



FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
(A CHARTERED UNIVERSITY)

Rector's Update

The latest news and announcements from Dr. Jonathan Addleton

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Dear Fellow Formanite,

The biggest Forman Christian College event this month is Commencement, scheduled to take place online beginning at 11:00 am on Saturday, February 27, 2021.

The decision to make this a "virtual" rather than "physical presence" celebration was difficult, understandably prompting several letters of disappointment and concern from students. We wish we had been able to honor those requests. However, in this age of COVID-19, we felt the only real choice was to follow the lead taken by most other colleges and universities in Pakistan and around the world, opting for a virtual gathering that will involve hundreds and possibly thousands of participants.

In recent days I have taken to calling the upcoming Commencement a Special Celebration for a Special Class -- the class of 2020 which has had to contend with so much yet demonstrated real resilience all along the way. I have no doubt that this resilience will continue to be the hallmark of this class as they make their mark on the world in the years ahead.

While the order of ceremonies at the upcoming Commencement will mirror long-standing Forman traditions, we look forward to including several "special touches" including recorded remarks from Former Rector Peter Armacost.

Diplomas will be available for collection in early March, providing an opportunity for graduates to have pictures taken on campus. Information will also be provided for those wishing to wear their academic gowns on this occasion.

Looking further ahead, we anticipate welcoming the Class of 2020 and members of their families back to campus for a post-commencement celebration, hopefully as early as fall 2021. Details on this unique event will be provided later, as the pathway toward a post-pandemic world becomes clearer.



Founder's Day is traditionally an in-person FCCU event, bringing hundreds of "Old Formanites" from all eras and walks of life back to campus for an annual alumni reunion. Rather than canceling it this year, we are organizing a virtual symposium on The Life and Legacy of Charles W. Forman, an appropriate theme to mark the 200th anniversary of Forman's birth.

Well-known writer and historian Fakir Aijazuddin will moderate the symposium which will include presentations on the life of Charles Forman (Yaqoob Bangash), the legacy of the Forman family (Jonathan Addleton), and the impact of Forman Christian College (Farzand Masih). In addition, Forman faculty members Sikandar Hayat, Tahir Masood, and Arfa Sayeda Zehra have agreed to serve as discussants, providing their reflections on Charles W. Forman and the institution that now bears his name.

As always, I appreciate it when visitors drop by, especially when they are Forman alumni. One recent example was the former Governor of Baluchistan Muhammad Khan Achakzai. We then paid a surprise visit together to Griswold Hall, his old Forman residence, to the interest and amusement of the current residents of that hall.

A group picture from the early 1960s is displayed in the Griswold recreation room, named after Governor Achakzai; he is shown seated next to then-Forman principal Sinclair. According to the caption, Governor Achakzai was "class secretary" -- an indication, perhaps, of an early interest in politics! It was also interesting to learn that the current Governor of Baluchistan -- Ammanullah Khan Yasinzai -- also attended Forman.

Other visitors to the Forman campus during the past few weeks include Shahid Mahmood Baig, the new head of the Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) who was given a tour by his former professor and later colleague Dr. Kausar, founder of Forman's School of Life Sciences. Also, Mian Imran Masood, former Minister of Education for Punjab (and a strong supporter of the Forman denationalization process during the early 2000s) dropped by in his new capacity as Vice-Chancellor of the University of South Asia and convenor of a group representing the interests and concerns of private colleges and universities in Pakistan.

Forman signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) during the past month, both designed to strengthen internship opportunities as well as "real world" work experience. One was with Umar Saif from Milkar and aims to link Forman students with NGO volunteer opportunities in Pakistan. The other was with Jamil Ahmad Jamil, Managing Director of the Punjab Small Industries Corporation, paving the way for potential internships and start-up grants involving Forman students.

In addition, I attended Kinnaird College's Board meeting, underscoring the long-standing relationship between Kinnaird and Forman. Among other things, I couldn't help but notice several photos featuring former Kinnaird board members from long ago -- including familiar names of past Forman principals such as Ewing and Sinclair.

The first Rector's Update posted in January mentioned several books written by Forman faculty. This month I am happy to highlight several timely and interesting journal articles, examples of the type of research in which Forman faculty are engaged.

Examples this month include Saeed Shafqat's on the Pakistan Muslim League in a recent book titled *Pakistan's Political Parties* (Georgetown University Press); Sara Rizvi's on the impact of Covid-19 on women in the *Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies*; Aftab Nasir's on development, power and positionality in the *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*; and Raja M. Ali Saleem's on Mike Kuhn's "Fresh Vision for the Muslim World," posted online by the Center for Muslim-Christian Studies at Oxford.

Meanwhile, Forman undergraduates continued to meet with success in a number of areas. For example, Mindstorm Studios selected three Forman students -- Ans Naveed, Amna Sheikh, and Muhammad Ali -- for an eight-week long learning experience focused on computer game development, a \$150 billion worldwide industry that hardly existed a few decades ago. More than 700 Pakistani students applied for the program, out of which only forty were selected -- including three from Forman.

I appreciated the opportunity to participate in two outstanding webinars in recent weeks. The first was hosted by Forman's Centre for Public Policy and Governance and involved Raja M. Ali Saleem's Ph.D. advisor Mark Rozell, Founding Dean of George Mason University's School of Public Policy and Government on The Meaning of January 6 and the Biden Transition.

The second was initiated by Dr. Siobhan Lambert-Hurley from the University of Sheffield as part of an ongoing project titled *Advancing Female Literacy and Empowerment in Pakistan and India through Life Writing*. Forman's Rukshana Zia and Nukhbah Langah were also involved in this fascinating effort that included reporting from some of the 18 Forman university students that participated.

Online student activities also continue, despite Covid-19. For example, I was pleased to see that the Forman Urdu Society and Forman Music Society together sponsored a folk singing and ghazal competition, with Adil Hussain taking first place in the Ghazal part of the program followed by Noman Ejaz and Hamra Kanwal.

Anyone familiar with higher education in Pakistan will be familiar with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and its role as a regulatory body. Among other things, this involves significant reporting requirements, a task Forman makes every effort to fulfill. This month I am pleased to note that Forman achieved a "100 percent" rating from the HEC's Higher Education Data Repository, one of only two universities to achieve this perfect score prior to the HEC deadline. My thanks to Amoon Jawaid Austin and his colleagues in Forman's QEC for making this possible.



Finally, at least some in the Forman community will know that one of my early activities during these first months in Lahore includes browsing in bookshops for publications connected in one way or another with Forman. My latest "discovery" was a memoir written by "Old Formanite" Roedad Khan, a leading member of the Pakistan Civil Service.

Looking back on Forman decades later, Roedad Khan's comments in his memoir that "I was fortunate in being exposed to such a talented group of students, belonging to different walks of life, and with a variety of backgrounds," regarding the diverse Forman community as one of the key factors contributing to his subsequent success. Looking around the Forman campus today, it is gratifying to see that this characterization of Forman from more than fifty years ago still rings true today, confirming my view that diversity ranks among our greatest strengths.

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