Save the Date

SOKA UNIVERSITY’S 12TH ANNUAL PEACE GALA
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2016

Cocktail Reception • Silent Auction
Gourmet Dinner • Live Auction • Entertainment • Dancing

www.soka.edu/giving/annual-peace-gala
Dear Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to this issue of SUA Founders. I hope you enjoy browsing through these pages to take a closer look at Soka University of America (SUA) as I share a few highlights from our spring semester.

In the month of March, many students had the opportunity to participate in several exciting programs including Alternative Spring Break and the United Nations Study Tour. Fifteen students and 3 professional staff volunteered for Alternative Spring Break. They traveled to Washington, D.C. contributing their time to various organizations serving veterans and the homeless. Each year, the ASB group prepares months in advance with fundraising activities to finance their trip and also hold workshops to prepare themselves for their volunteer work.

The 21 students who participated in the United Nations Study Tour took part in a week-long trip to the UN Headquarters in New York City. Their visit made me reflect upon the university founder Mr. Daisaku Ikeda’s annual Peace Proposal submitted to the United Nations on January 26, 2016 entitled, “Universal Respect for Human Dignity: The Great Path to Peace.” Mr. Ikeda shared, “One important function of learning is to enable people to accurately assess the impact of their actions and to empower them to effect positive change.” From these words, I am appreciative that our students have meaningful opportunities to become global citizens that empower and effect positive change.

Also this spring, the wonderful Soka Athletics team and coaches had a fantastic semester. The swim team concluded their season at the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Swimming & Diving National Championships where six Soka swimmers represented the university and achieved great results. We also had three students representing Soka at the NAIA Indoor Track and Field National Championships. I am truly impressed with the growth of our athletic teams under the leadership and care of our Soka coaches.

On May 27, 2016, we held the Commencement Ceremony for the Class of 2016 honoring the academic achievements of both the undergraduate students completing the bachelor’s degree program in Liberal Arts, and the first class of graduate students completing the new master’s degree program in Educational Leadership and Societal Change. We were honored to welcome Commencement speaker Dr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, Nobel Peace Laureate and former President of Costa Rica. In his speech, Dr. Arias shared, “Today, more than ever before, we have the resources and the knowledge to feed the hungry, end preventable disease, and educate our children. We are simply making bad choices about how to spend time, money and power. We are investing too much of our money in our militaries instead of in our schools.” With these words, I am reminded of how fortunate SUA students are to have generous donors investing in Soka education for future generations to come. We are truly indebted to all of you as your generous support directly helps our students receive a quality education.

In closing, we will continue to do our best to offer the level of academic excellence and access for all students, regardless of need, that will foster future leaders for peace. We wish you and your families the very best and thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely,

Daniel Y. Habuki, Ph.D.

President
The twelfth commencement ceremony took place in the Soka Performing Arts Center on Friday, May 27th. The audience of 722 students, friends, family, faculty and donors watched as global citizens received their diplomas.

The ceremony began with the Soka student choir singing the National Anthem. President Danny Habuki provided a warm welcome followed by a message from the university founder Daisaku Ikeda, which was read by Dr. John Heffron, Dean of Students and Director of the M.A. Program.

Dr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, former President of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace Laureate, delivered the commencement address titled “The Test of Our Civilization.” The crowd cheered as Dr. Tomoko Takahashi, Dean of the Graduate School, presented six graduates to receive their Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and Societal Change, and Michael Weiner, Assistant Dean of Faculty, presented 99 graduating seniors to receive their Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Arts.

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Four students were chosen by their classmates to represent the Class of 2016 by speaking at the ceremony. Prince Heto, Hiromi Hashimoto, Jonathan Junqua and Kimberly Mullenix shared comments about their experiences at Soka, their appreciation of the friendships they experienced with their classmates and their hopes for the future.

President Habuki then presented Bryanna Streeter with the prestigious Founder’s Award, the highest honor given to a student by Soka. A surprised Bryanna thanked her parents, family, friends, professors and donors for their support.

The student choir and orchestra concluded the ceremony with a moving performance of “Light of Hope” created by Daisaku Ikeda and Wayne Green.

Following the commencement ceremony, graduates celebrated with their families, friends, faculty and staff during the traditional dessert reception on the lawn.
First Graduate Class of the 2016 M.A. Program

Commencement Student Speakers

Prince Heto
Hiromi Hashimoto
Jonathan Junqua
Kimberly Mullenix
Learning about diversity and its practical value for the realization of peace in the world is one of the most important things Alexander Aldarondo (’07) learned at Soka University of America. Living on the Soka campus pushed him past his comfort zone. His professors inspired him to trust in his potential and brought out his voice as a writer. He says, “The courses never failed to pick at my brain, challenge my understanding of humanities, and expand my passion for learning. I find it easy to understand and collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds because of my experience at Soka, and I feel comfortable handling differences and mediating conflict.”

After graduating from Soka, he used every opportunity to learn about education and gain experience as a teacher. Alexander went to the University of Massachusetts in Boston because the program offered one-year hands-on teacher training in urban public schools. He received his Master’s in Education in 2010.

As a young boy Alexander had a troubled school experience. He often felt disempowered and incompetent as a student. His relationship with education changed when he arrived at Soka. Upon graduation he decided to use his knowledge and experience to transform education in Puerto Rico and to make it possible for young people to experience humanistic student-centered education.

Today, Alexander is the founder and director of ExAlt Corporation, Puerto Rico’s first Agile Learning Center, where young people use their passions and strengths to design their own learning experiences. At ExAlt they harness powerful tools for self-organization and intentional culture creation, tools that allow students to develop powerful, nurturing relationships while defining and working toward their own goals.

Alexander currently lives in San Juan, Puerto Rico.
On Their Way to Change the World

In May, these six SUA Graduate School students received their M.A. in Educational Leadership and Societal Change.

Jessica Bridges
Lakewood, CO

“After Soka I plan to pursue a Ph.D. in Education in the Social Foundations of Education program at Oklahoma State University. I hope to apply what I have learned at SUA to help people think differently about how education functions in society.”

Alankrita Chhikara
New Delhi, India

“I am eternally grateful to the benefactors whose generous contributions made it possible for me to attend the M.A. program. I graduate from the program with the intellectual and emotional ability to take on educational leadership roles while maintaining my optimism during these difficult times for educators and the society at large. Next I will be pursuing a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction at Purdue.”

Prince Paa-Kwesi Heto
Kpando, Ghana

“Through my experience at Soka, I have acquired a foundational knowledge and deeper appreciation of the power of education as a force for lasting and effective societal change. I am leaving Soka with the determination to help develop innovative and humane policies.”

Jamie Haynes
Austin, TX

“My future plans are pursuing a Ph.D. in Education Policy and Planning at The University of Texas at Austin where I seek to apply my learning from Soka through influencing public policy at the state level toward more equitable outcomes for students with disabilities and students of color. In building on the broad foundation SUA provides me, I will continue to focus on the impact of school choice policy and study practitioner action research.”

Vicki Mokuria
Dallas, TX

“After graduating, I plan to attend Texas A&M and begin to work on a doctorate degree in education. My goals include: 1) using my education to teach future educators, based on principles of Soka education; 2) collaborate with other educators to imbue principles of Soka education in schools; 3) work with others to develop a “Culture of Peace towards Global Citizenship” curriculum that can be used with educators and parents; and 4) polish my own life and heart so I can be a warm and supportive educator, mother, grandmother, and friend!”

Stephanie Samaniego
Dallas, TX

“I plan to share my degree in educational leadership and societal change with the world by striving to make a change in Latin American education and to promote the diversity of indigenous cultures that exist in the world. I want to understand how I, along with others, can support the survival of these groups and their significant place in this world.” Stephanie has received a Fulbright U.S. Student Program grant to teach English in Ecuador.”
Henry Rollins greeted a sold-out crowd at the Soka Performing Arts Center on February 17, as part of Critical Conversations @ Soka, a community speakers series founded to ignite ideas and to stimulate conversations across campus and throughout Orange County. Fans traveled from as far away as Colorado to see Henry.

Rollins is celebrated as the former front man for both Black Flag and Rollins Band and is also well known for his work as an actor, author, publisher, and spoken word artist. A solitary traveler with insatiable curiosity, he favors the road less traveled locales in places such as Nepal, Sri Lanka, Siberia, North Korea, South Sudan, and Iran. On stage, he brought one of his popular spoken word performances – or “talking shows,” as he calls them – offering a mix of political commentary and personal anecdotes, humor, outrage, and pop culture, along with a resonant message concerning the importance of global citizenship and the need to understand “the other” so that we won’t fear or turn on one another.

“In my mind, people will basically skew towards moral decency, kindness, and generosity if you put them in an environment with which they can do all of that,” he said. “If you pressurize them, they will skew towards survival and they will climb over you to get out of the ditch. If you want to make the world a better place, you have to put fewer people under pressure. For me to really understand that, I knew I needed to travel.”

“Gandhi, Ikeda, and Mandela are great thinkers, and when their views align with the world of punk, we really have something special.”

– Professor Shane Barter

Largely self-taught, Rollins implored the audience to “get a passport” and learn as much about one another as possible, “and in a place like Soka, where every student can liaise with people from several different countries – and hear real stories about … what challenges they face – that is the incentive to go to that country, and to start to understand, and in that way, be a help.”

“A guy like him who has traveled the world has essentially stumbled upon precisely what makes Soka great,” said Professor Shane Barter, who introduced Rollins from the stage. “Gandhi, Ikeda, and Mandela are great thinkers, and when their views align with the world of punk, we really have something special.”
Soka University hosted Dr. Vandana Shiva, a global activist known as “Gandhi of Grain,” as the final speaker in the Critical Conversation @ Soka, a series of events that are produced to engage the campus and community to ignite discussions and solutions about pressing global issues. Jaime Nack, an environmental consultant who was named as a Young Global Leader (YGL) by the World Economic Forum, moderated this program, held in honor of Earth Day.

More than 600 people filled the Soka Performing Arts Center to hear Dr. Shiva, a fiery opponent of genetically modified crops, talk about her passionate belief that protecting seeds from genetic engineering holds the key to public health, the environment and the planet’s future.

Dr. Shiva combines sharp intellectual enquiry with courageous activism, and she spoke of her work, which spans teaching at universities worldwide to working with peasants in rural India to organizing international movements. *Time* identified Dr. Shiva as “an environmental hero” and *Asia Week* called her one of the “five most powerful communicators in Asia.” The event concluded with a lively Q&A from the audience, after which Dr. Shiva joined the post-event dessert reception to sign over 200 books purchased by audience members.

Prior to the main event, Dr. Shiva held a private tea in the Ikeda Library Reading Room to meet with over forty Soka students from the Environmental Studies concentration, all eager to learn how they can better serve the best interests of the planet.

For more information about how to attend the Critical Conversation @ Soka events, please subscribe to the Soka Performing Arts email list at www.soka.edu/pac/email_list.
In March, 15 students traveled to Washington, D.C., to take part in Soka’s annual Alternative Spring Break (ASB), a program whereby students perform short-term volunteer service and learn about a variety of issues such as literacy, poverty, racism, hunger, homelessness and environmental pollution.

A unique aspect of this year’s program was working with military veterans. One of the highlights was touring Andrews Air Force Base with Chief Yarber, father of ASB student Amahni Yarber. Students received personal glimpses of what active military personnel do on a daily basis. The group also conducted an art project involving veterans from the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center.
"The two best decisions I have made in my life are coming to Soka and going to Taiwan for study abroad," said Erika Lim ('17). However, the night before taking the exam that would determine class placement in her study abroad program was scary because Erika feared she would be placed in a class in which her advancement would be hindered by her limited ability to speak and write Chinese. Erika admitted that she was placed in the hardest Chinese class of her life. Consisting of seven students from Japan, United States, Thailand and Europe, the class was taught entirely in Chinese. The textbook stated on the cover: This book has absolutely no English in it at all.

Erika struggled during the first few weeks of class. When she was handed her first test, she immediately forgot every Chinese character she had ever learned. Her teacher asked her what happened. She explained that she had studied all night but couldn’t remember anything the next day. She was relieved when the teacher replied, “Don’t worry, just do better on the next test.”

While in Taipei, Erika volunteered at the Ronald McDonald House and helped parents of sick children who were in the hospital. She was also able to teach English at a local middle school. She visited Malaysia for the first time, visiting with her grandparents and other relatives. She also traveled to Thailand, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Macau.

With strong determination and the support of new friends she made in Taipei, Erika’s grades began to improve. One day in the middle of class the teacher stopped to compliment her on how much she had improved. Erika commented that without the help of her roommate and new friends who helped her with the Chinese language, she would not have made it through the class. She is grateful to those who supported her in this difficult but rewarding study abroad experience.
The Soka Education Student Research Project (SESRP) produced the 12th Soka Education Conference on the SUA campus February 13 and 14. The conference, an annual event organized by undergraduate students, aims to promote dialogue and discussion concerning the application of Soka Education pedagogy and humanistic education in traditional and non-traditional spheres. This year’s theme was “Soka and Peace: Thinking through Education.” The essence of a Soka education is to utilize learning as a catalyst for transforming a suffering society to a world committed to value-creation and peace. Attendees were encouraged to consider the possibility of education as a bridge leading to peace.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Tony Jenkins, Director of the Peace Education Initiative at the Judith Herb College of Education at the University of Toledo and the Managing Director of the International Institute on Peace Education. His research examines the impact of peace education methods and pedagogies on personal, social, and political changes and transformations.

Ryan Nakazaki ('19) said, “I never thought attending the SESRP Conference … would be life-changing. I was able to change my perspective, my outlook, and my attitude towards my studies. This conference … re-energized my desire to study at Soka and to become a global citizen.”

“This conference … re-energized my desire to study at Soka and to become a global citizen.”

– Ryan Nakazaki ('19)
If you would like to continue supporting Soka University of America even after you’re gone but aren’t sure if a gift in your will is right for you, here are three ways to make a lasting impact. Although most assets can pass to your intended beneficiaries by the terms of your will, other assets require separate beneficiary forms. The beneficiaries of the following assets can be easily modified at any time to meet your changing needs:

- **IRAs and retirement plans**
- **Life insurance policies**
- **Insurance annuities**

**Changing Beneficiaries**

To name or change a beneficiary, simply request a change-of-beneficiary form from your insurance company or the administrator of the IRA or retirement plan. If you would like to name Soka University of America as beneficiary, simply decide what percentage of the plan’s value you would like Soka to receive and name Soka on the beneficiary form.
1. Please provide a brief background about yourself.
I was born in a small city in Southern China. My parents worked in state-owned enterprises before they were laid off during China’s reorientation to the market economy in the 1990s. The sudden loss of employment frustrated my father. Although he later took a job as a cook, he unfortunately became an alcoholic. He died of cancer in his early 50s. To support my college education, my mother opened a convenience store in our neighborhood. I graduated from the top university in China, Peking (Beijing) University. Before earning my Ph.D. in economics from Indiana University Bloomington, I came to California to teach economics at Loyola Marymount University and Occidental College prior to joining Soka University in 2015.

2. From which institutions do you hold degrees?
I received my double bachelor’s degree in economics and political science as well as a master’s degree in finance from Peking (Beijing) University, my second master’s degree in economics from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and my Ph.D. in economics from Indiana University Bloomington.

3. What attracted you to Soka?
Soka’s mission of fostering “global citizens committed to living a contributive life” really resonated with me. I felt this mission exactly expressed my passion for teaching, and I believed my expertise could contribute to the international faculty at Soka. My initial meetings with Soka students during my campus visit showed me the impressive global perspectives and concerns the students held. I was struck by their heightened awareness of, and desire for, global citizenship, which reflected the university’s implementation of its mission. The beautiful campus, uniting architecture with serene nature, also attracted me to Soka.

4. What distinguishes Soka students in your opinion?
I’m deeply impressed by how hardworking, motivated, and open-minded our students are. Soka students are diligent in learning and always want to strive for better. Also, students are highly motivated not just to learn but to make a difference in the real world. Prakash, a third year student in my international economics class, built two schools for the poor children in his hometown in the rural area of Nepal. This is the first time for me to have a student who has been engaged in such an endeavor. Moreover, our students are open to diverse cultures and ideas from across the world. I believe that the unique curriculum (e.g. learning cluster courses), the required study abroad program, the capstone project, and the daily cultural exchanges among the greatly diverse student body at Soka helps open their minds and broaden their horizons.

5. What inspires you?
First, a college education that fosters academic, professional, and personal development, helps students become global citizens and prepares them for meaningful work that creates transformative social change; second, the pursuit of the interconnected truths among nature, society and oneself also inspires me.

6. Do you have other reflections about your experience as a faculty member at Soka?
I genuinely think that I am very fortunate to be part of Soka. I grew up in a very poor family, so I always felt guilty when I asked my poor parents for money for tuition and textbooks. My personal experience allows me to identify with and appreciate the efforts Soka has made to provide more than 90% of its students with need-based or merit-based scholarships. It’s my desire to help all SUA students achieve their educational goals.
Professor Q&A
Champions of Character: Swimming in the NAIA

by Cassidy Lavigne, Swimming World College Intern

With around 60,000 athletes, 300 schools, and nearly $450 million worth of scholarships awarded each year, the NAIA is a collegiate division that few have heard of, but those who have, know of the outstanding programs and incredible opportunities they provide. The National Association of Interscholastic Athletics, or NAIA, provides athletes the opportunity to compete at the college level, participate in national championship meets, learn the value of teamwork, and receive excellent coaching all while getting a great education. The NAIA requires student-athletes to stay on their toes with their courses and emphasizes the “student first, athlete second” motto of student-athlete life.

Education

As a student-athlete representing Soka, I am required to maintain a GPA above 3.0 to be eligible for an athletic scholarship. Moreover, all student-athletes with a GPA below 3.5 must record tutorial hours in study hall.

Furthermore, all students at Soka are required to study abroad for a semester. The opportunity to travel abroad and immerse oneself in a different culture is encouraged by coaches. Athletes return from study abroad with their scholarships still intact.

NAIA places a priority on education, and Soka upholds that standard. There is a commitment to the team as well as a commitment to understanding the value of receiving a quality education.

Opportunity

When I was first searching for colleges while in high school, I was looking into playing NCAA Division II or III water polo. Now, two years later, I find myself at my top choice school. I never thought I would find myself in this position.

From day one of practice, I was in awe of everything Soka’s athletic program offered. The gym and Olympic-size competition pool are the best the swimming world has to offer. The athletic department’s staff and coaches push us to be our best. I have had the opportunity to travel and swim across the country, from Boston to Colorado Springs to Dallas, and most recently, to Columbus, Georgia to compete at the NAIA Swimming and Diving National Championships.

I am, by no means, the fastest swimmer at these meets, but I am still given the opportunity to compete with the fastest swimmers. At every meet, I continue to be inspired by the level of competition and being part of that competition pushes me to be better.

Champions of Character

The most unique aspect of the NAIA is the Champions of Character program, encouraging student-athletes, coaches, and parents to practice and play fairly with quality sportsmanship. Each season and every practice, coaches and teammates learn to exercise the five elements of a Champion of Character as outlined by the NAIA: Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Servant Leadership, and Sportsmanship. We try to be leaders by being on time for practice, pushing our teammates through test sets, avoiding negativity when someone feels a performance was not his or her personal best, and volunteering in the community. A well-rounded liberal arts education, the support of our coaches, and the Champions of Character program teaches us qualities that we can use long after our final start off the blocks.

Republished with the permission of Swimming World Magazine.
Graduation week provided many opportunities for Soka alumni to reunite with fellow alumni on the Soka campus.

On Wednesday, May 25th, an Alumni Student Exchange took place in the Lion’s Den. Fourteen alumni and 35 students joined together to discuss times when they were appreciative of being an Soka student.

The day after commencement, 113 alumni and 43 new graduates gathered at the Soka Performing Arts Center for the 11th Annual Alumni Meeting. During the meeting Tommy Tomiyama (’06) was recognized for his contributive efforts to the Sohokai Alumni Association during his three year tenure as a Board member. Scott Bower (’15) was welcomed as the newest Board member. Alumni listened as updates were provided about the reorganized Charter and Bylaws, a new regional chapter established in the San Francisco area, a new regional chapter slated to open later this year in Southeast Asia, updates from class reps and the development of Interest Groups. President Danny Habuki and Director of Philanthropy Linda Kennedy unveiled the Sohokai Alumni Association name engraved on the Founders Circle Diamond benefactor wall honoring Sohokai alumni for gifts to their alma mater totaling more than $570,000. CONGRATULATIONS Sohokai Alumni Association! You are setting a great example for future alumni.

At the reception following the meeting, alumni were able to catch up with old friends, meet new spouses and children, take photos and enjoy refreshment. Later that evening alumni gathered at an off-campus location to celebrate their return to their Soka home.
Together with Professor of International Studies Lisa MacLeod, 21 students spent their spring break at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City where they learned about UN operations and the impact of true global citizens.

Special thanks to the Luis and Linda Nieves Family Foundation for making this special opportunity to travel to New York City and explore the United Nations possible.
It was a particularly exciting time to be there because the UN Commission on the Status of Women was taking place, and 2016 marks the first full year of global implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Soka students were surrounded by strong, empowered women and men fighting for gender equality and the end of poverty and injustice.

Students had an opportunity to reconnect with a past Trustee of the university, Dr. Paulette Bethel, who is the Special Advisor to the President of the General Assembly. She expressed excitement about the power of education for change. According to one of the students, Bethel said, “SU A’s mission is the perfect match for what the UN strives for, and the UN needs more people with Soka philosophy.”

In the words of one student, Hidemi Sato, “The trip motivated me to really engage myself in studies more, to expand my knowledge and perspective by going out in the field and to really challenge myself to step out of my comfort zone and take action to be able to contribute to society and help people in need.”

### JUNE 2016

**J.W. Fike’s Photographic Survey of the Wild Edible Botanicals of California**
- **Date:** 05.19.2016 - 08.26.2016
- **Time:** 9:00 am - 5:00 pm (M - F)
- **Location:** Founders Hall Art Gallery 2nd Floor

**ClassWorks 2016**
- **Date:** 05.19.2016 - 08.26.2016
- **Time:** 10:30 am - 5:00 pm (M - F)
- **Location:** Founders Hall Art Gallery 1st Floor

**Soka University’s All-Sports Day Camps**
- **Date:** 06.20.2016 - 07.29.2016
- **Time:** 8:30 am - 4:30 pm (M - F)
- **Location:** Recreation Center

### JULY 2016

**Opera A La Carte presents Hail Poetry! The Magic and Madness of Gilbert and Sullivan**
- **Date:** 07.08.2016 - 07.17.2016
- **Time:** 8:00 pm - 11:00 pm
- **Location:** Soka Performing Arts Center

### SEPTEMBER 2016

**Roberta Eisenberg Retrospective**
- **Date:** 09.12.2016 - 01.06.2017
- **Time:** 9:00 am - 5:00 pm (M - F)
- **OPENING RECEPTION:**
  - **Date:** 10.15.2016
  - **Time:** 5:30 pm - 7:45 pm
  - **Location:** Founders Hall Art Gallery

**Soka Jazz Festival**
- **Trio Da Paz with Maucha Adnet**
  - **Date:** 09.23.2016
  - **Time:** 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
  - **Location:** Soka Performing Arts Center

**Soka Jazz Festival**
- **Trio Da Paz**
  - **Date:** 09.24.2016
  - **Time:** 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
  - **Location:** Soka Performing Arts Center

**Soka Jazz Festival**
- **Trio Da Paz with Claudio Roditi**
  - **Date:** 09.24.2016
  - **Time:** 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
  - **Location:** Soka Performing Arts Center

### OCTOBER 2016

**2016 Peace Gala**
- **Celebrating a Vision of Peace**
- **Date:** 10.8.2016
- **Time:** 5:30 pm

**Emerson String Quartet**
- **Date:** 10.15.2016
- **Time:** 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
- **Location:** Soka Performing Arts Center

**Lions Roar Student Campus Day for Juniors and Seniors**
- **Date:** 10.22.2016
- **Time:** 8:30 am - 3:00 pm
- **Location:** Founders Hall

**Tesoró**
- **Date:** 10.22.2016
- **Time:** 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
- **Location:** Soka Performing Arts Center

**La Passion de Jeanne d’Arc**
- **Date:** 10.28.2016
- **Time:** 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
- **Location:** Soka Performing Arts Center

**Herb Ohta, Jr. & Friends**
- **Date:** 10.29.2016
- **Time:** 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
- **Location:** Black Box Theater

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**Purchase tickets for events held at the Soka Performing Arts Center at:**
- [www.performingarts.soka.edu](http://www.performingarts.soka.edu)

**For more information on all events, visit [www.soka.edu](http://www.soka.edu)**
Orange County circa 2016 is an incredibly diverse place, with a population that includes people from many nations drawn here for our climate, culture, commerce and community. One of the core contributors to OC’s allure has been education, with public and private schools, colleges and universities attracting the best and brightest students from around the world.

Flash back to 2001, and OC’s future as a global center wasn’t as obvious. That’s the year that Soka University of America opened the doors of its stunning canyon-view campus in Aliso Viejo. The college’s first class comprised 120 freshmen representing 18 countries and 18 states, with 60 students from the United States and 60 students from other countries.

Today, Soka maintains its proud stance as a place that promotes global peace, human rights and understanding through its curriculum and culture.

SUA was founded on the belief that student-centered education is the best way to promote peace and human rights by fostering a global humanistic perspective on the world in which we live. The university prepares students for graduate studies and the world of work in an increasingly diverse and global society.

Soka’s founding principles are to “Foster leaders of culture in the community, foster leaders of humanism in society, foster leaders of pacifism in the world, and foster leaders for the creative co-existence of nature and humanity.”

The university is an amazing community resource. The library is open to the public, the campus is a favored place for runners, walkers and new parents pushing strollers, and the world-class acoustics of the 1,000-seat Soka Performing Arts Center draw performers from around the world and audiences from across SoCal. Students are also engaged in community life locally and globally. In fact, international travel isn’t only suggested, it’s a requirement at the school. All students must study two years of a foreign language and study abroad for a semester in a country that speaks the language.

The school’s first commencement ceremony featured as its speaker Anwarul K. Chowdhury, a diplomat and then under-secretary with the United Nations. “To meet effectively the challenges posed by the present complexity of our time, the young of today deserve a radically different education – one that does not glorify war but educates for peace, non-violence and international cooperation,” he said at the ceremony.

That unflinching focus on peace is one of many things that makes Soka stand out, especially over the decade and a half since the school opened in September 2001. It was an era marked by terrorism, war and concerns over local and international security, when principles of pacifism maintained at Soka were not the norm.

Still, Soka’s students, supporters, faculty and staff have remained committed to its values, which include a rigorous, non-sectarian humanistic curriculum. Its student-centered education promotes peace and human rights, fostering a global perspective on the world in which we live.

Educational objectives are fostered at the university through the commitment to rigorous academic endeavors, free and open dialogue, and an appreciation for human diversity. Wisdom, courage and compassion – values treasured by the university – do not exist in isolation. They emerge in individuals as they learn the importance of service to others, to the natural world around them, and to the great cause of peace and freedom.
Pianist Yuja Wang Helps Soka Celebrate 15 Years

With more than 900 people in attendance, the 15th anniversary of Soka University’s Aliso Viejo campus was celebrated with a solo piano recital by Yuja Wang. For some attendees, this was their first experience at Soka Performing Arts Center, whether they came from Aliso Viejo, Las Vegas, or Japan to see the 29-year-old virtuoso perform. Guests included students, young professionals, classical music connoisseurs and young children who proffered flowers to Ms. Wang after her bows.

The world-class acoustics of the concert hall were superbly demonstrated this night; from the slow, quiet movements of Schumann’s “Kreisleriana” (Eight Fantasies for Piano) to the passionate, upbeat tempos of Beethoven’s “Hammerklavier” piano sonata, the music was clear from every seat. This was only the second time that Ms. Wang publicly performed Beethoven’s masterpiece and General Manager David Palmer shared that she was nervous going out onstage at the top of the second act. But she performed the piece wonderfully and the audience, who gave her a standing ovation at intermission, surely didn’t notice, as they stood and cheered after this piece as well as both of the encores. After her final bow, one Soka student sighed, fell back in his chair and exclaimed, “I can die happy now.”

Written by Rebecca Pierce Goodman

The 15th annual International Festival was held on the Soka campus on Saturday, May 7th. Approximately 9,000 people attended. This year the International Festival featured over 900 musicians and dancers from many different cultures performing on four stages. Music ranged from Taiko drums and traditional instruments to full orchestras. 250 exhibitors also offered a wide variety of ethnic clothing, food, jewelry, arts, crafts, home goods, information and demonstrations. Soka University’s International Festival is a proud partner of the Orange County Imagination Celebration (www.sparkoc.com). We hope to see you next year on May 6, 2017!
Have You Moved Recently?

We would like to keep you informed of the wonderful news from Soka, so if you have a new address, please let us know by going to our website www.soka.edu/giving/u.s.-donor-address-update.aspx or send an email to Coleen Scherf-Ghara at cscherfgharga@soka.edu or contact her directly at (949) 480-4073. If you know someone who has mentioned they no longer hear from Soka, please make sure they contact us so we can update their information.

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