



Soka University of America

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Soka University, Aliso Viejo to hold First Commencement on May 22, 2005

Four years ago 120 students from 18 states and 18 countries embarked upon a pioneering adventure as the first class of Soka University, Aliso Viejo, a new private, non-profit liberal arts college founded upon the Buddhist principles of peace, human rights and the sanctity of life. From the very beginning, SUA offered a non-sectarian curriculum open to students of all nationalities and beliefs. Students could take emphasis areas in Humanities, International Studies or Social and Behavioral Sciences.

The members of the Class of 2005 were the first students to experience SUA's 9:1 student/faculty ratio and average class size of 16. They were also the first to receive laptops upon entrance so that there would be no technology "have nots" on campus.

They were the first to survive "Core I" as they spent their first Block (3 ½ weeks of one subject) reading the great philosophers of both Eastern and Western civilization. They were the first to use the new biology, chemistry and physics labs during regular terms (14 weeks of 4 classes.) They all studied a non-native language and then went abroad for a semester during their junior year as they launched SUA's required Study Abroad program. They formed the first Learning Clusters to research solutions to real-world problems, and they tackled the first Senior Capstone projects. They set the traditions and founded the first campus clubs, held the first dances and started the first athletic teams (swimming, water polo, track and field, and cross country.)

Now, on May 22nd, at least 97 members of Soka University's Class of 2005 are expected to be marching across stage to receive SUA's first diplomas. That's an 81% graduation rate in four years, which is outstanding when you consider that according to The Education Trust, the national average for liberal arts students graduating in four years is only 40%.

Where will SUA's first graduates be heading? About a third plan to go on to graduate school, and seniors have already been accepted to such schools as the London School of Economics, Claremont Graduate School, Carnegie Mellon, UC Berkeley, Chapman Law School, UCI, USC, George Washington, UC Santa Barbara, UCLA, Columbia University Teachers College and Vanderbilt University. Other students will seek jobs or pursue additional training. Whatever they decide, all will soon achieve another first...becoming the first Alumni of Soka University, Aliso Viejo.

Congratulation's to SUA's pioneering Class of 2005!

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