

UNITED BOARD

HORIZONS

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UNITED BOARD FOR CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ASIA



Sharing Challenges, Creating Solutions

In this issue:

How Endowments Support Future Generations

see pages 7-10

Message from the President

Gathering around the Table

The ultimate focus of the United Board's work is the classroom, where the educators in our network help young men and women discover new ideas, explore communities and cultures near and far, and find ways to apply knowledge in service to others. As the photo on the cover of this issue of *Horizons* suggests, the process of supporting these dedicated educators often begins when we gather around a table for informal discussions.

The cover photo shows a recent conversation at Women's Christian College in Kolkata, India; my colleagues Wai Ching Wong and Maher Spurgeon are seated at the table and Cynthia Yuen took the photo. What do we learn during these face-to-face conversations? We may hear about the current challenges our Asian colleagues face, such as constraints on human and financial resources or the need for curricula that reflect national standards. However, most of our time together is spent on the creative solutions our Asian colleagues have crafted and the ambitious plans they are making for the future.



Nancy E. Chapman
President

These conversations turn our map of network institutions into portraits of individuals with a passion for teaching and learning. The individuals featured in this issue of *Horizons* are equally

“These conversations turn our map of network institutions into portraits of individuals.”

inspiring! La Wun's academic training is in English literature, yet she is determined to build a journalism program at Myanmar Institute of Theology. Gunawan Tanuwidjaja at Petra Christian University is part of a team of faculty, students, and NGO professionals designing spaces for people living with disabilities. Through service-learning, Chen I-Jun is helping her students at Soochow University (Suzhou) appreciate the human dimensions of the science of psychology.

Our financial resources are modest, and our conversations with Asian educators help us determine the best ways to apply them. We invite you to become part of these conversations: as you read the stories in *Horizons*, please consider how your gift, of any size, can help support our colleagues' innovative endeavors.

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Network News



Developing China Studies in Indian Higher Education

China and India are the two giants of Asia, yet opportunities for undergraduate students in each country to learn about their neighbor are relatively few. At a January 16-20 workshop in Delhi, Indian educators discussed ways in which classes about China might be introduced into the curriculum. These educators find that overly simplistic images of China persist in India, and they believe that higher education can open avenues to develop an informed “people’s perspective,” built on a comparative study of China and a more nuanced understanding.

The three organizers of the workshop — the United Board, the Harvard-Yenching Institute, and the Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi — all have long histories of working with China and are considering ways in which to offer support to Indian colleges and universities that wish to introduce some form of China studies into their curricula.



Online Journal about Religions in Asia

QUEST is a new online journal that aims to promote creative thinking and lively scholarly discussion about interpretation of Christianity and other religions in Asia.

It is a peer-reviewed journal, published by the Divinity School of Chung Chi College and supported by the United Board. The inaugural issue includes the contributions of seven alumni of the United Board’s annual Institute for Advanced Study in Asian Cultures and Theologies (IASACT), which is administered by the Divinity School.

QUEST welcomes the submission of articles and book reviews that span the full spectrum of religious, cultural, theological, and interdisciplinary studies on the cultures and religions in Asia. To read *QUEST* or review the author guidelines, please visit the Divinity School website (www.theology.cuhk.edu.hk/quest)

ICU Alumni Share Their Stories

International Christian University (ICU) in Japan opened its doors in 1953, representing a desire to use the power of higher education to overcome division and nurture peace in the region. The United Board saw an opportunity to continue its support for educating the Chinese people, and so from 1953 to 1986, it provided 112 students from Hong Kong with scholarships to attend ICU. Many of these alumni believe their lives were transformed by their United Board scholarships and ICU education. A group of alumni shares reflections of their years at ICU and the impact their education had on their lives in a new booklet, *Turning Lives into Legends*. A digital version is available on the Publications section of the United Board website.



A Human Science

Chen I-Jun, Soochow University (Suzhou)

“Summary and reflection are critical for service-learning.”

“Psychology is a human science, and its ultimate goal is to serve humans,” according to Chen I-Jun (Evelyn), a professor in the School of Education at Soochow University in mainland China. That focus on serving others inspired her to introduce Soochow University psychology students to service-learning. With support from the United Board, she designed a project to train undergraduate psychology students in techniques to reduce social anxiety in children with learning disabilities.

“Service-learning is still an emerging concept in China,” Dr. Chen said, so she presented it to her students as a practice with three layers. “The first layer is meaningful service, which means using knowledge from the university to serve the community. The second layer is practical learning, which asks students to walk out of the campus and practice their professional skills in the community. The third layer is reflection, encouraging students to reflect on their practice, which is critical to their progress.”

These three layers also guided Dr. Chen’s approach to the course. In the classroom, she and her graduate students built up undergraduates’ knowledge of cognitive behavior strategies to reduce social anxiety. “Socially anxious children can learn to perceive and adjust their emotions, learn to relax, learn to smile and face their anxiety,” she



Prof. Chen in the classroom.

said. She also prepared her students to assume new roles. “They needed to adjust from being a student to a mental health worker for children,” she said, “and that means maintaining self-discipline and self-management, while also getting along with the children in their care.” The young children had their own individual characteristics: shy, talkative, mischievous, and in one instance, very blunt. “One child said, ‘This activity is boring, I would rather go home and do my homework!’” Dr. Chen recalled. “My undergraduates needed to maintain their empathy and figure out the reason behind this child’s complaint.”

Dr. Chen emphasized the value of reflection. “Although some universities in China organize social practice activities, they often lack the layer of reflection,” she said. “Summary and reflection are critical for a service-learning project.” Reflection deepens the learning experience, and helps students identify the characteristics they need to become competent, caring professionals. “The capacity for acceptance and empathy is the basic requirement to become an excellent psychological counselor,” Dr. Chen said. “Through our intervention, our undergraduates learned to show their empathy naturally and to make the children feel they were accepted and supported.”

The Soochow University course took place over several intensive months, but Dr. Chen expects long-term benefits. “Our project not only helps students make progress in building knowledge, but it also makes them conscious of serving society. That is an important outcome for college students.”



Students are encouraged to reflect on their interaction with children.

Teaching Empathy through Design

Petra Christian University

“We are trying to build a peace bridge.”



Gunawan Tanuwidjaja, one of the project leaders.

The physical environment can be a powerful indicator of a society's willingness to include people with disabilities, and a service-learning project at Petra Christian University in Surabaya, Indonesia helped architecture students absorb that lesson. “When we enter a community and the acceptance is there, it surely eases us in everything,” Dr. Arina

Hayati, a faculty member at the Institute of Technology of the Tenth of November told students, and she and others living with disabilities in Surabaya readily shared ideas on ways that architectural design can help them participate in community life.

This project was supported by a United Board Bamboo Grant and led by an interdisciplinary team of Petra faculty members and professionals from nongovernmental organizations. Like other exercises in service-learning, it enabled students to develop practical skills. Gunawan Tanuwidjaja, one of the project leaders at Petra, thinks service-learning also can teach empathy. “It is difficult, through lectures, to tell students how to become empathetic,” he said in an interview, but through service-learning, he could encourage his students to imagine the world of the disabled. “Simulation is one way for them to do this,” he explained, “so for one hour, they took on the limitation of a disabled person.” That exercise, combined with conversations with people living with disabilities, helped students think differently about design.

“As designers, students need to empathize with people living with disabilities, communicate with them, and design participatively with them,” Mr. Gunawan said. Participatory workshops helped strengthen that spirit of collaboration. “Students created

architectural models based on the data they collected and what they learned about needs,” Mr. Gunawan said, “and then, in the workshops, they asked how they can be improved.” By the end of the four-month class, the Petra students had created models for five homes, an apartment, and a school. Since then, they have started working with a school for the blind on construction of doors, toilets, and window protectors.

The project leaders see a close relationship between inclusion and peacebuilding. “Discrimination against the person with disability is common,” Mr. Gunawan said, and that places the disabled in the category of “other” or “different.” Inclusive design helps remedy that, by bringing people into the mainstream of life, whether on campus, in the community, or even in the home. “We are trying build a peace bridge to the person with disability community,” and the Petra faculty and students are eager to tell others about their experience with inclusive design. What began in the classroom is now being shared broadly, through a project video, social media and radio campaigns to raise awareness, a book on inclusive design titled *Living with Dignity*, and exhibitions in the Petra Christian University library and a shopping mall.

Please see our website for a listing of project stakeholders: unitedboard.org/petra-christian-university



Participatory design builds a collaborative spirit.

Building a Journalism Program, Step by Step

La Wun Shwe Wut Ye, Myanmar Institute of Theology

“It is a great thing to have a network.”

“There is a huge demand in my country for journalists,” La Wun Shwe Wut Ye, a lecturer in the English department at Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT), has discovered. In 2010, MIT wanted to develop a journalism course to introduce students to the field. The challenge was to find the human resources needed to train faculty and build the curriculum. La Wun had skills to offer — “I can teach students to write and assess their writing” — but she lacked the hands-on experience of writing news stories on short deadlines. Local journalists were eager to help with short-term training, but MIT faculty realized they also needed resource persons familiar with full-scale academic programs. “Students need to gradually build up skills and have their progress checked,” La Wun explained, “and this can’t be done in a workshop.”

In 2014, MIT turned to the United Board for grant support and access to expertise. “For a country where many things are not available,” La Wun said, “it is a great thing to have a network.” Through the introduction of the United Board, MIT began incorporating Asian expertise from Ateneo de Manila University, University of St. La Salle, and Hong Kong Baptist University. Faculty from these institutions visited the MIT campus to lecture and outline the primary content for elective courses in Principles of Journalism and News Reporting and Writing, and MIT faculty began matching concepts to examples from Myanmar news sources. MIT continues to expand its network, with both local and international experts, and plans to send a

faculty member abroad for a master’s degree in journalism.

The journalism initiative is thriving. MIT now offers four journalism electives: in addition to Principles of Journalism and News Reporting and Writing, students can take courses in Ethical and Responsible Journalism and Press, Politics, and Society. Student interest is strong. “Students often see electives as a chance for an easy course, so we tell them these courses will be challenging,” La Wun said. Despite the rigorous classroom content and an internship requirement, students are eager to enroll and learn how to gather information, analyze it, and effectively communicate it to the community. Five students have already received job offers from their internship hosts.

“Knowledge is at the core of journalism,” La Wun believes, and the inquisitive nature of journalism helps students develop critical thinking skills. These aspects of journalism justify its inclusion in the higher education curriculum, and inspire MIT leaders and faculty to continue the process, step by step, of translating their vision for a journalism major, embedded in the Liberal Arts Program, into a reality.



Photo credit:
Allen del Carmen

The United Board and MIT

The United Board’s long friendship with the Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT) began when the school introduced a four-year program leading to a B.A. in Religious Studies (BARS). That program’s liberal arts focus opened the door for the United Board and MIT to explore common interests in building a faculty and curriculum for liberal arts education. In 2010, master’s level courses were added, and the program name was changed to the Liberal Arts Program (LAP).

Faculty and leadership development have been key areas of cooperation between the United Board and MIT. Pictured in this 2011 photo are some of the faculty members who have participated in the United Board Fellows Program and Faculty Scholars Program.



Long-term Support, Enduring Impact

Establishing an Endowment at the United Board

“People find special meaning in giving back.”

Some United Board donors have chosen to make their gift in the form of an endowment. Trudy Loo, the United Board's senior manager for development, explains the benefits of this type of fund and invites interested supporters to start a conversation with the United Board on whether this fits with their priorities for supporting higher education in Asia.

What is an endowment fund?

An endowment fund is an investment fund established by a foundation or nongovernmental organization. It makes consistent withdrawals from invested capital in order to provide long-term support for a project or an institution. The time horizon is meant to be in perpetuity for a permanent endowment, or it could be a shorter period of time, such as 10 or 20 years, for a term endowment.

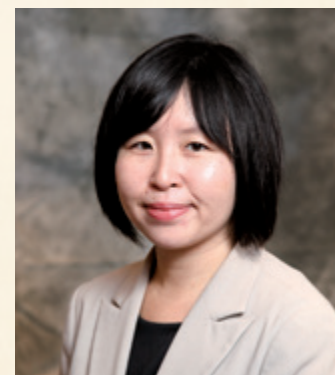
For donors, it's a way to make and sustain a commitment to something about which they care deeply. When donors establish an endowment through the United Board, they designate the support for a project on our list of approved projects. Their endowment fund may support something like a scholarship or faculty development or some other worthy cause.

What makes an endowment fund appealing to donors?

Many donors, especially those who know the United Board well, understand the impact of long-term support, so they want to make a commitment that extends beyond an annual gift. An endowment fund can support future generations, and additional donations made to the fund will allow their support to amplify over time. Often, friends and family will make additional contributions to a fund to honor an anniversary or pay tribute to a loved one.

People find special meaning in giving back to their college or university. Many United Board donors attended college or university when their institution was very young and their country was still quite poor. Yet, because of the

education they received, these donors have gone on to build successful careers and they are now in a position to give back. Through their support, they believe the school can do the same thing for future students as it did for them. Or perhaps they really want to see their university maintain its position of leadership.



Trudy Loo, Senior Manager for Development

An endowment fund is often a meaningful way to honor a person or an issue that is close to the heart of the donor. For example, a donor may set up an endowment in memory of their parents or a loved one. Perhaps a parent was the first in the family to attend university, or the parent's life was transformed by higher education, or he or she passed down their love of education. In this case, a donor may see an endowment fund as a lasting way to pay tribute to their loved ones.

How does the United Board steward the endowment fund?

Once the donor has made the gift, our United Board trustees review and approve the terms of the gift.

Our Stewardship

The United Board is grateful for the trust our donors place in us, and we have put steps in place to ensure careful stewardship of their gifts. Annual spending from endowments is reviewed with the Finance & Administration Committee of our Board of Trustees to ensure that we are in compliance with NYPMIFA, a law governing charities and endowments in New York State.

Long-term Support, Enduring Impact

Then the funds are invested in a pool that includes the United Board's own permanent endowment. Our investment committee meets regularly to review the performance of our investment pool and ensure that these funds are prudently invested.

We also work with the school to make sure the gift is used according to the donor's wishes. Each donor receives an annual report from the school and the United Board. We also provide recognition to the donor as they wish.

What advice would you give someone who is considering setting up an endowment fund?

First, think over what you would like to achieve in the long run. What kind of impact do you want to make with this gift? Is it helping a new generation of students



An endowment helps support outstanding young women at Southern Christian College.

A Gift of Lasting Impact

We are honored to steward nearly 200 endowment funds, each made possible by generous donor support. Please visit the Donor Recognition page of our website to see endowment funds established by donors with the United Board in the last five years.

To begin a conversation about establishing an endowment, please contact Trudy Loo, Senior Manager for Development, by phone (1.212.870.2612) or email (tlloo@unitedboard.org).

Ways to Start an Endowment

- Make a gift of appreciated stock. You may have tax advantages while making a larger gift than you may have thought possible.
- Make a bequest or other planned gift. Legacy gifts can be a way to start or fulfill an endowment fund commitment.

finish their undergraduate degrees? Or is it helping an institution enhance its faculty? Have you considered supporting a United Board program that aligns with your interests and goals? Think broadly and don't be afraid to think of new ways to support the school. Feel free to discuss these ideas with us.

Second, the United Board always advises donors to consult their legal and financial advisors before making a gift to establish an endowment. A new endowment fund at the United Board requires a minimum gift of US\$100,000 for a permanent endowment. Often there are ways to make that gift that are beneficial to the donor's tax planning, and the donor's advisors are in the best position to know the current tax laws. Also, donors should discuss the gift with their families, as well as with the institution that will benefit from the fund.

Third, don't be put off by the US\$100,000 threshold for a permanent endowment. There are creative ways to reach that threshold over a period of two years. Or you could set up a term endowment over a shorter period, which does not have the US\$100,000 minimum threshold.

Finally, feel free to start a conversation with the United Board! We want to know about the institutions and issues that are important to you, and we look forward to talking with you about how to support them.

Blessed in Many Ways

C.J. Alexander, Madras Christian College Alumnus

“Indian colleges, especially Christian colleges, need support now.”

C.J. Alexander received his PhD in chemistry at the University of New Orleans in 1974, and soon faced a difficult decision. Should he return to Madras Christian College (MCC), his academic home? Or should he accept a position in the United States? Dr. Alexander ultimately decided to remain in the United States, after careful consideration of career opportunities for himself and his wife and the needs of their family. “But I still had a desire to help Madras Christian College,” he said. “After all, I had been there for six years as a student and five years as a lecturer.”

Dr. Alexander was inspired by I.M. Mathai, a long-time member of the chemistry faculty at MCC. As chemists, they shared professional interests and, since they were from the same ethnic group and the same church, they had a cultural affinity as well. “Dr. Mathai was someone I appreciated,” Dr. Alexander explained. “He had opportunities to go work at other colleges, but he was dedicated to Madras Christian College.” The two men remained in touch over the years, and in 2002, Dr. Alexander spent a day visiting Dr. Mathai at his home

in Chennai. Sadly, a few days later, Dr. Mathai unexpectedly suffered a stroke and died.

Dr. Alexander learned that Mrs. Mathai and the family planned to set up an endowment in Dr. Mathai’s memory, which would support the chemistry department, the women’s studies program, and scholarships at MCC. He, too, wanted to honor his professor, so he suggested reaching out to U.S.-based alumni for contributions. He knew Joe Sprunger, who then served as the United Board’s director of foundation relations, through a family connection, and contacted him about setting up a U.S.-based endowment to support scholarships at MCC. Dr. Alexander and his wife made a generous donation to establish the endowment, stewarded by the United Board, and he encourages other MCC alumni in the United States to also contribute.



Dr. C.J. Alexander

Gratitude propelled Dr. Alexander and his wife to make their gift. “We have been blessed in many ways,” he said. Like many people of Indian origin residing in the United States, they often help family in India and make gifts to support the church in their home village. But Dr. Alexander encourages alumni of MCC and other Indian institutions to remember their alma maters as well. “Indian colleges, especially Christian colleges, need support now,” he said. “We have been lucky in the way we have been able to live here in the United States. “Think of the education we received and what we have been able to do — that rests on our college education.”



The late Prof. I.M. Mathai and his wife, Prof. Achamma Mathai.

The Best of All Development Aid

Anita Fahrni

“Women should have as much education as possible.”



“Supporting education is the best of all development aid,” Anita Fahrni believes, and her experiences in the fields of development assistance, politics, and personal philanthropy have persuaded her that the education of women and girls is especially important. “Women should have as much education as possible, and in whatever ways they are active later on — in business, politics, family life — they should pass it on,” she said in an interview. Ms. Fahrni has acted on her beliefs with almost 20 years of support for education in Mongolia and, more recently, by establishing an endowment fund at the United Board to support women at Southern Christian College (SCC) in the Philippines.

Ms. Fahrni devotes significant amounts of her time to Mongolia, where the needs in higher education are great. “I went to the UN women’s conference in Beijing in 1995,”

she recalled, “and then started networking with women’s organizations locally, nationally and internationally. A colleague suggested I go to Mongolia to meet active women there.” Those personal contacts inspired her to collect and ship containers of books to Mongolia (now totaling more than 400,000 volumes!) from her base in Switzerland, place Swiss teachers in Mongolian schools and universities, and invite Mongolian students and teachers for training in Swiss schools. “I seek out people from the Mongolian countryside,” she said. “They are not as well connected as their urban counterparts, so these exchanges have greater benefits for the individuals and their communities.”

Southern Christian College is far removed from Mongolia in distance, geography, and culture, yet Ms. Fahrni’s support of the college reflects her interests in women and higher education. She had a family connection to SCC, as her father, a theologian, and a former SCC president had met in the international ecumenical movement. Her mother was active on the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Her own connection took root shortly after her graduation from Oberlin College in the United States. She spent two years teaching English and French at Tunghai University in Taiwan, and during Tunghai’s summer break, went to SCC to teach during their summer term. Decades later, she made a gift in support of SCC through an endowment fund at the United Board, in order to “give the possibility of education to those who might otherwise not have it.”

The endowment provides support for the tuition and fees of female students whose families are unable to pay for their daughters’ education at Southern Christian College. “I call myself a feminist, and I have been pushing for women’s issues for a long time,” Ms. Fahrni said. Through her endowment, generations of young women in the Philippines will now have opportunities to further their education, enrich their lives, and benefit their communities.

Our Generous Donors

We are grateful to the donors who, over the years, have established endowments through the United Board. Through these endowments, grants of \$628,858 were disbursed in Fiscal Year 2016.

A New Perspective on Our History

United Board Archives

“Think of these working documents as historical documents.”



Martha Smalley, former head of Special Collections at the Yale Divinity School Library.

(YDS) Library since 1982, and now a substantial portion of the collection has been digitized, putting it within easy reach of researchers and others interested in the history of Christian higher education in Asia.

“An organization’s staff may not think of these working documents as historical documents, but they are,” says Martha Smalley, former head of Special Collections at the YDS Library. “They provide a range of perspectives, which might not otherwise be preserved.” Indeed, the United Board’s materials shed light on the roles that missionaries and higher education institutions played in famine relief, rural reconstruction, or the social dimensions of life in a particular time period. The collection also appeals to researchers interested in biographical details of a particular individual, conditions in certain geographical regions, major events such as World War II, or cultural topics. The photos are especially valuable, as many similar photos from Chinese sources were lost during periods of political disruption. The United Board files also document its relationships with higher education institutions in other parts of Asia, such as Chung Chi College, Yonsei University, and Tunghai University.

The United Board images and documents are part of a much larger collection of materials on

In its earliest days, the United Board supported the work of 13 Christian colleges and universities in China, and the images and documents from its archives seem to bring those long-ago days back to life. The United Board’s archives have been part of the Special Collections at the Yale Divinity School

the Protestant missionary movement that the Special Collections maintains. “We have chosen to document the missionary movement, with a particular focus on China and on educational missions,” Ms. Smalley explains. “We also have documents related to American missionaries in other parts of the world, as well as valuable documentation of medical missions.” Only about a quarter of the people who access the missionary collection are associated with Yale University; many researchers are from China or other parts of Asia, working on dissertations or other research projects.

There are no restrictions on accessing digital materials in the United Board’s collection. “The United Board decided to make these materials widely available,” Ms. Smalley said, and a few clicks at a home or office computer can bring the faces and words of educators, missionaries, and administrators to the screen. Other materials are available on microfilm; academic researchers can register to use these materials onsite in the YDS Library or interlibrary loans can be arranged.

Please visit the website version of this story for links to finding aids for the United Board archives: <https://unitedboard.org/new-perspective-history>



The United Board collection includes digital images from its earliest years.

Asking the Big Questions

Iven Jose, Christ University

“What is the ethos of the university?”

At age 41, Dr. Iven Jose is a young man, yet a great deal of his energy is devoted to thinking about even younger generations. Dr. Iven serves as the associate dean of the Faculty of Engineering at Christ University in India, and his experience as a 2016-2017 United Board Fellow helped him expand his ideas about holistic education and ways to prepare young adults for their professional and personal lives.

Dr. Iven arrived for his two-month placement at the University of Melbourne in Australia in September, but he began preparing for the experience months earlier. He corresponded with his University of Melbourne mentor, Dr. Anne Steinemann, about his goals and interests, so they could start to plan his schedule. He conducted research about the city of Melbourne to better understand the socio-cultural environment the university operates in. He also prepared a short questionnaire to help structure the interviews he expected to conduct with faculty and administrators. “I had a vision,” Dr. Iven said. “I wanted to ensure my placement culminated in something worthwhile for my home institution.”

Engineering, naturally, and opportunities for future academic exchange and collaborative research were topics he raised in the many meetings he had on campus and in the wider Melbourne community. But his discussions often went beyond the engineering discipline to issues of values and purpose. “For instance,”

he explained, “I asked the coordinator of the university’s Department of Infrastructure questions such as ‘How do you look at the university model?’ and ‘How do you ensure ethics and morality?’”

These types of conversations showed him that University of Melbourne faculty want to do more than deliver a class: they are looking ahead to the varied responsibilities that students will need to assume over the course of careers or in family life.

On the Melbourne campus, Dr. Iven noticed the large number of international students, including many from China. “This is a big responsibility for the university, in terms of global citizenship,” he said. He was impressed with the ways in which the university reflects upon its role in educating these students. “The university is asking what these students will take back to their home countries when they graduate. Yes, they will have an education, but what can they contribute to the social development of their country?”

“What is the ethos of the university?” Dr. Iven asked. “What will it evolve into?” Christ University responds to these questions with its mission of “excellence and service” and its practice of holistic education. Now, back on the Christ University campus, Dr. Iven can draw on the insights he gained in Melbourne as he ponders his own question, “How can we make the planet a beautiful place to live?”



United Board Fellows Program

The United Board Fellows Program is designed to develop dynamic leaders who will advance whole person education within their home institutions. A key component of this year-long program is each United Board Fellow’s placement at an Asia-Pacific college or university for a period of two to four months. Guided by mentors, the Fellows explore best practices and expand professional networks.

As Dr. Iven and other 2016-2017 United Board Fellows complete their program year, 20 more individuals have been selected as 2017-2018 United Board Fellows. These individuals represent 20 institutions in eight countries and regions of Asia. Please see our website for biographical information on our new United Board Fellows.

Hosting a “Goodwill Ambassador”

Anne Steinemann, University of Melbourne

“He catalyzed so many relationships among us.”

United Board Fellows, through their short-term placements at colleges and universities outside their home countries, often serve as goodwill ambassadors for their home institutions. During Iven Jose’s placement at the University of Melbourne, his mentor, Anne Steinemann, found that Dr. Iven took his role as a goodwill ambassador a few steps further. “He catalyzed so many relationships among us,” she said in an interview, referring to the ways he connected her colleagues in the Department of Civil Engineering with other faculty and administrators throughout the university. “We knew we would learn about his institution, but he also introduced us to others in our own university.”

At Christ University in Bengaluru, India, Dr. Iven manages a busy schedule as associate professor and associate dean of the College of Electronics and Communication Engineering. The United Board Fellows Program was an opportunity for him to observe the practices of another university and to further develop his leadership skills. “Iven is the quintessential academic leader,” Dr. Steinemann said. “He’s a scholar, a researcher, a teacher, who leads by example.” Dr. Iven was particularly interested in the connection between high quality teaching and research programs. That’s an area of strength for the University of Melbourne. “Teaching and research aren’t separate, they are mutually reinforcing,” Dr. Steinemann finds. “One benefits the other, especially when using a problem-based learning approach.” Starting with introductions from Dr. Steinemann and others, Dr. Iven was able to interview dozens of faculty members and learn about their approaches to teaching in the classroom and laboratory, the ways that university-industry can spark innovation, and how universities can provide input into government policy-making.

“Who else do you recommend that I meet?” Dr. Steinemann suggested that Dr. Iven end every meeting with that question. That helpful advice was a natural fit for his enthusiasm and curiosity.

As Dr. Iven expanded his network, and reported on the meetings he held across the University of Melbourne



campus, “he became a catalyst for collaboration, helping our faculty make new connections,” according to Dr. Steinemann. She and her colleagues still marvel at the number of people he met over the course of a couple months and the information he gathered.

She highlights another role he played. “Iven also was a goodwill ambassador for the United Board and its mission of whole person education,” she said. “People at the University of Melbourne became more aware of the United Board because of Iven. That’s a collateral benefit of the program.” It’s a style of people-to-people diplomacy that has helped shape the United Board’s network over the course of decades and that continues to add vitality to its leadership and faculty development programs.

Reconnecting with Australia

The United Board has resumed placements for its United Board Fellows at Australian universities in 2016-2017 after an absence of several years. We are grateful to Graduate House for making Dr. Iven Jose’s placement so successful. We extend our deepest appreciation to Dr. Kerry Bennett and her staff at Graduate House and The Graduate Union, Dr. Anne Steinemann, and the Department of Infrastructure Engineering at the University of Melbourne for their hospitality to Dr. Iven Jose and for their support of the United Board Fellows Program.

A New Perspective on the Asian Region

Mark Raygan Garcia, Silliman University

“The view from the ground up is different.”



“I am blessed to be part of a truly inclusive and empowering university,” Mark Raygan Garcia, director of the Office of Information and Publications at Silliman University, said in a recent interview. Silliman University is the academic home for more than 9,000

students, yet Mr. Garcia believes it also is a nurturing environment where “people are excited about their role in the university.” He sees the role of the Office of Information and Publications as one of reinforcing trust in the university, and the university’s publications, website, and social media platforms are tools to inspire a larger community to develop a lasting relationship with Silliman.

At the Education University of Hong Kong, Mr. Garcia is enrolled in the Master of Public Policy and Governance, with Social Policy Specialization program. “The Philippines has many comparable universities for graduate studies,” he said, “but the difference in studying public policy and governance in Hong Kong is the perspective, focus,

and contextualization of discussions.” His studies and interaction with other students are giving him new insights, particularly about Silliman’s strategic position in multicultural Asia. “Hong Kong tends to highlight the Greater China region and Asia in issue analyses,” he said. “I want to better understand the regional context. That would allow me to teach, assist in the offering of more programs related to China studies, and be involved in more multidisciplinary research projects.”

Despite China’s size and strong presence in the region, Mr. Garcia finds that Filipinos’ familiarity with China can be relatively low. Day-to-day life in Hong Kong gives him a chance to get to know Chinese people, and cooking for his roommates and other friends gives him a way to establish a family on campus. Media reports had given him the impression that the Chinese have an antagonistic attitude toward the Philippines, but he is finding common ground with the people he meets. “The view from the ground up is different,” he finds. “Chinese people are as family-oriented as Filipinos, and they have a sense of pride in their culture and in what their country has accomplished.”

The benefits of international experience are clear to him. “Studying in Hong Kong — or abroad, in general — where you adjust to a new environment outside your comfort zone, facilitates a different kind of maturity and builds a stronger sense of being a Filipino.” That means that, in addition to his master’s degree, he will return to the Philippines with a deeper appreciation for Silliman’s place in the Asian region and his own ideas on how to enrich the learning environment for its students.

A Transition in the Education System

The Philippines has embarked on a major transition in education, as a new K-12 law has added two years to senior high school. That leaves universities in a waiting period to receive incoming classes of freshmen and reduces their immediate need for a fully staffed faculty. During this period, Mark Raygan Garcia and Divino L. Cantal, Jr. (story on facing page) are pursuing graduate degrees through the United Board’s Faculty Scholarship Program.

When the 2017-2018 academic year begins, the United Board expects to provide support to 31 Faculty Scholars, representing 23 institutions in eight countries or regions. These individuals will pursue master’s degrees or PhDs in fields such as English, education, mathematics, peace studies, and business, and ultimately will apply their knowledge and experience to strengthen their home institutions.

When the Teacher Becomes the Student

Divino L. Cantal, Jr., Trinity University of Asia

“Values are evident in the way teachers teach.”



Dino Cantal, left, with Geoffrey Davis, a professor in his International Journalism program.

“At 34, I’m the oldest in my class,” Dino Cantal says, describing his experience as a graduate student at Hong Kong Baptist University. Mr. Cantal is more accustomed to being the instructor, as a member of the Faculty of Media Studies at Trinity University of Asia. Through the United Board’s Faculty Scholarship Program, he is currently pursuing a master’s degree in media studies, and taking a fresh look at teaching and learning from the student’s point of view.

“I can’t help but compare my classmates to my students in the Philippines,” Mr. Cantal noted. “They have a lot of similarities, such as their increasing dependence on technology and the way social media empowers them to speak about issues affecting our societies.” As an educator, he wants to link students’ enthusiasm and their fresh ideas to sound training in journalism. “Despite the proliferation of new technologies that seem to make anyone a journalist,” he said, “my students still think it is a noble profession. No one except the real trained journalists would devote such time and effort to sharing with the public what they ought to know.”

At HKBU, that type of training can be both challenging and rewarding. A course in multimedia journalism is an example. “The professor, who is a photojournalist for a European website, pushed me to my limits,” Mr. Cantal recalled. “But at the end of the semester, I realized that I

learned a lot from him, from creating a photo story to an audio slideshow to a video story. I got depressed with his criticism but I celebrated with his praise. These are the same things I want my students to experience.”

Mr. Cantal views his career through TUA’s core values of excellence, integrity, social responsibility, teamwork, and innovation. “These values are evident in the way the teachers teach, the administrators govern, and the students learn,” he said, and they also find a place in his classroom. “Take the course I am teaching as an example — Development Communication. It allows students to become socially responsible by using the knowledge they learn to foster development in the partner communities.”

Mr. Cantal was initially hesitant to apply to the Faculty Scholarship Program, as his father was ill. His family and colleagues persuaded him to pursue this “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” and Mr. Cantal is grateful he took their advice. “This scholarship allowed me to learn new things, to learn from the cultures of other countries,” he said. That’s an irresistible combination for a student, a teacher, or a journalist.

Support for Faculty Scholars

The Philippines’ Commission on Higher Education (CHED) sees the current transition period as an opportunity for faculty to pursue professional development. The United Board’s Faculty Scholarship Program offers CHED one channel to direct its support. CHED is generously co-funding three Filipinos as they pursue graduate degrees in Hong Kong.

Over the years, the United Board Faculty Scholarship Program has received the support of generous individuals, including Dr. and Mrs. Jared Dorn, Dr. Thuy Hoang, Albert Hung, Dr. and Mrs. Florante Quiocho, and Marilee Scaff, as well as the estate of Marie Losh.

From Textbooks to Picture Books

Zhu Yunzhi, Ginling College

“ I always try to apply student-centered pedagogy. ”

Zhu Yunzhi (Emma) holds a PhD in educational psychology and chairs the English Department at Ginling College, so it may seem surprising that she made children's books the centerpiece of a recent project. With support from the United Board, she designed a service-learning project that placed her undergraduate students in primary schools and libraries, where they read English-language story books to young children. The experience opened her students' eyes to new possibilities in language teaching and learning — and, in some cases, revealed what they had missed in taking a more traditional approach to developing proficiency in English.

“My students reported that they were amazed by the variety of children's picture books now available,” Dr. Zhu said. “They were impressed by the artistic style and language of the books and wished they could have had these books to read when they themselves were just starting to learn English.” The colorful books were a sharp contrast with the way many students in China learn English. In elementary school, “students are required to recite texts, which mainly consist of dialogues in family or school settings,” Dr. Zhu explained. “As students move up to middle school, the English class becomes more exam-oriented, and students spend much time on vocabulary, grammar, and various exercises.” What's missing? Reading for pleasure — whether picture books, short stories, or novels — and the opportunities it creates to enjoy learning.

That spirit of interest and enjoyment highlights the benefits of student-centered learning, a guiding force in Dr. Zhu's work as an educator. In her master's program in child development at Florida State University, she recalled, “I was first exposed to the ideas of class participation, presentations, and group work, as well as hands-on experience,” and it has had “a profound influence” on her. Now, in her work at Ginling College, she said, “I always try to apply student-centered pedagogy in my teaching, especially when students are cognitively and emotionally strong enough to take more responsibility for their learning.”



Student-centered learning is especially valuable when working with future teachers. “Being a good teacher requires not only academic knowledge but communication skills and commitment,” Dr. Zhu believes. As her students read the story books aloud, they appreciated the importance of vocal variation, eye contact, and body language in capturing the attention of active children. Interacting directly with children, and interpreting their signals, helped her students gain the confidence to experiment with new teaching techniques.

Similarly, Dr. Zhu has come to recognize that social media can be an advantage, not a distraction, in her college classrooms. Dr. Zhu relies on popular Chinese apps like QQ and WeChat. “The use of QQ actually brings teachers and students closer. The students feel it is easier to get support from the teachers, and the teachers have more opportunities to know their students.” Dr. Zhu has found that “the rapport built through social networking benefits teaching and learning,” and in that sense, a smart phone can be as valuable as a textbook — or a picture book — in helping students to embrace learning.

Front cover photo:

A discussion at Women's Christian College, Kolkata. At front center, WCC Principal Ajanta Paul. To her right, United Board Vice President for Programs Wai Ching Wong. To her left, Regional Programs Consultant Maher Spurgeon. Photo taken by Program Officer Cynthia Yuen.