

UNITED BOARD

HORIZONS

DECEMBER 2020

UNITED BOARD FOR CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ASIA



Reimagining the Classroom:
Educators Raise Ideas for the Virtual Environment

Also in this issue:
Our 2020 Annual Report

Message from the President

New Ideas for the New Normal

As I write this letter, I find myself reflecting on the many ways that our daily lives have changed since the outbreak of COVID-19. The first couple months of the pandemic seemed to be a period of constant adjustments to the routines that shape our personal and professional lives. Activities we once took for granted — commuting to a campus or office, shaking hands with a visiting colleague, or enjoying a working lunch with colleagues — suddenly became impossible. Before too long, we moved on from merely reacting to focusing on longer-term adjustments we could make to our work so that we could continue rendering effective service to educators and institutions in the United Board network. Our staff team approached the challenge of this “new normal” with imagination and insight, and I believe their redesign of our programs for the virtual world will expand the impact of our work even beyond the pandemic.



Nancy E. Chapman
President

“
Is there a place for whole
person education in the
virtual environment?”

The pandemic also has raised fundamental questions that go to the heart of our mission. Is there a place for whole person education in the virtual environment? Can educators help students develop ethics and values when face-to-face interaction is not possible? How can we serve those in need while maintaining social distance? We decided to seek insights from some of the thoughtful, committed faculty and leaders with whom we work. Their stories in this issue of *Horizons* provide

some positive responses to these questions, describing how they provide emotional and spiritual support, as well as academic guidance, to students; how to lend a helping hand to colleagues; and how to offer compassion and assistance to those less fortunate.

I hope that you, our generous supporters, will be inspired by these stories! Your gifts help the educators in our network continue the day-to-day work of whole person education under extraordinary circumstances. Please see the descriptions of our Pandemic Response Fund and our Centennial Fund, on the facing page, for additional ways for you to deliver your support.

I send you my best wishes for a happy, healthy holiday season, and my gratitude for your support of our mission.

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A Season for Giving

An Invitation

Our generous supporters help bring our mission of whole person education to life. Through your contributions, we are able to support leaders and faculty as they translate the goals of whole person education into meaningful action and long-term impact. We invite your support for two new funds, as described below.



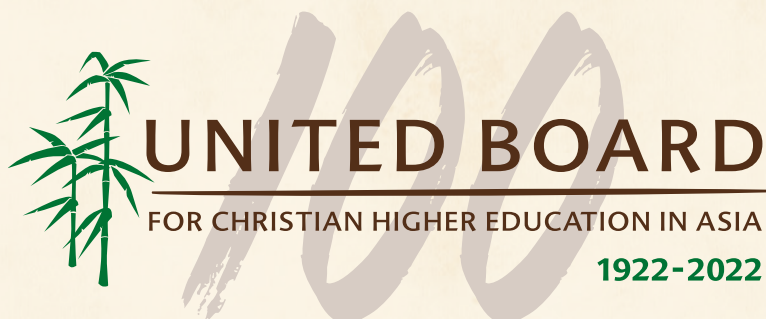
Pandemic Response Fund

Recognizing the significant disruptions our network institutions have experienced in recent months, the United Board has launched a Pandemic Response Fund, designed to help some of these institutions continue delivering quality education during challenging times. Grants from the Pandemic Response Fund will provide practical assistance to eligible colleges and universities in our network through two categories of support: general operating support for immediate needs brought on by the pandemic and immediate needs related to a transition to online learning, including for training, equipment, and software.

We have allocated \$500,000 from our endowment to establish the fund, and grants made from the Fund will be in the range of \$10,000 to \$25,000. We invite our donors to contribute their support to this fund, and to join us in recognizing the resilience of the leaders, faculty, and administrators at our network institutions.

Centennial Fund

The United Board will celebrate its Centennial in 2022, a milestone that prompts us to reflect upon our heritage and set great expectations for our second century. As part of our celebration, we are launching a Centennial Fund to renew and expand sources of support for our programs. Our Centennial Fund will give special attention to three of our strategic priorities: Leadership Development, Faculty Development, and Special Initiatives. We believe these areas will resonate with our donors, as many of them have a strong desire to invest in the “people of our mission” — the leaders and faculty committed to transformative education —and they can see the potential for higher education to respond to the needs of Asian societies. We welcome your support for our Centennial Fund!



Our Centennial Fund will renew and expand sources of support for our programs.

For further information on contributing to the Pandemic Response Fund or the Centennial Fund, please contact Ms. Trudy Loo, Director of Development, at tloo@unitedboard.org.

Striving Together

Debora Natalia Sudjito, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana

“It was an empowering experience for us.”



Debora Sudjito (third from right) with other trainers at a Whole Person Education echo training event.

“My life changed there,” Debora Natalia Sudjito said about the two years she spent at Ateneo de Manila University, where she earned her master’s degree with support from the United Board’s Faculty Scholarship Program. The university’s Ignatian pedagogy was her first encounter with whole person education. “My teachers treated me like family,” she said, as they demonstrated concern for her personal development as well as her intellectual growth.

In 2017, Ateneo marked another turning point in Ms. Sudjito’s professional life, when she returned to the campus for the United Board’s Whole Person Education Academy. “The Whole Person Education Academy came at the right moment for me,” she recalled. It recharged her approach to teaching, and it inspired her to bring ethical and spiritual dimensions into her teaching of physics

education at Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana.

The academy also connected Ms. Sudjito with other educators who wanted to help their students develop intellectually, spiritually, and ethically. In recent months, as she tried to integrate whole person education into her virtual classroom, she reached out to other alumni of the academy. As Indonesian alumni exchanged ideas through a WhatsApp group, the idea for a webinar series began to take shape.

Ms. Sudjito and her colleagues designed a two-part webinar series, “Integrating Whole Person Education in the Online Environment,” with support from Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana and the United Board. The August 5 session focused on student formation and the August 12 session addressed the design of the online environment for teaching and learning. Presenters shared their insights and experience, but what was most helpful to Ms. Sudjito and others was the recognition that, in this new virtual landscape, no one is an expert. Instead, educators need to lean on each other as they manage the transition to online teaching and learning.

“We are not alone,” Ms. Sudjito wants other teachers to know. “We can encourage each other, and we can strive together.” She sees the webinar series as a way of building strength. “It was an empowering experience for us, and I hope we can continue our collaboration.”

A Fresh Look at Student Formation

Father Johnny Go of Ateneo de Manila University focused on student formation in his presentation at the August 5 webinar on “Integrating Whole Person Education in the Online Environment.” He asked faculty to examine — and, in some cases, put aside — their assumptions about the online environment. For instance, faculty may assume that vicarious experiences are not meaningful, “but we know from our own experiences that reading a moving story can change our lives,” he said. Online discussions often are more inclusive than classroom discussions, as more students — not just the extroverts — participate. “Students can think before sharing their comments on the discussion board,” he said, “and often the sharing is more personal than face-to-face discussions.” The online environment also can be a comfortable forum for students to explore their faith and values. “Students have doubts and questions, and they are searching for answers,” he said. “We can use the online environment to meet them where they are, and ask them what they are looking for.”

Value Every Individual

T. Shirmila Stanley, Madras Christian College

“This is a frontier, with no boundaries.”

“The learning I experienced in the United Board Fellows Program had a huge impact on my personal and professional development,” Shirmila Stanley, assistant professor of commerce and convenor of the Centre for Human Resource Development at Madras Christian College, said in a recent interview. She describes her main takeaway from the 2017-2018 program in simple terms: “Value every individual.” That’s a lesson she now applies during the pandemic as she and her MCC colleagues consider how they can best support each other, their students, and the broader community.

Redesigning classes for online teaching and learning is an immediate need, but “not all of our faculty are tech-savvy,” Dr. Stanley points out. “Some need training, so those of us who have skills become enablers of others.” Students, on the other hand, may need emotional support. “Students have psycho-social needs,” she said. Many have parents who have lost jobs during the shutdown, creating additional stress. “What kind of assistance do they need?” Dr. Stanley asked “How can MCC as an institution, as a community, help them?” MCC sent out surveys to better determine students’ needs, and faculty have been calling their students to check on them.

The pandemic has magnified the needs of the larger community. “Yes, we need to guard and protect our own health,” Dr. Stanley said, “but we also need to tend to others’ needs.” The shutdown launched an exodus of

migrant laborers, returning home as opportunities for work closed down. “They needed food,” Dr. Stanley said, “so as a community, MCC supplied food and made meals — with proper social distancing — to feed these people.” Those encounters prompted Dr. Stanley to reflect upon the role that higher education plays in society. “If we are to be part of society,” she said, “we need to better understand social problems.”



Shirmila Stanley

Dr. Stanley hopes faculty will recognize the potential that lies in their hands. “This is a frontier, with no boundaries,” she said. “We can equip ourselves with new ways of teaching and learning, and find ways to go beyond our campus walls.”

Dr. Shirmila Stanley was the 2017-2018 Candy T. Eng Fellow. Following her experience in the Fellows Program, she received the 2018-2019 Outstanding Women Faculty Award at Madras Christian College.

A Focus on Self-Care

“Why do leaders, who are otherwise caring persons, care less for themselves? Why do they neglect their own well-being?” Tony Sam George, a 2017-2018 United Board Fellow and dean for social sciences and associate director of research at Christ (Deemed to be University) raised those questions in an August 25 webinar, “From Neglect to Nurture: Well-being and Leadership.” He highlighted the tensions between leadership “truths” — for instance, leadership can be lonely or require unpopular decisions — and a personal desire for approval or appreciation. Dr. Tony suggested ways to recognize these patterns and encouraged leaders to set realistic expectations, and, above all, be kind to themselves.

Visit the United Board Webinar Library, found on our website, for a recording of Dr. Tony’s remarks and other presentations.

A Humanistic Approach to Teaching and Learning

Martha Nandari, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana

“Create a nonthreatening class atmosphere and reduce anxiety.”

Martha Nandari brings a humanistic approach to her teaching at Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, where she serves as a senior lecturer in the English Language Education Program. She draws on the ideas of twentieth-century psychologists Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, who believed an environment that minimizes anxiety and maximizes personal security will help students build confidence and independent learning skills. “The humanistic approach, which stresses egalitarian and democratic principles, and promotes power sharing between teachers and learners, seems to support education for the whole person,” she said.

That approach is still possible, Ms. Nandari finds, even as the pandemic has shifted her classes to an online



Martha Nandari

environment. She has been relying on Facebook to create a welcoming environment for her students, as she explained in an August webinar on “Integrating Whole Person Education in the Online Environment.” “Students are already familiar with Facebook, so they are comfortable using it,” she said. “It’s user friendly, so it can create a nonthreatening class atmosphere and reduce anxiety.” This helps alleviate some of the stress that students may be experiencing during the pandemic.

Ms. Nandari created Facebook groups for her critical reading and professional narrative writing classes. Through these groups, she can share files, encourage students to post comments, watch a video with her students, or create rooms and walls for discussions. Facebook also facilitates an easy exchange of greetings, advice, and ideas — all of which help a teacher build a rapport with her students and students connect with each other. Even technical difficulties, such as uploading large files when Internet connectivity is low, can be valuable: students will look to each other, rather than the teacher, for guidance in solving these problems.

Ms. Nandari encourages other educators to see the value of a humanistic approach. “In whatever conditions, during or after the pandemic, having a positive attitude toward our students, respecting them, building good relationships and trust, humbling ourselves by being facilitators instead of the only source of knowledge, may help boost the students’ independent knowledge and confidence.”

UNITED BOARD
FOR CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ASIA
1983-2020

WEBINAR SERIES:
**INTEGRATING WHOLE PERSON
EDUCATION IN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT**

5 August 2020
9 A.M. - 11 A.M. (Western Indonesian Time)
10 A.M. - 12 P.M. (Manila / Hong Kong Time)

12 August 2020
9 A.M. - 11 A.M. (Western Indonesian Time)
10 A.M. - 12 P.M. (Manila / Hong Kong Time)

**STUDENT FORMATION THROUGH
ONLINE ENVIRONMENT**

**THE DESIGN OF ONLINE ENVIRONMENT
FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING DURING
AND AFTER COVID-19**

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Fr. Johny C. Go, S.J., Ed.D.
(Ateneo de Manila University)

Galvin Radley L. Ngo, M.Ed.
(Ateneo de Manila University)

Johanes Eka Priyatma, Ph.D.
(Sanata Dharma University)

Prof. Iwan Pranoto, Ph.D.
(Bandung Institute of Technology)

Liauw Toong Tjiek, Ph.D.
(Petra Christian University)

Martha Nandari Santoso, M.A.
(Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana)

Register here: bit.ly/WPEwebinar **LIVE ON:**

The two-part webinar on “Integrating Whole Person Education in the Online Environment” was a collaborative effort among Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Duta Wacana Christian University, Maranatha Christian University, Petra Christian University, Sanata Dharma University, and Ateneo de Manila University.

Campus Ministry in the Time of COVID

A Closer Look

The Basic Nature of Ministry

Shoko Kitanaka, International Christian University



Shoko Kitanaka

“It has always been my belief that ministry starts with listening — listening to God, to others, and to self,” Shoko Kitanaka, one of the two chaplains at International Christian University (ICU), explained in an interview. Before the pandemic, she often found opportunities to listen to the voices of ICU students and faculty

during worship services, prayer meetings, and Bible study or while offering support or spiritual guidance. In the spring, as her interactions became virtual, she felt the absence of those day-to-day encounters. In the quiet months that followed, she has spent much time reflecting on the basic nature of ministry.

“What is worship? What does it mean to be in fellowship? What does personal communication with students mean?” Rev. Kitanaka asked. “We can’t avoid these questions now.” Answers are not fully available but there are interesting pieces of evidence to evaluate. “Online worship felt strange at first,” she recalled, “but more students and faculty are joining the online services.” In the past, about 40 or 50 people attended services, but now more than 100 people may participate. “This is a happy surprise,” she said, “and we may need to rethink how we assist students in discovering Christianity.” The online fellowship gatherings she hosts each week also have been a revelation. “Students keep bringing new friends,” she said, which tells her that students are active and still making new friends even when most contact is virtual. “Students can teach us how to adapt to the online environment,” she added.

“Ministry is about encountering other people’s stories,” she said, “and the person we serve is the protagonist of their own story.” That opens the question of what role the chaplain plays. “Who am I in this story?” she asked. “The chaplain is the side character, whose role in the story may be small, but who shows up at a critical moment to be of help.”

The Need of the Hour

Jessie Ranjitha Jebaselvi, Lady Doak College



Jessie Ranjitha Jebaselvi

“COVID-19 has left an indelible mark on the mental, emotional, and spiritual states of most students,” Jessie Ranjitha Jebaselvi C., associate professor of English and chaplain of Lady Doak College, observed recently. “Confined to their homes, students feel marooned without simple joys like meeting friends and relatives,” Dr. Jessie pointed out. Many skills, combined with much innovation, are needed to help students navigate these changed circumstances. “Building a committed core team for campus ministry is the need of the hour,” she said.

As the campus transitioned to the virtual environment, Lady Doak College’s counseling unit — part of the Christian Activities Centre — drafted a detailed plan for online interaction with students. “We conducted tailored group sessions and one on one tele-counseling sessions, through which many students and parents were encouraged and strengthened,” Dr. Jessie said. As students often are hesitant to express their needs, the counseling unit initiated a peer help group.

After a brief pause, the counseling unit bounced into planning mode. “With the new normal in force, we had to find valid technology-based alternatives to substitute for some of our rich traditions and healthy practices,” she said. For instance, a 24-hour prayer chain substituted for the usual Founder’s Day gathering. The choir continues to rehearse virtually, and the chapel service will go online in the near future.

The hard work of transitioning to the virtual world has brought rewards, and the sense of a caring campus community remains strong: “It is encouraging to see various student and staff prayer groups meeting periodically, online, during this period to spiritually support one another,” Dr. Jessie said.

Creating Opportunities for Exposure

Helen Thimmayya, Women's Christian College

“I am conscious of being part of a community.”

As an educator, Helen Thimmayya always encouraged her students to look beyond the classroom. “I liked to take them outside and get them to intersect with society — this builds the person,” she said in a recent interview. “Students can be insular, being focused on their own growth,” she added, so the challenge for educators is to expose them to people and ideas that will help them develop socially as well as intellectually. That desire to build her students’ sense of community and connection infused her long career at Women’s Christian College (WCC) in Chennai, India.

Dr. Thimmayya was a 2002-2004 United Board Fellow — a member of the first cohort — and her placements at Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines and Saint Mary’s College in the United States showed her new ways of connecting students to a broader community. “At Ateneo, I saw how students were brought into service-learning,” she recalled. “It made a strong impression on me to see how students interacted, so willingly, with marginalized people.” When she returned to WCC, she built service-learning into her journalism course, and in her feminist perspectives course, she encouraged students to take internships at nongovernmental organizations. “I wanted them to see that the stories of simple people have deep meaning,” she said.



Helen Thimmayya

Dr. Thimmayya found her placement at Saint Mary’s College equally inspiring. “The atmosphere was so empowering,” she reflected. “The faculty had such clarity about what they were doing and could tie their work to the vision of the college.” She also found student governance at the college to be interesting. “Students were focused on social issues and debating ways to address them — they were vocal about wanting to make changes.”

Nearly 20 years after her fellowship experience, Dr. Thimmayya remains grateful for the exposure it provided and she is inspired to give back in support of others. “Because of my Christian background, I am conscious of being part of a community, of being interdependent,” she said. “I was aware that other people’s donations to the United Board made it possible for me to be part of this program.”

“People blossom, learn new things, gain more confidence, learn more about the world and their place in it,” she said, “and all this happens because of exposure.” It is her hope that many Asian educators will have similar opportunities for exposure and will be able to share the benefits with their students and colleagues.

Become a Monthly Donor

A monthly contribution provides regular support to our programs and our network of universities and colleges in Asia. We welcome monthly contributions of any size. To initiate a monthly gift, or for more information, contact Ms. Trudy Loo, Director of Development, by phone (212.870.2612) or email (tloo@unitedboard.org).

United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia 2020 Annual Report

This annual report covers July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, a period bifurcated by the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020. During this time, our programming successfully transitioned from in-person gatherings to online events. We believe these programs were “remote” in name only, as they continued to engage educators in a thoughtful,

collaborative exchange of ideas and experience. We extend our gratitude to all who helped make these programs possible: our donors, our program hosts, our resource persons, those who provided in-kind support, and many other colleagues throughout our network.



Clockwise from top left: Enthusiastic participants at the Harvest Seminar for Whole Person Education; Dr. Synthia John speaks at a counseling workshop in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka; participants enrolled in intensive English language training at Miriam College; 2016–2017 United Board Fellows (Dave Marcial, Marcella Simandjuntak, and Sridevi Venkatachalam) reunite at the Innovation in Education conference.

2020 Financial Review

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, the United Board had total support and revenue of **\$9,771,847**; total expenses of **\$7,484,126**; and total net assets of **\$133,755,852**. Support and revenue is comprised of contributions (both restricted and unrestricted) from individuals, foundation grants, and endowment income. The United Board’s Form 990 can be found on the Financial Statements page of our website.

More than 1,100 educators participated in United Board-administered events, and hundreds more attended workshops and seminars led by our network institutions.

UNITED BOARD PROGRAMS

The United Board endeavors to respond to the diverse challenges and opportunities facing our colleagues in higher education in Asia. We work in consultation with our network institutions to define priority areas for programming. Below we highlight some of our FY

2020 actions in support of Leadership Development, Faculty Development, Campus-Community Partnerships, Culture and Religion in Asia, Digital Content and Programming, Resource Development, and Special Initiatives.

Leadership Development

15 individuals participated in the 2019-2020 **United Board Fellows Program**, representing 9 countries and regions. They were joined at the Summer Institute by 4 recently appointed heads of institutions. Fellows explore new styles of leadership, educational management, pedagogy, ethics, and self-care, among other topics.

These Fellows enjoyed a virtual reunion and information exchange in April, a format we expect many of our cohorts to embrace going forward.

A webinar series on “Leading Through Crisis” expands our programming.



The 2019-2020 Fellows start their program year with enthusiasm at the Summer Institute.

Faculty Development

24 faculty members from our network institutions pursued advanced degrees with support from the **United Board Faculty Scholarship Program**. Host institutions generously contributed in-kind support of more than **\$236,000**, in the form of tuition waivers, living allowances, and other support.

The **Harvest Seminar for Whole Person Education**, held September 17-20, 2019, reunited 26 alumni from two iterations of our Whole Person Education Academy. These new ambassadors for whole person education highlighted the ways in which they are helping their students and colleagues connect academics to values.

15 faculty members participated in the **Intensive English Language Program**, held at Miriam College July 1 – August 15, 2019.



Educators compare notes on pedagogy at the Harvest Seminar for Whole Person Education.

Campus-Community Partnerships

18 project grants were awarded in support of service-learning initiatives, highlighting strong interest in making experiential learning part of the curriculum.

Grantmaking

The United Board awarded 42 project grants in FY 2020, valued at **\$508,422**, which engaged 22 institutions in 9 countries and regions.

TURN OUR MISSION INTO ACTION

As our programs transitioned to online formats, we hope our participants continued to feel the same sense of care, connection, and creativity that sets the foundation for all United Board programs. We

are pleased to discover new ways to work alongside Asian educators in support of our mission: to promote education that develops the whole person — intellectually, spiritually, and ethically.

Digital Content and Programming

About **100** participants at the conference on “**Innovation in Education: Opportunities and Challenges in Southeast Asia**,” October 29-30, 2019, discussed how digital technologies are transforming teaching practice, delivery, and assessment in the ASEAN region.

600 educators joined the April 28 **webinar** on “Education in Emergencies: Online Teaching and Learning Strategies.”

Since then, we’ve launched webinar series on “New Models of Education”, with additional programming in development.



Dr. Guydeuk Yeon engages audience members at the Innovation in Education conference.

Culture and Religion in Asia

Our annual **Institute for Advanced Study in Asian Cultures and Theologies** has been transformed into a collaborative research program, conducted in a hybrid format. **20** participants, grouped in 7 teams, are engaged in interdisciplinary research, dialogue, and writing.

23 individuals from India and Sri Lanka completed our Chaplaincy Training Program in March 2020, an 18-month workshop and online learning program for faculty from a range of disciplines.

Participants in our 2019 **Asian Campus Ministry Forum** continue to meet virtually.



The conclusion of the Chaplaincy Training Program included participants’ paper presentations and a certificate ceremony.

Resource Development

Through United Board workshops, grants, and one-on-one coaching, the United Board helps its network institutions develop the human and financial resources needed to be self-sustaining.

Special Initiatives

The United Board supported 3 training workshops in Sri Lanka that focused on counseling skills, engaging a total of **210** teachers, principals, and counselors.

OUR DONORS

The United Board gratefully acknowledges the generous support of our donors. Those listed below made contributions between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020.

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Award for Hong Kong Baptist University

Congratulations to Hong Kong Baptist University, which was part of an inter-institutional team that received Hong Kong's prestigious 2020 University Grants Commission Teaching Award! Under the leadership of Eva Wong, HKBU and three other Hong Kong higher education institutions used augmented reality to engage students more directly in issues and decisions related to academic integrity and ethics. The United Board had made a FY 2020 grant to support HKBU's work on this project, as well as its international collaboration with Marian College (India) and Silliman University (Philippines).



Dr. Eva Wong, the project's principal investigator (second from left), receives the UGC Teaching Award.

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