller house and a worse situation. I remember being scared and home alone with my older sister, covering in the house as debt collectors pounded on the door.

I wondered why we were not like other families. When I was nine I remember complaining to my mother about our life situation. To this day I cannot forget the look of anguish on her face and the tears rolling down her cheeks as she realized I had come to understand the difficulties our family was enduring. That day I grew up quickly as I realized what others do: they take on the struggles, worries and disasters that affect a family and try to comfort everyone while at the same time trying to repair all the holes that appear in the fabric of our lives. And my dad despite long distances, still kept trying to do his best ability to provide for us. I look back now and wish I had been able to comfort my parents and show more appreciation, but I was just 9 years old.

My dreams changed and now they became about getting good grades, so I could get a job and help my family. As I moved through my school years we continued to move, 12 times all together. I became very stoic keeping everything inside. When I entered high school, my only joy was the few hours a week I could play sports and be involved with student government. In South Korea, school is 7 AM to 10 PM, twelve months a year. It consisted of continuous rote memorization to pass tests in preparation for college entrance exams. I was a good student but my days were filled with colorless classes and monotony. I wasn’t learning anything, just memorizing facts so I could regurgitate them on tests. Although I tried to maintain a happy face, I was often sad inside. Once I overheard teachers talking about me. They said “Jaemin is such a sad sack.” Not only was I in a boring education system learning very little, but I was shocked to hear teachers openly gossiping about me in front of my fellow students. Looking back, I think how astute the founder of Soka education Tsunesaburo Makiguchi was. His desire and commitment to create a humanistic, non-rote, value creating education for youth to develop happy, confident lives is relevant even today. Speaking of Makiguchi, I’d heard about SUA while in high school. It sounded amazing but trying to be a pragmatic grown up attending SUA seemed like an impossible dream at that point.

To help support my family and quickly get a good job, during my third year of high school I entered the police academy. After one semester I began to question my decision. I felt like a loner, surrounded by students drinking, goofing off and cheating on the tests. I was an odd ball because I wanted to graduate quickly, get out on the streets and get on with my life.

Seeing my disillusionment, my mother kept reminding me about my childhood goal to become a global citizen and encouraged me to not give up on dreams. Before I could envision a world of peace I had to first serve my mandatory two-year stint in the South Korean army. After challenging basic training, because of my mental and physical acuity, I was put into the Elite Ranger Battalion. My mission was to invade North Korean territory, spy on the enemy then report back to help guide accurate air strikes.

It was that moment in my life when I was in utter hell that would become the fulcrum that catapulted me to where I am today. I had been trudging through ice and snow for 24 hours in full gear, fully armed, trekking in no-man’s land which is that great barbed wire divide between warring countries. I was totally exhausted. Many soldiers my age had escaped either by committing suicide or being killed by the North Korean army. I began to feel a camaraderie with soldiers who fought before me like my father and possibly some of you in the audience tonight.

When I saw the North Korean Territory I was in shock. I was looking at a land that was stuck in time! A third world nation held back by tyranny. As a Sergeant I could not
fail. In my head I told myself over and over “I will not be able to accomplish anything if I cannot complete what I am doing now. As I stood there I remembered something the founder of Soka University, Daisaku Ikeda said:

“Human beings need to have a macroscopic perspective as if we are observing the earth from the universe and then it appears as just a small community, when we do that we delete the abstract concepts discriminating humans such as race, nationality and ideology.”

As I looked to the skies with snow falling on my face his words came to life. I closed my eyes and imagined myself soaring into the sky and looking back at earth. I saw one peninsula, one people, one Korea. I vowed to be part of the solution to a united Korean peninsula. Then and there my mind was made up to attend Soka University.

Upon discharge from the Korean army I began my journey to SUA. For six months, I worked saving enough money to attend school in the Philippines. For three months, I studied night and day to master English. While there I saw extreme poverty, hundreds of homeless children living and working on the streets. I learned that they were forced to beg and then turn over the money to gangsters that owned them. I had a new goal: to solve poverty in the world.

I returned to Korea and continued to study English, imagining over and over again passing the SAT, having my application accepted, getting scholarships and then arriving at this campus. When I received the acceptance email I was overcome with excitement, joy and gratitude. I was accepted to the Bridge program established to improve the English of foreign students and upon completion would be part of the class of 2016.

Upon arrival, my fantasy of an idyllic life at SUA was tarnished. I had clashes with and experienced prejudice from fellow students. We all come from different backgrounds, ages and ideologies. My first instinct was to pull into my shell. But the very nature of SUA with its small classes and living on campus actually made that hard to do. In fact, Soka is not perfect! Yet, I would say that Soka is the perfect place that enables students to truly understand people from different parts of the world and diverse cultures, helping us transform into global citizens. Because of my struggles, eventually I was able to dialogue with students who humiliated me. We are now friends, having learned to understand each other hearts and respect each other’s differences.

In the future, when I have left this wonderful petri dish of peace that is SUA, I will not forget that the absence of education is one of the main reasons why the poor are trapped in the poverty.

I want to use what I have learned at Soka especially for those who do not have access to good education. Also I am convinced that when countries have good economic policies to stimulate their economies, the less privileged will have more disposable income to educate their children. As you may know North Korea is in the news constantly, with new threats of war and destruction. It is still a clear and present danger. My heart aches, but it deepens my determination in the reunification of the Korean peninsula.

I want to first thank my parents for never giving up and always doing their best to provide for me and encourage me to dream big. I am happy to say they are healthy, happy and still a very romantic couple enjoying life together. And most importantly I want to express the depth of my gratitude to you, the donors, who have made my Soka education possible. You have my commitment to make the world a better place. Thank you so much.”

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make this Peace Gala a huge success. Mark your calendar now for the Twelfth annual Peace Gala, Celebrating a Vision of Peace, Saturday, October 8, 2016.
Study abroad in Mendoza, Argentina, provided Sage Dunham (2016) with many contrasts. Simultaneously she found herself an insider living in the country as a member of an Argentine host family while also an outsider with the language skills of a child. Seeing Argentina from this insider’s perspective allowed Sage to experience the culture that only native Argentinians know.

Mendoza is a city of contrasts. Geographically the city is both a valley beside the mountains and an oasis in the desert. The streets are lined with trees to shade the houses from intense sun and have deep gutters to direct water throughout the city. Argentina incorporates a mixture of European, Latin American, and North American cultures. In a strip of high-end restaurants, one will find Milanesa (Argentina’s unofficial national dish) next to an Irish bar, an Italian restaurant, and a McDonalds. DIRECTV satellites are perched atop almost every home, even those made of metal and dirt, so everyone can watch the Argentinian futbol teams.

“However, the most shocking contrast for me is in the everyday actions of the Argentinians. Mendocinos in general are amazingly patient. I’ve observed them wait in line for hours only to be turned away when the bank closed for siesta. But even the most patient Mendocinos will run red lights or honk if they think the car they are following is going too slow,” said Sage.

The most important thing she learned from her experience in the Argentinian culture is to value people. “In Argentina, people always come first. The short work and school days allow families to relax and enjoy time together.” Her classes always began with 15 minutes of students greeting one another and asking about their lives. At first she found this to be a terrible waste of time but she soon learned that they do not value efficiency as Americans do. Sage commented that “they focus on the means rather than the end.”

The months Sage spent in Argentina provided her with the awareness to reflect on conflicting values existing in her own life. She is determined to remedy them now that she is back at SUA.
In 2010, Agnes Conrad (2012) received a Pacific Basin Research Center grant that allowed her to travel to Nepal. While there, she was inspired to learn Himalayan history and languages. She discovered that, contrary to the romantic perception of Tibet as a land inaccessible to the outside world, the reality for hundreds of years was that the Tibetan plateau has been a melting pot of ideas, peoples, and customs and is itself home to many great artistic, poetic, and philosophical traditions. Agnes met many Tibetans who, in the face of social pressure to shift to urban living, made the decision to move back to their home towns or villages on the grasslands of the Tibetan plateau to engage in yak herding, tourism, or teaching, rather than pursue working in a city. Meeting these people expanded Agnes’ interest in the way people relate to both the land and ideas of tradition and modernity. After graduating from Soka, Agnes went to India for a year to study at Sarah College to begin learning Central Tibetan dialect. For the next 18 months she stayed in Tibet working for a small family-owned business that incorporated an arts cooperative, a hostel, a café, and a tour/trekking/nomad homestay business. She was able to participate in purchasing, translating, and organizing student tours and treks. After returning to San Francisco for seven months to work and build up her savings, she returned to the Tibetan plateau last September to attend a Tibetan college within a Chinese University in Qinghai, China. There she studied Tibetan poetry and literature as well as the Chinese language.

She was very excited to study and become more proficient in reading and writing the Tibeto-Burmese languages. Agnes believes language, specifically the written word, is our greatest human accomplishment. She said, “When we learn new languages, we not only open our minds to different paradigms, but we show respect and initiative in trying to understand how our fellow human beings think. This is the first, most basic step, we can take to make the world a better place: seeing each other not as foreigners or strangers but part of a global community that is accessible, relatable and equal in our humanity.”

Agnes has also said, “The strongest lesson I learned at Soka was what the world needs now is a change of heart. We can change our location, change our appearances, change our names, but if we do not deeply and radically change the way we relate to our fellow human beings, the same problems will continue to arise for eternity. Learning Tibetan is my effort to deeply and radically change my heart, my life, and my world view to a point that whatever I do in the future I will be able to do so with profound, deep respect (not fear) of the unknown.”

It is Agnes’ hope and her fellow classmates’ hope to eventually create an organization to financially assist young Tibetan students in pursuing an education like the one she received at Soka.

“The strongest lesson I learned at Soka was what the world needs now is a change of heart.”
Dean of Graduate School will serve as commissioner to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Tomoko Takahashi, Ph.D., Ed.D., LHD, Vice President for Institutional Research and Assessment, has been elected to the WASC [Western Association of Schools and Colleges] Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). The Commission evaluates the quality and effectiveness of colleges and universities in the Western region, including California and Hawaii.

During her three-year term as a Commissioner, which began on July 1, 2015, Dr. Takahashi will work with other members of the Commission to evaluate and act on institutional review portfolios for accreditation and set policies related to accreditation standards and procedures.

Since 2001, as Soka’s Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), Dr. Takahashi has lead the university’s accreditation effort. Soka was accredited by WSCUC in 2005, four years earlier than expected, and reaccredited for ten years in 2010.

Regarding her recent appointment, Dr. Takahashi shared, “Being elected to the Commission is truly a great honor. As Soka’s ALO and as a frequent visiting committee member evaluating other institutions, I have gained valuable experience with the Commission. I look forward to gaining more experience, as a Commissioner, sitting on the other side of the table where decisions are being made.”

In addition to her role as VP for Institutional Research and Assessment, Dr. Takahashi serves as the Dean of the Graduate School.

“I look forward to gaining more experience, as a Commissioner, sitting on the other side of the table where decisions are being made.”
Second Annual Dialogue on the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence

The Second Annual Dialogue on the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence was held on October 2, 2015, at Soka University of America. The Role and Contribution of Women in Fostering Peace was the theme of this year’s dialogue.

Soka welcomed the return of Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury to chair the dialogue and also welcomed two prominent international leaders in the campaign for women’s rights, peace, and security: Irene M. Santiago from the Philippines and Luz Méndez from Guatemala. The day’s events included multiple dialogues involving SUA students and faculty. These exchanges highlighted and promoted the increasing role of women in fostering peace in the Soka curriculum and overall educational experience throughout global society.

Ambassador Chowdhury discussed his role in spearheading UN Security Council Resolution 1325 declaring the commitment by the United Nations to political and economic empowerment of women and the support of initiatives by its member nations for women to become active agents for peace and equality.

Irene Santiago discussed being an advocate for gender equality most of her adult life. Everywhere she goes she encounters gender inequality. She stated that women especially need to “participate to influence.” She is one of the few women in the world with actual experience in formal peace negotiations. She was a member of the Philippines government that negotiated with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and she was also the Executive Director of the highly successful NGO Forum on Women held in China in 1995. With 30,000 participants, it was historically the largest international conference on women.

Luz Méndez has dedicated her entire life to social change in Guatemala. She participated in the Guatemalan peace negotiations as the only female member of Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca, contributing to unprecedented commitments for gender equality in the peace accords years before Resolution 1325. She is a member of the UN High Level Advisory Group for the Global Study on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325.

Ms. Méndez, Ms. Santiago, and Ambassador Chowdhury enjoyed discussing with SUA faculty how curriculum can be enriched by the culture of peace and non-violence and how gender can be integrated across each of the disciplines. Participants modeled the belief that universities can be a place for discussion, a place to popularize positive aspects of culture that will result in peace. Professors can be role models to those who do not have these conversations at home. Hosting open dialogues and faculty forums can be the building blocks on many levels.

To conclude the meeting, speakers engaged in a final panel discussion open to the Soka community and the public. Ambassador Chowdhury emphasized that women are usually the first victims of armed conflict and that the only way for sustainable peace is through equality. Both Ms. Santiago and Ms. Méndez encouraged the audience with their powerful words: “Know what you want, imagine the future, in the end – just do it!”

Ms. Santiago and Ms. Méndez are working together on “#Women.Seriously!” The campaign uses social media to mobilize people to propel the agenda of women’s rights, peace, and security.

Special thanks to the Luis and Linda Nieves Family Foundation for making this special dialogue possible
Deike Peters, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Environmental Planning and Practice

Please provide a brief background about yourself.
I grew up in Dortmund, Germany, in the heart of an industrial region dominated by coal mining, steel production, beer brewing and soccer. In 1986-7, I was a foreign high school exchange student in a small rural town in Northern California. I lived in a very modest mobile home park surrounded by almond farms. While there I realized I am a city person. After high school, I headed straight for the Latin Quarter in Paris to perfect my French. My penchant for city living turned into a passionate interest in city building. My previous life had been pretty car dependent but Paris taught me otherwise. I switched my studies from French literature to urban planning – and made a career of advocating for more environmentally sustainable and socially equitable cities all across the world.

From which institutions do you hold degrees?
After a few years of undergraduate studies in Germany, I signed up for an exchange year at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. I received a dual Master's degree in Urban Planning and International Affairs from Columbia and then started to work for ITDP, an international environmental organization focusing on sustainable transportation. I worked with environmental groups in Eastern Europe and Latin America and was a gender consultant for the World Bank and UN Habitat. I received my Ph.D. in Urban Planning and Policy Development from Rutgers.

What attracted you to SUA?
My first academic appointment took me back to Germany, to the Technical University Berlin. In 2008 my family and I returned to Los Angeles. (My husband is a screenwriter and LA is the hub of his industry.) I secured a multi-year research fellowship from the German Research Foundation and was adjunct faculty at USC. However, I wanted to leave the world of big research universities behind to focus more on teaching. So when Soka advertised for my current job, I found it a perfect fit. I was presented with wonderful new colleagues, smart students, amazing staff and bountiful resources, all wrapped up in a beautiful campus setting. I’ve had the opportunity to develop a two-year rotation of courses on various built environment topics and I also get to teach two really fun general education classes, Modes of Inquiry and Learning Cluster.

What distinguishes Soka students in your opinion?
Soka students arrive on campus with a wide range of interests and abilities. Regardless of where they start out, they grow so much during their time here. The best students rival any graduate students I’ve taught at USC or anywhere else, and Soka students’ enthusiasm and compassion for each other is just wonderful to see.

What inspires you?
So many aspects of my work at Soka are inspiring: meeting students again for the first time after they’ve been away for study abroad and witnessing first-hand how much that experience has enriched, transformed and matured them; students telling me that my Learning Cluster on Los Angeles got them hooked on being constant explorers of LA’s rich cultural offerings; interesting lunch conversations with SUA faculty and staff; and seeing deer and other wildlife during my afternoon run in Wood Canyon before braving the crowded freeways on my way home.
Do you have other reflections about your experience as a faculty member at SUA?

The craziest thing about me ending up at SUA is that my husband, whom I met in my early 20s, actually grew up a few miles from here, so I have memories of hiking in Aliso and Wood Canyons when the hilltop that SUA stands on today was still undeveloped. Back then, I was just a German college girl visiting her new boyfriend’s family in Southern California, starting off on her life’s amazing transatlantic adventure. That’s why joining the SUA faculty 20 years later to teach the next generation of global citizens about “the creative coexistence of nature and humanity” felt like life coming full circle.

And I wonder what kinds of stories my students will be able to tell 20 years from now.
Soka University was a flurry of activity August 1st and 2nd when 83 pioneer students from the undergraduate class of 2005, along with 49 family members, returned to campus to celebrate their 10-year reunion. Sohokai alumni came from as far away as Ghana to join their friends and to reminisce about the years they spent in Aliso Viejo.

The Class of 2005 10-year reunion began Saturday morning with a welcome from reunion planners Juliana Sugano and Alex Marcos. Michael Sasaki and Junko Sato provided special dance entertainment for their classmates. A special message from Daisaku Ikeda was read by Stacey Smith. The founder said, “You have blazed a new and previously untrodden path with indomitable commitment and perseverance, and have given moving expression to your earnest and enduring love for your alma mater through your support for SUA’s future development.” Ed Feasel, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Chief Academic Officer and Dean of Faculty, took the podium to share some of his fondest memories.

Class of 2005 members and their guests gathered in the Bistro to enjoy lunch with faculty and staff and to catch up with old friends. Many were impressed to learn how the alumni were fulfilling the university mission in their daily lives.

An afternoon meeting took place in the Soka Performing Arts Center, providing an opportunity for some visitors to experience the beautiful hall for the first time. Yuya Uchida and Caisy Lun welcomed the audience before Michael O’Malley read remarks from the founder who referred to the Class of 2005 as “a light of hope illuminating a new era of learning for humankind.” Videos from the classes of 2006, 2007, and 2008 remembered and honored the pioneer class. Professor Phat Vu, Chef Kiyoko Trobough, and alumnus Shinsuke Tanaka shared their experiences with the audience. Director of Philanthropy, Linda Kennedy, announced total alumni giving had surpassed the $500,000 mark with more than $104,000 coming from the Class of 2005. President Habuki concluded the program by sharing his special memories and encouraging alumni to continue contributing to the university.

Following the meeting, the crowd gathered on the walk around Peace Lake for the unveiling of the Class of 2005 on Founders Circle commemorating their generous gifts to SUA totaling more than $100,000.

On Saturday night, a formal dinner and evening of fun took place in the Founders Art Gallery. Attendees enjoyed casino games, a photo booth, dancing, and karaoke. Sunday was family fun day at the pool with a BBQ and games for everyone. The weekend festivities concluded with a formal dinner at the Athenaeum courtyard where each alumnus was presented with a necklace or cuff links bearing the Sohokai logo. An open mic provided an opportunity for attendees to reflect upon the last ten years and also make vocal pledges to truly become global citizens who contribute to society.
Ways to Give

There are as many different ways to support Soka University of America as there are donors.

Check
Cash
Credit Card

IRA
Life Insurance

Appreciated Securities (Stocks and Bonds)

Retirement Plan Assets

Real Estate

Personal Property

Charitable Remainder Trust

Charitable Gift Annuity

Please contact Linda Kennedy, Director of Philanthropy, at 949-480-4072 to discuss what option works best for you.
Soka University is launching Critical Conversations @ Soka, a new community speakers series aimed at raising awareness about pressing social and environmental issues. Performing artist Anna Deavere Smith, instigator Henry Rollins, and activist Dr. Vandana Shiva will be at the Soka Performing Arts Center throughout the academic year.

**WED | NOV 18, 2015 | 7 PM**

**Anna Deavere Smith: The School to Prison Pipeline**

Pulitzer Prize nominated playwright, actor and MacArthur “Genius” Fellow, Smith is known for creating a new form of theatre that highlights issues of community, character, and diversity in America. She has performed on the popular series *Nurse Jackie, The West Wing* and *Madame Secretary*. *Doing Time in Education* deepens our understanding of poor, urban and minority youth stuck on pathways to prison.

**WED | FEB 17, 2016 | 7 PM**

**An Evening with Henry Rollins**

Actor, author, DJ, voice-over and spoken-word artist, TV and radio show host, former frontman for Black Flag and the Rollins Band will ignite ideas and conversation about work, war, education, race, politics and peace. And whatever else is on his mind.

**TUES | APRIL 26, 2016 | 7 PM**

**Dr. Vandana Shiva: The Future of the Planet**

Dr. Shiva combines sharp intellectual enquiry with courageous activism. Her work spans teaching worldwide to working with peasants in rural India. Named by *Forbes* as one of the “seven most powerful women on the globe,” and by *Asia Week* as “one of the five most powerful communicators in Asia.” Dr. Shiva is the author of over twenty books.
B2B: New Bridges-to-Business Program

This fall, Soka Career Services launched Bridges-to-Business (B2B), a unique college-to-career accelerator program designed to support students in bridging the gap between college and career by developing business etiquette, knowledge, skills, and contacts. B2B participants will receive mentoring about purpose-driven business models, such as social enterprise and B-Corp. They will get access to an expanded professional network and be trained to understand basic finance, marketing, innovation, and business analysis skills that serve all sectors of the economy. Students will also get private coaching to help them find jobs.

The B2B program received 26 applications. A committee of faculty and staff selected fifteen participants. These students will also receive free tuition (valued at $2,000) to Fullbridge, a business skills workshop developed by Harvard Business School professors. Training is being held on campus during spring break, March 14 - 18, 2016.

For more information about serving as a mentor or business contact for Soka students, contact Mary Patrick Kavanaugh at mkavanaugh@soka.edu.

Soka University’s 15th Annual International Festival

May 7, 2016
10:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
www.soka.edu/festival

Soka Athletics has been recognized by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) as a Champions of Character 5 star gold member.
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.

News Bites

Soka’s new rankings in US News & World Report’s “Best Colleges 2016”
#1 in Study Abroad
#1 in Faculty Resources
#5 in Diversity
#4 Best Value National Liberal Arts Colleges
Top 10 West Coast Liberal Arts Colleges
Also, Soka was ranked as Top 10 Best Colleges in California in USA Today

Archives available!
Past issues of the SUA Founders Newsletter can be found at www.soka.edu/giving/sua-founders.aspx

Save the Date!
Class of 2006 10-Year Reunion
July 30-31, 2016
SUA Campus