



FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
(A CHARTERED UNIVERSITY)

Rector's Update

The latest news and announcements from Dr. Jonathan Addleton

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Commencement is the biggest single event on the annual Forman calendar and this year's ceremony, held on November 18, was once again a big success, involving more than 4,000 guests and more than 1,000 graduates gathering under a big tent in Forman's main ground which usually serves as a cricket pitch. Governor of Punjab Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman graciously served as Guest of Honor, delivering inspiring remarks and lending further gravitas to the occasion.





ACADEMIC EVENTS



As part of *Campus ThinkFest 2023* involving several universities in the Lahore area, Nicholas Engel, who manages the Pakistan and Afghanistan collections at the Guimet Museum of Asian Arts in Paris, led a presentation at Forman on the museum's Gandharan collection, focusing especially on those items associated with the historic Alfred Foucher mission (1895-1897).

Foucher first visited museums in Calcutta and Lahore and then travelled to Mardan, Chakdara, Malakand and Peshawar where he purchased items for display in France. Engel's talk to Forman faculty, students and staff also drew on his experience as a member of French archaeological missions in both Syria and Afghanistan, having served as deputy director of the French archaeological delegation in Afghanistan from 2009 to 2013.

The ongoing Graduate Seminar Series organized by Forman's English Department under the leadership of Dr. Fatima Syeda has been especially active, sponsoring well-attended lectures on a variety of topics including *Matriarchal Values in Shakespeare's Plays* by Dr. Shahab Yar Khan from the University of Sarejevo and *The Brass Boatman: Early Instances of AI in South Asian Literature* by Dr. Walter N. Hakala from the State University of New York in Buffalo.

Other programs organized by the English Department during an exceptionally busy November included Ms. Marianne's Murphy session on *Text, Script and Performative Literature* and Ms. Zakia Resshid Ehsen's lecture on *Re-contextualizing Shakespearean Drama*. Notably, the Graduate Seminar Series as well as these classroom sessions were attended by not only members of the Forman community but also students and faculty from other universities in Lahore.



During his stay at Forman which was sponsored by the American Institute for Pakistan Studies (AIPS), Dr. Hakala gave a number of other presentations including one on research for graduate students.

The Forman Writing Center organized a workshop on *Personal Statement Writing*, aimed at helping students write compelling personal statements to include in applications for various academic and professional purposes.



Also, the Forman Writing Center and Department of English hosted a book launch for Madeeha Arsalan Hanif's first collection of poems titled *Bhadooan*. An educationist and prolific writer, Hanif grew up in Karachi and writes for many publications including *The News*, *The Nation* and *The Friday Times*.

The Urdu Department headed by Dr. Noreen Kokhar organized a lecture on *Iqbal's Thought and Social Reconstruction*, delivered by the eminent Iqbal scholar Dr. Tahir Hameed Tanoli, currently serving as academic director at Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

The Computer Science Department organized a symposium on *Empowering Women in Technology* that included talks by prominent women in academia and industry and designed to encourage opportunities for females in engineering and technology.

Activities organized by various academic departments often include a partnership with an associated student society or club, as was the case with another IT-related event, this one involving the Google Developers Student Club which presented an event titled *Summit Showdown: Code War*, a live-time coding triathlon tracked with a leaderboard screen and involving challenges involving programming, typing speed and problem-solving.

Also related to Computer Science, Dr. Mubashar Mushtaq provided an excellent introduction to Forman and its contributions in the IT field as part of a long interview aired on NEO TV in early November.

The Sociology Department hosted a talk by Dr. Manuel Mejido Costoya titled *Bringing Together Subaltern Knowledge and Experimentalist Governance: The Role of Social Sciences in Fostering Innovation for Sustainable Development in Pakistan*. Hosted by Dr. Jawad Tariq and moderated by Ms. Shermeen Bano, a recording of the session can be found here: <https://youtu.be/Cxij2dlwSHY>



Forman's Population Research Center headed by Sociology Professor Dr. Vaqas played a key role in partnership with the Population Association of Pakistan in hosting the *24th Annual Population Research Conference*, this year organized around the theme *Healthy Families and Communities in a Changing Society: The Role of Family Planning*; specific technical sessions focused largely on issues related to health systems, women and youth.

Prior to this two-day workshop, the Population Association of Pakistan partnered with Forman to conduct a one-day workshop on *Research Methods in Health and Social Sciences*, taught by Dr. Farid Midhet from Bahria University in Karachi and Dr. Saima Bashir from the Population Council in Islamabad.

The Sociology Department organized Forman's *Fifth Conference on Marginalized Populations* featuring twelve distinguished speakers including current faculty and former students. Topics included



minority populations (Hindus, Christian and Hazara Shia communities); remote parts of the country (Gilgit, Baltistan and Kashmir); and issues of special interest (Jaranwala, health care, refugees, aging women and home-based female entrepreneurs). I was especially intrigued by the titles of two papers which looked at the ways in which such communities are presented in the literatures of Pakistan.



Meanwhile, the Education Department is organizing its *Second International Conference on Education under the title (RE)forming and (RE)imagining Education*. Papers will focus on curriculum development, the role of teachers, student support, pedagogy and classroom teaching as they relate to educating the students of tomorrow.

Looking ahead, the Department of Environmental Services is hosting an on-line and in-person symposium titled *Environmental Applications for Carbon-Based Nanomaterials* on December 13, focused on removing noxious pollutants that contribute to the deterioration of water and soil in Pakistan and around the world. For more information, follow this link: <https://forms.gle/DUXLsVXxAa8U4DZA8>

The Physics Department chaired by Dr. Sadia Zaheer organized a conference on *Recent Trends in Plasma Physics*, featuring international contributors as well as some of the leading physicists in Pakistan, in this case exploring a topic that is especially relevant to those interested in space exploration.



Faculty from the Economics Department have been involved in outreach of various kinds. For example, Assistant Professor Dr. Humna Ahsan as part of an HEC-funded team undertaking an NRP project titled *Evidence Based Intervention to Improve Social Policy for Maternal and Child Health Using a Pre-Post Test Design* participated in a workshop for Basic Health Unit teams held at the Basic Sciences University.

Meanwhile, non-academic departments at Forman hosted a number of special events. Examples here include the Forman Counseling Department which organized a timely talk at the Mercy Health Center on *Creative Resilience: How to Flourish in the Face of Life's Challenges*, presented by campus counselor Sabrina Asim.

Finally, Forman's Church Relations Office once again organized a special tutoring program for aspiring first and second year college students from the Christian community. Known as the *Armacost Coaching Classes*, the purpose of this program is to help students prepare for the Lahore Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) exams held in early 2024.

SPORTS NEWS

Recent successes in sports competitions involving other colleges and universities include third place trophies in badminton, table tennis, squash and volleyball at the Intercollegiate Punjab championships for 2023-2024. Also, the Forman Swim Team secured a bronze medal at the Punjab Olympics Championship.

While competing in sports with other institutions of higher learning in Pakistan, our Department of Health and Physical Education also supports a vibrant intramural sports program in which all students can become involved. Activities here include the recently held Open Intramural Rugby Championships 2023 in which FCC Vikings placed first.

The three-day Forman Women Sports Fest 2023 commenced at the end of November, providing opportunities for female students from ten universities to pursue their passion in a number of sports including athletics, arm wrestling, badminton, basketball, boxing, cricket, chess, futsal, throwball, tennis, table tennis, tug of war, handbell, netball and volleyball.



ADVANCEMENT AND ALUMNI AFFAIRS

On November 4 Forman's alumni office organized a memorable alumni cricket match on Forman's main ground. In a performance reminiscent of Australia's recent winning form in the Cricket World Cup finals, the alumni team scored 262 runs in only 20 overs. In a valiant but ultimately losing effort, Forman's staff team responded with 238 runs of its own. Thanks to Redbull and HRSPORTS for providing kits and energy drinks.



In other alumni news, Forman's alumni chapter in the UK joined with the Pakistan High Commission in London to honor Dr. Arfa Sayeda Zehra, a distinguished member of the Forman faculty; High Commissioner Dr. Muhammad Faisal hosted the event which Forman Alumni Board Chairman Attiazaz Munawwar Ud Din and Brigadier (retired) Javed Iqbal Warraich also attended.



Scholarship programs play a vital role in ensuring that Forman's campus remains a diverse place, attracting students from different religious and ethnic groups as well as from a wide range of geographic origins and socio-economic backgrounds. Outreach efforts include a recent activity organized by Phool Shahzad who heads our Financial Aid office and involving on-campus tutoring for seven young women from Tharparkar in southern Sindh interested in attending Forman.

In recognition of contributions made by members of the Forman community to our scholarship fund, the Advancement Office hosted a reception for the "top three" contributors in each of three categories covering administration functions as well as academic departments in the college and university. The event was held in the MCS Lounge in our new Campus Center, providing participants with an early look at the first floor of that building which includes a large dining room, art gallery and shop. Our annual *Forman Society* booklet was launched at the same event, recognizing donors from a variety of backgrounds including alumni.



Forman’s Advancement Office plays an important role in raising funds throughout the year, not only to support scholarships but also to build and equip new buildings. In this regard, the office hosted a “naming ceremony” to recognize contributions from several donors including alumni board chairperson and Khazana CEO Attiazaz Munawwar Ud Din (whose name is now attached to North Field) and alumni board member Dr. A.S. Chughtai, founder of Chughtai Labs and Health Care (whose name is now attached to the main reading hall in the new Campus Center).

A couple of years before I joined Forman, two high school friends joined me in responding to another Forman fund-raising appeal, resulting in the naming of the chief librarian’s office in the new Campus Center digital library at this same ceremony: it is now known as the “RAM Suite,” drawing on the first letter in the last names of three families whose parents lived and worked in Pakistan from the 1950s through 2001: the Rasmussen family, Addleton family and Mitchell family.

Similar opportunities are available across the Forman campus and especially in the new Jim Tebbe Campus Center, providing a variety of ways to recognize and remember those contributing to Forman.





As part of the launch of a very busy holiday season, I participated in a memorable meeting of Forman's alumni chapter in Islamabad, possibly the most active of our several city-specific or region-specific alumni associations. More than 100 "Old Formanites" and their families attended, with special Formanite guests including Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, Ex NAB Chairman Qamar Zaman Chaudhry, and renowned diplomat and former Ambassador Ashraf Jehangir Qazi.

The Islamabad Club was the venue for this special dinner that highlighted the formative role that Forman played in launching many successful careers including that of Forman graduate and dean of post-graduate studies – and now Minister of Food Safety and Security in the caretaker government – Dr. Kauser Abdullah Malik who spared time from his busy schedule to serve as Chief Guest.

Let me also provide a shoutout to Adeel Riaz and his team who worked with the Islamabad alumni chapter to make this event possible. In addition, I want to thank Adeel for all his contributions to Forman over two decades as he embarks on a leave of absence to enter a graduate program in strategic business management in the UK. Adeel's journey at Forman started as a student in 2003; he later joined Forman as a member of staff in 2009, culminating in his current role as head of our office for Advancement and Alumni Affairs.



STUDENT AND FACULTY SUCCESS



Dr. Sara Rizvi Jafree completed her on-line post-doctorate degree from Oxford at the end of November. Her work resulted in three journal publications, all focused on barriers, facilitators and outcomes related to health care service delivery to women in Pakistan.

Also, her recent book *Social Policy for Women in Pakistan* (Palgrave, 2023) continues to receive positive reviews, in this case at the London School of Economics blog site: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsereviewofbooks/2023/11/03/book-review-social-policy-for-women-in-pakistan-sara-rizvi-jafree/>

Dr. Qurratulaen Liaqat's new book *The Element of the 'Absurd' in Rajiv Joseph's Post-9/11 Plays* (Cambridge Scholars, 2023) was mentioned in a previous *Rector's Update*. However, I am pleased to note here that the official Forman launch of her new book was held on November 27, involving several outside speakers including from the University of Punjab and Lahore College for Women.

Courtesy of our Political Science Department, let me offer a special shoutout to MPhil student Shahid Kamal who was selected among hundreds of applicants as a winner of the Policy Research Challenge involving a partnership with a trio of UN organizations in Pakistan, UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA. As part of an international



effort to engage youth in the policymaking process in Pakistan, Shahid is eligible for up to 500,000 rupees in research funding and will now work with Dr. Ayra Indrias Patras to develop effective policies for mitigating smog in Lahore.

Two students from Pakistan, selected earlier this year as part of the Pakistan-specific “*Falling Walls*” Lab organized and implemented by Forman, travelled to Germany to present their start-up “*itches*” at the international “*Falling Walls*” competition in Berlin, providing them with an opportunity to connect with peers as well as potential stakeholders from around the world.

One pitch, delivered by Asma Rehman, was titled *Breaking the Walls of Beehive Intelligence*; the other, delivered by Muhammad Anas, was titled *Breaking the Walls of Disability through AI*. As Dame Sarah Springman, Principal of St. Hilda’s College at Oxford who served on the jury selection panel noted, “*It’s wonderful to listen to 100 young entrepreneurs from around the world, diverse in every which way, as they pitch, persuade, network and knock these walls down*”.

Reflecting on the last eight years during which Forman has participated in “*Falling Walls*” (including serving as the venue for the Pakistan part of the competition during each of these years), organizer Mariam Khalid singles out Eileen Dass for her logistic support as well as Dr. Sufian for his long-standing service on the selection jury, along with Professor Asim George, Anum Shehzad and Usman Ali, all three of whom served on this year’s core planning team.

Following Commencement, I briefly dropped by a farewell party hosted by graduating senior Parkash Singh from Sukkur for his family and friends. Parkash has now departed for Ohio University for his graduate studies in computer science. This event was especially notable because it involved a number of guests from Pakistan’s Sikh community, along with friends, faculty and students from Pakistan’s other faith communities.



Kamil Shamshad provided an informative report on his trip earlier this fall to attend the European Association for International Education in Rotterdam (Netherlands). At the same time, he provided an update on FCCU activities related to international education including the prospective participation of several Forman students in exchange programs involving Sejong University (South Korea) and Lingnan University (Hong Kong). More than 500 of our students also attended a recent USA Education Fair hosted by Forman.

Finally, I received a much appreciated e-mail from Forman graduate Hira Mustafa who was awarded both a Fulbright and a Chevening Scholarship for graduate studies. In the end, she selected the former, choosing to enroll at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University in Boston, giving her experiences that she describes as “*incredibly enriching*”. She also singles out several Forman connections for special praise including our School of Management; her experience as the first female president of the Forman Leadership Forum; and the “*Analysis of Institutions*” class taught by Professor Mariam Khalid that she had enrolled in as a student at Forman.

OTHER NEWS

If you are enjoying our Christmas lights this year, please say a special word of thanks to Building and Works which for the tenth consecutive year joined with associated teams from our Purchase and Account Office to fund them!

Weather-wise, it has been a difficult month as far as air pollution in Lahore is concerned. As often happens in the late Fall, particulate



matter in the air we breathe has been higher than ever, moving well into the hazardous range. As a result, FCCU along with other educational institutions across Lahore and in various other cities were shut down on short notice for three successive days in late November by order of the Health Department of Punjab.

Despite the smog, visitors to Forman this month included Roger Dermody (Executive Director of Friends of Forman); Michael and Marianne Murphy (who previously taught at Forman); and former Forman Rector Dr. Jim Tebbe. Vice Rector Dr. Douglas Trimble's sister Rebecca Poole also visited, using her experience as a special needs teacher to meet with faculty from our Department of Education and visit the special needs school for younger children that is part of the TSA/FCCU partnership.



Ambassador Alfred Grannas from Germany spent a morning on the Forman campus in late November, partly to acknowledge previous gifts to Forman involving both media equipment (via GIZ) and science equipment (via the Humboldt Foundation). During his visit, he also met with students as well as members of our faculty who have studied in Germany.



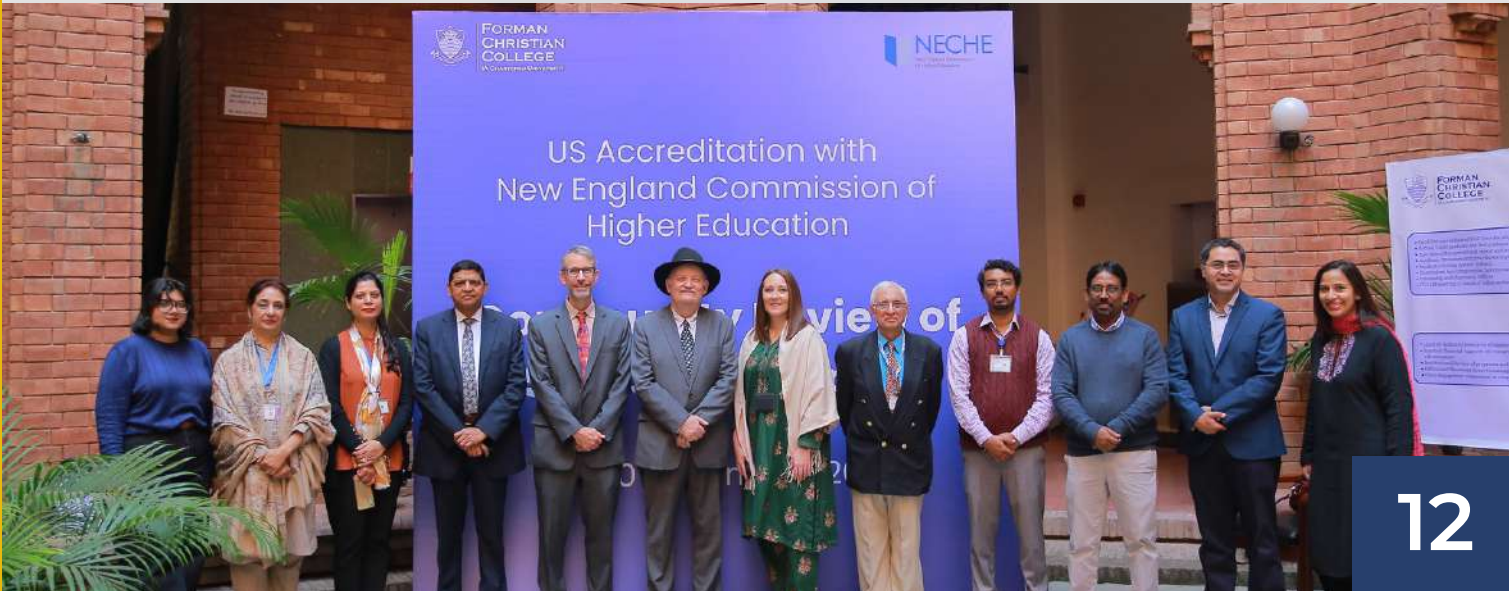
Annual cultural nights sponsored by Forman students from various parts of Pakistan are always memorable, providing a vivid reminder of the many contributors to the wonderful mosaic of this diverse and culturally rich country. During November, those memorable events included one cultural evening sponsored by our Pushtun students, a second focused on Saraiki culture, and a third organized by students from Chitral, Gilgit and Baltistan.

Special thanks to Anthony Richards and our IT Department for launching a new Helpdesk and Ticketing system, designed to streamline the response to technology-related requests. Rather than submitting requests by e-mail, this new procedure involve an on-line portal system: <https://fcccollegehelpdesk.on.spiceworks.com/portal>

Forman's journey toward international accreditation with the New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE) continues, with an in-person visit by the NECHE accreditation team consisting of representatives from peer institutions anticipated in the first quarter of the New Year. In the meantime, more than one hundred of our faculty and staff assigned to ten different committees are heavily engaged in preparing and critiquing the 100-page self-study covering all aspects of our operations.

NECHE is the academic body that accredits some of the best universities in the world including Harvard, Yale and MIT; whatever the outcome, the accreditation process helps strengthen every institution that participates in it. For our part, Forman achieved eligibility status in January 2022 and is now working toward candidacy status.

Preparation of the self-study also involves a “Community Review” to which every member of the Forman community was invited to participate, beginning in late November. Many thanks to Dr. Gloria Calib in the Vice Rector’s office for her leadership role throughout this process. She welcomes additional input, both as part of the community review and with respect to the entire NECHE process: glorialcalib@fccollege.edu.pk.



Finally, let me note with gratitude that this is the 36th edition of this monthly newsletter, marking the completion of my first three years as Rector of Forman Christian College (A Chartered University). Its publication also coincides with the Christmas season which Fiona and I will spend in the United States and Scotland, the latter to celebrate the wedding of our second son. Against this backdrop, let me take the opportunity to wish every member of the Forman community and their loved ones a special blessing as we together look toward the excitement and promise of a New Year.



DR. JONATHAN ADDLETON
RECTOR