

UNITED BOARD

# HORIZONS

DECEMBER 2023

UNITED BOARD FOR CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ASIA



NEW

LEAF

DEEP

ROOTS



Also in this issue:  
**United Board Annual Report 2022-2023**



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## Message from the President

I joined the United Board on 1 June 2023, and have spent my first few months becoming acquainted with the work of this unique organization, learning from staff, trustees (current and former), friends, donors, and colleagues from our network institutions. The more I learn, the more excited I am about our future. We have a strong foundation upon which to build and we have a dedicated team with whom to build it.

While being in the United States this August, I met with donors, friends, and former trustees from New York and New Jersey, and then traveled to California, Ohio, and Michigan to meet others.

I have also had the privilege to meet with some of our partner institutions in the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, South Korea, and Hong Kong. The geographic footprint of the United Board is enormous — our partners span 16 countries/regions and six time zones, and our donors and friends are spread across three continents — what brings us together as a community are our shared values and goals.

In all these meetings, the love and passion that our friends have for the United Board was evident. I was moved deeply by their thoughtfulness and care as we talked about how to make our work even more meaningful and impactful. Everywhere I traveled I saw genuine interest in delivering quality education and making full use of the knowledge, resources, and educational experiences available through the United Board.

Through it all, I am learning that the values and the legacy of the United Board are shared, cultivated, and lived each and every day all across the globe.

I am pleased to share with you the 2023 winter edition of *Horizons*. This issue will give you more information about the travels and connections I have already mentioned. Additionally, you will find stories about our friends and alumni who are impacting their communities, and you will also read highlights of recent United Board events and programs.

Each story captures the passion that the United Board and those connected to us exhibit in their communities while advancing Christian values. For example, you will read about Ruth Daugherty, who has dedicated her life to

the cause of equality far beyond the walls and influence of her church. Ruth is a former trustee and vice chair of the United Board and she was a driving force behind many of the United Board's initiatives in the 1980s and 90s.



There are other stories of the lives and experiences of our emerging leaders, scholars, and fellows. You will get a glimpse into how the United Board has enriched their lives and how we have prepared these early-career academics and administrators to have greater impact than they could ever have imagined. Their stories are inspiring.

Our Centennial celebrations, which you will read about in this issue, concluded with a flourish in June. Over 300 alumni, friends, partners, and former staff joined our trustees and staff at a gala dinner in Hong Kong. I am grateful to all those who came from near and far to make our celebration so memorable. Special thanks must also be given to the university presidents and rectors who shared their hopes and vision about the future of higher education at the Presidents' Forum held during the celebrations.

This issue of *Horizons* also includes our Annual Report for 2022-2023. I am pleased to report that we have emerged from the pandemic stronger financially, clearer in vision, and back up to full speed delivering programs and planning new initiatives.

We are able to do this because of your support. I am grateful to each one of you.

I am confident that together we have entered our second century ready for the challenges and opportunities that await us.

Wishing you a blessed holiday season filled with hope, love, joy, and peace.

**Pareena Gupta Lawrence**



# A Lifetime of Fighting for Equality

## Ruth Daugherty's Legacy for the Church and the United Board



*Ruth Daugherty in front of her home in Lancaster, Pennsylvania*

Ruth A. Daugherty (née Sheaffer) has spent a lifetime volunteering in service of her Christian faith and for equality for all people.

As the daughter of a pastor, her strong Christian values can be easily explained. Her passion for inclusiveness,

on the other hand, may seem anomalous for someone raised in a segregated community in Virginia during the Depression. But, fortunately, it was a belief instilled in her from an early age by her mother.

“My mother was very inclusive and didn’t make any

distinctions between people, which had a great impact on me,” Ms. Daugherty recalls. “Our parsonage was located about a block from the railroad track. People would often jump off the box cars before they got into town to look for some food. My mother would always invite them to sit down on the porch and feed them whatever food we had to give, whoever they were. That was the first time I saw African-American people.”

### ***Small town. Big heart.***

The Sheaffer family would later move to a West Virginia town with less than a thousand residents. Living in such a small town posed challenges to someone with aspirations to go to college, like Ms. Daugherty had, and required her to take initiative to expand her horizons.

“I would read almost any book I could get my hands on,” Ms. Daugherty says. “I was fascinated by other cultures, and particularly liked reading about Asia and Africa. Of course, I also read the Bible through from beginning to end.”

Her studiousness paid off, as she graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in English and Modern History from London Valley College in Pennsylvania and worked as a high school teacher. She also met and married Robert Daugherty, then a seminary student and later a Pastor at several United Methodist Churches. The couple would have three children—Beth, Carole, and Steven—and Ms. Daugherty ended her teaching career to focus on motherhood.

In 1956, she began volunteering with the United Methodist Women. Early in her time with the Pennsylvania chapter, she participated in preparing resolutions and successfully working for the church to accept the ordination of women. Later, she moved onto the national Women’s Division, where she was eventually elected president.

She remained actively involved with the United Methodist Women for decades, taking part in medical and educational missionary trips to India, Pakistan, Nepal, Taiwan, and other regions of Asia and Africa. These experiences helped her to further build her understanding of other cultures, not just through the missionary work itself but also through her interactions with her fellow volunteers.

“The Women’s Division had the mandate to be inclusive,” Ms. Daugherty explains. “We had African-Americans, we had Asian-Americans, we had people from Native American backgrounds. I learned from their lives and how they had been harassed for who they were. Hearing about their experiences helped me to form a passion for preventing others from having those types of experiences.”

### ***From United Methodist to United Board***

Ms. Daugherty brought this passion for equality to the United Board. Her service with the United Board began in 1979 as a United Methodist Church representative and continued as a trustee-at-large and vice-chair until 1999.

A notable moment from her time with the United Board occurred in 1986, when she led an official delegation to China after the country had opened up earlier that decade.

“We learned that the educational system in China at that time was very heavily male,” Ms. Daugherty says. “So one thing we did was insist that some women be included when they gave scholarships for people to come to the United States. We also formed a Women’s Educational Concerns Committee to look at how women could be involved more in education and get the opportunities that they needed.”





Left photo: Ruth (third from right on front row) at a United Board event in the late 1980s  
Right photo: Ruth with Ms Trudy Loo, Director of Development of the United Board



Ms. Daugherty found collaborating with the other trustees on the United Board to be incredibly rewarding and valuable to her personal development—and the feeling was very much mutual. As Paul Lauby, United Board General Secretary from 1970 to 1990, recalls in his book *Sailing on Winds of Change*, “Ruth’s practical sense and her ability to see issues clearly were of great value to the Board, which she served in many capacities. She was especially helpful as a member of the women’s concerns task force and as a Board representative to a number of Asian consultations.”

As her time with the United Board came to a close, Ms. Daugherty was pleased to see the organization moving towards increased Asianization of its ranks.

“At first, there was only a few people from Asia who were on the Board. So we were a little inclusive, but if we were making policies and directions, the people who are affected by them needed to have more input. I was very pleased to see the improved representation of the United

Board and the opening of an office in Hong Kong as well as the one in New York.”


### Still busy with equitable deeds

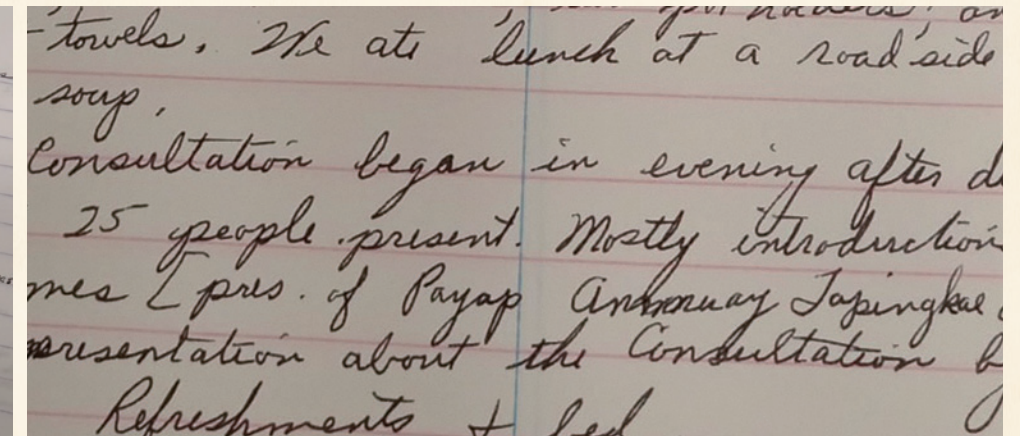
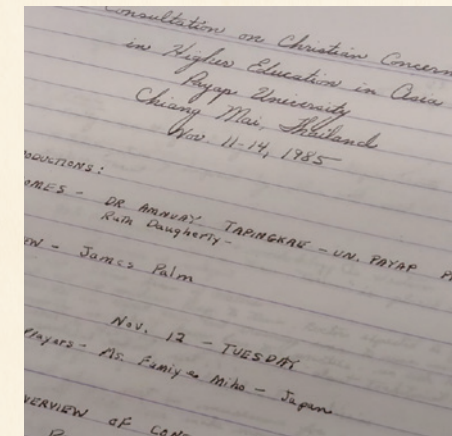
To this day, Ms. Daugherty continues to support the United Board with donations to women’s leadership programs.

“Women’s education is important because we need both women and men. They have different abilities and ways of seeing things. If you deprive one, you diminish the whole,” Ms. Daugherty says. “We need to give women the right to develop their own potential, so women and men can work together and really make the world a better place.”

In recognition of her decades of service, Ms. Daugherty has been recognized with Doctor of Humanities degrees from both Shenandoah University and Albright College. She continues to fight for equality through current activities such as serving as chair of EMBRACE — an interfaith group assisting individuals, faith communities,

and organizations in welcoming lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA) persons—and advocating for equitable funding for public schools in her state.

“If we can look at each other as equals and listen, it doesn’t always mean we’re going to agree, but we can at least respect the fact that we all have something to offer,” Ms. Daugherty notes. “That’s my hope for the future.” 



Above photos: from the pages of a trip diary to China and Thailand in 1985 kept by Ruth. Ruth has given the diary to the archives of the United Board kept at Yale Divinity School Library

## Consider an Endowment Fund to Support United Board Programs



Endowment support allows the United Board mission and programs to thrive and expand. As we enter our second century of work, please consider an endowed fund to support our programs, our network institutions across Asia and areas important to you. To explore how to do so, 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 donor-established endowment funds.



# A Grand Finale to Centennial Celebrations



The celebrations of the United Board’s Centennial reached its finale on 16 June 2023 in Hong Kong. In the Grand Ballroom of YMCA, United Board trustees and staff welcomed over 130 friends, partners, donors, university presidents and leaders from the religious and higher education sectors of Hong Kong and other Asian countries and regions. New friends met and old ones reconnected, all in joyous celebration of this special milestone of the United Board’s century of service to Christian higher education in Asia.



In his welcoming remarks, Dr. Christian Murck, Chair of the Board, said: “We enter our second century with a renewed period of optimism and a determined sense that we’re facing a very dynamic environment together with partners, who are equally committed to the values that we espouse and work with us to try to define and improve our programs as we go forward.”






The evening also saw the inauguration of the new President of the United Board, Dr. Pareena Lawrence. In her speech, Dr. Lawrence said: “I have held many positions in my career. None speaks to the breadth of impact, hope and the opportunity to help transform lives and communities than this: to serve as the President of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia.



“I want to pledge to you that together we will cherish and uphold the legacy of the United Board in sowing the seeds of change for the next generation. With a deep sense of responsibility, I am ready to begin.”



Hosts and guests also enjoyed the joint performance of the United Board Centennial Anthem, *Cherished Moments*, by the Chung Chi College Choir and the Petra Christian University Choir. The mood of the evening was further heightened by a member of the Petra Theatre singing a song from their original musical *11 Questions*, a paean to the education of the whole person through love, empathy, and sacrifice. 





# Taking the Pulse of Higher Education




When so many educational leaders from different countries in the region gathered in one place, as they did for the United Board Centennial celebrations in Hong Kong, who wouldn't think of taking the opportunity to pick their brains on the prospect of higher education? This was what the United Board did on the morning of 16 June 2023—to invite the presidents of its partner institutions to speak at the Presidents' Forum under the theme “Into a New Century of Higher Education”.

Dr. Pareena Lawrence, President of the United Board, welcomed the 40-odd attendees to the Forum and introduced the three panelists in the first session—Fr. Roberto C. Yap, SJ, President of Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines; Dr. Betty Cernol-McCann, President of Silliman University, Philippines; and Prof. Vincent Han-Sun Chiang, President of Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan.



The panelists gave their views on the trends, challenges and opportunities they saw emerging with impact on higher education in Asia. Fr. Yap began by surveying the excitements and anxieties surrounding the adaptation of ChatGPT in higher education, while Dr. Cernol-McCann and Professor Chiang shared the strategies and actions taken at their respective universities to address pandemic and other challenges.

Dr. Anri Morimoto, United Board Trustee and President of Tokyo Woman's Christian University, moderated the second session in which Br. Bernard S. Oca, FSC, President of De La Salle University, Philippines; Prof. Eun Mee Kim, President of Ewha Womans University, South Korea; and Prof. Djwantoro Hardjito, Rector of Petra Christian University, Indonesia took turns to present their views on how students should be prepared for a future world that is characterized by rapid and extreme changes with illuminating examples from their own institutions.

The speakers imparted so much food for thought that they elicited enthusiastic responses from the United Board Trustees and other educational leaders present. Before speakers and audience were invited to the adjoining room to continue the conversations over lunch, they were regaled with a musical performance by the students of Petra Christian University, an uplifting prelude to the gala celebrations in the evening. 



# A Tale of Two United Board Fellows

## Anita X Vinci



A linchpin of the United Board’s service to higher education in Asia is to develop the students intellectually, ethically, and spiritually. To achieve this mission more effectively, the United Board has through its Fellows Program developed the leadership skills of young academics and administrators and broadened their network so as to prepare them for greater responsibilities and high-valued services to their home institutions.

In each cohort of the Fellows Program, the Elisabeth Luce Moore Scholarship is awarded to an outstanding fellow in recognition of exceptional learning and achievement during the one year of leadership development. *Horizons* talked to two recent recipients of the scholarship—Dr. Anita Christine Tiphagne and Mr. Romulo Vinci R. Bueza of the 2019-2020 and the 2021-2022 cohorts, respectively.

### A sampling of exemplars

Anita was raised in Madurai, India and attended Lady Doak College, where she obtained her undergraduate degree in Social Sciences. She also has a Master’s in Social Work and Sociology, and a PhD in Sociology and went on



to teach at Lady Doak for more than 16 years. Besides being Assistant Professor at the Department of Social Sciences, she is actively involved in staff association matters and other functions at the College like service-learning, alumni relations, fundraising, and campus development.

Vinci was born and educated in the small city of Naga in the Philippines. After getting his BA in Philosophy from Ateneo de Naga University, he worked there for a year as assistant to the then president Fr. Joel E. Tabora. When Fr. Tabora moved to head Ateneo de Davao University (ADDU) 13 years ago, Vinci followed his mentor to Davao as Assistant to the President for External Affairs. His other roles include Director of Ateneo Internationalization for Mindanao Office and Program Manager of the Madaris Volunteer Program. Vinci sees his role as a steward of the mission of the university for the good of the community.

### Ingrained humanism

As Anita admits, a social consciousness and activism run in her family. Her father is a human rights lawyer who taught her never to take no for an answer. Her mother

was a teacher whose good work included helping women in distress. Anita began her social engagement in high school in work concerning child labor and refugees. From that time on, she has refused to endorse the buying and display of fireworks if they were produced with the exploitation of children.

One of her role models is her grandmother who was a French missionary doctor who had dedicated her whole life to services in India. She remained unmarried but adopted six children including Anita’s father, who in turn adopted a daughter. Anita continues this streak of altruism in the family by adopting a daughter herself.



She also “adopted” teaching as her profession, as she did not think she had the knack at first but once she started teaching she found she loved it so much that she cannot imagine herself not doing it.

The move from his relatively homogeneous hometown in Naga to Davao opened up new vistas for Vinci. His interest in community and the environment motivated him to pursue an MA in Anthropology at ADDU. He has since developed an abiding interest in disaster anthropology.

Vinci was drawn to disaster anthropology because it looks at how natural phenomena strike at communities and affect lives. He did his research not only in Davao but also in his hometown which knows all kinds of natural hazards such as earthquakes and typhoons. The subject also allows him to examine the milieux—policy, political, economic—under which disasters occur and how individuals and communities perceive, make sense of, and respond to adversities. In studying the forces of nature, he understands more about the workings of the individual and the communal.

Vinci said, “Climate change is ultimately about social justice, for it is the poorest and the most vulnerable segments of society that suffer directly the consequences of our irresponsible treatment of the environment.”

### Change-agents of change-agents

Both Anita and Vinci are driven by a desire to create a better world for the young in their communities. Anita believes that students should not be confined to the classroom but should be disabused of what hides the problems in the real world. Her view of education was influenced by the philosopher Paulo Friere who imprinted in her the idea of a democratic classroom where the teacher carries on dialogues with her students.

She said, “A teacher’s task is to encourage her students to know what’s right from wrong around them and to bring



about changes for the betterment of the community.” She has worked as part of the service-learning team at Lady Doak College which was one way of connecting the classroom to the community. She modestly characterizes her role as that of a facilitator, but in truth she is a change-agent given the charge of many potential change-agents.

Through the Madaris Volunteer Program at ADDU, volunteers are sent to Muslim communities in some of the most backward and forsaken regions in the Philippines to train the teachers there. After several years, Vinci said, seeing the impact the program made on the quality of education in those regions still gave him goosebumps. He is particularly gratified to see the gradual acceptance and recognition of their work by the local people. He also realized that he and the volunteers have something to learn from the indigenous people as understanding of their lives and religions from up close in conversations, prayers, and shared meals has transformative effects on both sides.

**Plates of plenty to take home**

Anita began her program before the pandemic struck and her cohort was able to attend the leadership workshop at Harvard University in 2019. She recalled, “Those




three weeks at Harvard, interacting with the resource persons and all other Fellows, made me rethink myself as a leader and the responsibilities that come with it. It has shaped and strengthened me in many ways. Most of all, I learned that I must not cultivate my students’ mind at the expense of their heart.”

The pandemic deprived Vinci and the others in his cohort of some of the in-person learning opportunities. But the Leadership Seminar at Singapore Management University in June-July 2023 was a treasure trove to open his eye to innovative concepts and remind him of his duty to bring those insights home to benefit his university.

He said, “I was fascinated by some of the innovations being carried out at Singapore Management University such as the Resilience Framework and the Blue Ocean Strategy. I immediately thought of adapting and implementing those at my university.” Upon returning

to Davao, he immediately turned his inspirations into concrete proposals to the president and other units concerned.

Anita agrees that the Leadership Seminar was transformative. In her own words, “All United Board programs have gone beyond the program contents and exceeded all expectations.” She is adamant that she would make the best of the knowledge and network from the Fellows Program to continue to influence young minds and make a difference to the community.

From the stories of Anita and Vinci, it can be seen that the United Board Fellows Program has come to be a breeding ground for young leaders who are serious about putting their vision and energy into actions. This vibrant force which is the United Board Fellows makes the prospect of higher education in Asia, despite the myriad of regional and local challenges, look promising indeed. 





# A Claypot of Theologies, Cultures, and Cuisines

## What's cooking at IASACT 2023?



“Besides the lectures and the daily scholars’ presentations we had to attend, the kitchen was a space in which we came to know each other personally and in a much deeper way,” Dr. Yoshihisa Amae (Yoshi) of Waseda University recalled his experience at the Institute for Advanced Study in Asian Cultures and Theologies (IASACT) 2023.

### A sumptuous summer

After a hiatus of three years due to the pandemic, the United Board was able to deliver IASACT in-person again. IASACT 2023 was held from 15 June to 15 July 2023 at the Divinity School of Chung Chi College at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). The month-long residential program was a melting pot of faiths, cultures, and disciplines. Academic and social activities opened new doors to the 15 scholars from 14 institutions in 11 countries and regions to stimulate their thoughts and enhance their research skills.

This year’s theme “Heritage in Asia” has encouraged the young scholars to rethink and refine their own research interests. Mr. Suwanapech Kongsatja (Kong), a law graduate from Thailand who is now studying for a PhD

at the University of Edinburgh, saw the possibility of extending his scope of study from European legal theory to Thai legal modernity. He was appreciative of the disruptive meeting of minds and disciplines at IASACT 2023 and said, “IASACT provides me with an opportunity to make use of other people’s discourses to nourish my own discourse. It made me rethink what I’m doing.”



Posing with the statue of Tang Junyi, a Chinese Confucian scholar, at New Asia College



IASACT 2023 in front of the Divinity School



Prayer and reflection

Yoshi, Kong and Dr. Andrew Tam, a philosopher and alumnus of CUHK, shared the same floor of the dormitory at the Divinity School and developed a deeper rapport



(From left) Kong, Andrew and Yoshi sampling some local dishes at a local restaurant

not only by their physical proximity but also by their enjoyment of the communal meals they had together at the dormitory and off campus.



**A buffet of budding scholars cum buddies**

For two decades, IASACT has been enabling early-career researchers to come together and form a supportive learning community. It is a multi-disciplinary program where scholars from different disciplines bring their own perspectives to work on the same theme. Yoshi is a political scientist who specializes on Japan-Taiwan relations. But his stay in Hong Kong had made him decide to do a comparative study of the two postcolonial societies of Hong Kong and Taiwan and investigate the politics of colonial nostalgia.

Andrew was intent on working out how eastern theology may contribute to the discussions of western philosophy. Armed with Occam’s Razor, he often played devil’s advocate and challenged his fellow participants in conversations and presentations. Andrew’s contentiousness was an education in itself for Kong, as he has learned to put aside what he’d accepted in order to imagine the unimaginable. In his own words, “I have to unlearn before I can relearn.”

Andrew observed that novices and veterans in the program had something to learn from each other. He cited the example of Dr. Stephen On, a political scientist from Taiwan. While Andrew took inspiration from Stephen’s more traditional scholarship, Stephen got a little help from the younger scholar on the use of PowerPoints in presentation.

Stephen shared the same floor and the communal meals there, which provided a much welcome alternative to canteen food. But at first the kitchen was only sparsely equipped. The gang finally borrowed a rice cooker from a resident there and the kitchen literally heated up. As Yoshi put it, “Securing a rice cooker was our first important achievement!”

**Chefs and sous-chefs**

Not everyone in the program was a regular at their dinner table, but they all knew the others very well from the packed schedule and frequent interactions in the program. Yoshi would prefer the physical living arrangement to allow for more social interactions, but he also noted that he’d never laughed so much during those four weeks.

Though the participants came from a diversity of backgrounds and each was pursuing his/her own research interest, Yoshi, Kong and Andrew were able to make

new friends and have conversations with everyone. The program was structured and led in a way that can accommodate diverse specialities and approaches. Yoshi realized that he had something to learn from everyone. Andrew agreed, “This program empowers my interdisciplinary and communication skills.”

They were in particular impressed by the grace and thoughtfulness evinced by Prof. Kung Lap-yan, dean and mentor of IASACT. Prof. Jeane Peracullo, another IASACT mentor, was most effective and caring in her mentoring and management of the projects and presentations. Combining intellectual focus with a freedom to explore and experiment, Professor Kung and Professor Peracullo encouraged curiosity and exchange. In Yoshi’s words, “The IASACT experience was an invitation to think of, to envision, and to try out new things.”



Andrew gives his view at a presentation

**Savoring the flavor of each moment**

Yoshi, Kong and Andrew savored every moment during those four weeks of scorching heat in Sha Tin. But to Yoshi, a veteran field researcher, his IASACT experience really came alive when he got off at Tai Po Market and saw the great varieties of fresh vegetables, seafood and poultry on offer there.

They began to frequent the market and fell into an unspoken division of labor—buying different food from different sections of the market, cooking, and doing the dishes. Kong observed that they had been casual but organized and equal in contribution. His Thai-style specialties—sea bass in lemon and garlic, and spicy minced pork—had left Yoshi begging for more and would definitely remain in his tasting notes for a long time.

Conversations began to flow in all directions after the meals. They would talk about their own research, families, current affairs, dreams and follies. No topic was off-limit. Though Andrew only contributed to the menu sparingly with his Portuguese chicken, he more than made up for that with his after-dinner stories of intercultural dialogues and influences behind specific ethnic cuisines.



Kong puts the finishing on his claypot while Andrew looks on



Kong on top of his pot

Kong’s all-time favorite dish is claypot rice, an ethnic Cantonese delicacy whose endless permutations of ingredients and subtlety in the manner of preparation never fail to delight the taste buds and satiate the guts. Without sounding frivolous, IASACT is an intellectual claypot where raw and not-so-raw talent “cook up” something for themselves by mixing well with other talent. Both claypots demonstrate that the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts. Kong has not forgotten about one ingredient, however: “If IASACT is a dish, Andrew is the wine or spice that kicks up all the flavors of the ingredients.”

Yoshi, Kong and Andrew, like their fellow IASACT scholars, have moved on in their scholarly pursuits. The intellectual stimulations and friendships forged at IASACT 2023 will, however, follow them wherever they go.



“Although I have been involved in IASACT for a number of years, first as associate dean and then as dean, this is the first year I also wore the hat of a mentor and spent time with the scholars on a daily basis,” said Prof. Kung Lap-yan. He was glad to see initiatives being taken among the scholars to organize social events such as a trip to Macau and the Friday potluck dinner where everyone would cook or bring some food for sharing. “The scholars can create learning and social opportunities for themselves. This is what gives each IASACT offering its distinct characteristics and flavor.”





Provide an Unrestricted Gift

Please consider an unrestricted gift to support the United Board’s second century of work and service to Christian higher education in Asia. Your trust in our mission and work ahead is greatly appreciated!



Establish an Endowment Fund

Endowed funds ensure annual support for the needs of future generations of scholars and educators in Asia. Endowments can be permanent or for a specific term. Please contact us to learn more.



Make a gift of appreciated securities

Discuss with your financial planner how donating appreciated securities may result in a larger gift than you may have thought possible to support a United Board program or network institution.

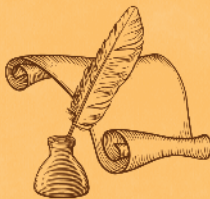


Give from your IRA

Gifts of up to \$100,000 can be made from a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from your IRA in 2023. At the time the gift is made, the donor must be an IRA owner 70½ years or older of age and the funds must be transferred directly from the IRA administrator to the charity. Although there is no tax deduction, the distribution is excluded from income for federal tax purposes. Starting in 2023, donors can also direct a one-time, \$50,000 QCD to a charitable remainder trust or charitable gift annuity as part of recently passed SECURE Act 2.0 legislation.

Make a bequest or other planned gift to the United Board

Legacy gifts are impactful ways to fulfill your philanthropic goals in support of strengthening whole person education in Asia. Please contact Trudy Loo, Director of Development, at [tloo@unitedboard.org](mailto:tloo@unitedboard.org) or (212) 870-2612 to discuss how we can assist with your legacy gift planning and so we may relay our gratitude. Please consult with your tax or financial advisor to determine the tax/financial implications for you and your family. The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia does not provide legal or tax advice.



Legal Name: United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia  
EIN# 13-5562367

FY2023 Financial Review  
(as at 30 June 2022)

Total Support and Revenue\*  
USD

\$ 23,301,859

Total Net Assets  
USD

\$ 152,131,786

Total Expenses  
USD

\$ 9,620,273

\* comprising contributions (both restricted and unrestricted) from individuals, foundation grants and endowment income



FY2023  
Donation Summary

around

400  
Donors

USD

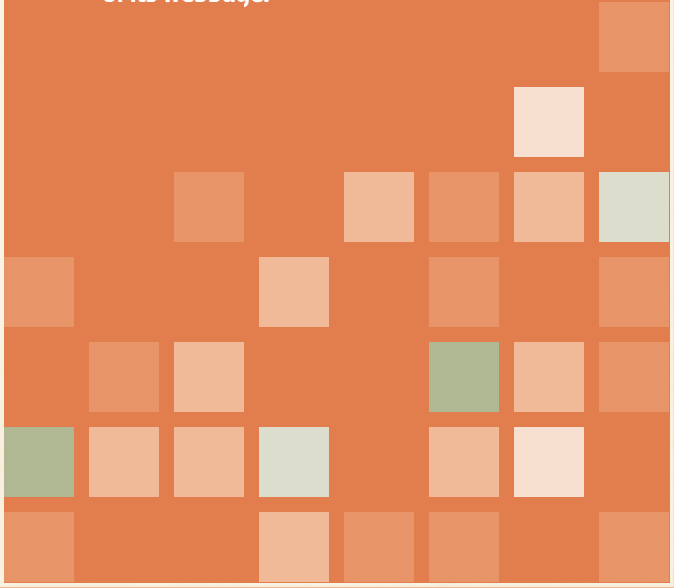
\$ 3,467,983\*\*  
Amount of Designated Gifts Received

USD

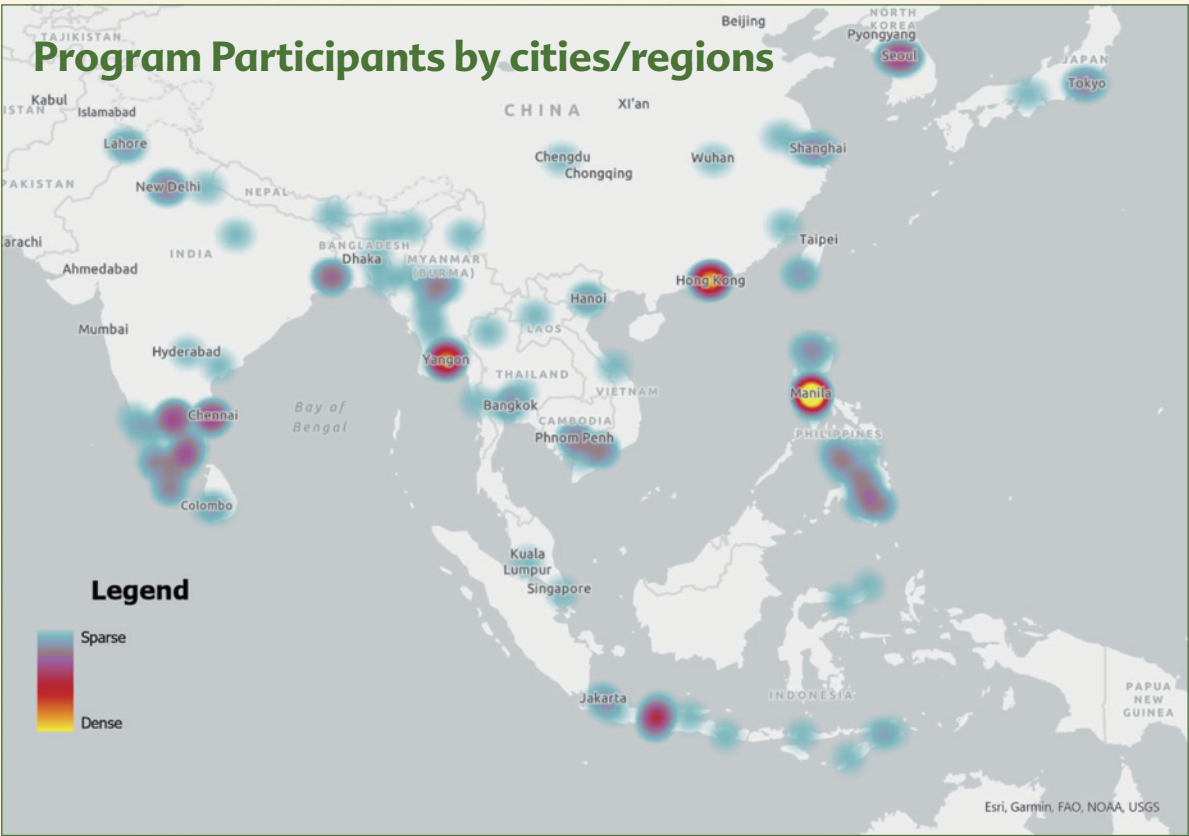
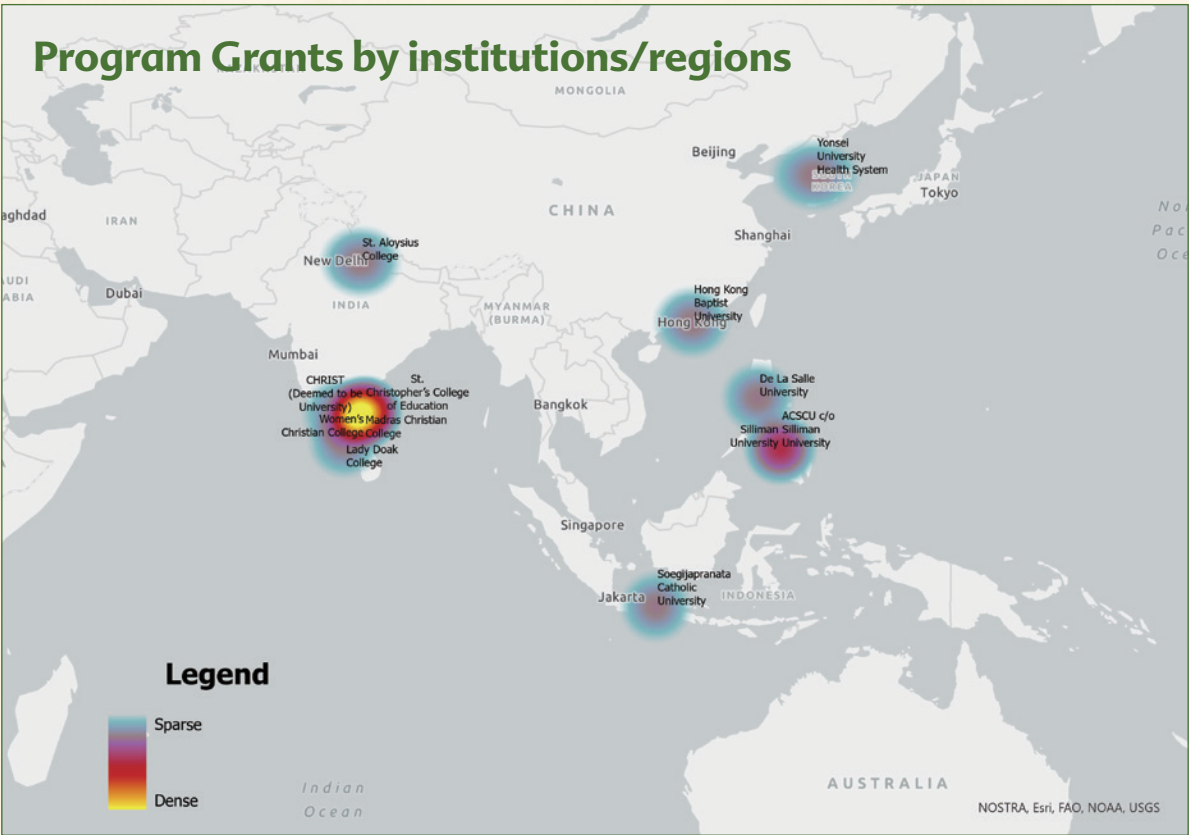
\$ 740,961  
Amount of Endowment Grants Disbursed

\*\* designated for 18 of the United Board’s network institutions

The United Board’s Form 990 can be found on the Financial Statements page of its webpage.







From 13 April to 15 April 2023, 50 heads of higher education institutions from all over India participated in the **Indian Christian Higher Education Leaders Summit** organized by the United Board and held at Women’s Christian College, Chennai.

The United Board had earlier commissioned a study on the impact of Christian higher education institutions in India. Highlights of the results were shared and the following were identified as the challenges for Indian higher education: the quality of and access to education, outdated curriculum, faculty shortage, research and innovation, and internationalization.

Dr. Maher Spurgeon, Consultant, Director of South Asia Programs of the United Board, said, “This Summit provided opportunities for the principals to share their challenges with one another and create a network and fellowship among them.” The impact of the Summit on Indian higher education will be felt for many years to come.

The grand finale to the Summit was a dinner held at Hotel Radisson Blu, Chennai to jointly celebrate the Centennial of the United Board and the anniversaries of four of the United Board’s partners in India, namely, St. Christopher’s College and Union Christian College which also celebrated their centenaries; and Lady Doak College and Stella Maris College which celebrated their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.





The **Asian Academy of Campus Ministry** was a two-week residential training (25 May—8 June 2023) conceived and sponsored by the United Board to strengthen chaplaincy care and services on campus. It also aimed to facilitate a paradigm shift of the role of campus ministry from that of a program-oriented liturgical one to an action/service and program-oriented one. Ateneo de Davao University in the Philippines hosted the Academy for 30 chaplains and campus ministry professionals hailed from 25 institutions in 10 countries and regions in Asia.

Dr. Jeffrey Kuan, United Board Trustee, led the session titled “Theological Perspective of Campus Ministry in the Asian Context”. He introduced the current challenges faced by universities where economic improvement is the usual driving force for pursuing education today. Another

Trustee Dr. Su Yon Pak, in the session titled “Campus Ministers as Meaning Makers”, introduced some useful meaning-making skills such as providing a non-anxious presence, deep listening for spiritual distress, resonance through matching, attunement and ground practice through the arrangement of space or distance.

Dr. Pareena Lawrence, joining the Academy in her first outreach activity since assuming the presidency of the United Board in June, gave out certificates to the participants and resource persons. She was glad to see the participants critically looking into the changing roles of campus ministry and preparing action plans to bring back to their home institutions.

A joint Leadership Seminar for two cohorts of the **United Board Fellows Program** was held from 28




June to 6 July 2023 in Singapore, where the 2019-2020 and the 2021-2022 cohorts gathered at the Singapore Management University (SMU) for an immersive and bonding experience. Forty Fellows from the two cohorts had ample opportunities of up-close interaction and conversations with top leaders and pioneers from SMU, the National University of Singapore, and Singapore Institute of Technology, to learn about Asian university management models and their best practices. During the lectures and activities including a fun-filled cultural night, the Fellows had vibrant discussions and sharing among themselves and with the mentors and staff from the United Board.

Dr. Pareena Lawrence, President of the United Board, addressed the Fellows at the closing ceremony: “From now on, as United Board Fellows, you will be the ambassadors of the United Board brand and the carrier of the seeds of our whole person education mission. I know that you have cherished every moment you have spent in the program, and I exhort you to charge forward on the path ahead with confidence and courage to help build a

better future through the institutions and communities we serve.”

After a lacuna of three years due to the pandemic, the United Board was delighted to deliver the **Institute for Advanced Study in Asian Cultures and Theologies (IASACT)** in-person again. IASACT enables early-career researchers to come together and form a supportive learning community. It is a multi-disciplinary program where scholars from different disciplines come together and work on the same theme from different perspectives.

This year’s IASACT was held from 15 June to 15 July 2023 at the Divinity School of Chung Chi College. The month-long residential program was a melting pot of faiths, cultures, and disciplines. Academic and social activities have opened new doors to the 15 young scholars from 14 institutions in 11 countries and regions to stimulate their thoughts and enhance their research skills. Deep friendships were developed among many who spent time and shared space together enabling them to learn from one another. 





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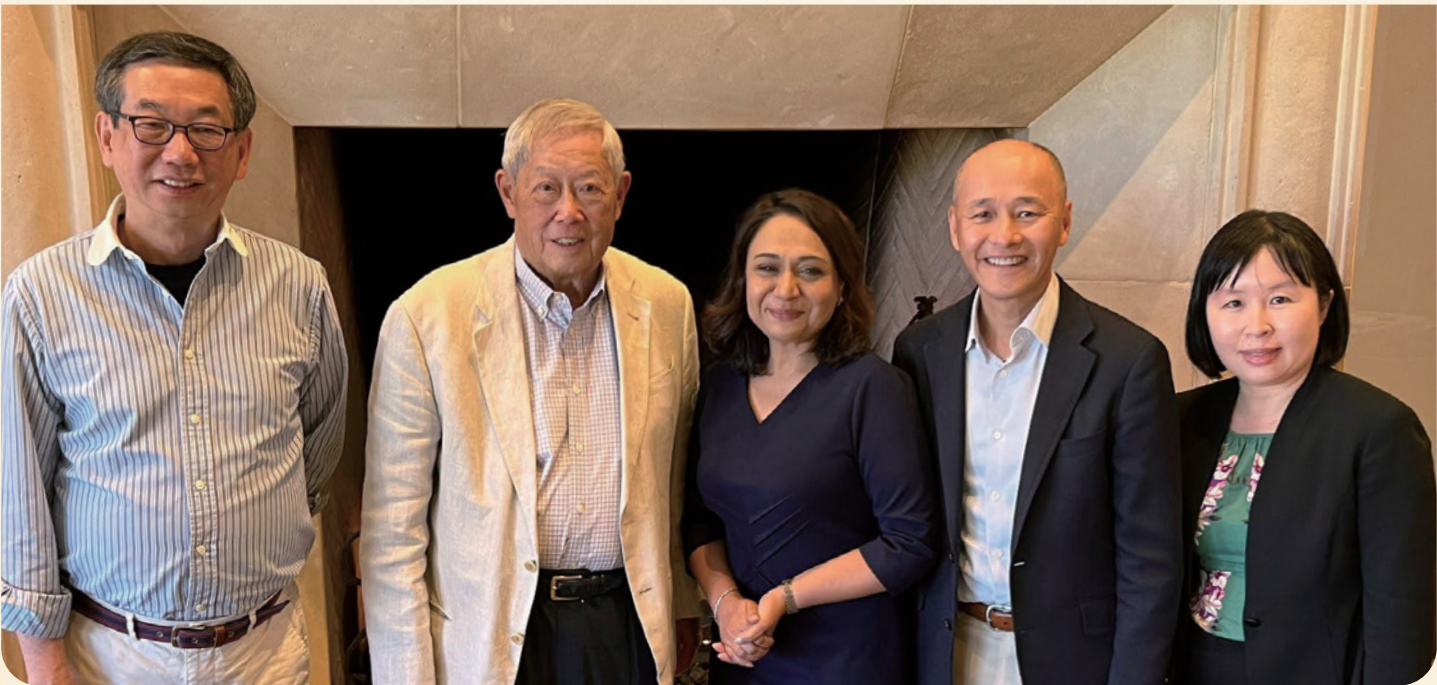
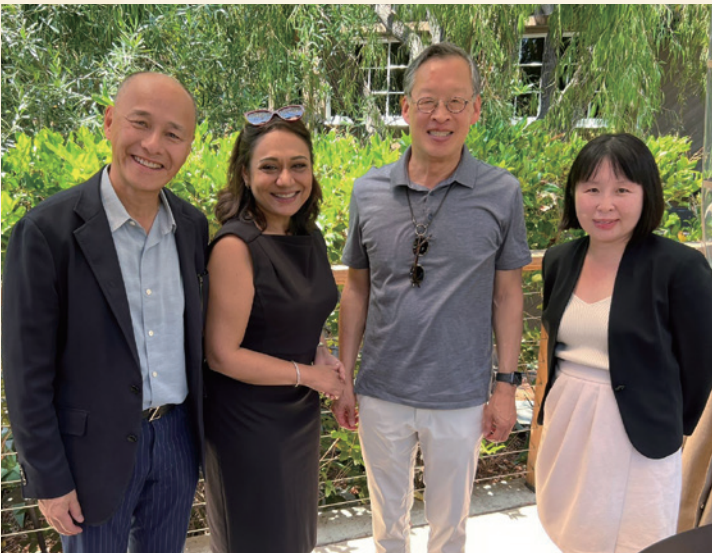
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**Mr. Anthony Ruger\***  
Retired; Former Senior Research Fellow, Center for the Study of Theological Education, Auburn Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL, United States

**Dr. Shailesh Shah**  
Retired; Former Global Chief Risk Officer, Wealth Management, UBS, Zurich, Switzerland

**Dr. Phoebe H. Stevenson**  
Senior Advisor, the American Educational Research Association; Managing Principal, Stevenson & Rosenzweig, LLC., United States

**Dr. Ying Wang**  
Professor and Chair, ICES Council, Fudan University, Shanghai, China

**Dr. Budi Widianarko**  
Professor and Former Rector, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Indonesia

**Dr. Joseph Zolner**  
Adjunct Lecturer on Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA, United States

*\* Retired from the Board on 30 June 2023*  
*\*\* Joined the Board on 1 July 2023*



# UNITED BOARD STAFF AND CONSULTANTS

(as of October 2023)

**Dr. Pareena Gupta Lawrence**  
President

**Mr. Ricky M. Cheng**  
Executive Vice President

**Ms Gladys Malloy**  
Vice President for Finance and Administration

**Mr. Lentson Amos**  
Consultant, Assistant Director of South Asia Programs

**Dr. Hope Antone**  
Director, Faculty Development

**Ms. Jane Chan**  
Program Associate

**Mr. Tommy Cho**  
Director, Communications

**Ms. Pray Eucha**  
Consultant for South Asia—Program Associate

**Ms Cindy Garcia**  
Staff Accountant

**Ms. Celeste Kong**  
Development Associate

**Ms. Nicole Lai**  
Administrative Associate

**Ms. Trudy Loo**  
Director of Development

**Ms. Ava Sewnauth**  
Senior Executive Assistant

**Ms. Louisa So**  
Director of Administration, Hong Kong

**Rev. Dr. Maher Spurgeon**  
Consultant, Director of South Asia Programs

**Dr. Jakarin Srimoon**  
Director, Leadership Development

**Ms. Taeko Suga**  
Program Associate

**Ms. Carmen Wang**  
Development Associate

**Dr. Cynthia Yuen**  
Program Officer

**Ms. Rachel Zhang**  
Program Officer

*(former staff who served any period of time since the last report in December 2022)*

**Ms. Connie Cheung**  
Program Associate  
(until 2 November 2022)

**Mr. Kevin Henderson**  
Director, Digital Content and Programming  
(until 9 June 2023)

**Ms. Karrie Lam**  
Senior Development Officer  
(until 18 December 2022)

**Mr. Raymond Tong**  
Assistant IT Officer  
(until 5 March 2023)

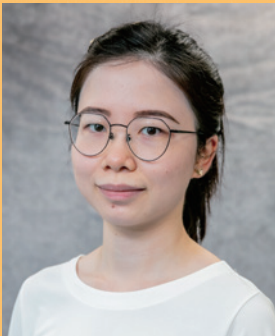
**Ms. Sarah Wong**  
Program Manager  
(until 15 August 2023)

**Dr. Wai Ching Angela Wong**  
Vice President for Programs  
(until 31 May 2023)

## New Staff

### Ms. Nicole Lai, Administrative Assistant

Nicole joined the United Board in 2023. As Administrative Assistant, she provides operational and logistical support to events and programs in the Hong Kong office. She has several years of experience in the hospitality industry. She has been pursuing a course of study leading to a Bachelor of Business Administration degree.



### Ms. Jane Chan, Program Associate

Jane joined the United Board in August 2023. She assists the Vice President for Programs in program management and works closely with the Program Directors and other Program team members in Hong Kong, New York, and the Chennai Consultancy Office. Jane holds an MA in Public Policy and Management from the City University of Hong Kong. Her interests are Public Policy and Public Administration.





## Congratulations to Ricky Cheng!

### CASE recognizes United Board Executive Vice-President for his contribution to institutional advancement



*Ricky receives the award from Sue Cunningham, President and CEO of CASE*

The United Board is so proud that Mr. Ricky Cheng, Executive Vice President, was honored with the 2022 CASE Asia-Pacific Distinguished Service Award in Melbourne, Australia on 17 May 2023.

The CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) Asia-Pacific Distinguished Service Award recognizes inspirational professionals whose accomplishments have made a significant and lasting impact on institutional advancement and whose life and character have earned the respect and admiration of fellow practitioners.

Ricky believes that education is the best way to help people choose their paths in life, as well as an investment that will change lives for future generations. Over the years, Ricky has generously shared his experience in fundraising with many higher education leaders at United Board programs, CASE conferences and on many occasions where he saw a need.

CASE conferred this award on Ricky in recognition of his inspiring leadership, accomplishments, and service to the CASE Asia-Pacific community of practice, and the

development of a strong culture of advancement at the United Board and its network institutions.

Ricky said, “Without the ability and the knowledge to raise precious resources, institutions will continue to struggle and may even be eliminated one day by the fast-changing landscape of higher education. I want to thank CASE for giving me this award and I hope it can inspire more to serve in this special profession.”

Congratulations, Ricky! 🎉



*Photos by www.melissahobbs.com*

## New Staff

### Dr. Jakarin Srimoon Director, Leadership Development

Dr. Jakarin Srimoon joined the United Board in October 2023 and is responsible for developing strategies for and overseeing the leadership development programs, and for supporting partner institutions to implement the programs efficiently and effectively.

Prior to joining the United Board, Jakarin was the Vice President for International Affairs at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok, Thailand and the Founding Dean of its International School of

Management overseeing its campuses in Bangkok, Yangon and Mandalay. Jakarin holds a Doctorate Degree in Economics from Kyoto University, Japan. He was an AFS Exchange student to the United States (1989-90) and a participant of the Ship for Southeast Asian Youth Program (1994). He is also a past fellow of the United Board's Young Faculty Leadership Development Program (2004-2005).



## Obituaries

We mourn the passing of two beloved former trustees who had played pivotal roles in the development of the United Board.

### Dr. Preman Niles (1936-2023)

Dr. Niles, a widely loved and respected figure in the ecumenical community, passed away on 3 August 2023 in London.



During his tenure at the United Board (2003-2013), Dr. Niles had devoted his time and efforts to important ideas and programs, including the Asianization of the United Board, and the Institute for Advanced Study in Asian Cultures and Theologies which has since developed into a signature program of the United Board. He was also centrally involved in the redefinition of Christian Presence as whole person education as the core of the mission of the United Board.

Dr. Niles was a tremendous force for good in the world and would remain in the hearts of the many lives he touched and those at the United Board who had the good fortune of knowing and working with him.

### Dr. Shanti Manuel (1934-2023)

Dr. Manuel passed away on 3 October 2023. Her tenure (1997-2006) coincided with the period in the United Board's development when the organization expanded its programming and geographical reach to South and Southeast Asia with new means of strengthening Christian higher education in Asia. She was the first Indian appointed to the Board of Trustees.



Dr. Manuel served as principal of Lady Doak College in Madurai, India from 1967 to 1993. The Centre for Women's Studies at Lady Doak College was her brainchild. A lifelong advocate of women's education, she has inspired and passed on her vision and passion to many women leaders and educators in India and beyond.

Ms. Elizabeth Abel, Lady Doak College alumna, recalled Dr. Manuel as warm and supportive, an example of “women who wanted education for women.” To Dr. Rani George who was teaching at Lady Doak College when Dr. Manuel was principal, she was a mentor, a good friend and a philosopher.

Our thoughts are with the friends and families of Dr. Niles and Dr. Manuel.





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Christian Higher Education in Asia**

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