

UNITED BOARD

# HORIZONS

JUNE 2023

UNITED BOARD FOR CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ASIA



## Into a New Century of Service





# Contents

---

- 3 Message from the President
- 4 Happy Birthday, United Board!
- 10 Coming Home to Whole Person Education
- 14 Celebrating Centennial in Indonesia
- 18 A Leader Who Serves, and A Servant Who Leads
- 22 A Balancing Act Made Easy
- 24 Going Intelligent and Going Generative
- 25 Changed Fabrics, Unchanged Fidelity
- 26 Staff News
- 27 The United Board Welcomes its New President



# Message from the President



I am deeply honored to be appointed President of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia and tasked with taking this much respected organization into its next century of serving our mission. One of the first tasks I found I was given is to preface the biannual newsletter

of the United Board, *Horizons*, to bring the United Board community up to speed on our work and initiatives in the past half-year. It is with great delight I am doing this.

The celebrations of our hundredth year of service started with exuberance in mid-2022, when the world began to emerge from the shock and shackles of the pandemic. A Centennial Celebration Luncheon was held last November, where we reunited with some 80 of our donors, supporters and friends, some travelling from great distances, and celebrated together this important landmark. We hope that the pictures in the following pages exhibit the energy and festivity on that sunny New York afternoon.

We have also taken our Centennial to the South. In the following pages, you are taken on a photo-tour of the joint celebration held with Petra Christian University in Surabaya, Indonesia and a dinner reception hosted in Yogyakarta, Indonesia to reconnect and rejoice with United Board scholars, fellows, and network institutions in the area.

Dr. Christian Murck, Chair of the Board of Trustees, said in his welcoming remarks at the Centennial Luncheon in New York: “People are indeed what has empowered the United Board to go from strength to strength over the years.” This issue of *Horizons* features two exemplars, Dr. George and Dr. Ricky. Dr. Rani George of Albany State

University has personally experienced and benefitted from an education with emphasis on the development of the whole person. In her story she goes back to her roots in India and explains why she decided to honor the memory of her mother by making charitable gifts to support Indian universities through the United Board.

The second feature is about Dr. Ricky, a United Board Fellow from Petra Christian University. His devotion to Christianity and belief in servant leadership has made him stand out among the many fine young scholars from the United Board Fellows Program. You will draw inspiration from his undivided loyalty to his two masters—God and the university at which he studied and now teaches.

While the world was shuttered during the pandemic, our Programs Team did not let the foot off the gas. They adapted and improvised our offerings in faculty development, leadership development, women’s leadership, to name a few. One of the good fruits from the period which was of great import to academics is a series of webinars on how academics can balance the triple demand of teaching, research and service. Not only is the article worth reading but the videos of the webinars are also worth watching.

The United Board is young for a centenarian, and we are keeping pace with the developments in Big Tech. Our responses to the digital revolution in higher education have been swift and on target. Please visit the newly established United Board Digital Library, the Digital Policy Speakers series, and a series of discussions on the impact of generative AI on teaching and learning.

I am proud to be part of a mission-driven organization with an able and dedicated team of staff and consultants to take our work forward, with counsel from the Board of Trustees. I am incredibly blessed to start this journey with you with unbridled enthusiasm and energy. I look forward to bringing you impactful program news and sharing more insights from the service of the United Board in future instalments of this publication as well as other channels and platforms. 📢

**Pareena G. Lawrence**



# Happy Birthday, United Board!

With the pandemic being brought under control in most parts of the world and the social distancing restrictions largely lifted, the United Board's Centennial Celebrations resumed with a vengeance. A Centennial Celebration Luncheon was held in New York on 12 November 2022 where United Board Trustees and staff welcomed over 80 friends, fellows, sponsors and donors. Arriving guests were greeted and posed in front of the Centennial backdrop for photos. Old friends reunited and new ones met. The atmosphere at the venue warmed up in no time.

The Centennial Video and a medley version of the Centennial Anthem were shown to the guests at the Luncheon.



(clockwise from top) The United Board celebrates its Centennial at the Harvard Club in Manhattan, New York; Staff make preparations at reception table at the entrance; Staff welcome the guests at the photo booth





(clockwise from top left) Nancy Chapman (middle) with dear friends and donors Mr. and Mrs. Terry Lautz; "Cheers!" to the Centennial; A group photo before speeches and meal; Trustee Budi Widianarko and wife take selfie; Ricky Cheng happily reunites with Carmen Dagnino, long-serving former staff





(clockwise from top left) Angela Wai Ching Wong (left) and Mrs. Elizabeth Abel, a donor; Maher Spurgeon leads the grace; Kevin Henderson and Hope Antone emcee the celebrations; Trustees, staff and guests at the “Campus Ministry”-themed table





(clockwise from top) Trustees, staff and guests at the “Women’s Leadership”-themed table; Ricky Cheng hugs Mr. George Yuan, while Mrs Yuan is infected with the warmth; (from left) Ricky Cheng, Trustee Joe Zolner, and Trudy Loo





(clockwise from top left) Trustees (from left) Phoebe Stevenson, Su Yon Park, and Boyung Lee give high-100; Nancy Chapman (middle) with Trustees Barbara Mistick and Jeffrey Kuan; Chris Murck makes welcoming speech

Dr. Chris Murck, Chair of the Board, welcomed the guests: “I am pleased to report today that the United Board faces the future eagerly but also soberly and realistically. Our mission and values have been renewed, our organizational and financial resilience have never been better, and the collaboration we enjoy with network partners sustains all of us. Rapid change will no doubt continue in the years ahead and we approach that with confidence.”






(clockwise from top left) The guests watch a performance of Cherished Moments, the Centennial Anthem; (from left) Ricky Cheng, Nancy Chapman and Chris Murck lead the Centennial celebrations; Standing ovation for a charismatic leader and a loyal servant

At the Luncheon, tribute was also paid to Dr. Nancy Chapman, President of the United Board who would retire at the end of January 2023 after a distinguished service of almost 12 years.

Nancy said: “The United Board brings together Asia and higher education with the Christian faith, which centers our lives. Working for the United Board also brings a certain sense of kinship—that of knowing one is always among friends. One also feels a meaningful sense of connection with the many generations that preceded us in this work, over a century and more. This gives to our daily work a real sense of being grounded in something so much larger than ourselves.”

On the heel of the resounding success of the Centennial Luncheon, a grand finale to our Centennial celebrations was being planned for June 2023 in Hong Kong comprising a gala dinner, a presidents’ forum and the inauguration of the new President of the United Board. 





# Coming Home to Whole Person Education

Dr. Rani George remembers her roots in India and honors her mother



For Dr. Rani George—professor of statistics and research methods in the Department of Criminal Justice at Albany State University, and a researcher of behavioral health among college students—a belief in whole person education started from an early age.

Born in Kerala and raised in Chennai, Dr. George’s core values were influenced by her family’s strong Christian roots and, in particular, by her mother, Aleyamma George, who worked tirelessly to raise her children after her husband passed away at an early age.

“I have such lovely memories of my mother,” Dr. George said. “She was people-oriented. She was always eager to

assist, guide, and support our extended family, friends and neighbors. I think God must have sent her on earth with a counseling degree. She was so very loving and caring. People both young and old, family and friends, even folks who just met her, would lovingly call her ‘mummy.’”

Although she had never gone to college herself, Dr. George’s mother was a fervent advocate for education. She was actively involved in her children’s academic success by attending school and college events, getting to know their teachers and professors, and learning about their educational programs.

“My education when I was young—from nursery





*Dr. George with husband and the Carters (2011)*

school to high school—focused on the whole person. I might never have thought of taking a nutrition course, or thought I could sing. But I was fortunate to have a well-rounded education that included eastern and western music, and Christian education and scripture and Gandhian thought. This focus on whole person education grounded me for my higher studies.”

Those higher studies began at the Women’s Christian College, affiliated with the University of Madras, where she learned about psychology for the first time. She was

**“She was always eager to assist, guide, and support our extended family, friends and neighbors. I think God must have sent her on earth with a counseling degree.”**

so fascinated by the subject that she went on to complete a bachelor’s in psychology and a master’s in applied psychology, complimenting her education with internships at mental health institutions.

After completing her master’s in 1983, Dr. George became assistant professor of psychology at Lady Doak College in Madurai, one of the United Board’s network institutions.

“The four best years of my career were at Lady Doak,” Dr. George recalled. “It was my first teaching job and it made a deep impression on me. I lived on campus and had close contact with students. It helped me to master the art of teaching.”

### **A focus on behavioral health in students**

Eventually, Dr. George moved to the United States to pursue graduate studies at the University of Delaware. Under the tutelage of world-renowned researcher Dr. David Kaplan, Dr. George developed an interest in research while receiving a PhD in measurement, statistics and evaluation and a master’s in applied human development.

In 1999, she began teaching in the Department of Counseling and Educational Leadership at Albany State



*Dr. George officiates at a graduation as dean (2010)*



University. She then had the opportunity to serve as Chair of Counseling and Educational Leadership, Dean of the Graduate School, and Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities. She currently teaches in the Department of Criminal Justice. In addition to teaching, she also leverages her research expertise and on-campus experience to further meet the needs of the community.

“At Albany State, I became interested in behavioral health because I’d be able to work with students who were there on campus,” Dr. George explained. “Being in a semi-urban, semi-rural area, we don’t have many of the facilities you find in big cities and I knew we could provide a much-needed service for our students.”

Dr. George would go on to contribute to dozens of publications, papers, and grants on student-focused topics such as HIV/AIDS prevention in rural areas, substance abuse, and suicide prevention. She is currently co-principal investigator on a grant focusing on violence against women, with her husband Dr. George Thomas, who also teaches at Albany State University.

## Supporting higher education in India

Although Dr. George now lives in the United States, she remains connected to higher education in India. She maintains a close friendship with Ms. Shanti Manuel, the United Board’s first Indian trustee and the principal and professor of psychology at Lady Doak while Dr. George was teaching there.

“Ms. Manuel has played a big role in my life. She was my mentor, a good friend, a philosopher. We used to take walks in the night to talk about all kinds of things and solve the world’s problems in a couple of hours. I still talk to her.”

Dr. George remains connected to Lady Doak through charitable donations through the United Board.

“One of the things that attracted me to the United Board is their philosophy about whole person education—it aligns so closely with what I learned in school. I don’t think many people know how much of an impact the United Board has had on education in India.”



*Dr. George gives lecture to psychology students at Madras Christian College (May 2022)*



*Ms. Shanti Manuel gives her remarks after Dr. George’s lecture*



**“I don’t think many people know how much of an impact the United Board has had on education in India.”**

Through that charitable giving, Dr. George also honors the memory of her mother and the role she played in instilling the value of knowledge and learning in all her children.


“Even though it was before the cell phone and social media age, my mother always knew what was happening to us but was never a ‘helicopter mom.’ She was a gentle yet strong mother, a teacher, a guide, and an anchor in my life. She is still my best role model,” Dr. George said. “That’s why I am dedicating my future donations to support high-quality education for young women in Tamil Nadu, in memory of my mother.”

While Dr. George and her husband are now preparing for



*Mrs. Aleyamma George*

retirement, she plans to continue to give back to higher education.

“For the past 12 years, whenever we have gone back to India, I find opportunities to talk to students at high schools and colleges. We will be spending a lot of time in India when we retire in the next year or so, and I plan to keep interacting with students. I want to keep sharing what God has given me with other people.” 

## **Consider an Endowment Fund to Support the United Board and its Network Institutions**

Endowment support is an enduring way to support our network institutions across Asia and areas that are important to you. To explore how to establish an endowment fund that will provide long-term support and impact, please contact Trudy Loo, Director of Development at 212-870-2612 or by email ([tloo@unitedboard.org](mailto:tloo@unitedboard.org)). The United Board is honored to steward nearly 200 endowments, each made possible by generous donor support.





# Celebrating Centennial in Indonesia



*PCU students, staff and management, with the United Board's sponsorship, have made the musical a resounding success*

Petra Christian University (PCU) in Surabaya, Indonesia, has been one of the United Board's closest partners in the region, and shares and actively pursues the same educational ideal of whole person education. On 4 March, a joint celebration with PCU was held where PCU marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its Petra Theater with the performances of an original musical *11 Questions*. Mr. Ricky Cheng, Interim President, Dr. Budi Widianarko, Trustee, and Mr. Tommy Cho, Director of Communications, represented the United Board in the celebrations.

A visit was paid to the backstage before the show to greet the cast and crew of *11 Questions*. Although the musical has only five actors, many students and staff of PCU were involved in the production. The United Board delegates were impressed by their professionalism and enthusiasm and the support shown by the management of PCU.



*Ricky and Budi greet the cast and crew of 11 Questions at the backstage*





*Representatives of the two institutions cut the cake for the United Board*



*Rector Djwantoro Hardjito of PCU thanks the United Board for its longtime support*



*Ricky and Rector Djwantoro Hardjito reaffirm the two institutions' commitment to whole person education*



*"For ten decades we embraced;/Education is the way;/A hundred years more we pray;/The world will be a better place."*

After the backstage visit, Ricky, Budi and Tommy joined the Donors Appreciation Dinner where friends and donors of PCU were invited to celebrate the Centennial of the United Board and witness their collaboration on whole person education. Rector Djwantoro Hardjito of PCU gave a welcoming speech thanking the United Board for its longtime support and then presented souvenirs to Ricky

and other donors. It was in effect a birthday party when representatives from the United Board and PCU joined in a cake-cutting ceremony.

Before the curtain went up for the main feature of the evening, the Petra Choir performed a recital of *Cherished Moments*, the Centennial Anthem of the United Board, in front of the audience.



More than 1,500 guests enjoyed and applauded the two performances on 4 March of *11 Questions*, a musical play about the growth of a college student and her awakening to the larger issues in her life—her place in the community and her relationship with those around her, especially the disadvantaged. It is a paean, vastly enlightening, touching, and entertaining, to the education of the whole person completed through love, empathy, and sacrifice. The event was subsequently widely covered in the local media.



*Ricky addresses the audience before the show: “We believe that no medium is more direct and effective than the arts which delight the senses and touch the heart to precipitate profound changes in individuals.”*



*Ricky goes on stage to congratulate the cast and crew after the curtain has come down*

On 8 March, a dinner reception was held at Hyatt Regency Yogyakarta to bring the United Board’s Centennial festivity and hospitality to our friends and fellows in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The rectors of Duta Wacana Christian University, Sanata Dharma University, and Atma Jaya University were present. Officers of the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies, as well as United Board fellows and scholars from the said universities made up the rest of the celebrants who were mixed and seated in four tables.



*Ricky welcomes the guests while Dr. Albertus Bagus Laksana, Rector of Sanata Dharma University, looks on*





*Dr. Henry Feriadi (right), then Rector of Duta Wacana Christian University, presents a plaque to Ricky and Budi*



*Ricky, Budi and Tommy among the staff and Prof. Ir. Yoyong Arfiadi (4th from right), then Rector of Atma Jaya University, Yogyakarta*



*Ricky, Budi and Tommy pose with officers of the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies*

Ricky and Budi made welcoming remarks thanking their participation and informing them of the latest developments at the United Board. In the course of the dinner, the guests were shown the Centennial Video and a video of the performance of the Centennial Anthem.

The United Board representatives felt they were back

among old friends. They were eager to hear the news about each individual and institution as well as recent trends and challenges in Indonesian higher education. The guests were keen to be updated on the United Board's initiatives and to explore ways for deeper collaborations. Guests and hosts had a most enjoyable and memorable Centennial reception. 🇮🇩



# A Leader Who Serves, and A Servant Who Leads

## United Board Fellow Dr. Ricky's undivided loyalty to Christianity and Petra Christian University



Dr. Ricky always has a lot on his plate. As a professor of management and business at Petra Christian University (PCU), he shoulders a trifecta of responsibilities of teaching, research, and service, in addition to active consulting, talks and community service.

Ricky was the Dean of the then Faculty of Business and Economics (School of Management and Business since 2022) at PCU from 2018 to 2021. During his deanery, he headed a team that successfully obtained international accreditation for their Management and Accounting Program from the ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA). While being Dean, he also initiated the Digital Leadership Curriculum at PCU, a giant step

that put PCU at the forefront of Indonesian higher education in the digital era.

### *A seed was sown*

A devout Christian who is always reflecting on his role in God's service, he is an ardent advocate of servant leadership and whole person education. Ricky's encounter with Christianity began in junior high school. Though not Christians themselves, his parents recognized the value a Christian education could give their son and so sent him to a Christian school near their home. He also attended Sunday School in a nearby church which deepened his knowledge of Christianity and the Bible.



“I had a very normal childhood,” said Ricky. “I went to school and learned my lessons. I went home and sometimes helped with the chores of my parents. I did things with my friends which any ordinary schoolboy would do.” Whether by accident or by design, from kindergarten through high school to university, all the schools he attended were within the Petra school system. It is no exaggeration to say that Ricky is a Petra product, and an exemplary one at that.

Ricky formally accepted the Christian faith in 1990, and promised himself that he would devote his time and talent to a career revealed and guided by Jesus Christ. He has since served only one master—Christ.

### ***Always serving one master***

After graduating from PCU with a bachelor’s degree in economics, he began teaching at his alma mater as a lecturer. In the early 2000s, he obtained a master’s degree in real estate from the University of New South Wales in Australia. He then returned to serve at PCU. From 2012 to 2017, he took his young family to Birmingham in the UK and studied for a doctorate in education at the University of Birmingham. Once completed, he returned to PCU to head its Faculty of Business and Economics. All his life he has only worked for one master—PCU.

Ricky, however, sees his academic work more like a calling than a job. His doctoral dissertation is titled “Servant Leadership in Higher Education”. The concept of servant leadership runs through how he views and pursues his educational missions. Servant leadership, as explained by Ricky, is a leadership approach that requires the leader, be him a teacher, a clergy or a social worker, to understand the needs

of his followers, see things from their perspectives, respect their values, and serve them in a way that transforms them into good human beings. The master-servant relationship should be based on equality rather than hierarchy and developed with empathy not commands and orders.

### ***There is a humanist inside this management scholar.***

Ricky added, “Often a servant leader leads by example. If I treat a student this way, I hope one day when the student has become a teacher herself she would treat her students the same way.” There is a humanist inside this management scholar.

### ***Meeting of mind and purpose***

The concept of servant leadership as advocated by Ricky shares a lot in common with the idea of whole person education—to develop students not only intellectually





but also spiritually and ethically—long promoted by the United Board in partnership with its network institutions in Asia including PCU. In fact, PCU has been one of its closest partners in promoting whole person education and service learning in the region.

From January 2022, Ricky has been the Head of the Whole Person Education Curriculum at PCU. It is a task force that deliberates on the contents and format of how to combine learning with faith so as to offer a holistic education to the students at PCU. It is, needless to say, no easy task, as academic subjects are tangible and therefore teachable but spirituality or ethics is open to different interpretations and practical applications. Ricky acknowledges the challenges but is at least pleased to see that awareness has been raised and discussions encouraged.

With an unwavering resolve to serve God and answer His calling for him in higher education, it was perhaps only a matter of time before Ricky found the United Board. In 2018, he attended the whole person education academy in Manila, Philippines organized by the United Board and came to know its staff and various programs and initiatives.

### ***From leader to fellow***

Ricky became a United Board Fellow in 2019–20 to participate in the Harvard Institute of Higher Education. As he recalled, “I was, like, wow, that’s really a once-in-a-lifetime experience for me. I had visited Harvard University before, to present a paper at a conference, but nothing remotely close had happened to me there.” Ricky was most impressed by the facilitators who were all very





**With an unwavering resolve to serve God and answer His calling for him in higher education, it was perhaps only a matter of time before Ricky found the United Board.**

solid in their knowledge and effective in their approach to teaching. He took home a lot from the facilitators which served him well as a Faculty Dean.

He recounted an almost epiphanic moment at the

Harvard Institute. He was assigned to the same team as the rector of PCU, Rector Djwantoro Hardjito, who's also a participant in the program. One day when they were visiting the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and taking photos on its campus, Rector Djwantoro almost laid himself down on the grass in order to take a picture of him from a low angle. He was first shocked by the Rector's prostrating himself before him and then saw that as a vivid example of servant leadership and that one's stature is not measured by height.

Ricky still has a lot on his plate. But his priorities have never been different—God, PCU. They are also where his loyalty is due. 🙏



## Support our Work in Leadership Development

Dr. Ricky's participation in the Fellows program was supported by several thoughtful donors. The generous support of foundations and individuals make the United Board's signature leadership development programs possible. Through donor 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 you to consider a gift this year to support the United Board's mission and programs. For gift-planning assistance, please contact Trudy Loo, Director of Development, at 1-212-870-2612 or by email: [tloo@unitedboard.org](mailto:tloo@unitedboard.org). Gifts may also be made online at our website: [www.unitedboard.org](http://www.unitedboard.org).



# A Balancing Act Made Easy

The United Board's trilogy of online presentations offers insights on how to integrate teaching, research and service



Teachers teach. Researchers do research. Academics teach, do research and, in addition, perform services to their institutions or communities. This tripartite portfolio is the expected competences of educators. However, balancing these three functions can be challenging especially in view of the different emphases placed by different institutions (e.g., more research to meet ranking needs) and other administrative tasks given to educators. It is therefore of vital importance that institutions sustain their academic staff through faculty development.

The United Board organized the Scholars Symposium and the Faculty Development Forum in 2022 to address these seemingly competing functions demanded of academics. Speakers at these virtual events highlighted the 'Integrated Scholarship' approach to research, teaching, and service.

"For the United Board, a whole person scholar is one who can integrate the three functions of discovery (or research); dissemination (or teaching), and service (or application)," said Dr. Hope Antone, Director of Faculty Development of the United Board. "Keeping

them connected and mutually enriching constitutes a hallmark of whole person education."

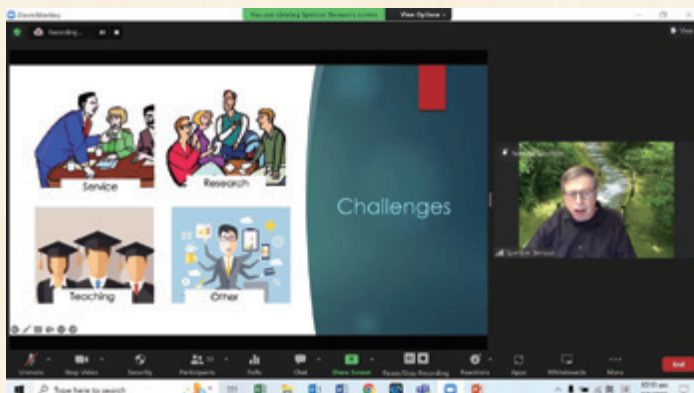


At the Scholars Symposium on 7 September 2022 titled 'Integrating Research-Teaching-Service: Finding Balance', Dr. Spencer A. Benson (left), founder and director of Education Innovations International Consulting, spoke of the need to balance the three functions of teaching & mentoring, research,

and service. He affirmed that the primary mission of a university is teaching and mentoring. Unfortunately, research is often seen as what counts the most since its purpose is to promote the university through ranking. Moreover, while service is expected, it is often not recognized or rewarded.

To survive and thrive, or to go from struggling to





balancing the three functions, a member of academia has to see the connections and not the disparateness among them. The trick is therefore not to treat them as distinct responsibilities that need to be dutifully performed one after the other but as connected programs or activities where resources can be leveraged and outputs shared.

Always succinct in presentation and practical in approach, Dr. Benson then offered up some tips for making those connections cost-effectively. For example, Teaching and Research can be connected by making one's research part of the course contents and having students work in the research team. Similarly, Research and Service can be connected by joining a research collaboration within and outside one's department and getting involved with community service related to one's research interest, and Teaching and Service can be connected by integrating service learning into a course.



With the help of Dr. Enrique Oracion (left), director of research and professor of anthropology and sociology at Silliman University, the United Board conducted in 2021 a survey of faculty development practices to understand how institutions hone their faculty members' competences in research, teaching, and service.

Seventy-one respondents from 46 institutions had participated. The results were presented by Dr. Oracion in the first part of the Faculty Development Forum on 2 November 2022 under the theme 'Challenges and Practices of Integrated Scholarship in Asian Higher Education', which showed that teaching received slightly more attention in the institutions' capacitation and professional advancement activities; research received more attention through the provision of incentives; while service got the lowest attention.

While it may not be possible to have an equally balanced proportion of teaching, research, and service, Dr. Oracion suggested that a meaningful infusion of research outputs into teaching and community service may subsequently flow back to enrich teaching quality. Service learning, he concluded, is a good platform for enabling students to participate in research, teaching and service in the wider community.




In the second part of the Faculty Development Forum, Dr. Gray Kochhar-Lindgren (left), director of the Common Core of the University of Hong Kong, used the Möbius Strip—a topological model that makes no distinction between beginning and end and between surface and inside—as an image

for integrated scholarship that weaves together what looks like different things but with coalescing moments. He described integration as an ongoing navigation within the university in multiple scales, and the pathways leading in and out of the university. Therefore, integrating teaching, research, and service involves thinking with all the constituents—faculty members, administrators, students, and partners.

Integration does not necessarily mean having the three functions in equal shares, as educators have different areas of interest and levels of capacity. But they need to enhance their capacity across these areas as they move through life, Dr. Kochhar-Lindgren stressed. He pointed to the university's mission—whole person education in any language—as a compass and leverage for integration and change. Integration means moving away from disciplinary silos, and realizing that today people, scholars included, inhabit a networked world.

Recent and current scholars of the United Board Faculty Scholarship Program attended the virtual Scholars Symposium while institutional representatives attended the Faculty Development Forum.

"Following the success of these talks, the United Board will soon launch a faculty development grant program on 'Integrated Scholarship Addressing the Sustainable Development Goals' for institutions to demonstrate their commitment to enabling their faculty to keep a good balance and make fruitful connections of teaching, research, and service," said Hope. 



# Going Intelligent and Going Generative

## ***No more stacks, opening hours, or “Quiet!” signs***

It is no exaggeration to say that the pandemic of 2020–2022 has ushered in completely the age of remote learning. In fact, knowledge transfer of any form has taken refuge on the cyberspace during the lockdowns of campuses and desertion of conference venues, churning out a massive repertoire of digital materials including videos, online courses and webinars recordings.

To make access to its rich and enlarging resource of digital materials open, the United Board has launched a Digital Library on its website. Not only videos of lectures, seminars and online courses offered by the United Board are available on the portal, but other materials relating to the United Board including past publications and reports, application, games and multimedia, and archives are only a click away.

No library card is required for access to the United Board Digital Library at: <https://unitedboard.org/learn-more/digital-library/>

## ***Get the knack, get the policy***

Digital contents and programming is one of the key initiatives of the United Board. Its latest offerings include the Digital Policy Speakers series, which is a six-part series and a ready resource for new and experienced policymakers to discover best practices from higher education administrators and policy makers in Asia and beyond.



The United Board sees a digital policy as a policy framework which guides how colleges and universities source and use digital technology for teaching, learning, and campus administration. It is hoped that this series will serve as a tool for higher education policymakers who are looking to develop digital policy which is both adaptive to changing conditions and in alignment with the principles and standards of their institutions.

The series is accessible at the United Board Digital Library.

## ***Staking out the grounds***

Near the end of last year, generative AI software such as ChatGPT and other synthetic media suddenly burst upon the scene and awakened academics and non-academics alike to some serious questions and pressing challenges.




The United Board responded to and participated in this emerging debate by organizing the “AI-powered Tools in Higher Education” series, to explore the positioning of AI tools in higher education, with perspectives from Asia-based and international faculty.

The series brought together speakers with different perspectives on the rapid entry of Generative AI systems into society and the consequences for this technology in the education sectors.

The series includes two webinars and a hybrid in-person/virtual conference and is co-presented with the Center for Holistic Teaching and Learning of the Hong Kong Baptist University.

The first session, “Generative AI: Artificial Intelligence and Teaching and Learning in Higher Education”, got off to a brilliant start on 20 March. About 350 from nine countries attended the webinar. 96% of the participants rated the contents excellent.

It was followed by the second session: “Rethink, Revolve and Reshape: Artificial Intelligence in Teaching and Assessment” on 2 May, and the last: “International Conference on Teaching with AI” on 2 June.

All the sessions in the series can be reviewed at the United Board Digital Library. 



# Changed Fabrics, Unchanged Fidelity

## UB-ICU scholars virtually revisit ICU campus in decades



(Photo courtesy of International Christian University)

The first cohort of UB-ICU scholars set foot on the scenic campus of International Christian University (ICU) in Mitaka, Tokyo in 1953. In a period of over 30 years, the United Board's scholarship scheme had supported 112 scholars in their undergraduate studies at ICU. Seventy years later, on 30/31 March 2023, some of the scholars revisited the campus through Zoom from around the world—Hong Kong, Australia, Canada and the US. They were greeted and given a tour of the old landmarks and new facilities by two current ICU students—Marco and Christy (above)—from Hong Kong.

Prof. Robert Eskildsen, Vice President for Academic Affairs of ICU, welcomed the scholars who had joined from different corners of the world. He remarked that despite the rapid changes in campus landscape in the last few years, ICU has remained unchanged in its emphasis on diversity and bilingualism, which made studying and living on its campus so much enjoyable and rewarding as it has always been.

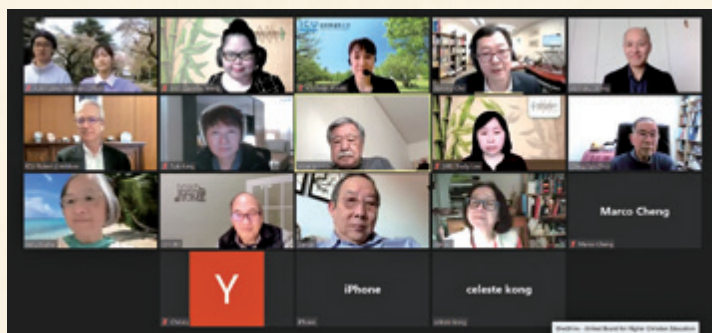
Mr. Ricky Cheng, Interim President of the United Board, thanked the participants for joining and ICU for organizing the virtual tour. He noted the long and sustained efforts of the United Board in supporting Hong Kong students to study at ICU and was happy to see the many distinctive achievements and services of the scholars in their respective fields. He also complimented ICU for its unwavering championing of liberal art education which makes it a kindred spirit to the United Board with its emphasis on whole person education. He believed that in a fast-changing world powered by technology and the internet, the insistence on educating the whole person would make all the differences.

The scholar-alumni were taken to see the new buildings and facilities—the gym and the pool, the new D-kan (student hall), the Shin-kan (arts and sciences hall), the new dormitories, etc., which make ICU stay top of the educational experience it offers. They were all delighted but did not fail to note the changes in student life





(Photo courtesy of International Christian University)



between then and now. For example, students who live in the dormitories are no longer required to share duties to clean the common facilities of the dormitories. What has not changed is ICU's bucolic and intimate environment for growing intellect and relationships.

While the peak of the cherry blossom season might have passed, the expectations and enthusiasm of the visiting scholars had never been higher. <sup>H</sup>

## Staff News

### Program Officer

Rachel Zhang joined the United Board programs team in December 2022. Based in Hong Kong, Rachel is responsible for the oversight and coordination of the United Board Fellows Program, while liaising with the network institutions and supporting leadership development.

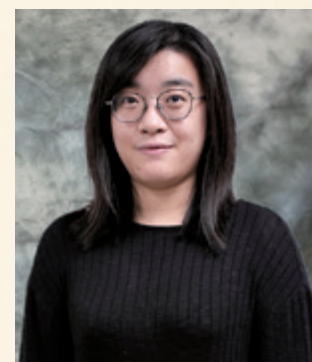


Rachel has been passionate about empowering young people through international education and development. She gained international and local program experience from her previous work managing the KAUST discovery scholarship and Fellowship programs at the Institute of International Education and implementing a portfolio of start-up projects at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) for promoting education, research and professional training.

Rachel holds an MA in Applied Linguistics from Hunan University in China, and a Master of Public Health from the Faculty of Medicine of CUHK. She's travelled extensively and lived and worked in mainland China, Thailand, the US, and Hong Kong.

### Development Associate

Celeste Kong joined the United Board's Hong Kong Office in October 2022 as Administrative Assistant. She has been internally transferred to the post of Development Associate from March, 2023. Celeste is responsible for managing the donor database, gift processing and producing print and digital marketing and communications materials.



Celeste came to the organization with experience in administration, hospitality and customer relations. She received a BA in Media and Communications from the University of Sussex.



## The United Board Welcomes its New President

The United Board appointed Dr. Pareena G. Lawrence, a distinguished economics scholar and senior university executive, as its President commencing 1 June 2023.

Dr. Christian Murck, Chair of the Board of Trustees, said, “The Search Committee, after undertaking a thorough review of highly qualified candidates from a global search, identified Dr. Lawrence as the best possessing the vision, leadership qualities, and experience that it looked for. Dr. Lawrence will be bringing over 25 years of leadership experience and knowledge of the global higher education sectors to pursue and fulfil our long-cherished mission in the changing landscape of Christian higher education in Asia.”

Dr. Pareena G. Lawrence began her academic career at the University of Minnesota Morris, where she was promoted to Professor of Economics and Management and later Division Chair of Social Sciences.

Dr. Lawrence’s academic leadership was demonstrated by her successive appointments as first Provost and Dean of Augustana College, Illinois, and then President of Hollins University, Virginia. She has extensive experience in working with donors, alumni, corporations, grantors, foundations, administrators, and academics for the overall advancement of the universities. She has also actively engaged and been successful in raising funds to meet the development needs of the universities as well as enhancing the learning environment and career prospect of their students.


Before joining the United Board, Dr. Lawrence was a Senior Fellow at the Office of International Affairs of Yale University, overseeing Yale’s global partnerships while focussing on regions in South and Southeast Asia. She helped to lay down a solid foundation for the merging of Yale-NUS, Yale’s only overseas collaborative campus, as part of the National University of Singapore as its honors college.

Dr. Lawrence has been a member of many national higher education organizations and boards and deeply engaged with research and trends in higher education, including

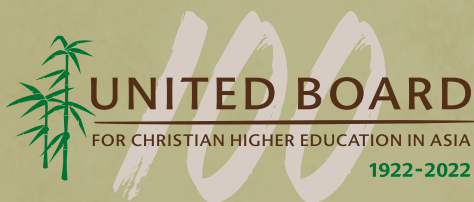


faith-based institutions, and in best practices to enhance student success and learning.

Dr. Lawrence said, “I am thankful for being given this incredible opportunity to leverage my experience, skills, and passion and serve the region I call ‘home’ and help institutions better serve their students’ intellectual, spiritual, and ethical development. I hold close to my heart such transformational educational experience which is also a hallmark of the goals and mission of Christian higher education of the United Board.

“I look forward to working with the United Board colleagues in the offices in New York and Hong Kong and the consultancy office in Chennai, India to take the worthy work of the United Board forward into the second century of its service.” 





**United Board for  
Christian Higher Education in Asia**

**New York Office**


475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1221  
New York, NY 10115  
U.S.A.  
1.212.870.2600


**Hong Kong Office**


1/F, Chung Chi College Administration Building  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Shatin, New Territories  
Hong Kong  
852.3943.4215

**Chennai Consultancy Office**

Riverlands Hostel Building  
Women's Christian College  
51, College Road  
Nungampakam  
Chennai — 600 006  
India  
91.44.29819718

 [www.unitedboard.org](http://www.unitedboard.org)

 [info@unitedboard.org](mailto:info@unitedboard.org)

 [UnitedBoard](https://www.facebook.com/UnitedBoard) 