

COMMITTED TO THE QUALITY OF TEACHING



Dr. Ming-jer Tang became president of Tunghai University on February 1, 2013. During a recent visit to the United Board's New York office, he shared his perspective on what makes Tunghai special and how it can remain an effective and attractive institution of higher education.

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WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO BECOME AN EDUCATOR?

After I received my medical degree in Taiwan, I did my residency at a city hospital. Most of the senior doctors on staff did not like to teach because they were afraid of being surpassed by junior residents. I was frustrated because I wanted to learn, but no one wanted to teach me.

The four years of my Ph.D. program in physiology at the University of Michigan really changed my life. I was influenced by mentors and other faculty members, and they treated students very, very well. So after four years I decided that I should be a scientist and a teacher rather than a doctor.

I spent 23 years at National Cheng Kung University in Tainan before coming to Tunghai University. I was provost of the university and also executive vice dean of the medical school.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR PRIORITIES AT TUNGHAI?

In the last six months, I was able to put Tunghai's liberal arts education into real context. We have already finished a white paper about liberal arts education, Tunghai-style, Version 1.0.

Five years ago, Tunghai established the POYA School, a small liberal arts school. Each year Tunghai receives more than 3,000 new undergraduate students,

and only 100 students are selected for the POYA School. It's a kind of honors program for them. It's been very successful. The POYA School was named the top school in Taiwan by a few well-reputed journals like *Business Week Taiwan* and *CommonWealth*, and we frequently receive visitors from other universities, particularly from mainland China.

Tunghai University was established in 1955 with the support of the United Board.

We want to expand the POYA program but it's a big challenge. For example, we think that student life in the dormitory is very important for liberal arts education. We currently have about 5,000 beds (for more than 13,000 undergraduate students) but we want to expand that to 6,600. In that way all undergraduate students could live in the dormitory for two years.

WHAT MAKES TUNGHAI UNIQUE?

In order to educate our students, we have a very good program for developing student leaders. Each year we have 200 student leaders called a (alpha) leaders who are in charge of residential life. They help younger students go through university

FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY'S REAL NEEDS

LAOS is reforming its education system so that graduates can better meet changing socio-economic conditions in the country. In this new context United Board Faculty Scholar Phetmany Luangsichampa finds that her study of education at Miriam College in the Philippines “has value for my teaching and work at the Faculty of Law and Political Science at the National University of Laos.” Ms. Luangsichampa completed her master’s degree in 2011 and now teaches English for Legal Purposes and serves as the university’s vice director of clinical legal education.

Ms. Luangsichampa aspires to continue her studies and earn a Ph.D. In the meantime, she is busy in the classroom and in the community. “The Faculty of Law is interested in raising legal awareness among the public and in educating lawyers who are skilled at solving problems and communicating to people who have little or no legal background.”

This requires a new, student-centered approach to teaching. Legal education in Laos typically focuses on rote learning of laws, rather than applying the law to actual situations. Ms. Luangsichampa’s department combines classroom work with visits to rural provinces, where students hear firsthand reports from villagers about land disputes and other issues. “For students to

become good lawyers, working in the interest of society at large, it is essential that they understand the legal issues people are facing,” Ms. Luangsichampa explains. “We learn the real problems with real people there. When we come back to school we can bring that knowledge and discuss the main problems together in the classroom.”

“We learn the real problems with real people.”

The clinical legal education program also helps turn students into teachers. It encourages them to feel more comfortable talking about the law so that they, in turn, can teach members of the community about their rights and obligations. In the villages, law students are teaching residents about land law, land registration, land user obligations, compensation for losses and other issues. And they spend time in primary and secondary schools,

using role play and games to introduce young students to the basics of criminal, civil and family law.

At Miriam College, Ms. Luangsichampa found that “professors understand where we are from” and therefore could expose her to the knowledge and skills that can best serve her home institution. Her current work in clinical legal education is rooted in a similar approach as she and her colleagues help students understand the social contexts in which legal problems arise and the actual people who are affected. **UB**

Go Online

Go to unitedboard.org for more information on the Faculty Scholarship Program.



Phetmany Luangsichampa, third from right, at village training session

MISSION

The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia works to support a Christian presence in colleges and universities in Asia.

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INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN ASIAN CULTURES AND THEOLOGIES THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

“FORGIVENESS is important for us all, not only for theologians, educators and students,” says Yoachim Agus Tridiatno, a Ph.D. candidate at the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS), “because we all experience injuries or mental wounds from the offenses of others.” Mr. Tridiatno found valuable time to research the concept of forgiveness with a group of collegial scholars at the Institute for Advanced Study in Asian Cultures and Theologies (IASACT). IASACT gives young Asian scholars of theology and culture five weeks to dedicate to research, receive advice from mentors and discuss ideas with their peers from other Asian countries.



*Yoachim Agus Tridiatno,
Indonesian Consortium for
Religious Studies (ICRS)*

“Forgiveness is powerful but it is also complicated,” Mr. Tridiatno wrote in an article published in *Orientasi Baru*, just a few months after his IASACT participation. In everyday life, he finds that forgiveness is often misunderstood as “just a handshake” when people say “I apologize.” The differences between forgiveness and pardoning or excusing may seem subtle, but they are significant to Mr. Tridiatno. In his view, it’s the dual nature of forgiveness that makes it powerful. “Forgiveness is a moral response which involves the responsibility of the victim and the offender,” he writes. “The offender is responsible for the wrongdoing that he or she did, and the victim for the acceptance of the injuries that befell on him or her in order to not hold resentment and revenge.”

Mr. Tridiatno’s ideas resonated with his fellow IASACT participants. “After my presentation, all friends talked about forgiveness based on their own experiences in their own countries.” Because IASACT is a residential program, these conversations continued during break times, over meals in the canteen or when relaxing in the dormitory. “I catch their point that forgiveness is relevant in recent days, because there is violence everywhere which needs one sort of resolution: forgiveness.” In his research, he found ways in which the concept of individual forgiveness can be expanded to address conflict and violence in societies; he sees roles for theologians and educators in helping societies better understand forgiveness and in finding ways to apply it.

Mr. Tridiatno teaches religion, morals and ethics at Atma Jaya Yogyakarta University and writes and plays liturgical music. IASACT gives young scholars like him a brief respite from the demands of their busy schedules — a precious opportunity to synthesize the knowledge they have gained, the experiences they have witnessed, and their calling to share their insights with new colleagues and friends from throughout Asia. **UB**



Go Online

Go to unitedboard.org for more information on IASACT.

UNITED BOARD FRIEND GROWING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH: DAVID YORK

MR. DAVID YORK’S support for the United Board began in 2012, but his connection to the United Board actually goes back to the 1940s, when his father attended St. John’s University in Shanghai. St. John’s was one of the 13 Chinese Christian universities that comprised the United Board’s earliest network.



*David York with
Nancy Chapman*

Now living in Hong Kong, Mr. York leads Dragon Crowd Group, an international apparel manufacturer and retailer. And while he has invested most of his energy over the past 40 years in building a successful business, the growing need for higher education in Asia also has been on his mind. “It is only through good education that an individual or a country can grow from strength to strength,” he said in a recent communication with the United Board.

His focus is naturally directed toward mainland China, where Dragon Crowd has a major manufacturing base in Dongguan and a retail network that spans more than 70 cities. He finds that “China lacks comprehensive programs to train faculty and scholars,” the lifeblood of a university. That is one reason why the United Board Fellows Program appeals to him. “It helps nurture and train faculty and scholars from China and other regions through mentorship and placement,” he said, describing how the program exposes mid-level Asian faculty to best practices through four-month placements at Asian and American universities.

For the past two years, Mr. York has sponsored United Board Fellowships for two Chinese faculty members. His generous contribution opens new doors for these rising leaders in education and, in turn, for many others. “I hope the returned scholars can benefit their students in the same way,” he said.

Mr. York notes that he navigated his business through decades of changing conditions by remaining true to key principles: always remain humble; listen to what others have to say; and continue to learn through reading, in order to develop crucial analytical skills. Those principles also serve as sound advice to United Board Fellows, as they embark on journeys that will expand their experiences, knowledge, skills and networks. **UB**

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life. Students do this for one year, and then we give other students this opportunity for leadership. Most students are in their third or fourth year at the university. I think this alpha program is quite unique.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES FACING HIGHER EDUCATION?

We are encountering a shortage of students. It's a birthrate issue for Taiwan. In the year 2016, enrollment in Taiwan may drop by 50,000 to 60,000. This could be a problem for a lot of private universities. Tunghai will not be excluded. So we have to consolidate our liberal arts education to make it attractive to students.

We have established an international college so that we can lure more international students to the university. Tunghai has more than 100 memoranda of understanding with other universities. On this trip to the United States, I am meeting with Trinity University in San Antonio, the University of Rhode Island and other universities. With this type of cooperation we can have more exchanges and implement a good international college.

DO YOU CONTINUE YOUR OWN COMMITMENT TO THE QUALITY OF TEACHING?

Yes, of course. I teach General Education. I also go to the cafeteria quite frequently to meet with students. This is unarranged — I just sit down and have lunch and talk with them. It's a good way to understand what students are like and what their problems are. I can learn from students who are the best teachers at Tunghai! **UB**

UNITED BOARD EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

ASIAN UNIVERSITY LEADERS PROGRAM: STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

December 4-6, 2013

Bangkok, Thailand

ASIAN UNIVERSITY LEADERS PROGRAM (IN-COUNTRY)

February 5-7, 2014

Yangon, Myanmar

STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION THROUGH SERVICE-LEARNING

February 20-22, 2014

Trinity University of Asia, Philippines

ALL INDIA ASSOCIATION FOR CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

February 20-22, 2014

New Delhi, India

WAYS TO SUPPORT THE UNITED BOARD THE IRA CHARITABLE GIFT ROLLOVER

Dear Friends,

There are a variety of ways to support the United Board and our higher education partners in Asia. One gift option is the IRA Charitable Gift Rollover, available to U.S. residents who are at least age 70 ½ at the time of making the gift. Such donors can transfer up to \$100,000 from an individual retirement account (IRA) to a qualified charitable organization, including the United Board. No tax will be incurred within allowable limits on this withdrawal and it will be counted towards the Required Minimum Distribution.

Please note: This giving option expires on **December 31, 2013** per the terms of the legislation.

To request more information, please contact us at 212-870-2612 or by email: legacysociety@unitedboard.org. We would be pleased to help you consider this and other planned gifts that meet your philanthropic goals and welcome you to the United Board Legacy Society.

Sincerely,
Trudy Loo
Senior Manager for Development

This is not intended as legal or tax advice. You should consult with your legal and tax advisors before making a planned gift.

