



FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
(A CHARTERED UNIVERSITY)

Rector's Update

The latest news and announcements from Dr. Jonathan Addleton

In This Issue

Campus Updates

Faculty & Staff Achievements

Recent activities




Dear Formanites,

As Christmas lights across campus were taken down in early January, I had an opportunity to reflect again on just how wonderful the holiday season at Forman was this year, from the College Holiday Gala featuring "*Silent Night*" in Korean, to the Light of Hope rendition of "*A Christmas Carol*". Many offices and departments also celebrated the season in a variety of ways. It was an honor and a privilege to participate in many of them including programs hosted by our gardening team, building and works staff, and HVAC crew.

I also love it when different elements of the Forman community come together for a common cause. That was definitely the case in the last Christmas event that I attended this year: the Secret Santa project which provided a gift for every student at the Light of Hope School. Among other groups, the project involved Advancement, Student Affairs, and Forman's Rotaract Club in which Chief Information Officer, Anthony Richards, played a guiding role. The partnership went beyond Forman, involving the Jesus Mission Ministry which prepared decorations, Ms. Nuria from TNS Beaconhouse, who made sweet bowls, and Lahore Midtown which donated Rs. 130,000 to the cause!

Against that backdrop, perhaps the biggest shoutout should go to Hina Yousaf who launched the first Secret Santa project at Light of Hope School in 2015 and has remained closely involved ever since. This year, she pioneered a connection to the brick kiln project, managed by Forman's Poverty Action Lab (PAL), with women from a nearby sewing school producing 260 Christmas bags and Santa hats that were then presented as gifts to each Light of Hope student.




Ringling in the New Year, I appreciated being presented with one of the first copies of Dr. Sikandar Hayat's latest edited volume, "*Pakistan Studies: A Book of Readings*", geared towards undergraduates enrolled in Pakistan Studies courses across the country. What makes this book especially interesting is that it features nine chapters covering everything from archaeology to literature, with each chapter written by a different member of the Forman faculty: Farzand Masih, Kashif Shafique, Muhammad Younis, Uzma Hanif, Arfa Sayeda Zehra, Saeed Shafqat, Sara Rizvi Jafree, Nukhbah Langah and Dr. Sikandar himself. I plan to distribute complimentary copies of this interesting and informative book to various Forman board members and many others, both in Pakistan and abroad, during the coming months.

Drawing on his vast knowledge of Quaid-i-Azam and the Pakistan Independence Movement, Dr. Sikandar also recently published "*The Quaid and the 'Inevitable' Partition of India in Hilal*", the Pakistan Army magazine: <https://www.hilal.gov.pk/eng-article/detail/NjkyNA==.html>

Also, Dr. Sara Rizvi Jafree, Anam Muzammil, and Syeda Khadija Burhan, all FCCU faculty members, co-authored "*Impact of a Digital Health Literacy Intervention and Risk Predictors for Multimorbidity Among Poor Women of Reproductive Years: Results of a Randomized-Controlled Trial*", published in an online journal, *Sage Digital Health*. In addition, Dr. Rizvi and Syeda Khadija Burhan were two of the four contributors to an impressive article titled "*The Migrant Hazara Shias of Pakistan and Their Social Determinants for PTSD, Mental Disorders and Life Satisfaction*," recently published in the *Journal of Migration and Health*. (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmh.2023.100166>)

Environmental issues have been a recurring theme in the first days of this New Year, reflecting a broader interest in environmental sustainability across the Forman campus. For example, Forman's Environmental Sciences Department organized a seminar in late January on "*Climate Change and Urban Flood Water Management*" featuring Sohail Ali Naqvi and Dr. Muhammad Imran Azam, both associated with World Wildlife Fund's Freshwater Program in Pakistan.



The Environmental Sciences Department also sponsored a second seminar in late January, this one focused on "*Bioremediation for Pollution Clean-Up*". It featured Dr. Muhammad Farhan from the Sustainable Development Study Center at Government College, Lahore. For those new to the field bioremediation is a "*nature-based solution to clean polluted environments,*

including soil and water, and improve air quality with less disruption to the surrounding ecosystems".

Meanwhile, Forman's Population Research Center headed by Dr. Mohammad Vaqas Ali sponsored an essay competition on "*2022 Floods in Pakistan: Ensuing Challenges and Possible Solutions*". Submissions from Forman students explored a range of topics including internal displacement, water and food security, economic challenges, and disaster risk reduction.

Another event, also in January: the Forman's Political Science Department invited Syeda Henna Babar Ali, to speak on "*Environmental Awareness*". Her contribution included reading a poem that she had authored on air pollution in Lahore. As part of the program, Dr. Derk Bakker from our Environmental Studies Department detailed the sources of air pollution in Lahore while a representative from the Packages Company described their approach to sustainability and corporate responsibility.

At a more hands-on level, I welcomed the opportunity to participate in a tree-planting ceremony at the end of January, across the street from my home on the Forman campus. It was part of an ongoing effort by Forman's student-led Earth Watch Society in partnership with the Green Panthers to focus on "*Green not Greed*". The first phase of this commendable initiative has resulted in 200 new fruit trees on the Forman campus.

Looking ahead, Forman will host its "*First International Conference on Soil Pollution and Remediation (SCPR)*" on March 15-16, focusing on anthropogenically induced soil pollution and remediation to promote food security and environmental sustainability. The deadline for abstract submissions is February 25.

In addition, the Kausar Abdullah Malik School of Life Sciences is organizing a major international conference in early February on "*Mitigation and Adaptation for Climate Change*," focusing especially on agriculture and food security. Last year's devastating floods which contributed to low crop yields, loss of livestock, damage to irrigation infrastructure, and food shortages all underscore the importance of devoting increased research attention to both mitigation and adaptation concerns. Let me also take this opportunity to thank Babar Ali for personally donating one million rupees on short notice to this effort.

Many other seminars, workshops, discussions, talks, and poster competitions also took place in January, and it was my privilege to participate in some of them. For example, we welcomed Dr. Michael Nazir Ali, former Bishop of Rochester (1994-2009) and author of several influential books on faith and Muslim-Christian relations, for an informative lecture on "*Modern Christian Thought in the Middle East and South Asia*", sponsored by Forman's Religious Studies Department.

Also, Forman's Benade Physics Society joined with our Physics Department to sponsor a talk on changing landforms, featuring two speakers from the Global Analysis and Discovery (GLAD) Laboratory at the University of Maryland: Post-Doctoral Associate Ahmad Khan and Professor & co-director of GLAD, Matthew Hansen.

I recently became aware of another ongoing international partnership involving the University of Maryland drawing on funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Based on this research grant which is valued at Rs. 1.7 million, our library team is working to develop URDU OCR software, with a view toward building a corpus of classical Urdu texts as part of the Open Islamicate Text Initiative.



Meanwhile, Forman's Philosophy Society launched this year's edition of *Miller's Dream*, a student journal edited by Anam Mahmood. Articles in this edition covered a variety of topics ranging from Plato to Stoicism. As I mentioned at the public launch of *Miller's Dream*, this is one publication that I find both accessible and interesting, and always read cover-to-cover!

I attended the opening session of a symposium on "*The Entanglements of Translation Theory and Praxis*", organized by Dr. Nukhbah Langah from Forman's English Department for her English 511 Class. In this case, speakers from the UK, India, and the Czech Republic joined via Zoom to provide their views. For me, this was a bittersweet occasion because Dr. Nukhbah is now heading to the University of Malaysia - though we look forward to seeing her again on her return visits to Pakistan.

Forman's Department of History and Pakistan Studies chaired by Dr. Farzand Masih partnered with IA Talks (www.IA.com.pk) to host a well-attended inspirational talk -- or rather a series of inspirational talks -- at Forman. Special speakers included Dr. Amjad Saqib, founder and chairman of the Akhuwat Foundation; cricket superstar Ramiz Raja; and Nosheen Ahmed, a visual artist from the National College of Arts who later gradually went blind, prompting her to launch a new artistic career as a sculptor while also demonstrating an inspiring combination of courage, determination, and gratitude at every step of the way.

Forman's academic offerings include a number of unique opportunities including certificate programs in Hebrew and Greek, popular among pastors and others who wish to explore Biblical history and theology in greater depth. As an indication of its success, 40 certificates were recently awarded to students who had completed this program in which Dr. Bob Wetmore has played both a pioneering and leadership role.

Meanwhile, Forman's Consumer Behavior (BUSN 385) class hosted a "*Business Bazaar*" featuring products designed and developed by first-year students taking the class. The creativity of our Business School students was on full display including various products ranging from cosmetics and jewelry to clothing, and puzzles. Special thanks to Irtifa Nasir for mentoring these projects.

January has also featured several sports events. The list here includes the Lahore Board Collegiate Athletics Championship in which Forman placed third among the 15 participating teams. Twelve students formed FCCU's Track and Field team, with Muhammad Saud winning the Silver medal in the Shot Put. Also, other team members won several Bronze medals, including in the 100-meter Sprint (Muhammad Nouman Khan); Discus (Muhammad Saud); High Jump (Joshua Aqeel); and 4x100 Meter Relay (Muhammad Noman Khan, Rana Muhammad Umer, Sameer Ahmed Buttar, Jahanzaib Awan).



Intramural sports featured as part of the sports mix for January including FCCU's Open Intramural Cricket Championship. Dr. Nayer attended the finals as Chief Guest, handing out the Championship Trophy to the Afghan Warriors. As for the FCCU Open Intramural Football Championships, Col. Khaqan presented the Championship Trophy to the Jugger Not, winners against the Quetta Warriors in the finals. Finally, Alina Baig won her finals match against Hubab Yousaf in badminton, receiving the Championship Trophy from Shawna Person who attended as Chief Guest. Special thanks to FCCU's Health and Education Department as well as the Sports Society for making these three intramural tournaments possible.

Staff development remains an important priority. In this regard, I am happy to congratulate Sannan Bashir for clearing his final exam to qualify as a Chartered Accountant, opening the door for membership in the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP). Also, Haroon Joiel has passed his accountancy exam, making him eligible to become a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCU-UK).

Recently, FCCU signed an agreement with the Shirazi Trading Company (STC), providing a path toward motorcycle ownership via a favorable credit/installment plan. Full-time faculty and staff are eligible to participate; those interested should contact HR as well as Forman's Supply Chain Office for more details.

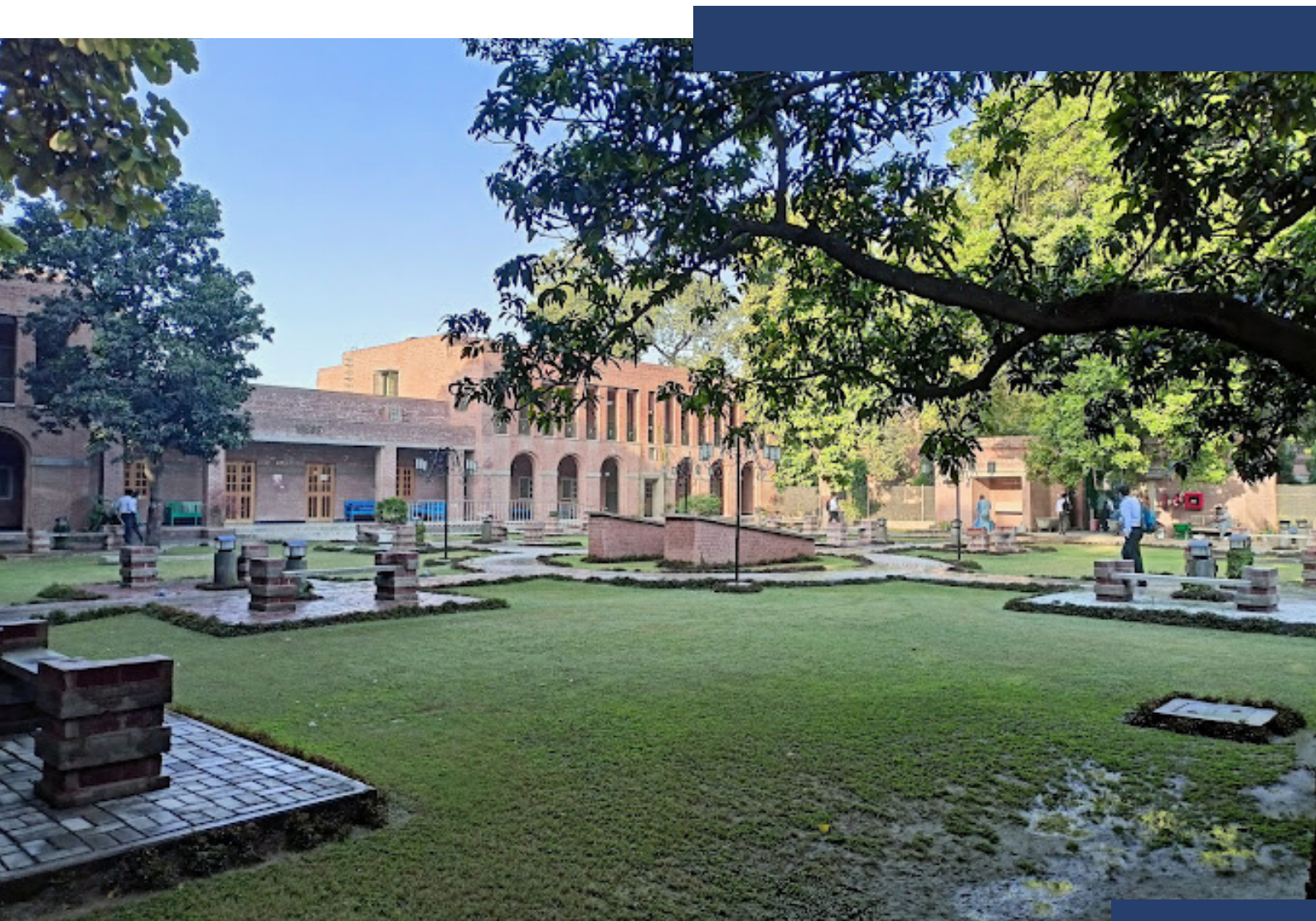
As with many other families and institutions, we are watching the unfolding economic situation in Pakistan with growing concern, especially as it relates to galloping inflation, foreign exchange shortfalls, and supply chain bottlenecks. At the household level, families face difficult circumstances, even as institutions struggle with the inevitable tensions surrounding efforts to both raise incomes and cut costs. Looking ahead, this too will have to be part of an ongoing conversation at FCCU, possibly involving some belt-tightening in certain areas, as we face new challenges in what we hope will be a truly post-Covid-19 world.



Prompted in part by a recent e-mail from a member of Forman's Board of Governors that was also circulated to the Vice Rector's Office, members of Forman's faculty are having an ongoing discussion on what ChatGPT means for higher education more broadly, an interesting dialogue precipitated in part by dozens of recent articles on the subject. When it comes to innovations like this made possible by "*artificial intelligence*," it is interesting to note that the issue has moved far beyond mere theory. On the contrary, its practical implications are now a regular part of our conversations, both inside and outside the classroom, mirroring similar discussions taking place among institutions of higher learning around the world.

It was an honor to participate in a special program organized by our Advancement and Alumni Office for members of Forman's Class of 1990 who lived in Newton Hall during the late 1980s. More than fifty "*Old Formanites*" who have made their mark in a wide range of areas -- including business, government, education, and the armed forces -- participated in the event which concluded with a traditional lunch in the hostel mess. The graduates, some of whom had not visited Forman in many years, also enjoyed playing board games, visiting their old hostel rooms, and reconnecting with friends.

Hopefully, many of these same alumni will return to campus on March 5, two days after our traditional Founder's Day. This will be the first really big alumni event since the onset of Covid-19 more than two years ago. And, in recognition of its significance, we have invited Dr. Peter Armacost, Forman's first post-denationalization Rector, to serve as Chief Guest! Friends of Forman Executive Director Roger Dermody along with several other international visitors are expected to attend as well.



A more recent Forman graduate, Nayya Hassan, also recently contacted the Rector's Office. We were last in touch more than 18 months ago when she had requested ideas for obtaining a scholarship to study at the London School of Economics (LSE). While offering encouragement, I was unable to directly connect her to scholarship funds. However, she called to say that in the end she had managed to access financial support -- and had just graduated from LSE with an MSc in Economic History; she is now working as an Associate for Deloitte in London.

Observant visitors will note that the brick cladding on our new Campus Center is nearly complete. While plenty of work still lies ahead, we are moving forward with plans to have a dedication ceremony in late April involving former Rector Dr. Jim Tebbe and -- all being well -- an official opening ceremony in Fall 2023. Work is also going well on the hostel renovations at the TSA/FCCU complex near the Forman campus. Hopefully, this will provide accommodation for up to 80 female students, also, by Fall 2023. Finally, I am pleased to note that construction has commenced on a new Light of Hope classroom building, this one designated entirely for boys.

Finally, a special shout out to Dr. Nayer and Sara Suleman for organizing a well-attended HEC-endorsed seminar titled "*Quality Assurance in Higher Education Institutes: National and International Perspectives*", also in late January. Academic standards set by both HEC and NECHE figured prominently in the presentations as well as in the discussions that followed. Deans and Department chairpersons from Forman attended in person, joined online via Zoom by dozens of representatives from universities situated in all four provinces of Pakistan.



Dr. Jonathan Addleton
Rector, FCCU