A Community for Whole Person Education

In this issue:
Our 2017 Annual Report
Message from the President
Making Great Things Happen

I recently had the great pleasure of spending two days in Hong Kong in conversation about whole person education with a group of Asian college and university leaders. Listening to these thoughtful educators, I was impressed by how easily words such as values, truth, character, and faith were woven into our discussions, which touched on curriculum design, campus culture, faculty development, assessment, and other topics. Their experience makes it clear that character, ethics, and concern for others can infuse an institution when leaders are committed, when faculty are given the resources to be innovative, and when students are encouraged to share their ideas and insights.

“What kinds of graduates do we want to send out into the world?” asks Juliet Dalagan, whose work at Xavier University in the Philippines is profiled on page 4. Her question echoes the discussions I enjoyed in Hong Kong, and her story and others in this issue of *Horizons* highlight the kinds of educators who bring whole person education to life. Le Ngoc Bich Ly of Payap University in Thailand wants her students to seek out interfaith encounters. Dorothy Wong, an alumna of International Christian University in Japan and faculty member of the University of Virginia, shows how the study of the humanities prepares students for leadership in all fields. Vanitha Williams, a zoologist by training, offered emotional support to students when called to serve as chaplain at Women’s Christian College in Chennai, India.

These stories demonstrate that great things can happen when educators bring enthusiasm, creativity, and social concern to their teaching, and we are pleased to have such strong advocates for whole person education in our network. Our 2017 Annual Report, featured on pages 9 through 16, highlights some of our programs, which expand and sustain a community for whole person education, and recognizes our supporters. We are grateful for the support that our friends and donors provide, which transforms our aspirations into reality and helps send inspired, creative, and caring graduates out into the world.

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Building the Community for Whole Person Education

The United Board’s September consultation, *Whole Person Education as a Way Forward: Challenges and Prospects for Asia*, might be described as a conversation that had been waiting to happen. As the 16 Asian higher education leaders enthusiastically shared information over the course of two days, it seemed clear that they were eager to be part of a continuing discussion on the impact of whole person education to date and the ways in which it might be strengthened in the future. They also serve as effective public advocates for whole person education.

Participants at the consultation pointed to faculty as a cornerstone of whole person education. “How can we persuade faculty to go the extra mile?” was a recurring theme of the discussions. One way is to reduce the pressure that faculty — particularly young faculty — feel to direct their time and energy in research and publication, rather than in undergraduate teaching. Another way is to invest in faculty development, so that faculty learn the skills for student-centered learning.

The United Board’s inaugural *Whole Person Education Academy*, conducted by Ateneo de Manila University’s Ateneo Teacher Center from September 18 to 29, offered an avenue for faculty to develop these skills. Twenty-one educators from Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Vietnam brought open minds and a willingness to learn new skills to the academy. “Learning is a way to lead students to make sense of their world,” one resource person at the academy explained, and over the course of two weeks, the participants learned how their teaching styles affect their students, how to build a class around service-learning, ways to engage learners through technology, and how the curriculum they adopt can translate the goals of whole person education into action.

A report from the consultation, *Whole Person Education as a Way Forward*, will be released in early 2018.

Candy T. Eng Fellow Named

Candy Eng was a beloved colleague to United Board trustees and staff, and she brought a steady hand to the management of our financial affairs. Her stewardship enabled scores of faculty, administrators, and leaders of Asian colleges and universities to participate in United Board programs and bring back new ideas and models to their campuses. Following her passing, in December 2016, her family and friends established the Candy T. Eng Fund to support the professional development of Asian faculty and academic administrators. We are pleased to announce that Dr. T. Shirmila Stanley of Madras Christian College in India has been named the first Candy T. Eng Fellow, and her participation in the 2017-2018 United Board Fellows Program will be supported by the Fund. We extend our congratulations to Dr. Stanley and our thanks to all who contribute to the Candy T. Eng Fund.
“Millennial students do not want multiple-choice style learning,” according to Juliet Dalagan, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Xavier University in the Philippines and a 2016-2017 United Board Fellow. “They like to take a broader view and look at the big picture.” That poses a challenge for faculty members accustomed to teaching from the perspective of a single discipline. “How can our teachers bring about a more integrative style of learning?” Dr. Dalagan asks. “How can they relate classroom learning to the issues students really care about?”

Faculty will have opportunities to respond to those questions as the Philippines rolls out its new General Education (GE) Curriculum in 2018. General education refers to the portion of the curriculum required of all undergraduate students, and through the new GE courses, the Philippines Commission for Higher Education (CHED) is promoting a more holistic approach to teaching and learning. CHED wants Filipino students to be prepared to adapt to fast-changing situations, to think innovatively, and to create solutions to problems.

CHED has mapped out a curriculum that emphasizes learning across disciplines, with courses such as Mathematics in the Modern World; Science, Technology, and Society; and Ethics. “The challenge is to make the curriculum real,” Dr. Dalagan said, “as each institution has to deliver the content in the classroom.” At Xavier University, where Dr. Dalagan leads the ad hoc committee for GE, that means preparing faculty from various disciplines for team teaching. “There is a different culture in team teaching,” she pointed out, and that type of collaboration may be unfamiliar. “How can we get faculty comfortable with this?”

Dr. Dalagan raised that question over the course of her United Board fellowship year, and she found some answers at the summer institute at Boston College, which focused on trends in international higher education; during her placement at Hong Kong Baptist University; and in conversations with her mentor, Mercy Pushpalatha, then principal of Lady Doak College. Hong Kong reformed its GE curriculum four years earlier, so Dr. Dalagan interviewed faculty and administrators about the process of introducing GE and ways to evaluate its impact. Dr. Pushpalatha facilitated a videoconference so that Xavier faculty could ask their peers at Lady Doak about best practices in teaching interdisciplinary courses.

The Xavier community is also examining the big picture. “What kind of graduates do we want to send out into the world?” Dr. Dalagan asked. Xavier’s mission is to form men and women of character, competence, and commitment, and if faculty are brave and bold enough to embrace a paradigm shift in teaching — reaching across disciplines, facilitating learning inside and outside the classroom, promoting values — then they can play a greater role in achieving that mission.

United Board Fellows learn from each other’s experiences. From left: Amy Lee, Annie Abraham, Juliet Dalagan, Felix Pasila, and Khin Nyan Linn.
For much of their history, Christian colleges in India were likely to have several ordained pastors on faculty, who could serve as an institution’s chaplain. Now, however, there are few pastors among the faculty, and institutions may allocate only limited resources to support the chaplaincy function. As a result, faculty from a variety of disciplines are recruited to fill the gap, typically serving as chaplain on a part-time basis for two to three years. “They are good Christians,” says Rev. Dr. Maher Spurgeon, the United Board’s regional program consultant for South Asia, “but they are not trained theologically, and two or three years is too short a period to bring about influential change in campus ministries.”

Vanitha Williams, a zoologist by training, served as the chaplain of Women’s Christian College in Chennai from June 2014 to May 2017. She was surprised when she was called to serve. “To be honest, the first thought that came across my mind was, ‘Will I be able to live up to this role as a Christian leader?’” she recalled. “Truly, I felt very humbled and accepted this responsibility promising to do my very best for God.”

For Dr. Vanitha, doing her best meant balancing the demands of teaching with the duties of chaplaincy, which included organizing worship services, student and faculty retreats, and the distribution of gifts to orphanages and palliative care homes. She also counseled students. “When students came to me, I would spend time listening to them and try my best to give guidance,” she said, but she wishes some formal training in counseling had been available to her.

Currently serving as WCC’s dean of academic affairs, Dr. Vanitha joined a consultation on chaplaincy training that the United Board convened in May at St. Christopher’s College of Education in Chennai. Participants discussed ways to deliver training in counseling and pastoral care, knowledge of world religions, and liturgy and preaching. The group outlined plans for a postgraduate diploma course in Christian studies for chaplains, to be delivered over the course of a year through online training, residential study, and site visits. The Institute for Advanced Christian Studies at Madras Christian College is preparing the initial course outline, and training for a small group of colleges will start in April 2018.

Dr. Spurgeon points to the words of an eighteenth-century prayer, used by many Indian institutions as their college prayer, to make the connection between chaplaincy and whole person education. “O Thou, who in days past didst put into the hearts of good people to found Colleges; for the imparting of sound learning, the building of character and the spread of spiritual truth....” The chaplaincy training program, it is hoped, will strengthen “the hearts of good people” to help the spiritual and emotional needs of young adults.
Dorothy Wong firmly believes that the study of the humanities has great value, even as policy discussions in Asian and American contexts focus on building up STEM-related fields. “We need to recognize how important it is to think critically,” she said, and in her view, the study of subjects such as philosophy, art, music, and literature can develop that ability and promote a greater sense of social responsibility.

A native of Hong Kong, Dr. Wong received her undergraduate education at International Christian University (ICU) in Japan with the support of a United Board scholarship. She considered attending university in Hong Kong, but felt that the degree programs available at that time would lead to “well-paved career paths” that were not exciting to her. “There were no colleges of liberal arts in Hong Kong at that time,” she recalled, “so I did something totally unknown and unpredictable when I went to ICU.”

Dr. Wong was already interested in history and literature when she arrived at ICU in 1977, but general education courses expanded her interests to art history and philosophy. Her rigorous study of Japanese opened up additional sources of scholarly information to her. Those diverse interests set her on course to earn a PhD in art history from Harvard University and a faculty position with the McIntire Department of Art at the University of Virginia. “I found lasting benefits in spending those four years outside my comfort zone,” she said. “For me, that was life-changing.”

Dr. Wong makes a strong case for university students in all fields to study the humanities. “People talk about the job market,” she said, and assume that business, engineering, science, or computer courses offer the surest paths to employment. But more ambitious students should take a broader view if they want to reach the top of their respective fields. “In high-level positions, you need people who can make an argument, see multiple perspectives, write well, and be articulate,” she argued. “These skills don’t come from technical classes but from the humanities, where you learn to think in a logical and sophisticated manner, to identify subtle differences, and to read and interpret critically.” Pursuing a double major or adding a minor in the humanities can strengthen long-term career prospects.

Dr. Wong is thankful for the liberal arts education she received at ICU and her scholarship from the United Board, and expresses her gratitude through her contributions to the United Board in support of faculty development and peace studies.

The United Board is grateful to Dr. Wong for her support of its programs and for her planned gift commitment through the United Board Legacy Society.
A Personal Path to Peacebuilding
Le Ngoc Bich Ly, Payap University

“Peacebuilding empowers people through inner transformation.”

“Peacebuilding has no ready-made formula,” Le Ngoc Bich Ly, a faculty member at Payap University’s Institute of Religion, Culture and Peace finds. “It must be rooted in one’s particular experiences and struggles.” Dr. Le’s own journey is rooted in her faith, which first took shape in a small Christian community in Vietnam; her academic development, which includes earning a master of divinity degree from the McGilvary College of Divinity at Payap in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and a PhD in interreligious studies from the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies, Gadjah Mada University; and her encounters with the world beyond her home in Vietnam.

Moments of awakening took place as she studied Feminist Theology and World Religions, Comparative Buddhism and Christianity, and other subjects at McGilvary College. Discussions with Buddhist friends in her classes pushed her to re-examine scriptures and craft a deeper theological understanding of her faith, one that embraces new gender roles and interreligious experiences.

“This experience generated my passion for new ways of peacebuilding,” she said. “For me, peacebuilding empowers people, through inner transformation, to become responsible and peaceful beings. It transforms what is dehumanizing, divisive, and destructive in our own cultures and religions.”

Now Dr. Le is putting into practice her mission of building human resources for peace work. “The first task is to build students’ critical and academic capacity to engage in intellectual discourses on peace and interfaith dialogue,” she said. “It is on this level that knowledge and theories about peace and interfaith dialogue from real-life experiences are generated, debated, learned, and transmitted.” The second task is to create conditions for deeper personal transformation through interfaith encounters. “At the experiential level, students are encouraged to move toward building equal and genuine personal relationships with people of other faiths.”

The work of peacebuilding has taken place throughout human history, Dr. Le points out, but the academic discipline is still young. As a peace trainer, she is excited about empowering her students to find their own places in the world of peacebuilding and interreligious understanding.

Reflecting on Gender and Peacebuilding

“In my opinion, creating space for Asian feminist discourse is part of peacebuilding,” Dr. Le said, and she found that type of space at the United Board’s Institute for Advanced Study in Asian Cultures and Theologies (IASACT). At IASACT 2016 she met scholars, from China, India, and Myanmar, who also were researching gender roles. “What I gained was not only knowledge about women’s situations in other parts of the world but also empathy and solidarity with other female scholars, as we had had very similar struggles.”

Dr. Le, fourth from right in front row, at IASACT 2016.
Strategic Planning: Strong Relationships and Shared Goals

When you have a cohesive and enthusiastic faculty, you get innovation.

Strategic planning emphasizes the “intellectual” work of assessing strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats — the SWOT analysis — but often overlooks the equally important “relationship” work. That’s been the experience of Anthony Ruger, a United Board trustee and member of its Development Committee, as well as a consultant to theological schools in the United States on financial strategy, institutional analysis, and policy. Before outlining plans for the future, Mr. Ruger advises, institutional leaders should ask, “Does our staff have a shared vocation and a cooperative spirit?”

Effective strategic planning seeks input from a wide range of stakeholders. In the seminary or university context, that means the voices of faculty, administrative staff, board members, alumni, and donors need to be heard. “Do people believe in the school and really want to do something with it?” Mr. Ruger asked. “For example, when you have a cohesive and enthusiastic faculty, you can get innovation.” In contrast, if stakeholders are preoccupied or mistrustful, strategic planning could turn into an occasion to rehash old battles. Institutional leaders may first need to invest time in restoring relationships in order to create the fertile environment that sparks new ideas for the future.

Social dynamics within Asian higher education institutions will differ from those found in the American seminaries Mr. Ruger works with, but he shares his experience in raising the following questions, which can be adapted to fit local contexts.

What do we do really well? Take stock of what makes your institution distinctive. “If I’m working with a seminary,” Mr. Ruger said, “I may hear, ‘Our urban ministry is strong’ or ‘We have the best Old Testament professors.’ Once you do this type of analytical work, and identify your strengths, then you can think about how to put these findings to work going forward.”

Can we actually produce it? Strategic planning is an occasion to be ambitious, but planners need to recognize potential barriers to success — and the human elements associated with them. Mr. Ruger points to the example of distance learning, which many American seminaries are exploring. “Faculty members are key to the success of distance learning,” he said, “but many of them have spent their careers in lecture halls. They will need coaching in distance learning, ideally private coaching, to avoid embarrassment.” That can be expensive — so institutional leaders need to determine if they can commit the financial and human resources needed for success.

How should we approach fundraising? “Fundraising is first about building relationships” Mr. Ruger said, and that starts with listening. “You might start a conversation with the question ‘What opportunities do you see?’” Sometimes that leads in unintended directions — a seminary may be interested in pastoral innovation while the donor is keen to see a new chapel built — but as these conversations continue, mutual interests start coming into focus. Involving major donors in the organization helps them understand the good work being done — and the involvement can include participation in strategic planning. Ideally the donor eventually decides to make an investment in the mission, making a gift he or she can be proud of.

Staff will own and execute programs if they believe in them, and trustees and donors will provide support when staff are committed and enthusiastic, Mr. Ruger finds, and that means people and relationships set the framework for successful strategic planning.

The United Board will celebrate its Centennial in 2022. Our Board of Trustees will launch a planning exercise to ensure that our work continues to be relevant and valuable as we begin a second century of service.
Whole person education forms the core of our five program areas:

- **Leadership Development for Higher Education**
- **Faculty Development for Enhanced Teaching, Learning, and Research**
- **Culture and Religion in Asia**
- **Campus-Community Partnerships**
- **Special Initiatives**

*Our support for these program areas is magnified by the many generous individuals who contribute their time, talent, and resources.*
Translating Our Goals into Action:

Whole person education — intellectual, spiritual, and ethical development of individuals — forms the cornerstone of the United Board’s work. The impact of our programs can be seen in people: the college and university leaders who are open to change and innovation; the faculty who promote student-centered teaching and learning inside and outside the classroom; and, ultimately, the students who are well prepared, in equal measure, for rewarding careers and service to others.

Our programs develop leaders and strengthen faculty:

19 United Board Fellows enhanced their leadership skills and set goals for their departments or institutions.

Impact:
Fellows are now turning their case studies into action plans at their home institutions.

Individual and institutional donors have pledged 50 percent of Fellows Program support.

36 Faculty Scholarships enabled faculty to pursue advanced degrees.

Impact:
Faculty deepen their knowledge, which they share with colleagues and students at their home institutions.

12 Study Awards immersed faculty in intensive English training.

Impact:
English proficiency expands access to information and opens doors for collaboration.

Opportunities for Learning and Networking

• An Asia-wide conference on the theme of gender in higher education attracted participants from 10 countries and regions.

• 4 in-country conferences focused on leadership, service-learning, transformative teaching, and other issues of relevance to India, Indonesia, and Myanmar.

• 16 Asian scholars were given time for research and reflection at the Institute for Advanced Study in Asian Cultures and Theologies (IASACT).
The United Board’s network spans 15 countries and regions of Asia and engages more than 80 colleges and universities.

Through grant support to these colleges and universities, the United Board helps to link teaching and learning with action and reflection, thereby promoting the development of purpose and values as well as the pursuit of knowledge and skills.

Our grant-making enriches teaching and learning:

106 Grants were made to 56 institutions, totaling more than $926,000.

Impact:
Nearly 2,000 faculty and students, working with 28 local communities, directly benefited from these grant projects.

These projects focused on service-learning, interreligious understanding, peace education, local knowledge, faculty development, and leadership training, among other topics.

With your support, our mission comes alive:

Contributions from nearly 500 generous donors expand our impact.

Alumni support their alma maters in Asia with $1,853,729 in designated grants for scholarships, faculty development, libraries, and more.

Endowment grants totaling $678,077 were disbursed, as an enduring legacy of generosity supports new generations.

2017 Financial Review
For the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2017, the United Board had total support and revenue of $9,112,986; total expenses of $7,909,683; and total net assets of $131,251,718. Support and revenue is comprised of contributions (both restricted and unrestricted) from individuals, foundation grants, U.S. government grants, and endowment income. The United Board’s Form 990 can be found on the Giving section of our website (www.unitedboard.org).
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