

Introduction by the President



It is indeed a great pleasure to write this Introduction as the new President of the university which now onwards is known by its new name: **UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST**.

In order better to serve the local region as well as the international and national communities, the Board of Trustees decided in 2004 to change the name of the University to University of the West. This is a name that stays close to the original Hsi Lai, which loosely translates as “Coming to the West” and has a significant Buddhist allusion to the advent of Buddhism to China from the West, i.e. India. From an American perspective, the “West” is associated with the frontier and the exploration of new and uncharted experiences. Located in California on the Western edge of the continent, the University of the West captures some of the metaphor of the exploration of the new and uncharted in the academic world. The campus combines European models of education with those of Asia in an effort to construct an environment for learning that embraces both.

Besides the name change, the University of the West is also taking new directions that provide for innovation and experimentation while upholding the institution’s mission and goals. Beyond the University’s existing basic program, the expansions include new degree programs, new certificate programs, Internet courses, and a variety of Continuing Education programs that reach out to the local communities.

In early 2004, the University received approval for its five new BA programs:

The major in Chinese Language and Literature is designed to educate students in modern and classical Chinese and offers a wide variety of courses on Chinese history and culture. The University’s close connections with Asia and its large number of Chinese-speaking students and staff members give students the opportunity to immerse themselves in the Chinese language at a level unequalled at most other American universities.

The Bachelor of Arts in English Literary Studies is dedicated to the study of the literature and cultures of Great Britain and the United States, with attention also given to influential writers and literary movements from countries such as Ireland, Canada, Australia, and India. The University’s role as a meeting place between East and West is reflected in course offerings devoted to the Asian-American literary experience.

UWest’s major in History provides students with the unique opportunity to appreciate the interaction between East and West. After a general overview, students can choose between two tracks: Western History, which covers American and European history, and Eastern History, which includes the history of South, East and Southeast Asia. While the major focuses on religious, political, social, and cultural

history, some emphasis is also given to the history of arts and philosophy.

The new major in Philosophy exposes students to philosophical thinking from both Eastern and Western perspectives. Students can then specialize in either the Western or the Eastern Philosophy Track. This study of Eastern and Western philosophy is further enhanced by the cultural environment of the campus: Students can interact with peers and professors of diverse cultural and philosophical backgrounds on both a formal and informal basis.

The University's fifth new major, Humanistic Psychology, adds the dimension of human interests, values, dignity and life goals to the traditional study of the human mind and behavior. Course offerings include instruction in the major Eastern and Western psychological theories and applications. Students are able to focus their study on both of these systems as well as the integration of the two into a new theory of humanistic Buddhist and Western psychology.

The University of the West is currently developing degree programs leading to a Master of Arts in Chinese-English Translation and Interpretation, a Master of Public Administration, a Master of Education and a Ph.D. in Education.

China's rise as a global and economic power has led to a growing demand for knowledge of Chinese culture, economics, and society. The MA in Chinese-English Translation and Interpretation will provide the cross-cultural and bilingual skills requisite for diplomacy, business, and cultural endeavors between the Chinese- and English-speaking worlds.

The Master of Public Administration program intends to provide students with the knowledge, insights, skills and interpersonal and technical abilities for dealing with organizational productivity and performance within the government setting. The program's strong professional orientation will provide the educational background needed to enter careers in government, skills that enhance the competence of current government employees, and the ability to meet the governmental challenges emerging from rapid change in various aspects of society and the world.

The Master of Education is geared toward training teachers and school administrators in the educational traditions of Eastern and Western thought. It is aimed primarily at individuals who have worked in the Asian world of education and wish to expand their skills through an appreciation of how Eastern and Western theories of education may interrelate and contribute to each other. The Ph.D. in Education extends this training to a higher research level at which students carefully analyze and evaluate a particular aspect of Eastern and/or Western philosophies of education.

The University of the West is currently developing the following three certificate programs: Buddhist Teaching and Monastic Leadership Training, Hospice/Hospital and Prison Visitation, and Integrative Psychology and Cross-Cultural Counseling. Each one of these certificates is geared toward enhancing the University's contribution to community service.

In order to serve a wider community, the campus has received the permission to experiment with Internet courses that will be both webcast real-time lectures as well as text-based courses. The first Internet course is scheduled for Summer 2004 and will be available to groups in San Diego, Fremont, and Taiwan as well as on the Rosemead campus. This will be a course on Spread of Buddhist Thought and Philosophy Along the Land Silk Routes, taught by Professor Lewis Lancaster, the University's President. The course will deal with the spread of Buddhist thought and institutions from the Ganges Valley to China and East Asia. It will be followed in Fall 2004 by a course taught by Professor Ananda Guruge that will trace the spread through the maritime developments of Southeast Asia leading to China.

Continuing Education will play an important part in the future of the University of the West. In Summer 2004 there will be a course on Asian Vegetarian Cooking. Later in the year, cultural courses will include calligraphy and Chinese painting. The campus is also currently negotiating with the Shao Lin Monastery in China to bring senior monks to teach both the philosophy and the techniques of martial arts.

The University is reaching out to the local community in new ways as well. During Summer 2004 students from the surrounding school districts will be invited to apply for admission to an experimental course in "double immersion" for English as a Second Language and Mandarin. In this team-taught course, the local students will be joined by an equal number of classmates from Taiwan. The purpose of the course will be to explore ways in which local students from Chinese-speaking homes can improve English proficiency while maintaining and enhancing their primary language skills. In addition to the ESL classes, the University plans to offer workshops for the teachers of the school districts who want to improve their cultural heritage curriculum, especially as it relates to Asia.

An important part of the University's outreach program will be to bring outstanding scholars to the campus for events that will be open to students as well as the general public. The first such convocation will be held May 12 with two distinguished researchers speaking on cultural heritage topics. Dr. Franciscus Verellen, Director of the Ecole française d'extrême orient in Paris, will speak about his research among the Daoist communities in China. Dr. Maurizio Forte, Director of the Cultural Heritage Division of the National Center of Research of Italy in Rome, come to the campus with a presentation on his efforts to reconstruct cultural heritage sites through the use of digital Virtual Reality.

I consider it auspicious that my appointment as President of the University was officially announced during the Fifth International Conference on Humanistic Buddhism in January 2004. This enabled us to bid farewell to the outgoing President, Professor Naichen Chen, whose services from 1998 to 2004 has left an indelible mark on the progress of the University. It is a pleasure for me to be associated closely with the International Academy of Buddhism, its series of the annual International Conferences and the Journal which results of the deliberations of these Conferences. I am pleased to present to you the fifth volume of the Hsi Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism.

Lewis R. Lancaster, Ph.D.
President, University of the West