



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,

Eid and the month of Ramadan that precedes it provides an important time for reflection and renewal. It also promotes empathy mixed with gratitude, in part through a daily "test" of what it means to experience physical and perhaps also spiritual hunger and thirst.

This year, the resurgence of Covid-19 added to this time of testing in ways that also affected students, staff, and faculty at Forman Christian College. Yet teaching and learning have continued, albeit largely online. For at least some of us, this experience has also deepened our understanding of what it means to live "one step at a time" and "one day at a time".

A number of construction projects have continued, despite the pandemic. For example, progress is being made on the new Campus Center, scheduled to open next year. Most work is now focused on the inside of the building, including the installation of elevators and air conditioning.

Other ongoing construction projects include a new front entrance on Canal Road; new football, basketball, and volleyball fields for the College; and the new Media Center, situated next to Forman's Center for Public Policy and Governance (CPPG). The construction and renovation of new faculty housing and staff quarters are also underway.

Online meetings, workshops, and special events provide useful opportunities to reflect on the times in which we live. The examples here are too many to list. However, I did appreciate the Human Resources Office for partnering with the Psychology Department to organize a virtual workshop on Emotional Intelligence, led by Dr. Sarah Shahed and Ms. Maryam Munir.

Notable faculty milestones include Dr. Arfa Sayeda Zehra's appointment as UNESCO Chairholder for 2021-2025 at the National College of Arts. This honorary position focuses on Pakistan's historical and cultural heritage, even as she continues to explore these same themes as a professor in Forman's History Department.

Meanwhile, Dr. Sara Rizvi Jafree from Forman's Sociology Department participated in an online program involving Altinbas University in Turkey, in her case speaking on health issues surrounding working women in the informal sector. Also, Forman and the Pakistan Physical Society have joined together to sponsor an e-conference on "Recent Trends in Plasma Physics" organized by Dr. Hassan Shah and others for May 19-21 and involving eight international speakers and 25 speakers from Pakistan including several from FCCU.

Evidence that the impact of Forman is spread well beyond the walls of our campus is not hard to find. Last year the CPPG helped publish a report on seven religious minorities in Pakistan titled "The Index of Religious Diversity and Inclusion in Pakistan", with Dr. Saeed Shafqat as head of the Center helping to develop a research methodology while also reviewing the final manuscript. As it happens, the study was recently cited dozens of times in a report issued by the UK Home Office, in this case, focused on Christians in Pakistan.

Class assignments are not usually published in leading magazines -- but that is exactly what happened with Atika Qasim's student paper, written for her "Applied Philosophy" class. Forman Philosophy Professor Sean Moran was so impressed that he submitted it to "Philosophy Now," the largest circulation philosophy magazine in the world. Typically, the magazine rejects 14 out of every 15 submissions -- but it published this one, leading Professor Moran to remark that this was an "impressive feather in her cap . . . and for Forman too".

Titled "The Not So Benign World of Photography," this remarkable and thought-provoking essay leads with one of Atika's own photographs of a child taken near Balakot, an entryway into the beautiful Kaghan valley. With that image as a starting point, she goes on to ponder and explore profound questions related to the images that everyone with a camera "captures" and then uses for their own varied purposes. The article is available online and can also be seen in bookshops and at new stands in the US, UK, and around the English-speaking world.



As always, it is gratifying to learn about alumni achievements. Alumni news this month includes Shaukat Tarin's appointment as Pakistan's new Minister of Finance. Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Finance are typically viewed as the two most important Cabinet positions in any country, carrying with them the burden of both great power and great responsibility. To my mind, it is remarkable that in Pakistan "Old Formanites" now occupy both positions.

I recently also had an opportunity to meet Forman graduate Salim Ghauri, founder of Netsol, one of Pakistan's most successful software companies and the first to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Having been given a copy of Salim Ghauri's interesting and inspiring memoir "Ghauri: From Nothing to Everything", I turned immediately to the chapter on "College Life" and read these words: "I am proud to be a Formanite!" According to Ghauri, Forman was "an emotionally liberating experience," in part because of its beautiful campus and its "idyllic and romantic atmosphere".



A special thanks to those contributing to FCCU's Zakat Scholarship appeal during Ramadan. As we approach the end of this fiscal year, Advancement reports that 56 individual donors have so far contributed Rs. 2.3 million to this fund. Overall, donations from all sources for the year total Rs. 36.6 million (including Rs. 5.1 million from Forman faculty and staff), a ten million rupee increase over last year (and donations will continue to be gratefully received as this fiscal year draws to a close). Most of these contributions go toward scholarships which during 2020-2021 benefitted more than 1,600 Forman students.

Let me also note with appreciation a donation in kind from Professor Nasim Riaz Butt -- former Forman English professor who also served for a time as Head of the Forman English Department -- for gifting approximately 350 books from his personal collection to Ewing Library.

Finally, each month I receive several volumes from individual authors wanting to donate their books to the Forman library. Invariably I do this -- but usually, I read or at least scan through them first. Donations this month included a fascinating collection of oral histories titled "Pakistan Army Through Eyes of Pakistani Generals" and edited by retired Major Agha Humayun Amin. Several of the retired generals in this book attended Forman. But what really caught my eye was an interview with the late Group Captain Cecil Chaudhry, a well-known and highly distinguished Forman graduate.

At a personal level, two aspects of Cecily Chaudhry's life stood out for me: his deep and enduring love of Pakistan; and his resilience and versatility, including the fact that he made remarkable contributions in each of the three major roles he assumed during his lifetime, first as a war hero, then as an educationist and finally as a human rights activist. Successful in each area, his life can also inspire others in the broader Forman community as Pakistan continues to face the many challenges presented by Covid-19.

Rector, FCCU
Dr. Jonathan Addleton

