



WHOLE PERSON EDUCATION AS A WAY FORWARD: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

**A consultation with Asian higher education leaders
convened by the
United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia**

**September 8-9, 2017
Lingnan University
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Board convened a consultation with some of its Asian colleagues, *Whole Person Education as a Way Forward: Challenges and Prospects for Asia*, on September 8-9 in Hong Kong. The goal was to explore the continuing strength of whole person education and the ways in which it responds to contemporary dynamics. This report reflects the highlights of two days of discussions, which were enriched by the thoughtful and candid contributions of representatives of 14 higher education institutions from ten countries and regions of Asia, joined by United Board staff and trustees.

Whole person education is an effective response to 21st-century challenges. The United Board defines whole person education as the intellectual, spiritual, and ethical development of individuals. At first glance, this approach may seem better suited to an earlier era, rather than the contemporary scene of expanding economies and rapid technological development in Asia. Participants provided evidence that whole person education gives young adults the qualities and skills they will need to thrive in the 21st century, including critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and a strong sense of ethics.

Definitions vary, but common themes emerged. Whole person education takes diverse forms in different settings, reflecting local history, social conditions, and cultural traditions. Participants agreed that whole person education seeks to build morals as well as knowledge, that learning takes place inside and outside the classroom, and that young adults need to develop empathy and social concern. Many of the participants spoke directly to the ways in which the curriculum, co-curriculum, and extracurricular activities are linked to the development of values.

Striving for excellence. International rankings factor into virtually any discussion about the status of higher education in Asia, and this consultation was no

exception. It was refreshing, however, to hear the ways in which advocates for whole person education are responding to the pressures associated with international rankings. These rankings, participants indicated, are only one means to view the status of an institution and the quality of education it delivers. Participants pointed to other indicators – such as feedback from employers and alumni, growing demand in some countries for enrollment in small, liberal arts-style colleges; and the impact of colleges and universities on local communities and larger societies – as evidence of the value of whole person education.

The Asian context. Participants agreed that Asian institutions need to maintain their identity, even as they strive to reach international standards. Part of the appeal of whole person education is the way in which it connects to a style of education found in traditional Asian societies, in which the focus of education was instilling moral values or making moral people. Whole person education also can provide an impetus for Asian colleges and universities to support research on topics relevant to local cultures or concerns, rather than emphasizing issues of interest to Western scholarly communities.

Faculty are key to the success of whole person education. Whole person education requires engaged, committed faculty: they become the force behind integrative curricula and student-centered pedagogy. Faculty need training in student-centered teaching methods, but they also will need to build a rapport with students if they are to help young adults explore new perspectives on the world, develop an ethical framework, and strengthen values. That kind of relationship requires time and accessibility, yet faculty are already bearing the pressure to research and publish as well as to meet the financial needs of their households. Institutions will need to develop new reward systems that will alleviate those pressures and enable faculty to devote greater time and energy to their relationships with students.

Leadership sets the tone. College and university leaders – including board members – are role models, and preaching about values to students becomes meaningless if an institution does not have ethical governance practices firmly in place. Participants outlined a number of steps that can be taken to improve governance, particularly in terms of promoting transparency and orienting board members to the mission of the college or university they serve. Participants also recognized that leaders' words of support for whole person education need to be matched by action, such as allocating resources and time for faculty training and funding to make smaller class sizes possible.

Building the community. The breadth and depth of discussions made it clear that participants had been hungry for an opportunity to share their experience with peers, gain validation for the curricular and pedagogical approaches they are

applying, and extend the community of support for whole person education. Participants also identified tools for increasing public support for whole person education, including employer surveys, alumni testimonials, and increasing enrollment levels at some small Christian colleges. They were eager for additional opportunities for networking and exchange, through in-person meetings or digital exchange, and encouraged the United Board to explore ways to extend the conversations initiated at the consultation.

The United Board will celebrate its centennial in 2022, and with that milestone on the near horizon, trustees and staff have embarked upon a period of reflection. The ideas and insights shared at the consultation, therefore, are especially valuable as the United Board takes a fresh look at its programs and considers how they align with our commitment to whole person education, how to build on the sources of strength and creativity in our network, and how to respond to emerging needs. We welcome educators at our network institutions, and all who read this report, to share their ideas with us, so that the United Board's second century will be one of greater service to Asia.



WHOLE PERSON EDUCATION AS A WAY FORWARD: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

I. INTRODUCTION

In its earliest years, the United Board supported 13 Christian colleges and universities in China, where a new approach to higher education took root and began to flourish. These institutions combined the best of

Chinese and Western approaches to teaching and learning, and built on traditional Confucian and Christian values. They combined a broad-based curriculum in the arts and sciences with knowledge of the needs of society. Their goal – now enshrined in the United Board’s mission and vision statement – was to prepare individuals for lives of professional and personal fulfillment and for meaningful service in community with others.



Whole person education – the intellectual, spiritual, and ethical development of individuals – became the cornerstone for the United Board’s work, which now engages more than 80 colleges and universities across 15 countries and regions in Asia. Conversations and collaboration with Asian educators make clear that this type of education is well-suited for 21st-century societies, just as it was for those of the 20th century. To explore the continuing strength of this model of education, and the ways in which it responds to contemporary dynamics, the United Board convened a consultation with some of its Asian colleagues on September 8-9, 2017 in Hong Kong.

This consultation, *Whole Person Education as a Way Forward: Challenges and Prospects for Asia*, was held at a significant moment for the United Board. The organization will celebrate its centennial in 2022, and the next five years offer a time for us to consider ways of opening new avenues of support for whole person education. The consultation was a first step for United Board trustees and staff to enhance their understanding of the ways in which United Board network institutions define and implement whole person education, the near- and longer-

term challenges they confront, and the ways in which these institutions might draw strength from each other's experiences.

This report reflects some of the highlights of two days of discussions, which were enriched by the thoughtful and candid contributions of representatives of 14 higher education institutions from ten countries and regions of Asia, joined by United Board staff and trustees. The United Board is grateful to these individuals for sharing their insights, which will be of value in our forward planning and of interest to educators in Asia and beyond. We also extend our sincere appreciation to Lingnan University in Hong Kong, which graciously hosted the two-day consultation.

II. THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE, THE ROAD AHEAD



Asian college and university leaders can take pride in the contributions that higher education institutions have made to social and economic progress in their countries over the past several decades. Many institutions are recognized as centers for excellence and their reputations are growing in prominence nationally and regionally, and some are even gaining global recognition. At the same time, they need to be clear-eyed about near- and long-

term challenges. **Leonard Cheng**, president of **Lingnan University in Hong Kong**, in his survey of the landscape of higher education in Asia, highlighted some of the questions, issues, and trends Asian education leaders need to consider.

Local identity. “Asian institutions need to maintain their identity, even while seeking to reach international standards. An overemphasis on international benchmarking threatens our cultural identity; we can’t let that undermine local culture and locally relevant research. Asian institutions also need to maintain differentiation among each other, so we are not just duplicate images of each other.”

Status and sustainability. “Leading universities in different countries all want to compete – every institution wants to be world class. Now, in Asia, there is intensified competition to become regional education hubs; Hong Kong wants to become a regional education hub, as does Singapore. Many places put this as a goal – but how many regional hubs can be sustained?”

Growth of higher education. “When demographics change, and universities have more places than young people, do they compete for students at the expense of mission? Hong Kong has a strong labor market and most graduates find jobs – but do available jobs fit their aptitudes and interests? Are graduates satisfied with the jobs they take?”

New models, new threats. “Will online education wipe out the traditional method of education? What impact will private, self-financing institutions have? When there are so many possible models for higher education, do we need to set a minimum level of quality? What is the role for quality assurance?”

Finding balance. “We need to strike a balance between faculty teaching and research, bearing in mind that education is the purpose of the university. We need balance between the natural sciences and the social sciences and humanities. How can we maintain small classes? Either current professors need to teach more or we need funding to hire more teachers.”

III. DEFINITIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS



What does whole person education look like in practice? One objective of the consultation was for the United Board to get a better grasp of the diverse forms whole person education takes in different settings, while identifying common characteristics. Consultation participants represented small colleges and comprehensive universities, Christian and secular institutions, single-sex and co-educational institutions. These institutions

reflected the history and social and cultural characteristics of ten Asian countries and regions. So, while common words and themes could be found in their respective definitions, it was not surprising that each participant presented a unique articulation of the goals and processes of whole person education.

Participants were candid in acknowledging the pressures they face, including limited financial resources and perceptions about their international rankings. Yet their frameworks for whole person education are built on high aspirations for students, as illustrated by the following list. In their words, whole person education requires more than preparing students to embark on a particular profession.

Instead, whole person education:

- goes beyond knowledge and skills to character
- seeks excellence with a soul
- creates situations in which a student can become an authentic person
- builds character, competence, and faith in God, together
- seeks to build what is true, good, and beautiful
- nurtures creative, caring, and ethical leaders
- develops intellectually well-trained, morally upright, and socially inspired individuals

How can these ambitious goals be achieved? Participants find that whole person education must undertake some of the following actions:

- combine academic rigor, moral inquiry, social concern, and civic responsibility
- promote faculty-student interaction
- foster the ability to think critically across disciplines, apply theories to new situations, and understand people of different backgrounds
- encourage intellectual understanding, open-mindedness, and deeper understanding of other cultures
- nurture intellectual, emotional, and physical development, as well as interpersonal skills and civic engagement
- integrate faith with instruction, research, and extension

In one sense, participants were joining a global discussion on the merits of whole person education or holistic education, or liberal arts education or liberal education. The focus of this consultation, however, was squarely on Asia, and the ways in



which whole person education aligns with Asian cultural, social, historical, political, and economic contexts. The participants recognize, of course, that Asian models need to respond to the dynamics of a globalized world. Yet they also pointed to ways in which the dominant Western models of higher education and the unrelenting pressure of international rankings fail to serve the needs of their citizens and societies. For them, part of the appeal of whole person education is the way in which it connects to a style of education found in traditional Asian

societies, in which the focus of education was instilling moral values or making moral people.

That type of education – one that builds morals as well as knowledge – requires advocacy if students, parents, policymakers, and employers are to appreciate the long-term benefits of critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and a strong sense of ethics over the more immediate attraction of well-paid employment. As a first step in advocacy, participants made the case among themselves, freely sharing their experiences with whole person education in their home institutions, their interpretations of scholarly writing on higher education and the development of young minds, and their responses to current and future challenges.

The following sections of this report attempt to capture both the highlights of participants' presentations and the collegial environment of exchange and advice that permeated the two-day consultation. Some sections are presented as abbreviated statements of participants' key points and others in a more conventional narrative style. We welcome the feedback of our readers, particularly in response to the concluding section, "The Way Forward."

WHOLE PERSON EDUCATION AND LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

Whole person education is a close cousin to liberal arts education, which has its roots in ancient Greek and Roman approaches to educating free persons for citizenship in their societies. In more recent times, liberal arts education has formed the basis for undergraduate education in the United States, particularly at smaller, residential colleges that emphasize close student-teacher interaction and offer a broad-based curriculum that draws on social sciences, natural sciences, and the humanities.

Whole person education and liberal education share many attributes, including multidisciplinary study and broad-based inquiry, development of critical thinking and analytical skills, and nurturing of ethics and social responsibility. From the United Board's perspective, whole person education goes a step further to include moral development, and in Christian colleges and universities, spiritual development. In practice, whole person education infuses the nurturing of values, ethics, and character throughout the curriculum, as well as in its co-curricular activities, such as service-learning, and its extracurricular activities, which may range from cultural events to sports teams to student clubs.

IV. LINKING VALUES TO EDUCATION

Whole person education is aspirational in nature: its practitioners envision young adults meeting the social concerns and economic needs of the future with open minds, creativity, and empathy. Educators certainly want to set their higher education curriculum on a foundation of intellectual rigor, so that their students will find solid footing in the professional ranks upon graduation. Yet participants frequently spoke of the need for learning inside and outside the classroom to be infused with values. They shared numerous examples of the ways in which their institutions are linking the development of values to the curriculum, co-curriculum, and extracurricular activities, as highlighted in the following section.

A Place for the Humanities

Kim Hei-sook, Ewha Womans University, Korea



“Whole person education aspires to cultivate humaneness and to change society and the world. It focuses on the transfer of knowledge and values. In some respects, whole person education can draw clues from Asian cultural traditions, particularly when we look at the Confucian ideals of knowledge, emotion, and righteousness. Confucius addressed the significance of emotional development, and he favored the

importance of poetry over the acquisition of objective knowledge.

“Whole person education requires the development of human imagination, particularly the ability to see the point of view of others. We can’t dictate morals – saying something like ‘don’t tell lies’ will have no impact on society. But literature and history offer valuable examples, and humanities education can inculcate values. By imagining themselves in the position of others, students can start to internalize values, take them as their own, and apply them in their own lives.”

Values and Sensibilities for the Contemporary World

Judith Berling, United Board Trustee



“What values are needed in the contemporary world? How can we spark students’ imaginations through open-ended problem-solving and ongoing learning? Dr. Kim’s approach goes beyond the subject matter of the humanities to argue that exposure to the arts, literature, or history can develop skills and sensibilities, such as self-reflection or ethical judgment. Students have to be asked to nurture those sensibilities through learning experiences, which could include journaling; exploring ‘what if’ scenarios; debates on the applicability of ideas; and asking the ‘big questions,’ such as ‘What does this teach us about the well-lived life?’ or ‘What does this tell us about how others live?’

Faith, Values, and Concern for Others

Betsy Joy Tan, Silliman University, Philippines



“Our president, Ben Malayang, says ‘Whole person education builds character, competence, and faith in God, together. It is education that elevates and transforms a person into someone with a higher ability to live, higher ability to serve others, and higher ability to serve God.’ At Silliman, faith is integrated with instruction, research, and extension. We do this through the ‘5 C’s’ – the classroom, church, (athletic) court, cultural center, and community. We believe this leads to graduates with character, competence, and faith.”

A Multifaceted Approach to Building Values

Lilian Jasper, Women's Christian College, India



“Students need more than knowledge in a particular subject. At Women’s Christian College, our goal is to provide a complete, meaningful, and relevant education to women so that they are intellectually well trained, morally upright, socially aware, and spiritually inspired. Yet spirituality is often lacking, and it needs to be nurtured. So, for spiritual development, we have a devotion at

the beginning and end of each day. There are retreats for teaching and nonteaching staff and retreats for students. We host Christian cultural events. There is a mandatory one-credit course on values. There is a contemplation day for third-year students, during which they are encouraged to reflect on what to do with their lives. Our advisor-advisee system provides mentoring of students, and it helps them deal with academic and personal problems.”

Observing Principles in Daily Life

Anri Morimoto, International Christian University, Japan; United Board Trustee



“The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948. It took the Japanese government 30 years to ratify it, but ICU knew about it much earlier. That’s because Eleanor Roosevelt was a founding member of the ICU committee, and in 1953, she spoke to the first class of ICU students about the declaration and the need to respect human rights in spite of differences. We ask each ICU student

to sign the Universal Declaration of Human Rights during matriculation, and we encourage them to observe its principles in daily life. This symbolizes our educational philosophy of training global citizens, who will contribute to world peace and help people from diverse backgrounds live together.”

Seeing the Needs of the Community

Paul Appasamy, United Board Trustee

“From missionary times, Christian colleges in India have been trying to reach the most underprivileged of society. This is something that has been sustained, and which benchmarks Christian colleges in a different way. When students are introduced to local surroundings and exposed to the issues around them, they develop empathy. They think about how to care for the earth, about inequality in the use of resources. They start to look at the flora and fauna on campus, and they start to think about how their lifestyles contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. All of this helps our young people become more engaged in respect for nature and concern for others.”



Touching the Hearts of Students

Rolly Intan, Petra Christian University, Indonesia



“Whole person education cannot be taught theoretically or only in the classroom. Students need practical examples and real experiences to deeply touch their hearts. In that respect, service-learning is the most powerful pedagogical method in whole person education, for it delivers the kind of real and practical experience that develops empathy and social care through serving the community. Petra Christian University has organized the Community Outreach Program

(COP) for more than 20 years. COP is a model of international, multidisciplinary service-learning and, over the course of two decades, more than 2,600 students from 17 universities in 10 countries have participated. In general, the outputs of the program are personal enrichment of students (hard and soft skills), as well as infrastructure improvement and community empowerment (education, health, and awareness).

Christian Values among Non-Christians

Father Leszek Niewdana, Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan

“There are 27,000 students at Fu Jen Catholic University (FJCU), but only 1 percent of them are Catholic. In fact, 75 percent of our students may say they have no religion. So how do we transmit the values that we stand for?

“We can’t make religion courses mandatory, so we look to incorporate values into other courses, such as professional ethics, which is a mandatory course. We try to create a campus culture, by design, based on truth, goodness, beauty, and holiness. Each year, FJCU signs contracts with several religious congregations, whose priests and nuns can provide diverse spiritual and pastoral services on the campus. Our Student Counseling Center employs priests, nuns, and devout Christians who possess counseling licenses. Still, it is a challenge to recruit committed and qualified personnel for spiritual and pastoral care, and we need more creative and attractive ways to reach out and build closer links between our academic staff and our spiritual and pastoral services staff.”



PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE 21ST-CENTURY

In his former roles as president of Tunghai University and vice rector of the University of Macau, Hayden Chen has seen how the job market's demand for skills has evolved. Higher education leaders should take note: the demand for "soft skills" is increasing. Dr. Chen contrasted the traits that defined the path for career success in 20th-century Asia with those that 21st-century employers



20th-Century Traits

- Be diligent
- Focus on one discipline
- Apply intelligence
- Take a rational approach
- Train for available jobs
- Show deference
- Be risk-averse

21st-Century Traits

- Be innovative
- Pursue cross-disciplinary studies
- Apply intelligence and empathy
- Be an effective communicator
- Pursue a "passion"
- Be enthusiastic and engaging
- Be optimistic and forward-looking

V. INSPIRING FACULTY TO GO THE EXTRA MILE

Whole person education requires engaged, committed faculty: they become the force behind integrative curricula and student-centered pedagogy. Participants in the consultation agreed that teachers need more than skills – they need to find ways to combine skills and compassion as they interact with students both inside and outside the classroom. Faculty need training in student-centered teaching methods, but they also need to build a rapport with students if they are to help young adults explore new perspectives on the world, develop an ethical framework, and strengthen values. That kind of relationship requires time and accessibility, yet faculty often face conflicting demands as they are pushed toward greater efforts in research and publication or try to meet the financial needs of their own households.

Against this backdrop, how can faculty be inspired to go the extra mile? How can the joy of teaching be restored? How can faculty think of teaching as a spiritual vocation as well as an academic profession?

Faculty Carry the Culture of the University

Ben Nebres, S.J., Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines; United Board Trustee



“Whole person education requires an intense relationship between faculty and students, between teacher and learner in the classroom and mentor and young adult outside the classroom. The most successful teachers are the ones who are passionate about the students themselves: who see them as individuals carrying gifts and talents and are willing to help them discover their own passions.

“Young people need to engage with a real community, so teachers should be getting to know local communities and helping students build relationships with them. Yet the pressure of international rankings changes the dynamics. Faculty are concerned with their own publication ranking, and as a result, they are less connected with what is happening in their own countries and don’t reflect enough on local needs and priorities.

“How can we respond? At the moment, the fastest way for a young academic to get published is to co-publish with a colleague from abroad. This skews the research away from issues of local relevance. Research typically begins with a literature survey, and English-language sources draw overwhelmingly from American sources. So, in our countries, we need to put together research teams in which senior scholars are willing to work with young researchers. Our graduate students should immerse themselves in local culture, so they can understand what is relevant and irrelevant, before they begin a literature search. We need to start our own journals, which meet ISI standards and have strong editorial boards in place, that will publish locally relevant research.”

Faculty as Role Models

Rolly Intan, Petra Christian University, Indonesia

“When I was a graduate student at International Christian University, lecturers invited graduate students to their homes at least once a month. In this way, we were learning not only in the classroom but from the life of the lecturer. But nowadays, when we suggest this to colleagues, they respond, ‘increase our salary.’ We cannot force staff to do this type of outreach, but among them, some of them do have a vision to do whole person education. How can we encourage this?”

Focus on Career Formation

Budi Widianarko, Soegijapranata Catholic University

“Whole person education starts with the faculty, and at Soegijapranata Catholic University (SCU), we want to cast teaching as both a profession and a calling, with a career development scheme. So, we focus on career formation for our new faculty, plus an annual retreat for all faculty. We set a theme for the annual retreat – for example, inspiring transformation, or love for the country – that is linked to SCU values. During the retreat, we live as a community for several days and we also do service in the community.”



Underscore Key Values

Anri Morimoto, International Christian University, Japan; United Board Trustee

“International Christian University also has an orientation program for new faculty. Professors in our Education Department developed this program, which we launched in September 2016 with three new faculty members. The program focuses on effective teaching strategies and underscores key values. The program lasts for three months – one ICU term – and participants receive a one-course reduction in their teaching load for attending these sessions. Most of this program could be applied in any other university.” (Note: Orientation program materials can be found online at <https://sites.google.com/info.icu.ac.jp/newfaculty>)

VI. LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

College and university leaders – including board members – are role models, and preaching about values to students becomes meaningless if an institution does not have ethical governance practices firmly in place. Board members and top administrators set the values and policies that have a cascading effect on the morale of staff and students.

The leaders of institutions, through their actions, can create an inclusive environment, where staff and students of all backgrounds are welcome. They need to demonstrate zero tolerance for corruption, nepotism, discrimination, and sexual harassment. They need to act as good stewards for the institution’s human, financial, and physical resources.

The work of setting a framework for governance is not glamorous, but it is essential for an institution that promotes values in education. Participants in the

consultation highlighted some of the essential components of a governance framework:

- Bylaws that lay down the guiding principles for the governing board
- The appointment of board members who are respected by society and who have expertise in areas needed by the institution
- Clearly articulated selection procedures and qualifications for top administrators
- Procedures for approval of budgets and dealing with extra-budgetary expenditures
- The use of auditors with high integrity

Participants gave particular attention to the roles and actions of board members. In principle, board members should be accountable to the community they serve, but they are rarely visible on campus. The policies they approve shape the college or university, yet they are seldom called upon to explain their roles or face questions from the communities they serve. Boards are often self-regulated, creating the potential for conflicts of interest or even malfeasance, and when term limits are not imposed, there is little incentive to recruit new members or introduce new practices.

What steps can be taken to improve governance, particularly the role of board members? Participants suggested the following:

- Board members need an orientation to the functions of an educational institution, generally, and to the ethos of the particular college or university they are serving.
- Board members can be encouraged to be more visible on campus. This can help them become more responsive to the community they serve and more familiar with the ethos of the college or community. For example, Fu Jen Catholic University has a “resident trustee,” who is designated to be on campus often in order to get a grasp of what is happening on campus. (Another viewpoint, however, is that having a resident trustee may open the door to trustee interference in day-to-day administrative matters.)
- To promote greater transparency, Silliman University has set up a university leadership council on which all academic units are represented. Policy issues are discussed with the university leadership council before they are brought to the board; after the board meeting, the council meets again to learn what decisions were taken.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE ASIAN CONTEXT

Rosie Bateson, who serves as dean of faculty and academic affairs at the Asian University for Women in Bangladesh, said that Asia sits at the crossroads of many academic cultures. Its higher education institutions have preserved aspects of Confucian and other Asian traditions, and over time they have absorbed the influences of colonial powers and missionary educators and experimented with both liberal arts and highly specialized institutions. More recently, demographic, economic, and social changes have prompted Asian institutions to re-examine their expectations and models.



Dr. Bateson highlighted the research of Ernest T. Pascarella and Patrick T. Terenzini (*How College Affects Students*) and Arthur W. Chickering and Linda Reisser (*Education and Identity*), and was pleased to hear the echoes of their work on student development and engagement in the presentations of Asian participants in the consultation. She commended the willingness of Asian higher education institutions to emulate the best practices of their Western counterparts, but also argued that Asian institutions should feel empowered to design and adopt models that are regionally relevant. How will Asian colleges and universities create educationally powerful environments? And can comparative analysis of these Asian models and Western models help educators learn more about student development?

VII. DISRUPTION ON THE HORIZON

At first glance, rapid technological development seems to be the type of disruptive force that threatens whole person education. Why should students direct their time and talent toward the humanities when the study of information sciences, engineering, or biotech leads to lucrative employment upon graduation? Why invest effort in exploring ethics or developing empathy, when big data and artificial intelligence are starting to power decision-making processes? What are the benefits of direct engagement with faculty or peers in the classroom when people can interact with each other in virtual settings at any time and from any place? Can values and empathy be developed through the use of digital tools?

Advocates for whole person education respond that students need to prepare for a lifetime of change and for careers that do not yet exist. In such an environment, soft skills become hard currency, so colleges and universities should ensure that

students are well versed in critical thinking, complex problem solving, team building, and effective communication, and have developed the ability to apply ethical reasoning to resolve human dilemmas.

Building Relational Skills

Kevin Henderson, United Board



“Within the span of 20 years, accelerated computing power and technological process have disrupted many established ways of working and living, and created new professions and new academic fields. Since the Internet’s entry into the public sphere in 1995, one of the key outcomes of education – as preparation for a clearly defined world of work – has been disrupted, as whole industrial sectors have

shifted and are increasingly driven by rapid technological advances. It is arguable that the global educational system has not quite found its footing since this shift.

“Changes in industry and technological disruption will only accelerate in the years to come: new developments that are already making an impact include artificial intelligence (AI) and big data; wearable and implantable technologies; smaller, cheaper, and smarter sensors; the sharing economy and distributed trust; and 3-D printing and other means of digitizing matter.

“Will whole person education be relevant in the age of technological disruption? Yes! Holistic education, which focuses on the social skills necessary to adapt to rapid change, can help to mitigate the effects of present and expected societal transitions and upheavals over the next several decades. Whole person education can build relational skills – such as decision-making, adaptability, empathy, and negotiation – all of which are increasingly key required competencies in the shifting job market. These are skills that policy-makers, economists, and academics view as vital to adaptation and success in professions and academic fields yet to come into existence. But beyond just industry, these skills and their transmission through education, inside and outside of the classroom, are of major benefit to students who, research suggests, may have no other source from which to build key social, emotional, and spiritual competencies.”

Strengthening Capacities for Emotional Response

Kim Hei-sook, Ewha Womans University, Korea

“Under the circumstances of the coming future, however, true humanness will be found not in the capacity for reason or rational judgment but in the capacities for emotional response, for cultivating interpersonal sensibilities and sensitivities, and for fostering a sense of community – all capacities that are difficult to calculate in quantitative terms. Reason and rationality may have to give up their place to AI, which would excel in reasoning and purposive thinking. Sensitivity for values, contextual understanding, direct engagement in and response to other individuals and specific situations: these capacities will continue to remain uniquely human, I believe and hope.

“The cultivation of the capacity to gaze in deeper, to feel here and now, to empathize with others, and to make new choices, will be evermore important for the existence of humans in the age of artificial intelligence. Whole person education in such complicated times must be set apart from all-rounder education, and focus on being ‘human, all too human,’ on the wild exposure of the free human spirit.”

VIII. DEFINING AND RECOGNIZING SUCCESS

The commitment to whole person education was clear and strong among the educators at the consultation, and their respective institutions are using the curriculum, co-curriculum, and extracurricular activities in creative ways to support whole person development. But when the goal is to prepare young adults for lives of personal and professional fulfillment, what criteria can measure success? What types of benchmarks indicate whether endeavors are bearing some early fruit? Is it possible to track changes in open-mindedness, understanding of other cultures, caring, or mutual respect over the four-year course of an undergraduate education?

Seek Feedback from Employers

Wang Ying, Fudan University, China and United Board Trustee

“Fudan offers an excellent liberal arts education for young talents who will make meaningful contributions to the world. We challenge our students to explore different disciplines, interrogate closely, synthesize disparate perspectives and experiences, try out new courses of action, understand people from different backgrounds, and dedicate their intellect and energy to serve society. These qualities are quite unique to whole person



education, and they are highly valued by employers, who want creative employees.

“We launched liberal arts education at Fudan in 2005, and in 2014 we began to collect feedback from 400 employers of our graduates. The information we collected mainly concentrated on graduate attributes and how graduates apply what they learn to their jobs. For example: How do they apply theories and methods to problem-solving? What is their level of civic engagement? Do they demonstrate independent thinking and collaborative work styles? The results have been quite positive.

“Promoting whole person education is an ongoing process, and we should make the effort to engage as many parties as possible in this project. This means not just reaching out to the faculties within a university but also to employers and alumni, as well as giving students a voice and opportunities to showcase their learning outcomes.”

Student Self-Assessment

Albert Chau, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong



“In Hong Kong, the motivation for higher education reform came from higher community expectations, globalization, and the rapid regeneration of knowledge. At Hong Kong Baptist University, we responded by focusing on seven attributes we want to develop in our undergraduates: citizenship, learning, creativity, communication, knowledge, skills, and teamwork. From these attributes we developed intended learning outcomes with associated rubrics.

“We have developed the Whole Person Development Inventory (WPDI) so that students can see their capacity for holistic development. Students conduct a self-assessment when they arrive at HKBU, using a questionnaire that looks not only at intellectual development but health maintenance, career preparation, emotional health, civic responsibility, art appreciation, and other aspects. Each student is given a personal profile. They respond to the WPDI at different points of study before graduation, which shows the dimensions in which they have improved. Collectively, the WPDI guides us in improving the curriculum and co-curricular activities.

“We want to nurture creative, caring and ethical leaders, and we want to redefine our curriculum so that it is flexible and broad-based and encourages diverse

learning experiences. The dilemma is that we are still using rather standardized tests to measure creativity and other qualities. We need to keep examining the process of learning and the transformation of students. How does learning occur? We need to know better what students are like at the beginning of their university careers as well as whether they have acquired the graduate attributes and beyond when they leave, and more importantly, the 'how' of learning."

Developing an Index

Lee Yoon-sun, Seoul Women's University, Korea



"Seoul Women's University (SWU) first developed and implemented Bahrom Character Education (BCE) more than 50 years ago, in 1961. Bahrom is the pen name of the first president of SWU, and it means 'being virtuous or righteous.' BCE is based on the educational philosophy that people can rightly utilize their knowledge and skills only after becoming a whole person, and that whole person education should be done by integrating three aspects: cognitive

(learning by head), affective (learning by heart), and behavioral (putting into action). Through a five-week living and learning community program and a 15-week project-based learning class, students focus on developing a sense of self-understanding, empathetic communication competency with others, and global citizenship. Students learn how to build harmony for community through collaboration and mutual respect and to actively participate in social problem-solving.

"We have developed a Bahrom Character Index (BCI) to assess the effectiveness of BCE on our students. By collecting longitudinal data using BCI, we are trying to measure the development of core competencies that are cognitive (such as moral self-awareness, reflective decision-making, and self-understanding), affective (such as conscience, self-respect, and sense of community), and behavioral (such as willingness, competencies, and habits). We want to measure the character constructs needed for a healthy adult, evaluate and improve the effectiveness of whole person education programs, and measure a trajectory of change in character level during the college years."

Alternatives to International Rankings

The pressure of international rankings is acute in Asia, and its metrics are driving many universities to direct an abundance of resources toward research and publishing, rather than teaching. Advocates of whole person education face a dilemma: should they continue to emphasize student-centered learning and close

faculty-student interaction, factors that rankings do not take into account, or should they seek greater international recognition, by moving up in the rankings?



Mok Ka Ho (Joshua), vice president of Lingnan University, Hong Kong, and United Board trustee, proposes a third way. He aims to persuade the international ranking agencies to establish new criteria for liberal arts colleges and universities. Lingnan University, joined by 14 other Asian universities, launched the Alliance of Liberal Arts Universities in November 2017; representatives of about 40 institutions from around the world attended a two-day conference

held in conjunction with the launch.

The goal of the alliance is to promote liberal arts education in Asia and demonstrate the importance and benefits of this type of education to Asians. "It is difficult to turn a comprehensive university into a liberal arts college, but it may be possible to set up a liberal arts track in elite institutions," he said. "To start, we can learn best practices from each other, raise the image and profile of liberal arts education, and explore different means of measurement." The alliance will explore avenues for collaboration, including joint programs and courses, student groups that reach across borders, an alliance summer school, and a global internship program.

Ranking Colleges Separately from Universities

Paul Appasamy, United Board Trustee

"There is an implicit assumption that an institution must choose between the pursuit of international rankings and whole person education, but for liberal arts colleges, this may be a false dichotomy. Most international rankings have to do with large, multidisciplinary research universities. India, however, has established its own national ranking system, which distinguishes between colleges and universities, as colleges focus more on teaching and learning than on research. What we have found is that Christian colleges often are the top colleges: they are standing out as islands of excellence. Whole person education enables these colleges to be ranked among the top 10 or 20 colleges – and society is recognizing that there is something special about them."

Let Society Be the Judge

Ben Nebres, S.J., Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines; United Board Trustee

"What we want to do is to help the young people who come to our school discover their passions and talents. If we can do that, then our alumni will succeed and our institutions will succeed, and parents will want to send their children to us. This

kind of work demands a lot of faculty and administrators, but it will be sustainable. Ultimately, it will be society, not the external rankings, that judges our success.”

IX. THE WAY FORWARD

Our two-day consultation, *Whole Person Education as a Way Forward: Challenges and Prospects for Asia*, was a conversation waiting to happen. The breadth and depth of discussions made it clear that participants had been hungry for an opportunity to share their experience with peers, gain validation for the curricular and pedagogical approaches they are applying, and extend the community of support for whole person education. The items below draw on participants’ insights, combined with the United Board’s own experience, to indicate some channels through which whole person education can be strengthened.

Leadership support and development. Consultation participants welcomed opportunities for continuing discussion on the challenges and rewards of higher education. They seemed open to working toward definitions and policies that would reflect shared goals and practices, while leaving room for individual institutions to imprint their own traditions and characters upon them. They seemed particularly interested in strengthening governance practices, and suggested training programs or sharing of case studies on this topic. Creating some form of a leadership network – perhaps with in-person working group meetings on targeted issues and electronic exchanges on broader themes – could help build the community of support for whole person education.

The pool of leadership talent also needs to be nurtured at the departmental level. Two years ago, the United Board made significant changes to its United Board Fellows Program, which is designed for mid-level academic leaders. (Two consultation participants are alumnae of the program; one is a current Fellow.) The new framework provides more focused training in leadership skills and requires Fellows to articulate, through case studies, a plan for improving teaching, learning, or administration at their home institutions. In their roles as deans, department chairs, and administrators, Fellows can gain experience in introducing change and building support for new endeavors. Similar efforts could help sustain whole person education practices within institutions.

Pedagogy. Pedagogy was a background theme to discussions on curricula, integrative learning, faculty development, and other topics, and participants recognized that faculty must be afforded training in new approaches to teaching, such as problem-based learning, service-learning, or team teaching. Participants’

comments suggest that the time is ripe for a more robust discussion of pedagogical approaches to whole person education. The United Board recently piloted a Whole Person Education Academy, in collaboration with Ateneo de Manila University, to demonstrate ways that Southeast Asian faculty can infuse teaching, research, and service with whole person education. Experience from the academy could be used as one case study in broader discussion of pedagogy and whole person education.

Participants offered a note of caution: verbal support for more effective pedagogies and associated faculty training needs to be squared with practice. For example, time spent in a training program doesn't yield research results or publications; are institutional leaders willing to ease the emphasis on international rankings (in which research and publication play strong roles) so that faculty may develop the skills needed for whole person education?

Public Advocacy. Whole person education advocates concede that their emphasis on undergraduate teaching, values, and character development does not respond to the metrics that ranking agencies rely upon. Still, they found tangible ways to demonstrate the benefits of their approach to education. India established a national ranking system that distinguishes between universities and colleges, recognizing that colleges focus more on teaching and learning rather than research; Christian colleges often topped these rankings, and prospective students and their parents are taking notice. When Fudan University surveyed employers, it found that they value graduates who can think critically, apply theories to new situations, and understand people of different backgrounds – the types of qualities that whole person education fosters. Student surveys also can underscore an appreciation for the hallmarks of whole person education, such as small class sizes, learning by doing, social responsibility, and room for self-discovery. Alumni can be ambassadors, with testimonials that link whole person education to career success and personal fulfillment. These steps can be effective tools for public advocacy, and educators can use them to expand the community of support for whole person education.

Faced with the pressure of international rankings, whole person education advocates can develop their own benchmarks for success – broad-based learning, a supportive campus environment, applying knowledge in service to society – and then highlight them for students, parents, employers, and other stakeholders. Ultimately, one participant said, “society will decide” upon the success of a college or university's efforts, and higher education institutions should emphasize long-term benefits over short-term rankings.

The Asian Context. In their pursuit of excellence, Asian higher education institutions should not overlook the value of Asian culture, education practices, and social needs. There are rich opportunities for research within Asian societies,

ecological environments, and cultural heritages, and faculty and students should be encouraged to turn their attention to these contexts. Participants agreed that Asian educators can maintain a global outlook and still feel confident about setting their models for whole person education squarely in the Asian context. Educators should contribute insights gleaned from the Asian context on ways to encourage critical thinking, promote innovation, and apply technology in the classroom into global discussions on 21st-century education. They should be clear-eyed about the demographic, economic, social, religious, and cultural challenges their communities will confront, and willing to engage stakeholders within and outside their colleges and universities to develop responses.

A New Century Approaches. The United Board will celebrate its centennial in 2022, and with that milestone on the near horizon, trustees and staff have embarked upon a period of reflection. Which programs are most aligned with our commitment to whole person education? What are the sources of strength and creativity in our network, and how can they be shared with others? What guidance can we offer to institutions that want to take the first steps toward implementing whole person education? And how can we be supportive of colleges and universities with deep experience in higher education that seek to take their institutions to a higher level of service to their students and communities? We welcome educators at our network institutions, and all who read this report, to share their ideas with us, so that the United Board's second century will be one of greater service to Asia.

Pope Francis offered a guiding principle that is of value to advocates of whole person education in his April 2017 TED Talk, titled "Why the Only Future Worth Building Includes Everyone." He asked his audience to consider how wonderful it would be "if the growth of scientific and technological innovation would come along with more equality and social inclusion." Whole person education, which takes as its starting point concern for human welfare, values, and dignity and which stresses the value of empathy, contextual understanding, and building human communities, can play a role in shaping that kind of future, as the participants at our September consultation so vividly demonstrated.

**Whole Person Education as a Way Forward:
Challenges and Prospects for Asia
September 8-9, 2017
Hong Kong**

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